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THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

VOLUME XXIII ISSUE 7

JULY 20, 1999

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. 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

*This generation
of believers
should be
known as
"the slogan
generation."*

(Continued on page 3)

*I'll Say It Again, A Reprint: This Article Is Written For
Only One Reader, Could That One Person Be You?*

***I INTEND TO DISCUSS OPENLY
THE ONLY REAL ISSUE
IN YOUR PRIVATE AND PERSONAL LIFE.
I, PERSONALLY, WILL ASK
YOU,
PERSONALLY,
The One Question
You Dare Not Avoid Answering.***

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this and that

Editors: Jerald L. Manley
Gary Roland
Dorothy Gundersen

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon. I have heard that sentiment expressed by sincere believers repeatedly over the last forty years. My mother was earnest in her expectation of the rapture, even in the closing days of her final hospitalization. She looked for the Lord Jesus. My Dad died anticipating the coming of Christ. I have walked from their graves and the graves of hundreds of others, having left behind a body "in anticipation of the nearing trumpet call to call this body from the grave to meet the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ at His soon coming." Did they believe and have I believed a lie.

Not long ago, I wasted an entire evening reading two worthless books. One was an attempt by a Baptist brother to persuade me that my parents will be in the grave for 38,000 more years (or therea-

bouts) and that instead of looking for Him to bring this world into judgment, I should be waging literal "war" to bring in the Kingdom of Christ. It seems that he is certain that Christ Jesus cannot return until we Christians take do-

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this and that

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minion and reconstruct the nations into God-fearing lands, removing all the tares. The other was an encouragement to get ready to face the tribulation and receive the purification necessary to make me fit to meet the Lord Jesus just before the bad stuff happens. If the blood of Jesus does not make me ready, then purgatory on earth would be of no assistance at all.

Either position would make "the blessed hope" an impossible dream. This preacher has made a decision that I no longer care to read what dimwits, nuts, and new-light Baptists have to write. Instead, the next time I have time to waste, I will take a nap. It will do much more for me than reading the speculation of men wise beyond their intelligence. If the Lord Jesus Christ does not return for 100 years, He will owe me no apology; however, I expect Him before dark today. —Pastor Manley

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I'll Say It Again, A Reprint

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cause their deeds were evil. {20} For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. {21} But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

{36} He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The Lord Jesus Christ is *the* Saviour. He set aside the robes of Deity and entered

this world through the womb of a virgin. He lived and He died. He did not stay dead for on the third day "He tore the bars away and up from the grave He arose." At this very moment, He is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high, alive for evermore. He is there to make intercession for those who "come unto God by Him." Today, I plead with you to cease finding your own way to heaven and accept the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as the atonement for your sins—the Way to Heaven that God has provided.

Jerald L. Manley

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Sweet Minute of Prayer

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(practically any random paragraph) of Spurge will provide more spiritual food than can an entire book numbered among the 100 BEST SELLERS as provided by a modern 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 was taken from the multiplied pages of CHRISTIAN FICTION or CHRISTIAN ROMANCE. I made no 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

There is far less appeal to the flesh and no titillation in the works of the "ancients."

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Love With Your 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 made 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," Bunion'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 works 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

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They did not accept the torture, refusing deliverance, so that their sons and daughters might dally with the snares of Satan.

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can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? {5} Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. {6} That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit

is spirit. {7} Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. {8} The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. {9} Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? {10} Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? {11} Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. {12} If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? {13} And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. {14} And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: {15} That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. {16} For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. {18} He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. {19} And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, be-

Frankly, if you have not read the Bible for yourself, then you are in no position to reject it.

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pears in the bright light of objectivity. You do not reject all medicine because of a few *nut-cakes* that pose as doctors. You do not avoid eating because some have poisoned certain foods. You likely have not refused to accept any twenty dollar bills because counterfeits are plentiful. You do not even stay off the highways because there are some "drivers" out there who do not follow the rules.

If you let a hypocrite stand between you and the Bible, you are not acting very sensibly. You are trying to live with a double standard, and that is hypocrisy! In short, you are a hypocrite yourself in using this excuse.

