

Faults are many where love is small.

(USPS 042-340)

I AM WITH YOU

by T.B. Freeman
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This text came to me August 15, 1987, in a dream. Now if we have a dream that contradicts the Word of God, we had better consider the source of that dream. However, it has pleased our sovereign God to reveal certain things to His own in times past, and I believe He still does when it pleases Him to do so. On the day of Pentecost, when our Lord baptized His church with the Holy Spirit, Peter said it was the fulfillment of that which was spoken of by the Prophet Joel. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God,



T.B. Freeman

I will power out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." (Acts 2:17). So, as an old man I have had a dream; praise God.

(Continued on Page 10 Column 2)

BORN AGAIN

by Waldo Whiddon
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"Marvel not that I said unto thee. Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). The verse of Scripture that is the text for this article is one of the most familiar on this subject in all the Word of God. Yet, it is kicked around, misunderstood, or mis-



Waldo Whiddon

represented by most users of it. John chapter three records the conversation that took place between Jesus and a man named

(Continued on Page 6 Column 3)

ONLY SIX WEEKS UNTIL OUR BIBLE CONFERENCE MAY 27-29 COME AND WORSHIP THE LORD WITH US!

MISSIONARY

PREMILLENNIAL

BIBLICAL

BAPTISTIC

The Baptist Examiner

Baptist Is Our Middle Name

Paid Circulation in All States and in Many Foreign Countries

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"—Isaiah 8:20.

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WHY BE BAPTIZED?

by Doug Newell
Assistant Editor

Acts 2:37-38, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."

Why be baptized is a good question, and one which deserves a good answer when we are confronted with it. But first, I will answer the question: what is baptism? Baptism is one of the two ordinances that the Lord's churches have. The other is, of course, the Lord's Supper. Baptist churches have never claimed any more than these; and we are content with them, desiring no others. Baptism is the act of totally immersing an individual into water for two reasons. The one being a picture of the showing forth the believer's death to sin and his resurrection to righteous-

ness. The other being it is the entrance way into one of the Lord's churches. Let me hasten to say that Baptism is not given to just anyone. While Jesus was here He gave His church the authority to baptize. In Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, say-



Doug Newell

ing, All power is given unto to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I

have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world". Jesus had already established His church, and He gave them the authority to do His work on earth. Now beloved, it was to a Baptist church that He was speaking. This can be proven both historically and doctrinally. Historically the Baptists have been traced back to the days of the apostles. Our enemies have admitted this. Historians have proven this. No other group on this earth, who claim to be churches of God, can trace their history back that far. All of them fall short, giving proof that they are not of the Lord. All of them, when traced back, fall into the same category; that is, man-made. Only Baptist churches are true churches. The Baptist churches are proven to be true churches because of the doctrines that they preach. Baptists and Baptists alone stand for the whole counsel of God. Baptists and Baptists alone preach the same doctrine that the apostles sacri-

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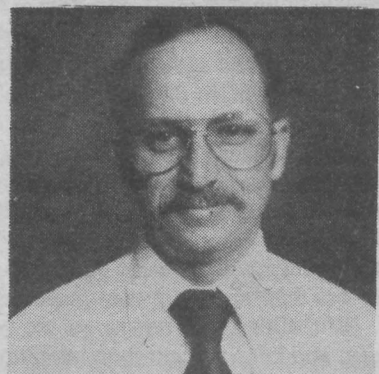
DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE? IF SO, THEN WHY?

by John Pruitt
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Job 6:11 says: "What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?"

Introduction: Put yourself in this situation. You are a Christian, faithful and sincere in your efforts to serve God. You are a prosperous person with a good job. God has blessed you in many ways, both materially and spiritually. You and your wife or husband are generally good

people with good children. You have been a faithful tither and giver, and active in the Lord's work. You are a kind and



John Pruitt

considerate person who tries to help other people any way you can. In general, you are a good example of the kind of person that God is well pleased with.

Then suddenly, without warning tragedy strikes, and the worse possible things begin to happen to you. Death of child, death of husband or wife, flood, or other natural disaster, violent crime, disabled in auto accident, tragic fire: What would be your reaction to such a thing?

The Bible gives us many examples of men who were faithful servants, who walked by faith in

(Continued on Page 3 Column 4)

The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

AN IMAGINARY TRIP THROUGH AN ARMINIAN HEAVEN

by Joseph M. Wilson
"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

Arminian theology is based upon and necessitates a denial of this precious verse, as well as much more of the Word of God. This theology in the realm of salvation embraces what might well be called the five points of Arminianism.

1. Either man is not totally

depraved; or if he is, God automatically does something for all men that lifts them out of total depravity and gives them the ability to receive or reject salvation. This is often referred to as common grace and is the product of the depraved mind of man, without a shred of Biblical support.

2. That God elects man to salvation on condition that he foresees that man will repent and believe of his own free will. This makes the glorious doctrine

of election to be a useless absurdity, and to have no part at all in man's salvation.

3. That Christ died for the sins of all men--for one as much as another, which casts a blasphemous slur upon the precious blood of Christ.

4. That the Holy Spirit tries with all His might to save all mankind.

5. That salvation once thus attained may be lost, and the man

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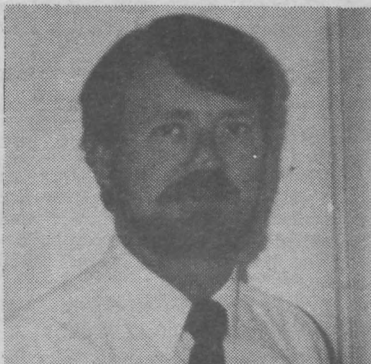
THE PROMISE OF THE BOW

by Bob Belanger
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Reading: Genesis 9:8-17

Text: Genesis 9:14 - "And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud."

Notice these first six words of our text. "And it shall come to pass." We ought to take great delight in such expressions as this found throughout the Bible. We know of none among men, that now walk the earth, that are able to speak with such confidence. "It shall come to pass," speaks of omniscience; an attribute that alone belongs to God. Many may well make such statements, based however on



Bob Belanger

mere theories, but elements of doubt must always remain.

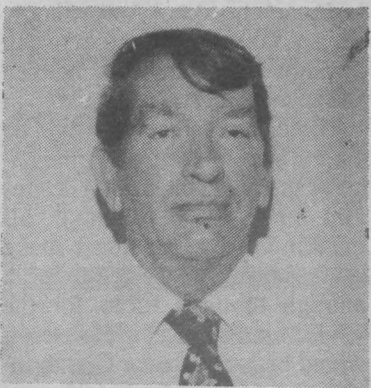
"It shall come to pass," comes to us as a promise from God, therefore it cannot and will not fail to come into existence. Were we to search the Scriptures throughout wherein such, or

(Continued on Page 5 Column 4)

BOUNDS

by Ray Hiatt
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"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26).



Ray Hiatt

All parents know about "bounds", for as they rear their children they expand their bounds from the crib to the school and to the earth at large in measured fashion. God has fixed the bounds of the sons of Adam and where these bounds shall eventually measure none can now say. They have been extended to the moon and may perhaps go beyond, though I doubt it.

The bounds of lost souls are few. They are bound under the heavens, and bound for hell unless they trust Christ as their Saviour. Children of God have a different set of bounds, for our

(Continued on Page 8 Column 3)

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There is corruption at the heart when the tongue is blistered and not bridled.

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IMAGINARY

(Continued from Page 1)

once saved finally perish.

Now these are the teachings of Arminianism as to salvation. I might safely say that no man taught by the Holy Spirit can possibly believe that these are the teachings of God's Word, and that a true experience of saving grace bears strong testimony against these heresies.

But let us for awhile assume that these teachings are true, and that this is the way men are saved and reach heaven. Accordingly, let us take an imaginary trip through this Arminian heaven and see what it would be like.

The Arminian heaven would be a very large place, for on the basis of their teachings, God desires and endeavors to save all mankind. So God must make this Arminian heaven large enough to have room for the whole human race. You see it would be insincere for God to invite men to heaven, if He did not make heaven big enough for them all. Oh, what a vast heaven this is and it shall take us a very long time to cover all its territory.

But as we travel over this vast heaven, we find that though it is very large, a vast majority of the area is undeveloped. For you see, God wanted everyone to be saved and made it large enough for everyone, but then learned that since He could not violate the free will of man, He could only persuade a very, very few to accept this salvation, and so the vast majority of the territory

remains undeveloped, and is grown over with weeds, and not at all the beautiful place we were expecting.

Then as we travel through this Arminian heaven, we are surprised to find that there are very few people here. We thought there would be a great multitude that no man could number: but you see, since we know from the Bible and experience the awful de-



Joe Wilson

pravity of man, we realize that on Arminian principles, only a very few finally made it through. You see on the principle of Arminian salvation, it is very hard to get anyone saved to start with. Man is so depraved, and so in love with sin, and so at enmity with God, and since the Holy Spirit cannot effectually and irresistibly work, but only persuade and try to save as a result of this only a

very few are finally persuaded to, of their own free will, accept Christ and be saved. (Actually, on the basis of Arminian salvation, no one would be saved, but we will imagine that a few "had sense enough to trust Jesus"). Then out of this few who were persuaded to start toward heaven, only a few made it all the way through. For the world is so attractive to man, and the flesh is so weak, and the devil is so powerful, that it is very hard to keep this Arminian salvation after you get it. As one Arminian preacher (?) said to me: "It is easy to get people saved today, but it is hard to keep them saved." Now these few who got saved started out singing "I'm going through, I'll not turn back," "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand," and the like, but after awhile the going got rough and most of them got lost again, and so there are very few who are in this Arminian heaven. (Actually on Arminian principles no one would stay saved, even if he could get it to start with, but again we are imagining). Thank God we are kept by the power of God.

Now as we journey, we notice another amazing thing. We find that there are many houses that were started, the foundations were dug, and the buildings partly

finished; some just barely started and others more nearly completed. As we inquire about these buildings we learn that these were for folk that started out but failed to make it through and lost their salvation; and so, the house was never finished. We see in our trip that there are more houses like this, than completed ones.

Then as we continue inspecting this Arminian heaven, we notice that there is a great deal of difference in the buildings. We were used to this on earth. We saw great stately mansions and small, tumbledown shacks while on earth; but we certainly did not expect heaven to be like this. You can imagine our surprise when we see over yonder a large stately mansion, and off in the distance we see a cabin in the corner of glory land. When we inquire as to this amazing condition we learn that people on earth were sending on the material for their heavenly home, and that the only material the heavenly carpenters had to work with was what we sent on ahead. Now this is why we find some rusty old halos, and so many cabins and shacks. Another Arminian preacher (?) told me about a sermon he preached how Jesus paid the down payment on our home in heaven and we are to keep up the payments by our good works.

Oh boy, can you imagine what kind of home we would have on these principles. (And people wonder why I hate Arminianism: What a slander on the Bible and the God of the Bible is this Arminianism.)

Now as we journey through this imaginary heaven, let us observe some of those few who made it through. Ah, there is a group of them, and they are having a song and testimony meeting. Let us listen in. What is the song they are singing? Is it "Amazing Grace," or the song of Moses and the Lamb? No, they are singing "Surely I Will," and oh, how they swell with pride as they sing of their prayers and their works and how they walked in the pathway of duty and many such songs. Now they are going to have a testimony meeting, and oh, how eager they are to tell one another how they made it through. One tells of how he had sense enough to trust Jesus; another tells of praying through down at the barn; and another tells of his hair-raising experiences in the war; and on and on, it goes. One tells how he ran from his Arminian god for eight years, and another fought for fifteen years before he finally surrendered to his Arminian god and promised him he would do

(Continued on Page 3 Column 1)

FROM THE EDITOR

HOW SHOULD A CHURCH TREAT THE EXCLUDED MEMBER OF A SISTER CHURCH? This is a very important matter. Church authority is important. Relationships between churches are being seriously damaged because some churches refuse to show proper respect for the authority of a sister church. As Brother Hobbs once wrote in this paper, "A church that recognizes an excluded member in any way is deliberately slapping the church in the face that excluded him." Of course, such actions are going to damage church relations.

Most churches do not exclude any member for any reason (so-called churches). This is a serious failure to obey God's Word. There are certain things for which a member should be excluded. However, when other churches fail to respect the authority of a sister church in such exclusion, they do great damage to the whole matter of church authority. It is much like a father whipping his child, and the mother petting the child.

A church should not receive an excluded member of a sister church. A church should not use such an excluded member in any way - to preach, lead in prayer, or sing specials. When a church does this, she is showing disrespect for the authority of the excluding church. She is condoning the sin for which the member was excluded. She is comforting the excluded member in his or her sin and rebellion against the excluding church. She is participating, insofar as she can, in the sin for which the member was excluded. She is showing disrespect for and disregard for the Biblical doctrine of Church Authority. These are terrible things for a church to do, but when a church receives or uses an excluded member of a sister church, that church is doing all these mentioned things.

Now most of our kind of men and churches will give lip service to what I have just written. They will profess that they believe in respecting the authority of a sister church. But often, in order to get new members; or in order to appease, satisfy, and keep present members; or for some other invalid reason, many churches will totally ignore what they profess to believe, and will receive or use excluded members. Many men and churches say that they believe in church authority, but their actions prove that they do not. They will use this doctrine when it is to their benefit, and then ignore it whenever they feel they can profit by doing so.

We have said that a church should not receive or use an excluded member of a sister church. We have said that our kind of churches all give lip service to this truth. We have said that many, by their practice, ignore, disregard, and show disrespect for this truth.

Now, understand that I do verily believe that a church can be wrong in its exclusion. A church can exclude a member on improper grounds, or in an improper way. A church could refuse to restore a repentant, excluded member.

If this should be the case, another church would then have the right to disregard the act of exclusion, and to receive or use the excluded member...But there are things that should be done in such a case. The church that receives or uses the excluded member of a sister church should be very careful and very sure of what she is doing. The pastor should be knowledgeable enough in Scripture and concerned enough about doing the right thing, to lead his church in handling such a matter properly.

