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THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

VOLUME XXIV ISSUE 8

AUGUST 20, 2000

I, even I only, am left

The 21st Century: The Days of Elijah Return

1 Kings 18:22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

1 Kings 19:10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain

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I'll Say It Again: A Reprint. Sweet Minute of Prayer

The heights were lofty, the precipice precarious, the descent rapid. Exactly how far contemporary Baptists have fallen from those spiritual heights where our forefathers walked is difficult to express though it is not hard to measure. When one opens the writings of past generations, an immediate awareness that the "old divines" breathed in a different atmosphere than do we is unavoidable. A single paragraph (practically any random

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this and that

Editors
Jerald L. Manley
Gary Roland
Dorothy Gundersen

As an optimistic pessimist, I desire to assure you that even though I see dark clouds on the horizon of our future as Christians and as a nation, I am not discouraged. In recent days I have again read the New Testament with an eye looking for passages describing the days before the Tribulation. Not one text promises luxury and ease for believers in the time before the wrath of God is poured onto this world. Believers are everywhere warned to prepare for days of danger. The Rap-

ture is our blessed hope. Frankly, when life is great, we believers do not desire the Lord to come quickly. We are content to live right here.

As the time of the prophesied deliverance approached, the Lord caused the events of the world of the children of Israel to be-

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this and that

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come so severe that they cried to God for the deliverance that He had promised. I believe we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will likewise be pleading for His return. I believe that the Lord will bring us to a place where we are pleading for His return as our blessed hope.

I remember hearing a preacher in my younger years say that he did not think the coming of the Lord was near because 'things were not bad enough.' I did not understand his intent then; but I do now. My prayer is that the Lord will return before things get any worse. I have no desire for my granddaughter to face the world that I see developing.

—Pastor Manley ☒

THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

(428-290)

is published monthly by
THE HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH
of PENSACOLA,

2200 West Michigan Avenue,
Pensacola, Florida 32526-2379.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID
AT PENSACOLA, FLORIDA.

THE BAPTIST HERITAGE is sent without charge to the members of the church and, by request, to interested friends of this church.

There are no subscription charges and no paid advertisements are accepted.

This is VOLUME XXIV and
ISSUE NUMBER 8 for AUGUST 20, 2000.

I'LL SAY IT AGAIN: A REPRINT

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That calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my Father's throne,
Make all my wants and wishes known;
In seasons of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter's snare,
By thy return, sweet minute of prayer.
Sweet minute of prayer!
Sweet minute of prayer!
May I thy consolation share;
Till from Mount Pisgah's lofty height,
I view my home and take my flight:
This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise
To seize the everlasting prize;
And shout, while passing thro' the air,
Farewell, farewell, sweet minute of prayer.

As did Daniel for his people, I confess the sins of mine and plead for God to revive us again. I need it more than any of you; but we surely all need the work of God.

—Pastor Manley

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I, even I only, am left

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thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

1 Kings 19:14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

My title may seem cavalier, even arrogant. I do not intend it to be understood that way. Having read the story of Elijah, I fully realize that I am not the only voice crying in the wilderness. I do not believe that I, and only I, continue in the lineage of true biblical Christianity. I do believe that 'the faith' is an endangered species.

Across this land and in most other countries of this world, in smaller churches and in larger ones, a remnant remains of earnest men of God in pulpits and of true believers in pews, even though the two are not always together in the same church. In America and England, this is a statistical remnant of what once was may have been a numerical majority. There is no question in my mind that the actual percentage of biblical Christians measured against the total population of America is greatly reduced from even fifty years ago. It may even be that the total number of blood-bought, born-again believers may even be lower in 2000 than it was in 1950. If that should be so, it would be in spite of the increase in