Some candidly say that they do not think that they can live up to the Bible standard. Yet, if the Bible is true, if it is the word of God, if it is to be the rule of life, then you and I had better find out how to "live up" to the standard of the Bible!

Sadly, those that I have met who have said this have never understood what the Bible standard is. Friend, I fear that this is exactly your situation. Since I fear this to be true, I will give you precisely what the Bible declares is the standard of life and death.

John 3

{1} "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: {2} The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. {3} Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. {4} Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?

If you let a hypocrite stand between you and the Bible, you are not acting very sensibly.

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Sweet Minute of Prayer

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for all things prophesied, while enduring all things they encountered. Their trumpet gives a certain sound that all might prepare for the battle. The sufficiency they 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 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 blows, the bruises and the blood, they knew they were not forsaken. Cast down and thrown out was the story of their lives; 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 for 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 chains heavy, their dungeons dark, the whips harsh and the swords bloody. Their light affliction was, after all, only for a moment and their expectation was

Our Baptist forefathers did not wear chains, endure beatings, enter prisons, or face the executioner so their children could pass off "Solomon on Sex" as a commentary on the Song of Solomon.

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

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Sweet Minute of Prayer

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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 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 as having seen Him Who is invisible. They were our kinsman according to the faith. Through heavy sacrifices, they delivered unto 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 the executioner so 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 *dilly dally daily* 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 and the example of faith. Stoned, sawn asunder, dying by the sword or

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be to choose to do exactly the opposite. If God is such a God, then sanity would demand that one would serve Him and to do so down to the very smallest, most seemingly insignificant, of detail to avoid being sent to burn in a lake of fire for eternity! If God is such a God, then you and I had better serve Him.

*I care not how low
you have set your
doctrine of life nor
how high, you
have not attained
that standard.*

The truth of the matter is that God *does not* send sinners to burn in a lake of fire for eternity. While you may believe that to be true, or someone may even have told you that such is true, the absolute, provable, fact is that the Bible does not teach such a thing at all. The word of God, in fact, teaches the exact opposite. God never has and never will send a single human to burn for eternity in a lake of fire.

The Bible clearly teaches to any who dare to read it for him/herself that those whose end is to burn for eternity in the lake of fire are there by one's own choice. Neither an act of God nor an accident of birth determines eternal destiny. Each living soul makes a personal choice.

If you burn forever in that lake of fire, you will do so because you reject the gift of God's salvation and accept instead some "other voice." You--not your mother, not your father, your friend, your mate, your "spiritual advisor"--will have made the choice. It will not be God's choice for you.

I have heard some suggest that they rejected the Bible because of the errors it contains. Yet after nearly forty years of preaching, I have never had a single person, not even one--show me even one error that prompted their choice. Instead, they quote some "authority" who said it was so. Frankly, if you have not read the Bible for yourself, then you are in no position to reject it. Might it not be dangerous to do so?

Others speak of the sorry, hypocritical way that those claiming to be Christians actually live as the prompt that moved them away from the Bible. How silly such a reason ap-

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I'll Say It Again, A Reprint

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lived up to the standard that you have accepted. You have come short of the goal. You have failed to keep your own standard. This is true regardless of what standard you have accepted.

I care not how *low* you have set your doctrine of life nor how *high*, you have not attained that standard. What is more, down in your very heart of hearts, you know that I am right on target. You know that you have failed, just as I know that I have failed.

Surely, you would not dare to claim that you have actually met the standard you have accepted. Surely, you would not really claim to be beyond fault, to be perfect, in every detail of life. You cannot be so bold as to lie to yourself. Even if

You and I both have missed the mark we have chosen as our goal.

you tried to do so, your own conscience would challenge your assertion and brand you a liar. You know this is true.

Suppose for instance that you were to hear someone claim to live by the Golden Rule. You would know, whether or not you dared say so

aloud, that the person does not always "do unto others as he/she would have others do to her/him."

Neither you nor I have ever met a person who claimed to "live and let live," who was not a meddler at some point in the lives of other people.

You have never met anyone who fully lived his/her standard of life and we both know it to be so.

I have often wondered why it is that you have chosen to reject the Bible as an authority and have in its place selected your standard. It puzzles me as to what your reasons were. I know what others have given me as the motivation of their decisions. Perhaps you have followed the same line of thought as did one of them.