If a church feels that another church has excluded a member on improper grounds, they should do the following: They should contact the excluding church and learn exactly what the excluding grounds were. They should never, never, never just take the word of the excluded member or of some interested parties. They should always consult with the excluding church. If they feel that the grounds of exclusion were improper, they should try to discuss the matter with the excluding church, and seek to have the matter settled peaceably. Only after con-

sulting with the excluding church and being certain that the grounds of exclusion were wrong and unscriptural should they receive or use the excluded member. Every effort should be made to bring the two churches to harmony in this matter.

If a church feels that the exclusion was conducted in an unscriptural and wrong way, the same procedure should be followed. The authority of a sister church should be respected until and unless total investigation of the matter, including consulting with the excluding church, and every effort to settle the matter in love and harmony have all been made.

If a member says that he or she has apologized to the excluding church and that such apology was not accepted, the church should do the following: They should consult with the excluding church to see: 1. If such an apology has been given. 2. If the church has refused to accept such. 3. Why the church refused to accept such if it did. The authority of the excluding church should be respected until and unless such investigation, consultation, and effort at a settlement in love has been made. The church should never, never, never take the word of the excluded member without even consulting with the excluding church.

Before receiving or using an excluded member, a church should: 1. Consult with the excluding church. 2. If convinced that the excluding church is in error, should lovingly seek to deal with this and bring the church into proper attitude and action on the matter. 3. Should do such only after investigating the matter, hearing the excluding church, seeking to lovingly correct the matter, and with a feeling of sadness that such is to be done.

Now, most of our kind of preachers and churches will give lip service to what I have written here. They will profess that they believe it. But some of them will, when and as it pleases them, go contrary to all I have said. Some time back, we excluded a member. One church received this member. Another church used this member in a special way. Neither of these churches has ever made the least effort to do even one of the things mentioned above. Neither church has made any contact with us at all except, upon request, to inform us of what they have done. They have not made the least effort to honor and respect the authority of our church in the matter. They have not even offered to explain to our church why they have done these things. One would think that a church whose excluding authority has been totally disregarded, who has been "slapped in the face" would deserve at least some explanation of such action.

Maybe some of my readers can reconcile a professed belief in church authority with a total disregard of such in action, but I cannot. If our churches do not begin to show some respect for one another, I can but wonder where we are headed. Let us preach church authority, and let us also practice it. If we are not going to practice it, let us cease pretending to believe in it. The Lord's church is precious in His sight. To "slap her in the face" must displease Him greatly.

Well, I have no authority over sister churches - neither do I desire it. If they will not show respect for the authority of a sister church, they cannot be forced (by man) to do so. We will just have to let them do as they please, and leave them with the Lord. Let some of us still preach Church Authority, and let us also practice it. Let those of us who will, still show proper respect for the authority of our sister churches. Let others do as they will. We cannot fellowship churches who "slap us in the face" by showing disregard and disrespect for our authority. But we will love them, pray for them, and sincerely long for the day when such matters will be made right - and sweet fellowship restored. Let those who are guilty in the matter give much thought to what they have done, and repent thereof and seek for restored fellowship. Comments welcomed.

A true minister is best measured not by how many bouquets have been pinned on him, but how many brickbats have been pitched at him.

IMAGINARY

(Continued from Page 2)

what he should. Then the mourner's bench crowd begin to tell of how they wrestled with their god, and would not let go, and wept their way through. Some of them made many trips to the mourner's bench before they finally got through, and some sought their god for many years, and so, on and on it goes. (Reminds one of the services these Arminians had on earth, when the preacher didn't even get to preach).

Then they begin to tell of how hard they had it after they got saved; how the devil fought them, and friends opposed them; but they decided they were going through anyway. By this time you and I are sick to our stomach of all this, for we heard all of it we wanted to hear on earth, and then some. The two things that stand out in this Arminian meeting in this Arminian heaven, are the continual praise of self, and the lack of giving glory to God. (Well, we need not be surprised at this for these have always been the two outstanding qualities of Arminianism).

Now in our imaginary trip, let us consider the triune god of this Arminian heaven, and what do we behold? Oh, my friend, a sadder sight never met our eyes than the pitiful god of the Arminian. We behold a disappointed father, a downcast and disillusioned son, and a defeated holy spirit. The father of this trinity desired, planned and did all He could for the salvation of all men, and now it is all over, and there are only a few in his heaven. So, He walks the avenues of glory, a poor, disappointed old man - enough to make our hearts weep. Then the

son of this Arminian trinity came into the world and died for all the sins of all men and thought to provide salvation for all men. He did all of this hoping and expecting to see his seed and the travail of His soul, and because of this joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame. Now, He is downcast and disillusioned, as he realizes that He died in vain, and that his blood was mostly a wasted thing. Then the holy spirit of the Arminian trinity tried with all his might to save all men, but the majority of them were just too hard for him, and there was nothing that he could do but let them go to Hell, and now he is a sad, defeated being. Oh, behold! the Arminian trinity, weak, helpless before the almighty free-will of man, defeated, walking through their heaven they hoped would be full of the saved. Hear the sobs and wails of this pitiful trinity as they cry out their terrible disappointment throughout eternity. Note another thing about this. This trinity is the most neglected of the inhabitants of heaven, for you see, the ones that made it through are so busy admiring themselves, and sharing the experiences of others, and each one trying to out shout and top the experience of others, that they have no time for their Arminian god. After all, why should they? What did he do for them that he did not do for others who went to hell? And was it not their mighty freewill, and their perseverance that got them where they are? Why should they give their god praise and glory that really belongs to themselves?

Well, our trip is over. What think you of this Arminian heaven? Frankly, I am a little

sick and disgusted with it all, and will be greatly disappointed if this shall turn out to be the real heaven. But after all, I'm not much more sick and disgusted than I am with Arminianism here on earth, and too, that is about all I would expect an Arminian heaven to be like.

Now briefly, let us compare the heaven of God's sovereign grace with this imaginary Arminian heaven. This heaven is not as big as the Arminian one, for it is a purposed and prepared place for a predestinated people, and God knows exactly how big to make it. The heaven of sovereign grace has no undeveloped territory, but every plot is fully and beautifully developed.

All whom God purposed to be there are there. There is not one place too many, or one too few at the banqueting hall of glory. You see, before the world began, God chose a people to be the objects of His saving grace and predestinated them to a place in heaven. The Son died on the cross for their sins and satisfied the justice of God in this respect. The Spirit effectually brings them to repentance and faith in Christ, and the power of a Triune God sees them all the way through. Now in this heaven there is a great number that no man can number; for God's election is a large election, as large as the love of God.

Oh! we shall not want for company in God's heaven, for a vast multitude shall be there. You see God predestinated that these should be there, and who can defeat the purpose of a sovereign God? Then every mansion is complete, there are none started and not finished; for whom God saved, He saved with

an everlasting salvation, and has kept them by His almighty power. And the mansions in this heaven are all alike glorious and there are no cabins in the corner, for they are the gift of God's love and grace. And though there are degrees of rewards according to our works, our heavenly home is not made out of materials we supply, but it's all provided by His grace.

Then as we observe the inhabitants of this true heaven, we find no self glory and praise, but we find them singing a new song and saying "Worthy art thou," to the Lamb of God, and casting their crowns at Jesus' blessed feet.

Oh! no Arminian testimony meeting in heaven, for these are too busy praising the Triune God of all grace. And last, and more important, we find the Trinity of the heaven of sovereign grace to be satisfied, blessed, and completely, eternally victorious. All the Father chose, and for whom the Son died, and whom the Spirit called, are there. There is not one missing. Not one case too hard, but all present and accounted for to the eternal glory of the Triune God. Well, my imaginary trip through an Arminian heaven has made me love Ephesians 2:8 even more. I hope it has done the same for you. God bless you all. Amen.

DO BAD

(Continued from Page 1)

God's promises, and served Him diligently; and yet had bad things happen to them. Noah lost everything that he had, including all of his family except His two sons and his wife. David was persecuted by King Saul for many years. Elijah was hated by

most of his own people. Moses spent 40 years in the desert trying to lead a people who hated him, and constantly complained. Naomi lost all of her family in a foreign land.

We have documented history of the horrible and tragic persecution that millions of our loved ones in the faith suffered from the time of the Lord's ministry until recent years. Whole families, whole churches, and sometimes whole Christian communities being wiped out for the cause of Christ. Many heinous tornados were invented to bring harm and suffering upon God's people. These were good people who loved the Lord, and many who loved the Lord's church and the doctrines of grace.

Even in our lifetime we can think of tragedies that have happened to good people. In Wichita Falls, Tx., just a few years ago, nearly all of the membership of a Baptist church was wiped out by a giant tornado. Just this past year a church bus carrying young people was swept away in flood waters, and several children were killed including a girl who fell from the Helo lifeline. Yes, bad things do happen to good people, but why?

It is common for people to think that all bad things come from the devil; so if something bad happens the devil did it, and it is probably your own fault. There is either some secret sin in your life, or else your faith in God is weak. I heard recently the testimony of a Christian woman who after having lost two sons in the past, now stood by her third son dying from injuries received in an auto crash. As she waited and prayed a friend called to inquire of the boy's condition. The

(Continued on Page 4 Column 4)

ANOTHER GREAT TIME IN SOMERSET, KENTUCKY

It was my honor and privilege to hold revival services in the Deerfield Baptist Church of Somerset, Ky. February 24-28. What great honors has this church bestowed upon me. I held a meeting for them in April of last year. At that time they scheduled me for a meeting in October of this year (no church had ever done that before, scheduling a future meeting during a present one). But they added to my blessings and privileges by having me for this meeting referred to here.

I have been going through some very trying times the last several months. I have had some friends, preachers, and churches turn against me; and this is always a source of great heartache for me. My, in such times, it is doubly blessed to be treated as I have by the Deerfield Baptist Church. I do praise God for the blessings that have been mine, and the great encouragement that has come to me through this church and this meeting.

This church is pastored by Elder Wendell P. Furlong. He is a very sound and able man. I do not know for sure and for myself about his preaching ability (I suspect that it is very good), but I will, God willing, find out at our Bible Conference this year. He is one of the "new" men who will preach for our conference this year. I look forward to this. I can say that I greatly enjoyed the good fellowship I had with this brother during this meeting. He took off two days from his job. We did a good bit of visiting during this time. Brother Fur-

long has a great love for his church, the members thereof, the unsaved, and for the whole community in which he lives. He seems to know about everyone around. We went from place to place, seeking to give comfort, to the sorrowing, witnessing to the unsaved, urging the saved to faithfulness in serving God, etc. I think very highly of this brother, and so sincerely hope that our great fellowship of the last year or so is just the beginning.

I very seldom preach to as many people as I did in this fine church. I don't know when I have preached a revival meeting with so many visitors present from night to night. We had visitors at every service, many at some services, and a large total as to all services. This surely speaks well of a church and its pastor. Having visitors in the services is surely a sad point in most of our churches. Maybe, if we would visit more, we would be visited more. What think you?

We had several preachers to visit during the meeting. We had eight preachers present one night. I do not know what the total of visiting preachers was, but it was unusually high. Except maybe in Florida, I do not know when I have preached to more preachers than in this meeting. It is always (maybe I better say, usually) a great blessing to preach to preachers. They can be a real help and encouragement to the one preaching. They pray for you. They listen well. They seem to just reach out and help the preacher. I deeply appreciated this part of the services. Oh, I do love

God's preachers.

We had several visitors who came from a good distance to the services. Some came from 60 miles away - one man and his wife came to four of the services from this distance.

Some came from 90 miles or more. Oh, it humbles me, even as it lifts me up and encourages me, when folk come like this to hear me preach God's Word. I do desire to be a blessing to those who come to hear me preach. May God help me to pray more, study more, work harder in trying to be a blessing to others.

Brother Furlong is a little mischievous and sneaky. He had asked me to preach a sermon on John 3:16. He suggested that I preach it on a certain night when he knew some Arminians were visiting. I was in a fix. I knew what was coming. I struggled through the opening part of the service. I felt sure I would be unable to do much preaching. But God intervened. He helped me greatly in presenting the truth of this great verse clearly. He helped me to refute the Arminian perversion of the verse and to clearly and strongly set forth the truth therein. I think Brother Furlong sat there and chuckled as he knew the struggle I was going through. But God blessed. I hope some who did not know the truth were given something to think about, and that they will eventually come to the truth. I do know that some of the members of the Deerfield church almost came out of their seats in their enthusiasm and zeal and enjoyment of sovereign grace truth.

The men of the church met at a local restaurant for Saturday breakfast. This was a real time of blessing. Most of the men were there, and we had great fellowship. I did verily learn that the men of Deerfield were not ignorant "dummies" in the things of God's Word. They may be "country" (and what's wrong with that?), but they were accomplished theologians concerning the Word of God. I was pleasantly surprised at the depth manifested in our discussions at this time.

This is an unusual church in many ways. The attendance of the members is very good. The zeal and interest is simply excellent. I just loved the spirit of the services. If you visit Deerfield, do not be in a hurry to get home. They are just about going to be there 1-1/2 hours per service. Congregational singing, choir singing, special singing, and prayer is all an important part of the services to these people. And they do not expect the preacher to give up his time just so they can have their time. They give him all the time he needs. They are an easy people to preach to. They listen so well - and it takes good listening to make good preaching - preachers will know what I mean. I felt that they were interested, anxious, prayerful, etc. as I preached. Why, if a man can't preach at Deerfield, I don't know where he could preach.

My son, Sam, is to be there the last week in April. I know he will enjoy this. I am already looking forward to being there again in October of this year.

They are talking about asking me to preach on certain subjects in October. If they do, I know I will have to really get to work.

I enjoyed, so very much, the time in Brother Furlong's home with his good wife and three sons. I was treated so well.

If you are ever in the area of Somerset and Burnside, Kentucky, do try to visit Brother Furlong, his fine family, and especially, the Deerfield Baptist Church. You will be glad that you did, and will thank me for telling you about it. Pray for this fine church and her able pastor. Oh, that we might all love and pray for one another more.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Elder Sam Wilson will be preaching in revival services at the Deerfield Baptist Church of Somerset, Kentucky April 25th through May 1st. This is a fine preacher preaching in a fine church which is pastored by a fine preacher. You will be blessed by attending these services. The Deerfield Baptist Church is located about half way between Somerset and Burnside on Route 27. The building is behind the Honda place. Readers in the area are asked to attend these services. All readers are asked to pray for this meeting. For further information call brother Furlong at (606) 679-2972.