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I, even I only, am left

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the number of churches claiming to be Bible based. In the 1950's, Christians were the clear majorities in more than one town or county in this nation. Today, I could not name a single place where I would believe that to be true. I do not intend that my title imply that I think I am the only one to remain faithful. Yet, I cannot fail to comment on the terribly rapid decline in the *expression* and in the *possession* of authentic, faithful, biblical Christianity in this land. While more Americans (figures range upwards of 85%) than ever before tell pollsters they are 'born again' and have a 'personal relationship' with God, some of the same polls report that fully 60% of Americans believe in reincarnation and less than 20% believe in the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ. Americans may believe in a god (Authentic atheists are extremely rare and hardly ever found away from the halls of academia.); but Americans as a nation do not believe in the God of Heaven as revealed in the Bible. Among those Americans professing Christianity, the confession that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, God Incarnate, is becoming a minority view. The Bible is not held to be the very word of God, but has been relegated to a collection of ethical suggestions. The highest and most sacred oaths of this nation were conceived to be those taken with hand upon the Bible and before God. Lying under such an oath, once deemed improbable and unpardonable, has become "understandable." This alone is unimpeachable evidence that 'there is no fear of God before their eyes.' Like the old gray mare, Christianity in America "ain't what she used to be."

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of such spirit-leading going on today; however, lying spirits are not of God. Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.

Oh, how we need a return to the preaching that reveals the holiness of God. It is hard to do that when the preacher is more known for his humor than for his use of Scripture. It is difficult to do that where the congregation desires entertainment more than the milk and meat of the word. It is tough for Sam to preach convincingly the holiness of God, while wearing a *lime green ham and eggs, I Am T-shirt*. It is impossible to preach the holiness of God following sensual music as Delilah and Salome slither off the 'stage.'

Nowhere is the vast difference between this generation and our forefathers more evident than in the mid-week services. Once upon a time, these were times of gathering for prayer. Most Baptist churches have more fun and games than prayer during the Wednesday service. Call Christians together to spend sixty minutes on their knees before the Holy God of Heaven and watch their stunned reaction. The last time Mr., Mrs., or Miss Christian spent anywhere approximating an hour in prayer was when some tragedy struck the home. Christians want a one-minute Bible reading and a one-minute prayer meeting.

Can you not hear the New International Revised American Standard song the saints will sing at the Rapture?

Sweet minute of prayer!

Sweet minute of prayer!

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lably, claiming all the time that they are filled with the Holy Spirit. This is not new to our age; the same shenanigans have all been manifested before. Exactly such a 'revival' was taking place in upstate New York when Mr. Joe Smith 'received' directions to those golden plates that nobody ever saw. History records eruptions of these phenomena in revolving generations back into antiquity. Not all of which were defined as 'Christian.' Dear Friend, these manifestations are as satanic today as they were then. They are the productions of deliberate frauds, those sincere but deceived, or those directly manipulated by evil spirits. Even so, many who would not participate in such foolishness treat the Holy Spirit as so intertwined with their own personal feelings that He is credited or blamed for all decisions. To those deluded souls, the Holy Spirit is a mere synonym for emotional desire and/or fleshly lust. No words are more abused than "led by the Spirit." How many times has a certain super church filed bankruptcy while being led of the Spirit? The number of unfinished projects, un-purchased property, unpaid bills, and unfulfilled promises—all attributed to the Holy Spirit is staggering. I recently journeyed through Scripture identifying the "spiritual" lies recorded—places where someone said, "God led me" or "God told me" where it was a known lie when they said it. I was astounded at the number of events and even more jarred that we preachers have neglected such clear warning. Search it out for yourself; the reading will do you good. Very often, the very name of Jehovah was piously used by the liar to identify the source of the lie. There is plenty

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This obvious decrease in genuine Christianity is fully in keeping with biblical prophecy. The Lord Jesus Christ addressed this very issue when he used a parable to phrase a question that seems not to be pertinent to the context.

Luke 18:1-8 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

Notice how the Lord Jesus applies this parable.