I have been told that "the God of the Bible sends sinners to burn in a lake of fire for eternity, and I do not want to serve such a God." Yet, intelligent, rational thinking would

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There is a desire to mimic the lifestyle of the ungodly, while keeping the name of Christian.

wandering in sheepskins and goatskins—destitute, forsaken and tormented, they lived or 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 precious, infallible, inerrant, inspired, holy word of God; and we are reading "The Mail Order Bride," "Legend 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, yea eager, to give God all of sixty seconds, and that every day, to speak to our hearts and to direct our paths, leaving us a mere 86,340 seconds to the pursuit of "personal matters."

Perhaps the nature of the very titles used is valid evidence that the contemporary American Christian is

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Voices, voices everywhere.
Which one dare we to trust?
Turn here! Keep on! Go there!
But which voice should we trust?
Voices, voices everywhere.
They call us on; they bid us stay.
Slow down! Hasten quickly! Linger here!
They call at night and through the day.
Voices, voices everywhere.
They call from beyond and from the dust.
Hear me. I will ease your load of care.
Each voice bids us place in it our trust.
Voices, voices everywhere.
'Tis true my friend, in one you'll trust.
A bad choice, no matter how sincere,
Will shackle, chain and keep you trussed.
Voices, voices everywhere.
The one you choose to follow through life
determines where you will be after here.

You and I hear them. Siren voices call to us from every point of the compass. Each urging us to consider a specific philosophy or a particular obligation as *THE ONE REAL* fundamental reason for our existence.

Some of these voices have a seemingly rational appeal; others are so irrational that a sane person must wonder how anyone could become so beguiled as to accept such a fallacious and fraudulent cause. These voices come from every spectrum of our society including the political, sociological, economical, medical, educational, even the religious fields.

*One "scholar"
wrote that the
only hope for the
survival of the
world was for all
living humanity to
be destroyed so
that evolution
could start all over
and, perhaps, do
better the next*

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Sweet Minute of Prayer

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of Heaven and watch their stunned reaction. The last time Mr./ Mrs./ or Miss Christian spent anywhere near an hour in prayer was when the last 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!
That takes me from a world that cares,
And lets me at my Buddy's throne,
Make all my wants and wishes known;
In seasons of real pain and grief,
My soul has often sought relief,
Though, I never faced the tempter's snare.
Oh my how slow, sweet minute of prayer.
Sweet *minute* of prayer! sweet *minute* of prayer!
May I tarry long without real care;
Till from My Lazy Boy,
I rise reluctantly to take my flight:
My remote I'll hafta drop to rise
To join the saints up in the skies;
And shout, while passing thro' the air,
Farewell, farewell, sweet *minute* of prayer.

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

need this work that only

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God can do.

Jerald L. Manley ✕

Sweet Minute of Prayer

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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 is used by the liar to identify the source of the lie. There is plenty of 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 for prayer. Most Baptist churches have more fun and games than prayer during the service. Call Christians together to spend sixty minutes on their knees before the Holy God

Nowhere is the vast difference between this generation and our forefathers more evident than in the mid-week services.

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There are accredited spokesmen willing to declare that the only real purpose in living is to regret that we are alive and to devote our life to preventing others from living. One "scholar" wrote that the only hope for the survival of the world was for all living humanity to be destroyed so that evolution could start all over and, perhaps, *do better the next time*. This book-selling (of course) scholar is, in my view, too "intellectual" to realize that if evolution were true, then evolution would be a current event. If evolution were happening right now, then he dare not interfere, lest he might destroy that very "better" being evolved! *(In my opinion, if he is serious, then he ought not to be running around loose! He is a danger to himself and to others.)*

I must suspect the integrity of any teacher, let alone a scientist, who advances evolution as anything more than an often disputed and never proven theory. Evolution is a theory (untested and un-testable) based entirely upon surmise and supposition and accepted only on the basis of faith in the self-interest of the promoters of the theory.