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

APRIL 16, 1988

PAGE THREE

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT
THE BAPTIST EXAMINER--P.O. BOX 60--ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

Who is the invitation of Revelation 3:20 for? What does it involve?

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Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Let me begin by stating that this is a most mis-used verse by the Arminian. The use of this verse to preach that Jesus is trying to gain entrance into the heart of man by knocking is not only heresy, it is well nigh blasphemy. This type of preaching is the result of a violent method of Biblical interpretation. There is no Scriptural basis at all for making the door here the sinner's heart. In fact, even a careless study of the context will prove this is not the heart of lost sinners. Let me briefly answer this question. This question could easily be answered in an article rather than the Forum.

Let me first give some reasons why the door here does not refer to the heart of man. First, there is no verse in the Bible that even implies that heart is referred to as a door. Unless the Bible tells us the door represents the heart, we are merely guessing, and one guess is as good as another. The stories of Christ knocking on the door of sinner's hearts is just that, a story. It is another invention of the devil to lead men into making false professions. Secondly, a proper understanding of what kind of heart man has will enable us to know that Jesus does not desire entrance into the filthy heart of man. Beloved, Arminian heresies begin with a misunderstanding of the heart of man. Man's heart is blind, deceitful, depraved, and dead. I assure you that Jesus does not desire entrance into such a heart. If man has a dead heart; (and he does), then he could not respond even if Christ were knocking on his heart (which He is not). Thus, if that is the interpretation of this verse, we are all doomed for hell because none of us can get up and open the door. Thank God that is not true. The Arminian interpretation of this verse denies the total depravity of man, and thus it cannot be true.

The next point I want to make, is that when the heart is opened in the Bible, it is God that does the opening and not man. Read Acts 16:14: "And a certain woman named Lydia a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were

spoken of Paul." The heart was opened by God, not by Lydia.

The next point I want you to notice is the context from which verse 20 is taken. It is very clear who is being spoken to here.

Read verse 14. We are told that the letter is addressed to the church of the Laodiceans. Unless you can prove from Scripture that everyone who was a member of this church was lost, it is absurd to use this verse as an example of Jesus knocking on the sinner's heart. The verse in question has nothing to do with lost people. It is a verse written for the improvement of saved people in the church at Laodicea. I could go on and on about the fallacy of the Arminian interpretation of this verse. I could talk about how this interpretation denies everything that God really is. It denies His sovereignty and omnipotence. It makes man not only equal, but superior to God in salvation. Beloved, this interpretation is damnable heresy. It is blasphemous against the character of God.

Let me briefly comment on the second part of this question. This verse involves the need of repentance by the membership of Laodicea. It also involves a promise of blessings to those who do indeed repent of their sins. The major blessing in this verse is a restored fellowship with Jesus Christ. How we ought to desire this blessing. How we ought to examine ourselves and our churches and see if we do not need to do some repenting. I believe that though this letter was written specifically to the church at Laodicea, it still has a secondary message to every true church of Jesus Christ. What was said about those at Laodicea applies to every other true church that might be in the same condition. Let us examine our churches and repent if the need be there. Then we can begin to experience the blessings that are mentioned in the text. May God bless you all.

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"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

This was written to the church of Laodicea, one of the seven churches of Asia, to whom the apostle John had been commanded to write. The Lord had told them that He knew their works and had found nothing for which to commend them. In fact He found them wretched, miser-

able, poor, blind, and naked. They were in such a shape that He was ready to "spue three out of my mouth" In spite of the condition of the church, it seems there were Christians in the church, for He instructed them, "to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18). He then gave them a word of warning when He said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent" (V.19)

What the Lord is telling the church is that although their condition is such that He is ready to withdraw the candlestick, and that He is on the outside of the church; yet if they repent, the true Christians, He would come in unto them and fellowship: could still be restored. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9) I know that there has been many a sermon preached, picturing Jesus standing at the heart's door of the sinner begging to be let in. The only trouble with this is that it is not true. This was addressed to the members of the church at Laodicea and in no way is it addressed to the sinner. Besides, where in the Scripture does it tell us that Christ ever begged a sinner to let Him save him?

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"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20)

I must begin by saying that I am totally opposed to the use of this verse as a "gospel call" to the lost in general and the elect in particular for salvation. This letter and the other six are written to the Lord's churches, not to the world. Therefore, this invitation in Revelation 3:20 has to do with the Lord's churches as well as individual Christians within them. I believe that the invitation involves fellowship; intimate spiritual fellowship and communion with the Lord Jesus. It does not take much observation to discover that precious, intimate fellowship with the Lord has been traded, or at least edged aside to a minimum by many other things in this modern life. Many

true churches have experienced an ebbing of love, and fellowship to the point of lukewarmness because Christ is no longer the acknowledged Head in "all things", great, or small, in the assembly. Individual, compromising, lukewarm, and self-satisfied Christians are much more than just the exception in this present age. Indeed, many magazines and books today seek to teach modern day antinomianism. Maintaining that since Christ paid for all our sins; past, present, and future, we need not ask forgiveness, or seek to maintain unbroken fellowship with Christ, many advocate that fellowship can't be broken. How sad! How wicked! How untruthful! I John 1:6 says, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:"

The Lord has been warning the rich and self-sufficient Laodicean church of their true wretchedness, blindness, and nakedness. They are not dead, but they are not normal, or even near par. How like many today. The Lord Jesus stands at the door and knocks for fellowship, for the center and the rightful place in an assembly. He is an all-providing, loving, and disciplining Lord. He knows our needs. Many assemblies are in the midst of lukewarmness and self-sufficiency. They believe themselves not to be in the very state in which they languish. They need the total sufficiency of the Lord Jesus, as do individual Christians. Many of God's children have neglected intimate fellowship with Him, most are greatly unaware to the point that they are unconscious of their desperate spiritual need. Pride, self-sufficiency, human wisdom, and indeed neutrality need to be replaced with the fullness of intimate, precious fellowship with the Lord Jesus. He does not force the pleasures and strengths of intimate fellowship upon His children; He stands at the door and knocks. Satan and the flesh would rob God's children of the great delights and benefits of supping with the Lord on an individual basis and as an assembly. Lukewarmness is today's standard, while His personal coming draws near. Let us not be found naked at His coming, but filled with His presence and succor. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches". (Revelation 3:22).

DO BAD

(Continued from Page 3)

brokenhearted mother replied softly, "He's dying." The inquiring friend who reminds me of Job's three friends replied, "No! Don't say that. If you will have enough faith your son will live. If he dies you will have no one to blame but yourself!" It would have been easier on the mother had her so-called friend hit her over the head with a large club, or pierced her with a lance.

I must tell you beloved, that I do not have all the answers, but I do have the Word of God which reveals many answers.

In the account of Job's affliction, no one had an answer as to why Job was being afflicted. There was much speculation and conjecture, but no real answers. Perhaps all bad things do come from the devil, but this one thing I know, God is the director of all things.

Some Things To Consider

I. It Could Be Chastisement--Hebrews 12:5-11. The Bible says that all true children of God experience chastening at one time or another. Chastisement is not punishment or judgment, but a means of teaching, instructing, and guiding us. Chastisement is an expression of God's love for us. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth..." (Heb.12:6). Chastisement is God's way of reminding us to walk in holiness. "...but he, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." (verse 10), "It yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness..." (verse 11). Chastisement is not always a personal, physical affliction.

It may be that God is allowing the devil to afflict you in order to chastise someone else. Or it may be that God is afflicting someone else in order to chastise you.

II. It Could Be to Build Your Faith. True faith cannot be obtained except through experience. Faith is not a natural human virtue. It always, without exception, comes from God. (Rom. 5:3,4), "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:" (Rom. 8:24,25), "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he hath hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

Faith's theology must be tested. It may be voluntary or a mandatory test. Some want to put God to test rather than let God test them. Illustration: Like the man who asked God to move a mountain, but had his mind made up that He would not. He finished his "prayer", went to the window, saw that the mountain was still there and declared, "Just as I thought." I am afraid that for some of us, this is about as deep as our faith goes.

Therefore, God sometimes brings trials upon us that we might be reminded of where our grace and mercy comes from (Rom. 5:2). Speaking of Christ, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This tells us that our access to the throne of divine favor comes through faith, so if we are to utilize our privilege of divine favor, faith must be cultivated. Sometimes God cultivates faith through trials, and tribulations.

III. It Could Be Working of God's Secret Will: Elihu's conclusion to his discourse to Job and his three friends was, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out..." (Job 37:23). God is working out His own divine Sovereign will and purpose of which much cannot be understood, or even known. Much of God's will has been revealed to us, but not all. Much of it is secret, known only to Himself. It was apparent that, though it has been revealed to us, Job had no idea why God was afflicting him. Nevertheless, it was Job's responsibility to accept it, and praise Him for it.

No, we can't always know the why of affliction or bad things that happen to us. Many mothers have sat beside the bed of a dear

(Continued on Page 5 Column 4)

The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT
THE BAPTIST EXAMINER—P.O. BOX 60—ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0063

Can a child of God backslide? What is backsliding?

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have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." It is at this point that corrective action must be taken, or the progression will continue.

The second step is denial. The one that has erred will begin to deny the faith that he has. To deny means to disown or to engage in direct movement away from something, in this case, faith. Eventually, they will deny even the power that supports faith. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (I Tim 3:5). This must be corrected or the denier becomes worse than an unbeliever.

Denial progresses to the casting off of faith. It may not be the proper analogy to use, but Paul said to Timothy that the one that denies the faith, will eventually cast off their first faith. Read II Timothy, chapter five. First faith is the only faith, and to cast off means to put aside or displace. When something is displaced, there is usually something else to take its place. Paul used the example of faith being replaced by fables.

Lastly, casting off progresses to the outright departing from the faith. This is happening to many people in many places today. It is a fulfillment of the word of God. "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" (I Tim 4:1). To depart means to fall away. To give heed to seducing spirits is today revealed in the practice of secular humanism. That practice is promoted by many organizations today. It began in the Old Testament. "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25). This must be corrected.

The backslider can correct himself. He alone, with God, knows his situation and state of decline. He, alone, can recognize the chastening that God brings upon him. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (I Cor 11:31).

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Yes. A lot of people in our churches today have backslidden. I don't mean that they are living in open sin, but rather they are not faithful in their obligation to their Lord in attending church on Wednesday evening and Sunday evening.

When one is saved he falls in

love with the Lord and just can't seem to do enough for the Lord. Sometimes this lasts right on, but many times people get cold and indifferent and fall into a backslidden state, and they are not happy and sometimes cause a lot of confusion in their church.

Let us not confuse backsliding with falling from grace and being lost, for this is impossible according to God's word. John 3:16 says, "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." Jonah was a backslider, Israel is said to be a back-slidden nation.

What is Backsliding? A backslider is one who turns back to the old things and old ways; forgetting his commitment to God and God's Word.

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Only a child of God can backslide. Backsliding is turning from God after one's conversion.

When a person hears and believes the gospel of Christ. They are said to "born again." By grace through faith they become a "new creature" in Christ, and are granted repentance toward God from sin, made alive unto God and good works. They are adopted into the family of God. Legally they are children of God through faith in Christ. They are, justified before God, washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb. That which is born from above is sinless. The spirit once separated from God by sin, "dead in sin", is quickened by the regenerating power of the Spirit of God. Yet this spirit dwells in the flesh, that was born in sin and is sinful by nature. Herein lies the problem of sin in the child of God. Paul said that when he would do good, evil was present with him. He delighted in the law of God after the inward man, but his earthly nature was prone to sin. To yield to the earthly nature results in backsliding, or turning from the laws of God. As we read God's Word we are continually exhorted to follow after godliness, not to yield to the desires of the flesh. This is one reason God gave us His inspired Word. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

The child of God that does not heed the reproof, and is not corrected by the righteous instruc-

tion of the Word falls under the chastising hand of the Father. Whom He loves He chastens, and corrects. I suppose it is possible that a child of God could get in such a backslidden condition that you could not discern between him and an unbeliever until God corrects him and he confesses his sin and forsakes it. But it is important to remember that the outward appearance of a man does not determine, let alone reveal his true standing with God. We cannot discern the heart. Only God is able to do that! A person may appear to be born again and live a godly life, and not possess true saving faith. He may be trusting in his good works, not Christ. While another person trusting in the finished work of Christ, and that alone, may appear in the hour of temptation, as a child of Satan.

Just how long God will allow one of His children to remain in a backslidden condition until He corrects him, I do not know, but I do believe He will correct him, or take him home. "There is a sin unto death." If you are a child of God, in a state of willful rebellion against God, turn back quickly, don't continue to tempt Him! Draw near unto Him through His Word and prayer. Confess your sin and forsake it.

DO BAD

(Continued from Page 4)

child who was dying from dreaded disease. We know not why. Many families have stood and watched as their home and all their hopes and dreams have gone up in flames. Such a tragic thing was the two ships that collided in the Philippine Islands, where 15 to 16 hundred souls were swallowed up by the sea. But we know not the reason for these things.

But beloved, no matter what, we must believe that there is not one rose petal that falls to the ground, nor one little ant that is crushed under foot, nor one tree that falls, nor rock that slides that our Mighty God does not know about and care for. And beloved, we can be sure that He knows every affliction, every trial, every bad thing that happens to us, and that He has a perfect will and purpose in it. (Romans 8:28), "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose." Amen.

PROMISE

(Continued from Page 1)

similar expressions are used, we would find that not in any instance has it failed to be fulfilled. In such places where the expressions are prophetic to yet future events, we can well rest assured that these likewise "shall come to pass." Such needs to be considered beloved, when we find ourselves downcast or burdened. We ought to think upon and search out the promises of God. Our text is one of them. Would any of us doubt the validity of this promise? Mere observation shows and proves that God always keeps His word in all His promises.