And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Though some will differ on the understanding of the use of the word 'faith' in this passage, I believe it to refer to the body of truth that comprises biblical Christianity. This would be in keeping with the use of the term in passages such as the following:

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Acts 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Acts 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Acts 16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Acts 24:24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

Rom 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

1 Cor 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

2 Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be rep-

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bottle of cola, or a movie character. "It doesn't matter if you eat eggs or eat ham, God loves you dearly. He's the great I Am." (*Available in sizes medium through XX-large, but only in lime green*). "Jesus Christ. The Force with no dark side." (*Sorry, only comes in black.*) Brethren, that is deathly sick Christianity—If it is Christianity at all. Where is the reverence and fear of the King of Kings, Lord of Lords? It is gone—due to pulpit failure.

In the minds of average 'Christians,' the Father is somewhat of a combination of a Nanny and a Butler, destined to cater to their every whim. To them, He is much as a fabled genie in a bottle, to be stroked when they have a desire or a burden. God, in their eyes, stands ready to respond. They think, that He is, in fact, limited by the necessity of their instructing Him to perform. Therefore to them, He is useful to get them out of troubles and stands ready to accept the blame if He fails to do so. God the Father is, in the concept of so many, little more than a 'fairy godfather.'

The Holy Spirit, in this new mindset is more force or power than person. He is now conceived to be a servant to provide rather than leader to direct. He is portrayed as One subject to control not as One to Whom to submit. He is now felt not followed. In these near four decades of ministry, I have heard nearly every sin, even some most vile, attributed to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In this very community, individuals howl as if they were wolves, oink as if pigs, bark as if dogs, roar as if lions; they stagger and slur their speech as if drunk, cavort on the floor as if giving birth, and laugh uncontrol-

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hold pairs by the dozens.

Life is physically comfortable and so are believers spiritually. How can we be so much at home in a world that our ancestors found "unworthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed" and described as a 'vale of tears?' Why are we no longer "just a passing through?" Why do we no longer feel that we "can't be at home in this world any more?" We believers, at least, give head consent to the truth of Scripture that the world is not our "final home"; even so, we certainly are acting as if it were. Why? This world is still "no friend to grace to help us on to God." What has happened? Whence came this shift in thinking? I think it is a result of several deficiencies in the modern pulpit. One of which is primary among all others. Pastors no longer preach the holiness of God.

The *Nineties' Believers* have such a shallow concept of Deity that they trivialize the very person of God, vainly attempting to make the Lord God Almighty in their own image. The very terms that are used convey the picture of casualness. They speak often of "Jesus," but rarely of the "Lord Jesus Christ." There is such lightness in the very tone of voice that all trace of reverence is discernibly missing. The Son of God is considered more 'buddy and pal' than 'Lord and Master.' He is to be approached as a 'pal' and a 'chum,' not as the High Priest. This generation of believers should be known as "the slogan generation." Bracelets and T-shirts convey the attitude better than I am able to describe it. The Lord Jesus is equated with the colonel's chicken, soup in a can, a

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robates?

Gal 1:23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

Gal 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Phil 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Col 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Col 2:7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

1 Tim 1:2 Unto Timothy, my own son

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paragraph) of Spurgeon will provide more spiritual food than can an entire book numbered among the 100 BEST SELLERS as provided by a Christian Booksellers industry leader such as Spring Arbor/Ingram. Consider these recent offerings taken from catalogues of "America's #1 source for Christian books, music, videos and more for less," Christian Book Distributors (CBD). My comments should not be construed as intended to disparage authors, publishers, or distributors. After all, the business of supplying religious materials is simply a livelihood to them and they merely offer that which produces the most income. I affirm that I have not concocted a single word in any title that follows. I also declare that all but one of these examples was pictured and that none were taken from the multiplied pages of available CHRISTIAN FICTION or CHRISTIAN ROMANCE. I did not attempt to search for weird offerings; I devoted all of three minutes to scanning three publications and did not use the worst that I found.