Others are convinced that the earth is headed for doom from human mis-deeds. Global warming, greenhouse gases, internal combustion engines, rain forest depletion, chemical exposure, ozone destruction or something else developed by man is going, say they, to bring this world to destruction. Those who promote these pseudo-science findings do so expecting to be received as both rational and reasonable. This is true although the very scientists who formerly wrote of a returning ice age are now the same ones warning of global warming.

Yet, when a simple preacher like this one reports that the God Who created this earth has declared that He is going to bring the world into judgment, those very same people

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laugh and mock at such a *scientific impossibility*. They are willing, even eager, to credit collective humanity with more power and more ability than the Creator God Who spoke all into being. If I must decide (and I must and so must you) destiny on the basis of faith, then I shall choose to place my faith in the revelation of God and not in human reasoning. It seems to me to require less faith to believe the record of God than the record of humanity. Which do you choose to believe?

That question, Dear Reader, is the only real issue of life--of my life and of your life. *Where will you and I place our faith?*

We all have faith to place somewhere; we all place our individual faith somewhere. *The single question is where?*

If I must decide (and I must and so must you) destiny on the basis of faith, then I shall choose to place my faith in the revelation of God and not in human reasoning.

With careful, deliberate intent, I have placed my faith in the word of God. *Have you exercised careful selection? Are you willing to die by that standard under which you live? Where have you placed your faith?*

Perhaps you protest that you have not placed faith anywhere. Yet, that is an impossibility. Faith may

be placed or withdrawn, but it cannot be retained, sealed within, never used.

Faith by its nature is always placed somewhere. Faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." That definition, though from the Bible, is fully valid of every kind of faith, not just religious faith. In your life, you have things "hoped for" and you accept "evidence of things not seen." This is not something done seldom or rarely, but often and regularly.

Faith, according to "Webster" is first, "allegiance to duty or a person" and, further, is a "firm belief in something for which there is no proof." That definition validates the biblical definition.

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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 uncontrollably, 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 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 feelings that He is credited or blamed for all decisions. To those deluded souls,

Even so, many who would not participate in such foolishness treat the Holy Spirit as so intertwined with their feelings that He is credited or blamed for all decisions.

the Holy Spirit is a mere synonym for emotional desire. 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 is staggering. I recently journeyed through Scripture identifying the "spiritual" lies recorded--places where someone

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chicken, soup in a can, a 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 mind of Mr./ Mrs./Miss 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 at their command. They think, 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 yet 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 'fairly godfather.'

The Holy Spirit is considered more force or power than person. He is conceived as a servant not a leader and guide. He is subject to control, not One to Whom to submit. He is felt, not followed. In these near four decades of ministry, I have heard every sin, ever the most vile, attributed to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In this

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I have too much faith in your integrity to believe that you would claim that you honestly believe that you have not placed faith in some concept, some philosophy, some guide, and some rule of life. You have done so and, in our heart of hearts, both you and I know that you have.

Certainly, I can understand that you might feel that I have accepted, *by faith*, an arbitrary standard, the Bible, as my rule of life. I will concede that I have done so; I do not deny that at all.

However, in fairness, you also must concede that you, just as arbitrarily, *by faith*, have rejected the Bible as your rule for life and have accepted something else as its substitute. Unquestionably, you have that right. I would not deny you that right; but I would insist that you admit what you have done. That you have accepted such an alternative standard or rule is self-evident since you reject the Bible as that standard. *With what have you replaced the word of God? What led you to place your faith where you have placed it?*

What length, what depth of study did you give the matter? Did you reason this out for yourself or did you follow someone else and place your faith in his or her investigation? How did you decide to reject the Bible? What fault or failure did you personally discover? In exactly what do you place your eternal destiny?

Do not become angry with me. Do not avoid the issue. Since you do not accept the Bible as the standard or rule for life, I am simply asking what standard or rule have you accepted? If not the Bible, what then? Name your rule of life. State your standard. Identify your decision. You should not be ashamed or embarrassed to share your choice, since you are not ashamed or embarrassed over rejecting the Bible. *With what have you chosen to replace it?*

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I have too much faith in your integrity to believe that you would claim that you honestly believe that you have not placed faith in some concept, some philosophy, some guide, some rule of life.