Our text tells us of the rainbow. I would venture to say that there is not one of us here that has not seen a rainbow or a

"bow...in the cloud." This then is proof positive that the Word of God is always reliable. We well affirm His promises by the very existence of true Baptist Churches, by the existence of church members and an elect people of God. We could show multitudes of things which proves God always keeps His Word. Beloved would we have more joy in our lives? Then let us look to His promises. We can find them in every book of the Bible. But what's more than this? We can find them written also in the heavens and on the earth. This our text also tells us.

Genesis 9:13 & 14 states, "I do set MY bow in the cloud...And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth! that the bow SHALL BE SEEN in the cloud." Take careful notice beloved, You see He promises also to bring a "cloud". Rare are the days we do not see clouds. Would to God beloved we would look upon these things of seeming simplicity, with remembrance each day. That we might exclaim to others, "look, and behold the handiwork of the Lord!" The most simple things beloved, that we take as commonplace, can be daily delight if we would but observe them as the handiwork of God! Yes beloved, He promises to send clouds. To many, the coming of clouds means an approaching storm. To many, this is distressing for you see, the sun has failed to give forth light. It is overshadowed that we cannot know its presence. This is not much unlike the clouds of afflictions we are often beset with in this life. These often, as the very clouds of the heavens, appear often. Cloudy skies and afflictions often depress the souls beneath them. Remember that the darkened heavens of times past once spelled wrath, anger and death to those who gave no heed to His promises in them. Of such does Genesis chapter 6-8 openly declare, and of such does the earth yet testify. When we are beset by afflictions, that is, the dark clouds of life, we are often led to feel that there is no end to them; for none take delight in suffering. We, by nature become fearful and fretful. In part because we, at present, are creatures of time and are not often given to wait patiently upon the will of our Sovereign God. Yet what saith He? Genesis 9:14, "...when I bring a cloud over the earth that the bow shall be seen in the cloud." Beloved, should He be pleased to allow affliction or sorrow upon us, let us strive to consider that an all-wise Father has done this. Look for His "bow" in the trial. Take delight that He yet rules to do us good in His sovereign will, in our lives. For it is indeed for His glory and our good. Let us observe the bow of goodness in our text beloved, and listen to its declaration.

The rainbow is produced by the light rays of the sun being refracted through water vapor or more precise, clouds. Thus the rainbow is composed of light and water giving us a clue as to its Scriptural meaning.

The bow is the ancient weapon of war and of the hunter. It, in this sense, is descriptive of the

(Continued on Page 6 Column 1)

PROMISE

(Continued from Page 5)

events that occurred prior to the appearance of the rainbow. Namely, the warfare which God in His holy wrath, waged against man because, as we are told in Genesis 6:5 & 11. "the wickedness of man was great in the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." The King of all creation set forth His plan of battle in Genesis 7:4 saying: "I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth." Here was His promise beloved, and that a promise kept! Even so our reading declares, "I set my bow in the cloud." Those clouds that once threatened and destroyed, were now to take on new meaning. For the all mighty Warrior had laid His weapon upon them, In Psalm 11:2 we read: "For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart." But we observe the bow of God laid up on the cloud, It is without arrow and without string. Have we not often heard of those who give guarantees with "no strings attached?" This text of promise is one such promise, There is no string, there is no arrow. We know how quickly fear strikes the heart at the sight of a pointed gun. But if it be emptied and laid up, it is harmless; therefore there is no need or cause for fear. The bow laid down and bereft of arrow or string is an assurance that the battle is over. Danger is now passed. Genesis 9:14-15 states; "the bow shall be seen in the cloud, And I will remember my covenant.. and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." The bow in the cloud then, is given as a signature of His promise. What once destroyed has now become a symbol of peace. By water all flesh died, and by water He makes His bow. The bow is His promise of Genesis 9:11. "It shall be for a token of a covenant (sign of agreement) between me and the earth." All nations of the earth then would easily recognize His bow in the heavens and be given assurance. This is to be His continual assurance of a covenant written in the heavens, agreeing with His words for all to but behold as continually kept.

Beloved, this promise of our reading indeed has been continually kept for over forty-three hundred years. It is before the eyes of mankind continually testifying of His faithfulness. Why then need we doubt any of His promises? The bow is even as His Word while the ages last for His Word is ever as durable as He.

In Matthew 14:26-31. when the Lord Jesus walked upon the raging water He bid Peter "come". But the strong wind wrought fear in the heart of Peter as he began to sink in what he

may have believed was a watery grave. Our Lord "said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" To Thomas in John 20:21, He would say, "be not faithless. but believing." Doubt in the Word of God, in the promises of God, is a disorder of His children about Him. Doubt beloved, is a sin which separates us from our Lord. Consider this: When the rainbow appears, we are no longer attracted to the clouds, but rather to the bow as we behold all its glorious brilliance and colors. We are delighted with its beauty; ignoring the clouds, Do we then understand what the rainbow is really telling us? Do we understand the meaning of its presence?

Some may have the idea that when they have afflictions or sorrow that they cannot be comforted by trying to see the bright side of the situation. Sometimes there appears that there is no bright side because "self" affords none. But what is the bright or positive side to life's afflictions and sorrows? Look to the bow in the clouds. Can the bow even exist without the sun? The bow, we remember, is light upon water. It is light refracted that our dim eyes may behold the beauty of the light. I John 2:8 states, "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth," I John 1:5 adds, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all". Again in John 8:12 Christ declares, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," Did He not also declare, "the bow shall be seen in the cloud"?

In Matthew 14:25 we are told that the disciples were on a ship at sea facing the storm and "Jesus went unto them walking on the sea... the disciples saw him walking on the sea." There beloved, in the midst of the storm, walked Jesus upon the water. There in the midst of the cloud stands the bow. The bow, we are told in Genesis 9:12, "is the token of the covenant." It is the sign of God for assurance that He will indeed keep His word. Christ upon the waters is the sign of assurance, His word. Remember how He ascended in a cloud assuring us of His return? (Compare Genesis 9:14 with Acts 9:1-11.)

Notice also beloved, that the bow always faces heavenward, from whence are told to look for Him. The bow could not exist without His light. It has its origin in Him alone. It shines from the heavens, and from His sun which typifies Christ. The bow indicates to us that the sun is near. In Genesis 9:13 He refers to the bow as "my bow." In the vision of Ezekiel (1:28) the Lord Jesus is described "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the days of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." The bow has its origin with God. Both the bow and Christ accomplished and proclaimed His will. The bow joins heaven and earth, even as Jacob's ladder, and both typify the Lord Jesus Christ. The bow was the very symbol by which man was to understand the mercy and grace of God. The

symbol by which men, when looking upon it, would receive comfort and peace; for it symbolized that wrath had passed away.

Notice that our text states, "the bow shall be seen." In Genesis 9:16 our Lord adds, "and the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will look upon it that I may remember." You see beloved, the bow was to speak in behalf of the earth. It stood, as it were, withholding the wrath of God upon men. The Lord had told Moses, "when I see the blood, I will pass over you." The bow then, typifies the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus Christ in behalf of His own for we are "saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:9). The bow symbolized security from everlasting destruction. The bow was "the token of the covenant.. for perpetual generations" (Gen. 9:12). In other words all men were enabled to see it in its beauty, but not all men would understand its message! The bow, in its colors, represents the manifold graces of our Lord Jesus Christ. Titus 2:11 tells us, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." We understand also that the colors of the rainbow are produced by the sun, even as "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Finally beloved, notice that in Genesis 9:13, 14 & 16, the bow is mentioned three times, thus setting the seal of His Word, of completion to His promise, even as Christ is the seal and completion of our redemption. Christ then, is our assurance in all things. As surely as the bow appears after the storm, let us rest assured that He shall come in comfort and peace to those who would but seek Him out. When the clouds are gone there is no rainbow, but ever so brightly shines the sun. This day is coming when face to face we shall behold Him in all His wondrous and glorious beauty.

BORN

(Continued from Page 1)

Nicodemus. John is the only gospel writer who mentions this conversation. How thankful we should be for this record and the valuable information that we have concerning what is called the new birth, because the words spoken to Nicodemus apply to us all. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3). How careful we should be to see to it that we have experienced this new birth. May the Holy Spirit be our guide and teacher as we study this most important subject.

First, let us look at the "why" of the new birth. Jesus was very explicit when He spoke of being born again. He did not say, "Ye ought to be born again," or "it would be better if you were born again," but rather, He said: "Ye must be born again." I take that as true value spoken by our Lord coming from His own lips. This is His admonition to the unbeliever. This man to whom these words were spoken was no ordinary man. Nicodemus was a Jew, a member of God's chosen nation. He was an outstanding man among the Jews of that day.

The Bible tells us that he was a Pharisee and a master in Israel. He was upstanding and well respected. He was truly the outstanding fellow of the day. However, in spite of all that he had going for himself, Jesus told him that it was not enough. Jesus looked him straight in the face and said, "Ye must be born again." In spite of his good works, Nicodemus was still a sinner and unfit for heaven by the natural birth. Oh, may God help us to see the need of regeneration if we hope for heaven.

What was true of Nicodemus is true of every descendent of Adam. By the natural birth we have all been born with a sinful nature. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:22). The very best that the lost sinner has is unclean in God's sight. Some seven hundred years before Christ came to earth, the prophet Isaiah, inspired by the Holy Spirit, as is all Scripture, said these few precious words concerning the stage of sinful man, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6).

Beloved, there must be a great change, a "new birth," if you please. Exactly, what is the new birth? The new birth is one of the great mysteries of the Bible, one that we cannot clearly explain, and yet one that we know is very real. "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" (John 3:8). We cannot explain the wind, how it blows, why it sometimes is a gentle breeze, yet at other times is a mighty force that uproots the sturdiest of trees and causes even total destruction at times. But we know that it is real. So it is with the new birth. While we cannot explain it, we who have experienced it know it is real. Just a few years ago there was a severe hurricane came ashore from the Gulf of Mexico out in the Panama Beach area of Florida's panhandle. We visited the Panama City Beach area the next day, driving along the highway that runs parallel to the beach. The driving was very difficult because of the litter along the road: buildings flattened, furnishings, whatever, strewn over the road and across the road into the properties along the roadside. There was only a gentle breeze that day, but the evidence was there showing that something drastic had made a quick and deciding change. There is usually the evidence of a great change in a person after the Holy Spirit brings godly repentance to one's heart. It is quite evident to all his or her relatives and friends.

There are several things about the experience of the new birth that we do know. First, we know that the new birth is of God. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). In this verse we can see three negatives and one positive. We are told that the new birth is not of blood. This means, that it is not our's by heredity. You may have inherited certain things from your parents, but salvation is not one of them. Just because one's

parents are saved does not mean that the children are born saved. One great orator once said: "Sin and not grace flows in the blood stream." If your parents are saved it is simply because they were born again! If you are to be saved, then you also must experience the new birth. The second negative is, "Nor of the will of the flesh." Salvation is not of man, it is not of his own will or power that he is saved. To claim that he had anything to do with his salvation is to rob God of His Sovereignty! In fact, left to himself, man would never have the desire or will to be saved. The third negative is, "nor of man." No one is ever saved by the power of the preacher, or because of the preacher or any other man. No man has the power to forgive another person's sins and bring about their salvation. No man can lay his hands on another person and pronounce him saved because he has confessed his sins to him. Beloved, they are not forgiven, they still have unconfessed sins unless they confessed to God asking forgiveness as they did so. The positive statement in the verse is, "But of God." The new birth is an act of God. Not only is he the physical giver of natural life, but in the new birth He is the giver of eternal life.

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (James 1:18). In the new birth the old nature is not removed, but rather a new nature is given. The born again person is a partaker of the divine nature. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4).

Now let us look at the agent of the new birth. "...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" (John 3:5). This verse is often misused and taught for baptismal regeneration. However, baptism is a burial according to Romans 6:4, not a birth. When water is spoken of in the Bible it does not always mean baptism. In John 7:37-39, Jesus used water as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 5:26, water is used as a symbol of the Word of God. Both of these, the Spirit and the Word, are necessary in the new birth. The Holy Spirit is the agent of the new birth. It is the Spirit that convicts the sinner of his guilt, reveals Christ to him as the only Saviour, draws the sinner to Christ, quickens him, and after repentance, seals him unto the day of redemption. The Word of God is the instrument that the Holy Spirit uses in bringing this about. No man is saved, beloved, apart from the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Jesus made it so very clear to Nicodemus that there were two births for the saved ones in John 3:6-7. We have already been born once in the flesh. The born again person has received the second birth which is spiritual. Beloved, it is not of the flesh. Jesus told us very plainly in John 3:6 about the second birth, the only birth for salvation, the spiritual birth. Beloved, all people must have two birthdays if they are to enter God's great bosom of rest. To be born twice is to die only once. To be born only once is to be at

(Continued on Page 8 Column 2)

PLAIN PROPHECIES FOR PLAIN PEOPLE

John R. Gilpin, Sr.
"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19:9).

I am sure you will agree with me at the very outset that there is no event in life which stirs the emotions, and excites the affections, and stimulates hope, and increases the tempo more than marriage. In my ministry, over the years, I have married thousands of people. Therefore, I have had much experience so far as weddings are concerned. I can say to you truly, I have never known of any event which has excited, and stimulated, and increased the tempo of individuals more than that of matrimony.

When I marry a couple, I always make it a point to tell them to answer "I do" to the question. I remember some good while ago that I was marrying a couple, and I instructed them in advance to say, "I do." When it came time for the fellow to say "I do," he got so excited that he kept saying, "I do, I do, I do, I do." I let him go for ten times, until finally I cut in and stopped him.

I remember another individual who was 53 years old who came to get married. He acted about like a child. I had told him in advance to say, "I do," and then I asked him the question, he said, "I do, yeah!"

I remember another couple that I was marrying sometime ago. I had told them in advance that they were to join their right hands when I came to a certain place in the ceremony. When I came to that place and told them to join their right hands, this fellow held his hand up like he was at a courthouse about ready to receive a sentence, as if he were going to swear. Well, actually, he was about to receive a life sentence, but nevertheless, I wasn't expecting him to hold up his hand to swear as he would in a courtroom.