"Eat and Stay Thin," The Weigh Down Diet, "He's Gonna TOOT And I'm Gonna SCOOT," *"The Lady, Her Lover, and Her Lord," "The Bible For Blockheads," "I Hope God's Promises Come To Pass Before My Body Parts Go South," "A Divine Revelation of Heaven"* ("After 30 nights of horrifying excursions into the depths of hell, Baxter [Mary K. not J. Sidlow or Richard] experienced 10 rapturous trips into the realms of heaven."), *"How To Make Love With Your*

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having heaven foremost in our thoughts. Our thoughts concern 'getting along' not 'getting through.' Heaven is only a 'possibility,' while America is reality. This wonderfully technologically advanced America is neither worthy nor capable of any comparison with the City Foursquare. This land, filled with sin's vilest stench, would make the citizens of Sodom hide their faces and cause Jezebel to blush. From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, America is a festering, open sore. There is no soundness in her and she desires no Balm from Gilead or anywhere else connected with biblical Christianity.

How does the average believer respond to this 'halting between two opinions?' It is, indeed, a battle of conscience. However, the solution soon presents itself. A few dollars from the surplus remaining after the steak and lobster is tossed toward 'missions' and that simple act assuages (*Excuse me, I forgot that is an archaic spelling from the King James. We spell it 'assuages' now.*) the conscience so that there is no need to forgo the 60 inch projection altar, the 'masseur in the chair' Lazy Boy, or the backyard swimming hole. Does anybody notice that the closets of today are bigger than the bedrooms of my childhood? My grandparents had nails behind the door and a dresser. Any two Christian families could go together to start a thrift shop and have more stock and more investment capital than Sears and Roebuck had when those two men began their business. I remember a man in Jefferson City, Missouri that was under conviction because he had two pair of shoes. During a revival, he gave away one pair. Today, stores sell racks that

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is the message. That is selective morality.

Doctrinal preaching was exchanged for relevant preaching. It became the pattern for preachers to be reapers. The result is that the fields have been gleaned, but the seed for future crops has not been sown. The seed sowers and the seed water-ers did not show up for duty Sowing, watering, and reaping, that is the natural order and the biblical mandate. The word of God, defined by the Chief Shepherd, as the seed must be sown and it must be watered if there is to be a steady harvest. Bluntly stated, preachers and churches have tried to reap without sowing.

Dr. Bob Jones Sr. used to warn his preacher boys of the danger when reaping is the only goal. His illustration was of an orchard reaped with methods that produced limbs broken resulting in the reduction of the future harvests—if the trees survived. The care of the trees was as important, in his illustration, as was the reaping of the harvest. Churches, the trees of his illustration, require teaching if they are to spiritually grow. Teaching is the explanation and the application of truth, of doctrine. Drawing numbers through entertainment and programming, an attempt to harvest without sowing and watering, is a farming technique that will work only as long as the seed previously sown self-produces. However, very rapidly, the weeds take over the field and what self-seeding exists is continually reduced until the field of grain is a field of thistles and thorns.

America is a weed field today.

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Clothes On," "52 Ways To Have Fun Fantastic Sex," "Investing In Your Independent Years," and "Escaping From The Coming Retirement Crisis."

Even though all of these are "right out there in public," I cringed as I typed some of them for fear that when I see her in Glory, my Mother will reprove me for including those phrases in this article. I remember her stern correction over a single word choice I allowed in an article years before she died. She was so exercised that she insisted that I write an apology in the next issue, which I did with sincerity. Though I continue to miss them, I am thankful that both my parents are in that *Better Land Beyond The River*. Dad and Mom no longer have to endure the rapid deterioration of what passes for Christianity in this final decade of the century.

After reading those above referenced titles, somehow, Spurgeon's "All of Grace," Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Baxter's (Richard not Mary K.) "The Saints' Everlasting Rest," Brooks' "Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices" and Keach's "Preaching From The Types And Metaphors Of The Bible" now sound rather dull and boring. There is far less appeal to the flesh and no titillation in the work of the 'ancients.' Their affection was set on heavenly things and the things of earth grew, to them, strangely dim. Looking unto Jesus, they were able to bear all things imposed, believing all things revealed, hoping for all things prophesied, while enduring all things they encountered. Their trumpet gave a certain sound that all might prepare for the battle. The sufficiency they