I'll Say It Again, A Reprint

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On what basis are you willing to live your life and, one day, die your death? You are alive and you will die. You know those two facts are absolutes. You may not wish to agree with me on much of anything else; however, on this you cannot deny the truth. We are alive and one day we will die. Some standard guides us in life and, when death comes, we will die

You may not wish to agree with me on much of anything else; however, on this you cannot deny the truth. We are alive and one day we will die.

by some, probably the same, standard. Therefore, be honest and identify the basis on which you live and on which you will die.

Is it "live and let live?" Is it "doing the best you are able?" Is it the prophet Joseph Smith? Is it the prophet Mohammed? Is it the visionary Mary Baker Eddy or Pastor Russell? Is it the concepts of Carl Sagan or Karl Marx? Is it in dogma determined by councils of men convened through the centuries? Is it

keeping the Golden Rule? Is it one that you yourself have devised?

Whatever it is that you have accepted, you have a belief system. This is true, even if you have not previously considered the issue. It is still true, even if you deny it!

I challenge you. Think! Identify the standard by which you live. Name the principles of your belief system. Spell them out. Write them down. I do not hesitate to do so.

Basically, mine are very simple. I am not ashamed to share them with you, because I have chosen to base my life upon these simple faith-accepted beliefs. Summarized these beliefs may be written in three statements.

1. God is.
2. God has revealed Himself.
3. God reveals Himself through the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible. The Bible therefore becomes the Book of record, the source of

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Sweet Minute of Prayer

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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 believe it is a result of several deficiencies in the modern pulpit. One of which is primary among all others. Pastors and preachers 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' 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

"It doesn't matter if you eat eggs or eat ham, God loves you dearly. He's the great I Am."

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

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Sweet Minute of Prayer

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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 hung clothes on nails behind the door and used a dresser. Any two Christian families in Anytown, U.S.A. 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 sincere conviction because he had two pairs of shoes. During a revival, he gave away one pair. Today, stores sell racks that hold pairs by the dozens.

Life is physically comfortable and so are believers

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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 these two men began their business.

I'll Say It Again, A Reprint

(Continued from page 12)

truth, the authority for life.

I am not ashamed to admit that I believe these concepts nor am I embarrassed to have others know this.

To reject those three assertions means that you must deny that God exists or that He has revealed Himself to us or that, if there is a revelation, it is not the Bible. Provide the basis for your denial. I am most curious to understand your thought process. Surely, you have not made such a vital choice without careful, deliberate, time consuming process of actual thought! Who would do such a thing?

I have chosen to base my life and risk my eternity on the veracity of the Bible. Why have you rejected the possibility of the Bible being true?

Please understand I do not claim perfection. I do not assert that I always have met or, even now, fully meet the standards of the Bible. My failures in that endeavor far outnumber my compliances. Were it not that the Bible teaches salvation by grace, I would have no hope at all. I recognize that I am not able to attain perfection in living up to my faith-chosen standard.

Whatever that rule or standard is by which you have determined to measure your conduct and life and on which to risk your eternal destiny, of one thing I am absolutely certain. Whatever system you have chosen to accept, wherever you have determined to place your faith and hope, you have not lived up to that rule or standard! This is not said to be mean or harsh, just truthful.

What is true of me and of my relationship to my standard is true of you in relationship to your standard. This is not an act of condemning you or of judging you. It is a simple statement of honest fact. You and I both have missed the mark we have chosen as our goal.

I say this again, lest you misunderstand. You have not

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Were it not that the Bible teaches salvation by grace, I would have no hope at all.

Sweet Minute of Prayer

More Baptists in this day are better familiar with the New York Times Best-sellers or Oprah's Books than they are with the works of Spurgeon or Bunyan.

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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 ugody, while keeping the name of Christian. Too many are seeking to en-

joy 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 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*

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Sweet Minute of Prayer

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will soon be gone." Therefore, in order to survive, the purpose is compromised. Exactly as the supper 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 comment 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 having heaven foremost in our thoughts. Our thoughts concern 'getting along' not 'getting through.' To modern

Christians, 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.

Over the doorway of the typical 'Christian' bookstore should be hung this sign: Vanity and Vexation.

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