I can even remember the day that I was married. There were a few things that were slightly of a stimulated nature on that day. I wasn't married until 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon, but I was fully dressed for the wedding at 12 o'clock noon. So far as Mrs. Gilpin was concerned, she was quite excited that day. She was wearing a little two-pieced suit with a pocket on the side of the jacket. Before we went into the room where we were to be married, I gave the preacher a five dollar bill, and he very kindly and graciously gave it back saying: "I never accept money from a preacher." Well, instead of handing it to me, he handed it to Mrs. Gilpin, and she put it down into the pocket of the jacket she was wearing. During the ceremony she got so excited that, with her hand in her pocket, she tore that five dollar bill into shreds. You know, brethren, I made up my mind right then she wasn't a fit subject to handle money and I have never given her a penny since.

I say these things that I might say it is thus with the marriage of the Lamb. I am sure that there is nothing that thrills my heart concerning the Word of God more than what is out in store for the child of God on that glorious day when the bride of Christ shall be presented to the Son of God, and

when the marriage of the Lamb shall take place. To me, the Bible is just one long continuous love story, beginning with the book of Genesis, and going all the way through to the book of Revelation. Finally, when you come to this 19th chapter you will have the consummation of all the promises of God concerning the marriage supper, when the Bride is presented to the Lord Jesus.

I The Groom - Jesus:

When I analyzed the marriage of the Lamb from the standpoint of marriages that we know about in this life, I said that if you are going to have a marriage you have to have a groom. It would be an impossibility to think of a marriage without a groom.

I am satisfied today that there is nobody who would argue with me as to who the groom is in this marriage that I am speaking of today. Of course, when I get a little further along and talk to you about who makes up the bride I expect some sparks to fly, but just now I am satisfied that we are in perfect agreement. I am sure that all of you will agree with me that the groom is none other than the Lord Jesus Himself. Listen: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son" (Mt. 22:2). This son that is thus referred to is Jesus Christ Himself.

Notice again: "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:28-30). This definitely shows that John the Baptist recognized the Lord Jesus Christ as being the Bridegroom.

In the parable of the virgins, we read: "...Behold, the bridegroom cometh,... Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mt. 25:6, 13). Surely the bridegroom at this glorious wedding that we are all looking forward to is none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

As Paul said: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2). I am sure, beloved, from these verses you will agree with me that the bridegroom at this wedding is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. The Bride: I'd like first of all to sort of ruffle a few feathers by just saying that THE BRIDE WILL NOT BE COMPOSED OF ALL THE REDEEMED OF ALL AGES. Now all you Scofieldites (and I am one of them, for I have used a Scofield Bible since 1925) and all of you individuals who believe that all the saved of the world will make up the bride, get ready to think for a moment's time. I am not saying that I'll convince anyone, but I'll have a good time talking to you, hoping that I will provoke you to think a little in this

respect.

I believe that Jesus Christ, when He was here in the days of His flesh, established a Baptist church. I do not have time to prove that now, but I ask you to believe this with me. I believe that He gave His commission unto that church, and I am satisfied that there is not another organization on the top side of God Almighty's earth that has the authority to baptize, to send out missionaries, and to observe the Lord's Supper other than a missionary Baptist church. I contend that He gave that authority unto His church; therefore, I do not accept alien immersion. I do not believe that the immersion that is performed by other organizations other than by a Baptist church is valid baptism.

Furthermore, so far as the Lord's Supper is concerned, I do



not think we have any right at any time to invite everybody in this world to come to the Lord's table even though he may claim to be saved. Beloved, I'll tell you how close I am on close communion. I believe it ought to be just one local Baptist church. If the church I am a pastor of were to observe the Lord's Supper at their next service, only the members of that church would take part. All the rest of those who were there would have to sit by and observe what we were doing. We don't want to be unkind, but we want to be Scriptural. It is a whole lot easier to be sentimental than it is scriptural, but I try to be scriptural in my practices. Therefore, regardless of how much we might think of individuals in the audience, and love them as Christians and fellow Baptists, we could not invite them to take the Lord's Supper with us.

Now, beloved, believing that Jesus established a Baptist church, and believing that Baptists have the authority to baptize and observe the ordinances, and believing that the ordinances observed by anyone else are alien and therefore invalid; believing that, we take our stand for these truths.

I might say that I am not a Baptist because my parents were Baptists. I am a Baptist because I have read Baptist truth in the Book, and I have some convictions that are very dearly bought, that mean a great deal to me. Because of that, I want to stand for what I think is right.

Now suppose for seventy years I live and preach and stand for these things that are dearly bought convictions, and during those seventy years I incur the wrath of all the people of the world that are not Baptists as well as that of a lot of Baptists. I have caused every Protestant to say that Gilpin is a narrow minded bigot. I have caused them to say that I should be fried in oil, that I am a Hardshell that I ought to be hung up by my

The Bride of Christ Part I

toes, and so on. Suppose I live here in this world for seventy years, and people hate me for what I stand for, and what I contend for, but I go on contending for it regardless. Suppose at the end of seventy years I die, my enemies die, and all the Protestant people who are saved but have alien immersion, and have entered in union meetings, and have been observing the Lord's Supper by way of open communion, die and they come up to Heaven. I ask you, will all these redeemed that I have mentioned make up the bride of Christ?

Beloved, I would be the biggest fool in this world to contend for seventy years for the truth, if, when I die, I am going to live throughout a never ending eternity in Heaven with all the schismatical heretics who haven't believed the truth that I have preached concerning the church and her ordinances. I say to you, I am the biggest fool in this world I am an idiot - I am worse than an idiot if I contend for things in this life and then come down to the end of the way and we forget all about what we have stood for, and in Heaven it doesn't mean a thing for a man to have been a Baptist and to have been faithful to the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I say, beloved, if it doesn't mean anything up there, then we ought not make it mean anything down here, but if it means anything down here for a man to be honest and loyal to the Word of God, you can rest assured it will mean something up there when you stand in the presence of the God who wrote the Bible, and who gave us a commission, and who told us what we were to stand for unto the end of the day.

From the standpoint of human reasoning, I cannot in any wise believe that all the redeemed of all ages will be a part of the bride. And now, I'll turn to the Word of God and show you from it that all the redeemed will not be in the bride. "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee" (Psa. 45:13, 14).

Notice, there is just one bride, but she has many companions. I haven't time to give you a detailed exegesis of this Scripture, but I'll call it to your attention and let you study it at your convenience. However, you will find one bride, and that one bride has many companions for her wedding. "There are three-score queens, and four-score concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her" (Song of Sol. 6:8, 9).

Talk about the number of redeemed who are going to be saved! You can bring on your adding machines, your calculating machines and your posting machines. Bring on all your clerks, and your secretaries, and your bookkeepers, and your accountants. Nobody will be able to

count the number of that crowd that is going to be saved and in Glory, for it says, "There are three-score queens, four-score concubines, and virgins without number."

Again I say, I haven't time to give to you an exposition of this Scripture but I call this to your attention, there is just one bride, but there are many attendants of this bride. Listen again: "Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9).

Sometime ago, a man handed me an amplified New Testament. I had never seen one before. He was talking to me about this very subject. I told him of this Scripture and we read it in the amplified New Testament. Beloved, it proved the very thing that I am wanting to prove to you now. In our Bible it says, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb," and in the amplified New Testament it uses the word "invited." It says, "blessed are they which are invited unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Beloved, there is going to be a wedding someday. The Lord Jesus Christ is going to be the bridegroom. There will be a bride, but the bride is not going to be all the redeemed. There are going to be a lot of invited guests that will stand on the sidelines and do some wishing for an opportunity to do a lot of things differently to what they did heretofore. They will be saved all right, but they will stand as invited guests at the wedding.

I'll go further and say to you that there won't be anybody in the bride but Baptists. The bride will be a choice group. There will be many guests, but there will be nobody in the bride but Baptists; and I'll prove it to you.

First, let me say that not all Baptists will be in the bride. Now, beloved if I made some of you angry when I said that nobody but Baptists would be in the bride, maybe I can rub a little ointment into the sore by saying that not all Baptists will be in the bride.

The fact of the matter is, I am thinking that in the average community the word "Baptist" smells to high heaven. If I am not badly mistaken, the majority of so-called Baptist churches don't deserve the name Baptist. There is many a Baptist church and many a Baptist preacher today that is a definite disgrace... to the name Baptist. The Baptists that have lived in the years gone by would hang their heads in shame if they were introduced to the average modern twentieth century Baptist of today.

Beloved, I am contending today that there are a lot of preachers in Baptist Churches who have compromised especially on church truth. There is many a Baptist preacher today who knows a whole lot more than he is preaching today. I am satisfied that there is many a Baptist preacher who knows a lot about the church, but he is keeping still a lot about the church also. I am sure that there is many a Baptist preacher who knows a great deal

(Continued on Page 8 Column 1)

PLAIN

(Continued from Page 7)

about baptism, but he is keeping still about it. In other words, many preachers are compromising for the sake of popularity.

I learned a long time ago as a boy preacher that the average Baptist preacher is more afraid of the moving van than he is of anything else. I don't think the average Baptist preacher fears God nearly as much as he fears the moving van. Many preachers fear if they preach the truth they are going to have to move on - that the Lord is going to have to lead them to new quarters. I am saying to you today, many a Baptist preacher compromises for popularity's sake.

Some Baptists live only for the world, and they unite with worldly organizations such as clubs and lodges. If you are a lodge man, I say to you frankly that I certainly believe you are in the wrong field when you try to be a member of a Baptist church, too. If I were you, I'd either get out of the lodge or else get out of a Baptist church.

Recently, I read where a Baptist preacher died, and they were having his funeral. They were having Masons and two or three other lodge organizations to act as pallbearers. They had all of the honors. His church was ignored. When I read it, do you know what came to my mind? You remember the king in the Old Testament, of whom it was said when he died, he was buried by his concubines. Somehow, beloved, that was the way I felt about that preacher, for when that preacher had given all his honor and money and time to glorify lodge organizations and came down to die, the lodges buried him and the church wasn't even mentioned. It sounded a great deal to me like he was being buried by his concubines, and the church, the biggest institution in this world was being completely ignored and left out.

I say to you, I do not believe that all Baptists will be in the bride. Compromising unionistic Baptists - modern Baptists - Arminian Baptists - alien immersion, open communion Baptists - Baptists that are lodge members - worldly Baptists - Baptists that compromise both as to doctrine and practice - and especially universal church Baptists will never be any part of the bride. Rather, the bride will be a select number of Baptists. They will all be Baptist that are in the bride, but that bride will be a select number out of all the multitude of Baptists.

You say, "Brother Gilpin, are you going to be in the bride?" I don't know. I look at my life and I think what a terrible sinner I have been. I look at my ministry since I have been saved, and I wonder about myself when I realize how far short I have come of pleasing God. When I think of it, I don't know whether I'll be in the Bride. I don't know who is going to be in the Bride. I wouldn't tell you today that you are going to be in it, or that I am going to be in it, but I'll say this to you, you Baptists who waste your money on other things besides missions - you Baptists who stay in a compromising church just because they call

themselves Baptists - you Baptists who support organizations that you know are positively a disgrace to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, you can't tell me that you have any hope of being a part of the Bride of Christ. Beloved, our God has a select number to be in the Bride.

BORN

(Continued from Page 6)

death facing eternal damnation in a devil's hell, the second death! Thank God for His salvation by grace alone. This, beloved, is the new birth.

Most people can quote John 3:16. "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." Salvation, or everlasting life is promised to the believer, but how do they come to believe? "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). This is a very good reason for being missionary minded Baptists. We are to preach the Word, preach the gospel as in the Bible to everyone because it is the Word of God that the Holy Spirit uses to point people to the Saviour. I believe preaching is important, for the Saviour on departing this world said "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19).

What about the evidence of the new birth? Just as there are evident manifestations of the physical birth, or physical life, if you please; there are also evidences of the spiritual birth, the spiritual life. When there is no evidence of physical life, we say that a person is dead. Likewise, when there is no evidence of spiritual life, there is serious reason to question whether a person is really saved; whether indeed he has been born again unto everlasting life. The most delightful evidence that I can see first of all, is his desire to live and grow. Peter wrote about this. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (I Pet. 2:2-3). A new babe in Christ will begin to study, read, and listen to what the preacher preaches. He will truly desire the sincere milk of the Word. The new babe in Christ has a new feeling in himself. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). We see another Scripture bearing this great truth also. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. 3:20). We are surely citizens of heaven by faith in Christ. Beloved, such Scriptures as these make it plain that the Holy Spirit indwells each person saved and bears witness of his salvation.

Another evidence is the inward struggle that takes place in the heart of every saved person. One of the first lessons that we learn after salvation is that the old nature is still with us; very much alive and very active. This is clearly seen in the life of the apostle Paul. Twenty-five years after he was saved, he wrote the

church at Rome and told of the struggle that he had as he tried to serve God. One may note this account by reading Romans 7:15-25. Every born again person knows what Paul is speaking of. We have that within us that cries out for fellowship and communion with God, but also that which is easily tempted to turn to the things of sin. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). Now God does not lead and watch over one who has not been regenerated: born again. "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18). At this point one may ask; "How can a man not at some time or other lose his salvation because of being heckled by the evil spirit all the time? We answer with a question; "Is Christ still alive?" "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25). He is active right now, this very hour, making intercession for His elect. Make no mistake about it, Christ either gave us everlasting life, or He did not! There are many other scriptures that bear out without a doubt that we are eternally saved. How about you beloved, have you truly been born again? Believe on Christ, receive by faith His promise today. May God help you to do so. Amen.

BOUNDS

(Continued from Page 1)

walk is more narrow in all its permutations than any lost soul could know or understand.

We walk by faith not by sight, and in this we are bound. Our conversation is bound to the measure of the Spirit and the Word which guides us. Our presence is bound to the place where God wishes us to serve at a point in time. A boundary is simply a restriction beyond which those to whom it applies may not wander. My children are in their teens and are always clamoring for expanded bounds, but we keep them fairly close; because while temptations beckon, dangers threaten.