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claimed was not flowing from their possessions nor garnered from their investments, it was of God. Though they were troubled on every side, they were not in any distress. Sometimes the battles and burdens perplexed them, but they did not know despair. Oh yes, they were persecuted, and that severely and frequently; however amid the blood and bruises, they knew they were not forsaken. Cast down and thrown out was the story of their life, even so, they could not be destroyed. In their own sight, they were already delivered unto death and that for the sake of the Lord Jesus and the reaching of the lost. Their confidence was in the promises of God; they anticipated the very resurrection of their own bodies even as God raised the Lord of Glory from the dead. They refused to faint though the weight of their dungeons was dark, the chains heavy, the whips harsh, and the swords bloody. Their light affliction was, after all, only for a moment and their expectation was that of a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They saw not that which is temporal but that which is eternal. They groan with a desire to be clothed upon with a house from heaven and cared not for beachfront, lake-side or shaded lot. They considered being at home in the body as being absent from the very presence of their Lord and they were confident, even willing, to leave behind this earthly tabernacle of clay and rise above this bitter land of woe to be *WITH HIM*. The concern of life was to be found accepted of Him; therefore, it mattered little if they were the off scouring, the plate scrapings, of the world. Their destiny was to rise above the skies and

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change in compass. The pulpit insistence upon a literal interpretation of Scripture and, as a consequence, a literal obedience to Scripture was perceived as the harshness left from a regretful, repressive history. The restraints of a public conscience trained by preachers such as Billy Sunday, J. Frank Norris, Bob Jones Sr., and others were removed as God, the Creator, was replaced by god, the force guiding evolution. This transformation, planted in the twenties, took root in the fifties and flowered in the sixties. As this concept that humanity is only a progression of animal life became the educational manta, each successive generation of students has adapted a life concept more animalistic than the previous. This replacement of the God to Whom each is accountable with a god each may manipulate to individual advantage has affected music, styles, language, entertainment, literature, morals, fidelity, politics, and religion.

The standards of Scripture were swapped for the notions of the world. This 'evolution,' though easier to discern in the secular areas, has infected Christianity. To follow the concepts of Scripture as past generations had—as though they were dictates, injunctions, or commands—was described as legalism. Freedom and liberty, biblical truths, were redefined to mean license. All was to be interpreted in the light of relationship and relativity. Since numerical growth became the standard for ecclesiastical and ministerial success, "Win the lost at any cost," became the battle cry. As with so many slogans, this expression sounds appropriate, even good, until one thinks about what is actually being said. Motive over obedience

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lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

Over these last fifty years, I have witnessed the devastating and very tangible results of preaching that is void of doctrine, of evangelizing that is without discipleship, and of fellowshiping that is separated from convictions. The entire tenor of American Christianity has been changed in five decades of this tepid ministry. What the former generation of preachers had warned would happen did become reality. The winds of change were not of hurricane force bringing a sudden relocation, but rather just a pleasant zephyr that caused a gradual drift. The gentleness of this caressing breeze was accepted as a refreshing uplift after the vicious struggles against modernist and the harshness of a world war. The anchor was slipped and most did not even notice the

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dwell in the Better Land. With patience, they approved themselves as servants of the King enduring afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, and hunger. They stood by the word of truth and by the power of God. They chose the armor of God and repudiated the arm of the flesh. They endured having seen Him Who is invisible. They were our kinsmen according to the faith. They sacrifices gave us our doctrine and our practice. The very Book we hold the dearest on earth is ours because of their trail of blood.

Our Baptist forefathers did not wear chains, endure beatings, enter prisons, or face executioners so that we their children could pass off "Solomon on Sex" as a commentary on the Song of Solomon. It was not their dying thoughts that their descendants would romp and rock to the jive beat of paganism. They did not accept the torture, refusing deliverance, so that their sons and daughters might dally with the snares of Satan. They received the mockings, the scourgings, the bonds, and the imprisonments that they might convey to following generations the truth of salvation. Stoned, sawn asunder, dying by the sword or wandering in sheepskins and goat-skins—destitute, forsaken and tormented, they lived and died to preserve the message of redemption from a judgment destined world; they did this to persuade others to flee from the wrath to come, not to belly up to the bar of life and drink to the fullest. From their deserts, mountains, caves, and dens they left a good report; but who believes that report today? They handed us the word of God and we are reading "The Mail Order Bride," "Legend

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of the Celtic Stone," or "Where the Wild Rose Blooms."