We are bound in our degree and extent of fellowship, and I'm not always sure exactly how to gauge this. I must continually ask the Lord whom I am allowed to fellowship with and whom I must shun, and this is not a transferable rule, but rather is imposed on each saint individually by the Spirit.

I never, never criticize others for their bounds of fellowship. Never. The formula given in II Corinthians 6:14-18 applies to every saint of course, and more particularly to every church for the epistle is church addressed. But, there is a wealth of fellowship, or lack of fellowship, either allowed or prohibited beyond this.

Every saint has the Spirit dwelling within, and He directs our feet in individual paths. Every Christian walks a solitary walk which is different from the walk of any other. All our children are different, and so too are all of God's children whom he leads severally as He wills. No two Christians walk the same identical path, nor would God

have them to.

Each leaf of each tree is different as is each snowflake that falls. Each child of God is a personal and particular creation of God, and though we are all saved the same way, by grace through faith, we are not all reared the same way measure for measure. Some things apply to all saints in common, but a host of others do not.

Our bounds differ as God constricts or enlarges them. Our particular and precise responsibilities differ as God leads. The very space we each occupy on earth differs, for no two men can stand in the same precise spot at the same precise time. So then our bounds, which are given by God, are applicable to each saint and to him alone.

Why does God grant that some saints might live in the bright land of Kentucky (my homeland) while others must abide in the wilderness swamps of Florida (all of Florida is a swamp)? Why does He move a saint from one church to another? How is it that He sends a particular pastor to a church and another man to another? He has established their bounds personally and individually, has he not?

I never question any person who makes a move, if he testifies that the Spirit leads him. I never question any saint who remains in a place at the Spirit's direction. They are being true to their boundaries affixed by God. When I first came to Florida some folks asked why, why? Usually I don't answer such things for Christians should know better than to ask and lost people wouldn't understand anyway. But, I told the inquirers that God had changed the boundaries of my life, just as he changed Jonah's bounds on the Nineveh trek.

This paper is really about fellowship and I had best get to it before another page is filled. What are the bounds of fellowship for a Christian? God knoweth, the Christian saint knoweth, and few others do.

We may not fellowship with Belial nor cohabit in his house. We are not to fellowship with darkness. Infidels we just reject after admonition. Yet, beyond this there is a vast world of fellowship open to us or closed to us by the Spirit's leading.

Some draw the bounds of fellowship so tightly that they are like the bit of verse which says; "And this is good old Boston, the home of the bean and the cod, where the Lowells talk only to the Cabots, and the Cabots talk only to God". There are many poor, miserable and lonely Baptist who speak only to a small select circle whom they conceive have access to God. I find that this dark world is lonely enough without binding fellowships.... never. If I claim freedom under the Spirit to fellowship as I feel led, then I cannot deny this liberty to others. Perhaps those who restrict fellowship to a minute circle can withstand loneliness more ably than I.

Others of the same genre, though of a different compartment, expand their fellowship to the wide world of "Christendom", whatever this detestable term means. Baptists are usually thought to be too restrictive, while the world's religions acknowledge every soul who even speaks the name of Christ... even when they speak it as a muttered curse. We have some recent defections from our ranks wherein

men who stood strictly are now recognizing the baptisms of Protestants and cultists as credible where once they held it false.

Fellowship is like our Constitution to a degree... it must have provision to be amended to meet changing circumstances. For good or ill this is who and whom I will fellowship with just now... my bounds if you please.

I will fellowship with the saints of God, as saints, where and when I find them. We have a common blood kinship in Christ. I cannot fellowship with a Methodist, as a Methodist, nor support the institution which Wesley began and which the devil conducts. Yet, if he is a saint, there is common ground for fellowship as brothers.

In general terms I will fellowship with any Baptist until I find him to be otherwise. By "Baptist" I mean Baptist and this without any tag end titles of pedigree. I find this far easier and simpler on the nerves and mind than trying to parse a man's designation to a finite detail. So then generally I will fellowship with a "Baptist" so far as I may. Ah, but not with all Baptists at all times.

Is Jerry Falwell a Baptist? Let's be charitable and say that he is. I believe he is a saved man whether or not he is a Baptist. Yet, my fellowship with him personally would be severely limited by his doctrine. I have almost come to believe that the bulk of Southern Baptist churches are no churches at all, but I cannot know without studying each particular case. I will not join my labor with theirs to promote their "program" which was devised by dark forces. Yet, I believe there are saved folks in their churches, and no doubt some are yet churches indeed. This is possibly true of all conventions and mission boards. I will have fellowship with no parachurch structure; for if God did not build it, we are not left to wonder who did.

Another boundary. What about churches which are independent, but which support, succor, aid and labor with mission boards? I have some difficulty here. I don't want my name associated with such things, but very fine lines of determination are ever before us. My judgment for many years was that I would attend no conference or fellowship where those who support and endorse mission boards were predominant. All such denial of fellowship is subject to amendment of course as God leads. I don't say that I would never attend or preach at such a meeting, but for many years my mind has been fixed against it.

In areas where there is no specific Scripture to guide us it is wise to never say never. The general rule is "kind to kind, like to like", but this is only a general rule. I hope I haven't brought confusion where I intended to show light, but fellowship is such a diverse matter that no single rule shall guide every saint. We should then be tolerant of "every saint" as they wend their way among God's children and churches.

I once preached a funeral at a Methodist meeting house. I didn't preach "with" the Methodist for there were none there (or at last they didn't wear labels). I have balked at this talk for I didn't wish to give the impression of fellowshiping with infidels, but a dear lady in the church said, "Preach the gospel to them

(Continued on Page 9 Column 5)

STUDIES IN I JOHN

Chapter 5:1-13

C.T. Everman

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (I John 5:1).

In this letter John has stressed three tests for one who professes to be a Christian. Those three tests are: belief in Christ, His eternal Son, obedience to His Word, and love for God and His children. He has repeated each of these tests in various ways, separately and in combinations of two's. Here in chapter 5: 1-5 he brings all three together to show the connection between all three, and that they can not be separated. First, He shows that the beginning of the Christian life is the new birth and that new birth comes to "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ". Note that it is one who has faith in Christ who is born of God. It is not our works. It is not what church we belong to. It is not what doctrine we believe, but it is what we believe concerning the man, Christ Jesus. Is He the Christ, the Son of God? Is He just a man that took on Christ at his baptism and departed from Him at the cross as the Gnostics of John's day claimed? Or is He just a man as many claim today? Or is He really the eternal Son of God come in the flesh? John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, tells us that for one to be born of God that one must believe that Jesus is the Son of God. One may be a member of a Baptist church, yes, even be a pastor of a large Baptist church and claim that Jesus is just a man and not God. That one is not born of God. When Christ asked His disciples, "But whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). John tells us that if we believe this, we are children of God. The new birth not only brings a love for the Father, but also a love for His children, "and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him".

This love for God is closely connected with love for the brethren. In verse 2 he says, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." It is impossible to love God and not love the children of God. Another result of love for God is obedience. If we love God, we not only love His children, but we will also "keep his commandments". In verse 3 we have an explanation of God's commandments, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous". Here we see that love of God is to keep His Word and that His Word is not grievous. It never becomes a hardship or burden. We, as Christians go through many trials, tests, and sorrows in this life; yet we have a divine life and the love of God by which we can face what ever comes. It is by trials and troubles that we come to learn more of His love, His grace, and His concern for us. In verse 4 we find the reason that we do not find His commandments grievous, for we are told, "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and

this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith". The new birth has given us power to overcome the world. In John 16:33 Christ told His disciples, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." In I John 2:15-17 we are told to, "Love not the



world, neither the things in the world." The world is the system that is opposed to God and whose ruler is Satan. We are living in that world, so how can we overcome it? The answer is, Whosoever "is born of God." We have a guaranteed victory through our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. One "born of God" has the nature of God, and it is impossible for that nature to disobey God. Our old nature, when in control, causes us to disobey God, but when our new nature is in control we obey God. Note that our victory over the world is a result of our faith, "this is the victory...even our faith." Faith in what? Faith that "Jesus is the Christ" (V 1). Faith in God and His promises. As we grow in faith we grow in love, and we find it easier to trust Him.

In John's writings the word "overcome" is used many times. In I John 2:13, 14 he uses it in connection with overcoming the devil. In Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 13, he uses it at the end of each of the letters to the seven churches of Asia in describing believers and the blessings which they will receive. Here in this verse he is not describing some special child of God, but is using the word "overcomer" for all true Christians. If we have been born of God we are overcomers. We are children of God - the ones born from above and as such we share in His victory. Our faith "overcometh the world," what does this include? It means the whole world system controlled by Satan. In Ephesians 6:12 we are told of that system, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places". This is the world that we as Christians through Christ overcome? This overcoming includes rejection of false doctrine and rejection of false teachers in the church. It is the overcoming of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (I John 2:16). Victory comes to the one whose faith is in Jesus Christ, the pre-existent Son of God; the One Who came to bring salvation and eternal life to His people.

"...but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" With this statement we are brought back to the beginning of the discussion. Those who believe are born of God. As children

of God we love all who are His children. All who love God keep His commandments. They overcome the world because they are born of God. From this we see the close connection of belief, love, and obedience and how impossible to separate the three. The new birth brings us out of darkness into light. It brings us into a certain relationship with Jesus Christ, God the Holy Spirit, God the Father and to His family.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (I John 5:6, 8).

In the last part of verse 5 we read, "Jesus is the Son of God". The name "Jesus" refers to His humanity. "Son of God" refers to His divinity the statement, "Jesus, the Son of God" is telling us that Jesus the man and the Son of God is both human and divine in one person. Here in verse six we have a description of Jesus, the Son of God. "This is he" this is the One whom we have been speaking of, and we have three that bear witness to that fact. To what do they bear witness? To the fact that He is the eternal son of God, and that He came to earth to redeem His people. The three witnesses here on earth which God uses to show that Jesus is His eternal Son are the Spirit, the water, and the blood. The Spirit is of course, the Holy Spirit. Christ told His church just before He went to the cross, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). The Holy Spirit gives testimony as to the person and work of Christ.

What about the water and the blood? In what way did God use them as witnesses? There is much confusion concerning this passage. We need to remember that John, many many years before this was written stood near the cross of Jesus and saw a Roman soldier with a spear pierce the side of Jesus, and blood and water came forth from His side. John, now an old man, has never forgotten this event and is now inspired by the Spirit to give as witnesses, the water and the blood. In what way are they witnesses? There is nothing unusual for blood to come from the side of one who is dead. The remarkable thing was that both blood and water came from our Lord's side at the same time. The fact that both blood and water flowed from His side caused John to note and record this event. For this to occur must indeed be a miracle. The water and the blood are God's witnesses to His Son, and to the eternal life that believers have in Him. The blood of Christ cleanses from the guilt of sin. "...The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Water is often used to mean the Word that is used to cleanse the sinner's walk, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto

you" (John 15:3). "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:25, 26).

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word (Son), and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (I John 5:7). Verse 7 tells us that the three in heaven, the Father, the Word, (Christ), and the Holy Ghost are one, and They bear record concerning Christ.

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son" (I John 5:9). What John is saying is that since we take what men say about things, why can we not take what God has said about His Son? We accept many things which men present as facts, but too many times we question what God has said. Many times men will accept false testimony concerning Jesus, rejecting the true testimony of God. John is saying that God has given a witness in regard to His Son, "this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son". Do we believe what God said?

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (I John 5:10). This verse is very plain. If we believe on the Son, if we believe what God has testified concerning His Son; we have the witness within ourselves. The Holy Spirit indwells us and, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). On the other hand, if we believe not God, we have called Him a liar. If some one comes to you and tells you some thing and you do not believe him have you not made him a liar? This is what John says of one who does not believe the record which God has given of His Son. He has called God a liar.

What is the record which God has given concerning His Son? And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (V. 11). Eternal life! What is eternal life? How long does eternal life last? Does not the word "eternal" carry the meaning "without end"? This being so, you, my friends, who believe that you can lose your salvation, have you not made God a liar? Think what you are doing when you say a saved person can be lost. Note again, life, eternal life is in His Son. The man that says that salvation is by man's works-in whole or part, has made God a liar, and in verse 12 he tells us that only those who have the Son have life. There is no way that a person can have eternal life apart from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. A man may be a professor in a Baptist seminary, he may be a pastor of a large Baptist church, yet he does not have eternal life unless he believes the record which God gave of His Son - that eternal life is in His Son. "he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13).

We have a saying that the only things in this life which are certain are death and taxes. This is not true. The Holy Spirit inspired John to tell us of some things which we can "know" with assurance. In the Gospel of John it is told how we receive life-eternal life. This is the theme of the whole book, in fact, John said that this was the purpose of the book. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). While the Gospel of John was written to show how the sinner could have eternal life, First John was written that those who believed on Christ might know that they had eternal life. In Chapter 2 of the letter it is said that we "know" we have eternal life because we keep the commandments. In Chapter 3 it is said, we "know" we have eternal life because we love the brethren and in chapter 5 we "know" because we believe His Word. In 5:20 we "know" because we are in Him that is true.

By taking both the Gospel of John and the First Epistle together we are told that one who hears and believes has eternal life and can know with assurance that he has eternal life. God's purpose is not only that we hear, believe, and have eternal life; but that we can have the assurance of that life, "that ye may know." Many people say, "I have a hope", or "I think I have," or "I hope to have when I die." John says "that ye may know that ye have." The word "know" means to know with assurance. You don't have to hope you have that life, but if your faith is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Spirit tells you you can know. The word "have" means that you now have that life while here on earth. We do not wait until death for that life, but "now are we the sons of God". "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God:" My friends, if your faith is in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, you don't have to doubt your salvation. You can know now that you have eternal life, and know that this life being eternal can never end. Do you have that assurance? Do you believe God's Word?

BOUNDS

(Continued from Page 8)

brother" and so I preached.

There are barriers to fellowship both genuine and artificial. A disciplined church member is limited in fellowship. There are occasions when we dare not even actively fellowship with another Baptist church for reason of confusion and disorder. We do not say she is not a church, but simply that we cannot walk with her

(Continued on Page 10 Column 1)

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER
APRIL 16, 1988
PAGE NINE

BOUNDS

(Continued from Page 9)

for a time. This is a genuine barrier.