One title seemed to me to represent American Baptists better than any or all others did. This one title reveals as nothing else their pathetic condition. In itself, it presents the most serious indictment possible to bring against us. Nothing describes us better and nothing condemns us more. The least meditative consideration will compel you to agree with my assessment. The nature of our heart is laid open. The level of our spiritual aspirations is shown. The words alone should drive us to our knees. The title is "The One Minute Bible." What more could be said. We are willing to give God sixty seconds to speak to our hearts and to direct our paths.

Perhaps the nature of the very titles used to sell modern Christianity is valid evidence that the contemporary American Christian is more intrigued with the physical and the material than contending for the faith, resisting the wiles of the devil, or yearning for Heaven. There is a desire to mimic the lifestyle of the ungodly, while keeping the name of Christian. Too many are seeking to enjoy every minute of pleasure this comfortable world can offer and give no thought to either the lost and dying world or to the day of their own personal accountability to the God of Heaven. Indulgence of the carnal nature, 'fringe' participation in fleshly voyeurism, pampering of the worldly desires—that is the content that wins the money. More Baptists in this day are better familiar with the New York Times Bestsellers or Oprah's Books than they are with the works of Spurgeon or Bunyan. Even if they read 'Christian' books, the one hundred top

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I, even I only, am left

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they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly

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should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in un-awares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things

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I'LL SAY IT AGAIN: A REPRINT

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selling Christian writings is comprised of novels, pop-psychology, 'feely-feely' drivel and out-right false doctrine. In the typical 'Christian' Bookstore, the commentaries, sermons, and theological books are all in a side section; the secular--made sacred by the deletion of profanity and the addition of pious themes--dominate the shelves, while the clothing, jewelry, decorations compete with the music for the floor space. Many of the good, old, solid, biblical works are going out of print; they do not sell. As one leading book supplier suggests, "Most Christian Bookstores begin as a ministry; but the obvious soon becomes apparent. If the sales are not there, the ministry will soon be gone." Therefore, in order to survive, the purpose is compromised. Exactly as the super churches of our day have shown, Christians will sacrifice truth and principle rather than food and pleasure. Over the doorway of the typical 'Christian' bookstore should be hung this sign: Vanity and Vexation.

I often hear a saying that compels me to guard my tongue very carefully. I regretfully hear it even from the mouths of believers. When asked how he or she is doing, the glib reply is to the effect that "*Well, I am alive and that beats the alternative.*" If uttered by an unbeliever, the statement may be evidence of unknown wisdom and an opportunity for witnessing. When spoken, however, by a believer, it may be evidence of the mouth speaking from the abundance of the heart. At the very least, it is the indication of a serious lack of thought. Our minds and hearts are not 'geared' (my mechanical generation's term for this computer generation's 'configured') to

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in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

1 Tim 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Tim 6:21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

2 Tim 3:8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

2 Tim 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Titus 1:13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;

1 Pet 5:9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

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Additionally, we are specifically cautioned that we must contend earnestly for that very faith because of the infiltration of those who would depart from that faith. This is a warning that should not be ignored in these 'latter times.'

1 Tim 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Were it not for the fallen nature of humanity, no sensible person would exchange the truth of Scripture for the doctrines of devils, yielding to the seduction of evil spirits. Due to the perverted nature of humanity and the cunning capability of satanic teachers, it is only the grace of God that allows anyone to stand true, without compromise. The danger is not theoretical; it is real. If any book of the Bible should be read in the churches today (Colossians 4:16), it should be the neglected book of Jude because that book is devoted to this warning. I plead that you will not allow your eyes to merely scan the text that follows. This is the entire book of Jude. I believe it is most fitting for today's situation.

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called: Mercy unto you, and peace and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye

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