Alas, alas, there are many artificial barriers to fellowship where the bounds are constructed by man not God. These barriers come from children walking in the guise of adults. A dear lady once sat in my home and pronounced anathema on a former minister. She dis-fellowshipped this minister on personal grounds. Our bounds in all things are fixed by God. If I dis-fellowship a person because my petty feelings are injured am I not assigning to myself an aspect of deity?

I have had people (children actually) try to draw me into their trivial spats over fellowship. I have had some well-aged children deny me fellowship simply because I refused to dis-fellowship someone they were currently enjoying a spat with. "Enjoying" is an apt word here, for children in adult garb do so enjoy their little tiffs. I remain aloof from such things and allow folks to dis-fellowship me as they please. I have children of my own to care for, so I don't need 40 and 50 year old children to complicate my life with their squabbles. If this sounds unsympathetic; I, of course, apologize. Yet, it is my impression that about 80% of Baptist acts of dis-fellowship are more a matter of petty spite and personal prejudice than for any genuine, spiritual cause. My statistics may be wrong, and I shall amend them if you can show me the correct ones.

I never judge people in their fellowships, but I sometimes wonder who is fixing their bounds in this. I frankly fellowship with some folks who do not care for me in the least and who say quite horrible things about me. I find this amusing. Yet, I do not cut them off for peradventure I might aid them in some way. There are perhaps a half dozen people in this world who I will on no account fellowship with. They may be saved, and they may be Baptists; but I have found them to be dangerous people to the work of God, and so I shun them. The weakness is of course mine for I should be more capable of dealing with such folks. Yet, since I cannot aid them I shun them.

When I first moved to Florida, a minister drove many miles to come to my door. He said, "I'll drive a long, long way to fellowship with God's saints". I was grateful for his visit and I have made his words my credo. I also will drive many, many miles to find fellowship where it can be had in reasonable peace. I will go further to seek fellowship than I will to sunder it. I am content with God's bounds fixed upon me. Are you?

I would encourage each heart to examine this matter. Who do you fellowship and who do you shun.... and why? Do you avoid company with some of God's saints because of some wounded feelings? Did God fix this bound or did you? Did your wrath fix it or did God's love? The bounds of my fellowship are not for me to establish. I walk in company with some folks whom others will have no dealings with. Their bounds are theirs and mine are

mine... as God leads. I do not judge them and trust they shall not judge me if I extend a hand to those whom they will not walk with. Generally our bounds should not be excessively liberal or restrictive. Wasn't it Spurgeon who said, "Only blockheads go to extremes"?

Left to myself I would probably fellowship with no one, for no one is quite as right in their understandings as I (or so I tell myself in my weak moments). But, my fellowship is not left to my determination. My bounds are fixed by God Almighty who surely knows more about the matter than I. I would say generally that any barrier to fellowship erected in wrath and because of petty differences is not of God. Irritation with a brother or sister is not a proper grounds for breaking fellowship. Wrath is a hard task master and it shall lead you to injure others and drive them from you when you should treasure them if they are in Christ. We must all learn to endure many irritations from God's children for I assure you that God's children endure many irritations from us.

I have always let this maxim guide me, "If God can put up with me then I should be willing to put up with anyone." There are surely people and churches with whom we cannot fellowship. Yet, this is an individual determination which each must make and which no saint may enforce upon another soul. Be content when God establishes your bounds with the sure understanding that He shall do so for all His children in love.

I AM

(Continued from Page 1)

There was said to be a preacher who when something bad was told him, would always say, "It could have been worse." One morning one of his brethren came to him and said, "Brother preacher, last night I dreamed you died and went to hell." "That's bad" said the preacher, "but it could have been worse." "Worse," said the brother, "what could have been worse than that?" Well, said the preacher, "Whereas it was only a dream, it could have been a reality."

Now we read these words, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

We view our text then, "I am with you", not in the sense of God's omnipresence, but in a very particular aspect. For we read of some of which it is said, God was not in it. When God showed Elijah, on Mount Horeb, the great and strong wind that rent the mountains; the Lord was not in the wind. Then He showed him an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire, a still small voice which God was in. (I Kings 19:11, 12).

The greatest tragedy of all times and eternity, is to live and die without the presence of God in one's life. It is a failure in life, with hell to follow. Our text holds the secret of success and victory. I do not mean success and victory as the world sees it. Neither am I writing to you about a life without the cross, suffering, afflictions, battles, and great trials. However, with all these things, God being with us,

we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us (Romans 8:37).

I would like to call your attention now to some examples relative to our text. God was with Noah in the ark, for He said to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark" (Gen. 7:1). Notice, He didn't say go into the ark, but come into the ark. This tells us that God was in there with Noah. That's why there was wonderful order in that ark.

God was with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and though they wandered in a land where in they were strangers with many trials; yet God made them to prosper.

Consider also that man Joseph, a lovely and beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ in so many ways. With all of his suffering and trouble, it is said of him three times in one chapter in the book of Genesis that God was with him (Gen. 39:2, 21, 23). I quote one verse of this scripture. "The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper" (Verse 23).

How about Moses? The Lord said to him, "My presence will go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Ex. 33:14).

Joshua, his successor, receives the same promise of encouragement as God said to him, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5).

Now friends, let me share with you our perfect example. Please hear this word about our Lord as Peter preached to the household of Cornelius, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

Now dear hearts, will you object if I call your attention to a very serious question. Is the great "I Am" with you? Please give diligence to this matter and be not careless. Above all things, make your calling and election sure (I Peter 1:10). Remember how Mary and Joseph went a day's journey from Jerusalem, leaving our Lord Jesus in the Temple, supposing Him to have been in the company (Luke 2:44). The apostle Paul warned the members of the church at Corinth, saying by the Holy Spirit, "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 reprobates?" (II Cor. 13:5).

Some years ago while visiting a man in the hospital who was dying with cancer, I said to him, "Brother, you will soon be with Christ, won't you?" "If I am not deceived," he said. Shortly thereafter, I preached his funeral. I have, since that time, thought about what he said a number of times. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Remember, our Lord said, "I am the way, the

truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Peter addressing the Sanhedrin, preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit, says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

It is He alone, who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification. He is our substitute, who died for our sins, the just for the unjust, the pure for the impure, the holy for the unholy, the sinless, the heaven-deserving for the hell-deserving. Hear what the prophet, by the Holy Spirit, says of Him: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Paying our sin debt with His own precious blood, He rose from the dead for our justification. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

My friends, do listen to the advice of this old soldier of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be sure you are saved, and that God indeed dwells in you and with you. Then whatever happens to you, coming, or going, it matters not too much.

"When peace like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like the sea billows roll; What ever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul." (H.G. Spafford).

Beloved, what a glorious privilege it is to have the Almighty God, the creator of the ends of the earth, dwelling with you! What a treasure this is, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (II Cor. 4:7).

How then, is Christ manifested in us and with us? "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:22, 23).

Consider then what a glorious fellowship we have with our Lord dwelling with us. While through the years of our pilgrimage we have trials of faith as though some strange thing has happened to us. Mr. Spurgeon said that for five years in his ministry, he felt forsaken of God. He had this to say in a message four years before he died. "I felt a great depression of spirit. I knew that I believed, but somehow I could not get comfort from the truth I preached. I even began to wonder whether I was really saved. Being on holiday, I went to hear a brother preach. While he preached a sermon full of gospel, tears flowed from my eyes, and I was in such joy on hearing the gospel that I said, O yes, there is spiritual life within me, for I hear the gospel, love the gospel, and the gospel can touch my heart, and stir my soul".

I too, have had sometimes

when it seemed darkness had veiled His lovely face. As our Brother John Newton wrote in his lovely hymn they sang over fifty years ago at my dad's funeral. "How tedious and tasteless the hours when Jesus no longer I see! Sweet prospects, sweet birds, sweet flowers, have all lost their sweetness to me. The midsummer sun shines but dim; The fields strive in vain to look gay; But when I happy in Him, December's as pleasant as May".

What must we do in such times? The Scripture tells us, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God" (Isaiah 50:10).

While these trials do come our way, and we must have some thorns in the flesh lest we should be exalted above measure. Yet at other times, we are carried to wondrous heights of joy unspeakable and full of glory, far too much for pen and tongue to fully tell or describe. We do know there is a joy we have in Him that far exceeds any earthly pleasure and transcends all worldly joy and excitement.

My friends, there is another way in which our Lord manifests His presence to us, and that is by His love which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us (Rom. 5:5). Our Lord in His great prayer, just before He died for our sins, requests this wonderful petition for us saying, "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26).

There was a woman whom I found it very difficult to love, though I believe she was a saved woman. Her doings and ways were very distasteful. I prayed for more grace to love her. Then one day, while I was recovering from an operation, suddenly there burst forth in my heart an overwhelming love for her in all purity. The love of God filled me with great compassion, and my joy was full, praise the Lord. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren, He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (I John 3:14).

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another" (John 13:35).

There is another way in which our Lord manifests His presence with us, and that is by His power which worketh in us. He has told us that without Him we can do nothing, (John 15:5). This is our imperative and supreme need in every facet of our service for Him. We can't pray without the Holy Spirit's assistance. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

I love that Scripture so much that says... "Now unto that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us"

(Continued on Page 11 Column 1)

I AM

(Continued from Page 10)

We need this power in our preaching so much today. The apostle Paul writes to the Church of the Thessalonians saying... "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (I Thess. 1:5).

If you will bear with me here, I would like to share something with you by the way of my personal experience in the years of the past. As a young preacher, during the time when my home was broken for four years, I began to realize I needed more power with God. I knew He was with me, but I felt such a need of a greater manifestation of His presence. One night I ascended the hill where I resided at Bristol, Virginia. For some time I had been under a heavy weight of depression of spirit. I fell in prostration upon my knees in that secret place of prayer where I thought no one would hear me pray, except my Lord. I hadn't been on my knees in that red clay but a very short while until there came upon me such an overwhelming power of the Holy Spirit surging through my soul like currents of the wind repeatedly in great joy and as waves of liquid love. I wish I had words to explain this heavenly visit of the presence of my Lord. It was so sacred that I seldom speak or write of it. I was soon off the hill back to the house rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. One of the neighbors had come down to the house and was talking with my mother. She heard my rejoicing and wondered if I had gone berserk or lost my mind. I do solemnly believe to this day, that my God that night gave me a special anointing of the Holy Spirit for the ministry which He called me to do. I also know that at that time He gave me a filling of the Holy Spirit. There is no question in my mind and heart about that. I do know also that soon afterwards I experienced great revivals in those days, and for years to follow. For nearly fifty-two years by His power and grace, I have served Him and His presence has been the secret of my perseverance... "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day" (Acts 26:22).

But some will say, "Preacher, if God is with us what about all this trouble and adverse circumstances we are having today?" Now let me point you to a Scripture found in the book of Judges. "And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah that pertained unto Joash the Abiezerite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites, and the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us" (Judges 6:11-13).

Israel was then under the dominion of the Midianites who were oppressing them sorely. God had given them under this depression for their great sin of

idolatry. Beloved, have you ever felt like Gideon under trials? I have, and I am sorry that I have. How mistaken we sometimes are. "Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take, the clouds you so much dread, are filled with mercy, and will break, with blessings on your head. His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour, the bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower."

Would you consider with me now a word concerning the relation of our text regarding His comfort. In these times of the abounding of iniquity, and the love of many waxing cold, (Matt. 24:12), it is sweet to have the comfort of His presence. He has said, "...And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:16-18).

The Holy Spirit, spoken of here as our comforter, is alongside to help us. The word comforter comes from a Greek word "Parakletos" one called alongside to help". He is our advocate, our guide, teacher, and anointer. His strength is made perfect in weakness (II Cor. 12:9). He dwells with us and in us. What a Comforter who comforteth us in all our tribulation (II Cor. 1:4). We may quench Him, we may grieve Him; but He will never cease to abide with us (John 14:16). Our Lord said to His Church. "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20). He has said to all His elect people... "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). Moreover, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit, unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). God's seal can never be broken. While our souls are redeemed by His precious blood when we are born again, we wait for bodily redemption. For further comfort of the Holy Spirit, He takes the things of Christ and shows them to us (John 16:14). That is, He comforts us through the Scriptures, showing us that they testify the things of Christ, that Christ is the grand hero of the Bible, that He is our salvation, our life, and spiritual light, the fount of every blessing, the deep sweet well of love, our God, our home, our heaven, our all.

But you say, how about death in relation to our text? Well, my friend, let us turn to the words of the Holy Spirit spoken by David, the sweet singer of Israel.... "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalms 23:4).

Please turn now with me to the great words of the Holy Spirit by the mouth piece of Isaiah. Hear him cry. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Isaiah 43:2).

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow; For I will be with thee, thy trials to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress." - George Keith.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalms 116:15). "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:55-57).

I would like to say friends, that I am still on the battle field for my Lord and I am available for meetings. If any of you Pastors, believe it is God's will, for you to recommend me to your church, for a meeting, I shall be happy to help you. My address is 5010 Panther Lane-Mims, Florida 32754 - Phone 305-267-1990.

WHY BE

(Continued from Page 1)

ficed so much, and even died for. Thus, we contend that Baptists and Baptists alone have the authority to Baptize. How can any other group have it when God gave it to His church in Jerusalem? Baptism is not valid, if observed outside of true Baptist churches. So Baptism is that act of obedience performed by God's authority, picturing newness of life in Christ, and granting entrance way into a true church of Jesus Christ.

Notice that it is not the entrance way into the heretical universal invisible church, but rather into a local, visible body. Notice that after Peter's sermon, they were baptized into that local body. Acts 2:41, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls". They were added unto the church. There was already a membership of 120, and these three thousand were added to that membership. You cannot add something to something that does not exist. Each local body has authority from Christ to govern itself. Each local church has the authority to administer baptism, to observe the Lord's supper, and to send out missionaries. Baptism is the entrance way into one of the Lord's churches, not "the church" the world speaks of. Now my sermon topic is "Why be baptized?" Let's see why.

Why be baptized? One should be baptized because of the command to do so. In our text, when Peter was asked of the 3000, "what shall we do"; he told them to repent. He had just preached of Christ and His atoning work. He told them that they needed to turn to Christ to be saved. He told them to look to Him for the remission of sins, not to baptism. The reason he mentions baptism to them was not for their sin problem, but as the first act of obedience towards God. Peter was not making baptism a part of the saving grace of God. Baptism has nothing at all to do with it. Peter never hinted as to it being thus. Now beloved, if those 3000 thought baptism saved them, they would all be in hell; but praise God, His elect trust in Him for the saving of their souls. Baptism comes after salvation. Baptism is a direct command of the Lord, and it is not to be overlooked by those who are saved. Many feel like they are at liberty so serve God any way they desire. I wonder where they read that in their Bibles. I never did read that. But, it is spelled out plainly how we are to worship

and serve him. It is also clear that Baptism is the first act of obedience for the child of God. This is why Peter mentions it to them, commanding them by the authority of God and His true church to be baptized. Baptism is important because it is commanded of God. The Bible says, "What things soever I command you observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it". Some feel that, since they are saved, baptism is not important. They feel that they are going to heaven anyway, so they will not bother. Well, that is a pretty poor attitude for one to have and especially towards a commandment of God. Baptism is commanded and it is to be observed. It is to be observed in the way that God teaches in His Word. One without salvation cannot be baptized. One cannot be baptized by being sprinkled. One cannot be baptized as an infant. One cannot be baptized but by one way, and that is the Biblical way.

Why be baptized? You need to be baptized so that you can be a Baptist. This is the only way that you can become a Baptist. You must be baptized into a Baptist church. You cannot talk your way in, neither can you buy your way in. You must come by way of baptism. Some may not care that they are not in a Baptist church. Some may be satisfied where they are. Some may say that it does not matter to them. Well, let me assure you that, though it might not matter to you, it does matter. It matters to God. God is not pleased in all of the false churches in the world today. He is only pleased with Baptist churches. All churches except true Baptist churches are man-made. They do not honor God. They do not glorify God. They, in fact, stand in opposition to God and His true churches. Oh! how important then to be in the Lord's church. How much it means to be where you are able to please God. How wonderful to be able to claim "I am on the Lord's side." Ephesians 3:21 says, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Paul said unto Him be glory in a Baptist church throughout all ages. In other words, Jesus instituted His church to receive glory in and through His church in all ages until He returns for His people. There will be no other way. There will be no new kind of churches. There will be no clubs or organizations that will do the job. It must be through a Baptist Church. And when I say Baptist, I mean a Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Independent, Missionary Baptist church. By this I exclude the Freewillers, the Hardshells, and any others who have long since departed from the faith that was once delivered to the saints. What greater privilege, apart from salvation, could be bestowed upon an individual than to be a Baptist. I'll tell you brethren, the name of Baptist is a wonderful name to me. I cherish the name. I love the name. I love to talk about the church. I love to preach about the church. I love to preach in the church to other Baptists. I just love everything that is connected with being a Baptist. To think that there are a small number on the earth doing the Lord's work in His prescribed way, and to think that I am a part of that number thrills me to no end. But

I must give all of the glory to my Saviour. My salvation and my privilege of being a Baptist all belongs to the triune God of the Bible. My Father chose me before the foundation of the world. My Saviour died for my sins at Calvary and arose. The Spirit of God called me and taught me. Praise God!

Why be baptized? You should be baptized so that you may be a candidate for the Bride of Christ. Heaven will be made up of underserving redeemed sinners such as you and me. All of heaven, though, will not make up the Bride. The Bride will be taken from those who have faithfully served the Lord in His true churches. Notice that I said that baptism will make you a candidate for the Bride. All Baptists will not be in the Bride, but all of the Bride will have been Baptist in their life time. Paul ins peaking to the church in Corinth said, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Jesus is the husband spoken of in this verse. The chaste virgin spoken of is the church at Corinth. Thus, you see, the Bride will be made up of those who serve faithfully in a true church. Note, that I say "faithfully". There are those who have been baptized into a church, and they care very little for that church. They will not attend regularly. They do not support like they should. They are of little or no help at all in the Lord's work. These need not expect to be in the Bride on the wedding day. Revelation 19:7-8 says, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Now of course, all are there by the imputed righteousness of Christ. We cannot be saved by our own. The righteousness spoken of here is that which is done while in our service to the Lord. Our righteousness shall be judged and the Bride will be chosen in regards to that. Do you want to be in the Bride? Do you want to be in this number on the wedding day? If so, then your first step is Scriptural baptism into one of the Lord's churches, followed with faithful service.

Why be baptized? Many eternal rewards are at stake. Yes, beloved the matter of rewards are at stake. Now, I do verily believe that there are some rewards outside of a Baptist church. But I will say readily that there will be few. Of course, I speak of those who have lived since its institution. I am not referring to Old Testament saints here. II Timothy seems to indicate that there is a reward for all saved. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." While there are a

(Continued on Page 12 Column 2)

FROM THE BAPTIST EXAMINER FORUM (March 8, 1969)

Question: If an individual (particularly a preacher) is Scripturally excluded from a church, and he admits that his exclusion was just, should he be called upon to pray publicly, or should he be recognized in anywise by any church, until he has repented and made matters right with the church that he has offended?

This question is answered with a very definite and firm "no." Remember, we just recently had a question similar to this and I said then that any church that would receive an excluded member of our church would be breaking fellowship with us. This is still true. I would feel that the church that recognizes an excluded member in any way is deliberately "slapping the church in the face" that excluded him. It is not wise, it is not good, and it is not ethical. Let me proceed to show you why. (Since I have already shown you about church discipline in the other answer, I will not spend much space on that in this answer.)

A person who has been excluded is guilty of some sin—spiritual or moral. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2). You ask if he could be called on to pray publicly. No, because as long as he has not repented of his sin and made matters right with the church, he is out of fellowship with God. His sin forms a wall between him and God and God will not hear his prayers.

Any man who claims that his exclusion is just and will not repent and ask the church to forgive him, is deliberately disobeying God. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it no, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

If we are not careful we might be guilty of being charged with the same charge as the wicked in Romans 1:32. "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." We certainly would be guilty of seeming to have pleasure in them that do them if we do not condemn the unrepentant excluded church member. Romans 2:21 says, "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" Do we teach that a person who sins against God should repent? If so then how can we recognize one who does not.

Before I close, it is necessary to say that we should not ignore or stand off from such a person. The purpose of exclusion is to, hopefully, show the individual that he has sinned against God and is guilty. We should strive to deal with this person.

James Hobbs

Editor's note: Note that Brother Hobbs does not just deal with one who recognizes that his or her exclusion is just. He says, I feel that the church that recognizes an excluded member in any way is deliberately slapping the church in the face that excluded him. It is not wise, it is not good, and it is not ethical."

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER
APRIL 16, 1988
PAGE TWELVE

Surely, "that recognizes in any way" would include singing specials. According to Brother Hobbs, what has he and his church done to our church in using our excluded member? He says he has not changed. Let the reader of this page compare his old Forum answer with his present actions and judge for himself if Brother Hobbs has changed.

Quote from King's Addition Baptist, March, 1988 by Brother Hobbs, "Let me assure you that neither I nor my church, has changed one bit."

FROM THE BAPTIST EXAMINER FORUM (OCTOBER 31, 1970)

Question: If a man's wife desires freedom rather than live with him, and deserts him, does the man have a Scriptural right to divorce and remarry?

...We are told that if a brother or sister has an unbelieving mate that he must stay with them. In other words, the Christian cannot leave his mate. But if the unbelieving mate should leave the believer that is a different story. The believer is no longer bound...

James Hobbs

FROM THE BAPTIST EXAMINER FORUM (FEBRUARY 18, 1978)

Question: Is it according to gospel order to receive a member excluded from a sister church of like faith and order?

We must remember that a church exercises discipline for the good of the erring member as well as the church. "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. You glorifying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (I Cor. 5:5, 6). Whenever a church has exercised discipline in the form of exclusion, the person excluded is under chastisement. No other church should interfere.

Whenever a person comes for membership into a church from another church, the church should strive for a letter of commendation from the other church. (That is, of course, if it is a church of like faith and practice). There are certain circumstances where the person is received by their statement of faith and if their baptism is Scriptural. Under no circum-

stances should a disciplined person be received unless it is absolutely proven that the discipline was unscriptural. (Editor's note: I suppose that brother Hobbs would say "be used" as well as "be received." How does this fit with his using our excluded member? He has made no effort with our church to prove the exclusion unscriptural). Let me hasten to say that there will be very few cases like that, however. Very few church is discipline a person unless it is necessary.

Any church that receives a disciplined person of another church is breaking fellowship with that church. If the King's Addition Baptist Church administers discipline and another church receives that person, they will no longer be recognized by our church as a sister church.

James Hobbs

BROTHER JIM HOBBS REMOVED FROM FORUM

Before reading this, one should read the two Forum answers and one excerpt written by Brother Hobbs. They are on this same page.

It is with great sadness that I make this announcement: Brother Jim Hobbs has been removed from the Forum. Before giving our reasons for this action, I want to say for myself and my church that we deeply appreciate the work Brother Hobbs has done as a Forum writer. This is much more difficult than any except those who have done it can know. Brother Hobbs is, basically, a very sound and able preacher. He and I have had some great fellowship in the past. Our churches have had much good fellowship. It is our sincere desire that this may be restored in the near future. My church and I stand ready, willing, even very desirous of having this fellowship restored to its former condition. All this will take is for Brother Hobbs and the Kings Addition Baptist Church to straighten out the condition that has brought this breach about.

This action was voted on by our church in her March 2nd business meeting, and for the following reasons: We excluded a member from our church on what we believe to be proper grounds and in a proper way. This mem-

ber was urged to cease from that which brought about the exclusion, but refused to do so. Before answering Brother Hobbs' invitation to speak at his conference, I wrote and asked if he planned to use this excluded member in his conference. He wrote me that, if the person were present, they would probably use her. I then wrote Brother Hobbs, asking that I and some of my men might meet with him and his men and discuss the question of why Kings Addition Baptist Church would use an excluded member of Calvary Baptist Church, a sister church. He informed me that his church had voted to not have such a meeting. He informed me that his church did not have the right to judge whether our action was right or wrong. Such a "don't judge" attitude is totally contrary to his previous position that a church should not recognize the excluded member of a sister church.

The Kings Addition Baptist Church recently excluded a member. That member visited our church. I "judged" that the Kings Addition Church was right in her exclusion, and did not call on this man to pray. I urged him to get right with the church that excluded him. Our church would not receive or use this member in any way. I am sure that the reader will agree that our church did the right thing. But Kings Addition did not show the same respect for our authority that we did for theirs.

No member of the Kings Addition Baptist Church, including the pastor, has ever contacted our church about our exclusion in any way. If this church disagrees with our grounds for excluding this member, they are the same grounds upon which Brother Hobbs and his men severely criticized...when he was a member here. I dealt with ... over this matter and ... ceased the action immediately, for which I highly commend him. But understand that no member of Kings Addition has contacted us as to our grounds of exclusion or anything about the matter. If they have any reason as to why they showed such disrespect for the authority of our church, they have never told us what it is. One would think that, if they were going to so flagrantly disregard our authority, they would at least give some explanation for this. As I have said, I asked to meet

with them and discuss this, but they refused.

I have written Brother Hobbs again, asking him to please reconsider this matter, and for us to meet and discuss the matter. I do not desire this breach in fellowship between us. So far, I have had no answer to this letter. We have done all that we can do to try to straighten out this matter. (Maybe it would help if some interested brethren would try to get Brother Hobbs and his church to at least meet with us and try to work this matter out. I leave that with them).

I greatly desire to have this matter lovingly and peaceably resolved. My efforts to even discuss the matter have been rejected. Since Brother Hobbs and the church he pastors have, as he said in a former Forum answer, "slapped our church in the face", we have no recourse except to remove him from the Forum. We simply cannot use a man in our paper who so flagrantly refuses to respect the authority of our church - even refuses to discuss the matter with us.

We have been told that it is being told that our excluded member has written a letter of apology which we refuse to accept. This is a blatant and total falsehood.

I felt that I owed our readers an explanation as to why we were removing Brother Hobbs from the Forum. However, there are thousands of T.B.E. readers who know and care little about this matter between two individuals and two churches. Therefore, I absolutely will not make this paper a continued battle field over this matter. I do not plan any further articles on this matter. If any reader is interested further in this matter, he or she may write me, and I will give them all the details in total honesty. I do not plan to carry this matter further in The Baptist Examiner.

We stand ready for and even desirous of an apology from Brother Hobbs and his church - or an explanation - or a discussion as to their action. It is our sincere and great desire to have things restored between us as they were before. May the Lord bring this about if it pleases Him. We have removed Elder Hobbs from the Forum. We have not, as yet, officially broken fellowship with the Kings Addition Baptist Church.

WHY BE

(Continued from Page 11)

few of them, there are a multitude for those who are Baptists. The Baptist church is God's institution just as much as the tabernacle and the temple were in the Old Testament. It is in His

true churches that He receives His glory, and that His work is properly done. Yes, many a reward will be lost because the work was not done in God's way.

Why be baptized? I think that the answer is very obvious, don't you?

SAINTS SECURE IN JESUS' HANDS

(Tune: Alas, And Did My Savior Bleed! #110)

Firm as the earth Thy gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust;
If I am found in Jesus' hands,
My soul can ne'er be lost.

His honor is engaged to save
The weakest of His sheep;
All that His heavenly Father gave
His hands securely keep.

Nor death, nor hell shall e'er remove
His favorites from His breast;
In the dear bosom of His love
They must forever rest.



FIVE GENERATIONS: Seated and holding baby Bianca is Sister Loma Dawson, a member of our church. Seated beside her is her great-granddaughter, Kim. Standing are Sister Dawson's daughter, Bernice to the right, and her daughter, Beverly to the left. We do not often see this many generations in the same picture. Sister Dawson is our oldest living member.