

The Baptist Examiner

The Paper With a National Circulation

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

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel!"

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First Baptist Church Was Established By Jesus Personally

HAMBONE'S PHILOSOPHY

Several years ago many dailies carried a cartoon of a plantation negro under the name of Hambone. The cartoon was changed daily. Sometimes Hambone had a possum by its tail; sometimes a snake on his back; sometimes a rabbit on his back; sometimes a rabbit hunting, and so on and on. Written under the cartoon was Hambone's philosophy and though several years have passed we still remember some of the things he said.

One was: "The good Lawd has sent me a big crap of taters this fall and now if he will send a big crap of 'possums he needn't bother himself about me no more in-coming winter."

Another was: "Miss Lucy asked me if I was looking for old Sandy Claus this coming Christmas. But she knows that ain't what I want to know. What I want to know is if gwine to be around here looking for me."

So Hambone was on the receiving end of the line. He wanted taters and 'possums" and he

wanted Santa Claus to be around looking for him. Most men are like Hambone. But our Lord said it is more blessed to give than to receive.—Alabama Baptist.

There are evidently many Hambones in the world today. They are in every church. We have many on the mailing list of THE BAPTIST EXAMINER. They say: "You are giving us a great paper"; "I don't know how I'd get along without it"; "We need an independent paper so badly," and yet this is as far as they go. They are perfectly willing that someone else carry the financial responsibility.

Everyone knows that we can't print and distribute this paper for 50c weekly. Of necessity, we must depend upon our friends for contributions and extra support. Just now, while it is in your mind, forget the philosophy of Hambone, which you may have unconsciously adopted, and send us a liberal, substantial offering for the carrying on of our work. May you give as God leads you!

Shall We Know Each Other In Heaven?

We have been asked to deal with this question, and it is one that is asked over and over again.

The answer is an emphatic Yes! Certainly, the redeemed shall know each other in the life that is to come. Space is not available here for elaborate discussion, but let us note some of the Scriptures and incidents of the Bible that teach or else plainly imply future recognition.

The Teaching of I Thessalonians Read I Thess. 4:13-18. Here Paul tells the Christians not to sorrow over the temporary loss of their Christian dead as those without hope. Then he tells why. He says that the Lord will return and will bring the saved dead with him, and that then we shall all be forever in his presence. We shall be "caught up together WITH THEM." The whole point here is that we shall be once again with our loved ones. What would that be worth if they appeared unrecognizable?

Moses and Elijah On Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-9)

Two men, long departed from this world, appear to Jesus. Several things may be learned from this incident as follows:

They were recognizable. Certainly that goes without saying.

They knew what was happening here on this earth and what was going to happen later on, for they talked with Christ about his forthcoming decease which should be accomplished at Jerusalem.

If the disciples recognized those whom they had never seen before, how much more shall our own loved ones be recognizable.

The Rich Man And Abraham (Luke 16:19-31)

The rich man who died lost, recognized Lazarus did he not? He recognized Abraham. He remembered his five brothers on (Continued On Page Two)

THE SCRIPTURES, AND THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

By W. Lee Rector
(Now With His Lord)

The Scriptures disclose three houses of witness; namely, the House of Seth, and the House of Abraham, and the House of God.

1. The first to witness is the House of Seth, Gen. 4:25-26. Here, men began to call upon the name of the Lord. The witnesses are set forth in Gen. 8:22, and these witnessed during a period approximating two thousand years.

2. The second to witness is the House of Abraham, Gen. 12:1-3. Here, the Lord makes a covenant with Abraham and promises to make His House of Witness a blessing unto all the families of the earth. In this house, He perpetuated the faith of the House of Seth and thus doing He helps preserve the "seed of the woman," Gen. 3:15. He renews this covenant with Isaac and with Jacob, and identifies both redemption and Millennial truth in the covenant He makes with David, 2 Sam. 7:4-17. He fulfills the redemption price provided in the Abrahamic covenant in the birth of the Virgin's Son, Matt. 1:23 and Luke 2:7 and in His crucifixion, Matt. 27:35. And, finally, He will culminate the Kingly aspect of the Davidic covenant with the coming of the Lord Jesus to reign over the kingdoms of this world, Matt. 25:31-34 and Rev. 11:15.

3. And the third to witness is the Church of the Living God. The Lord Jesus Christ in person founded this House during His earthly ministry, Mark 3:13-14 and Luke 6:12-13. The church differs from the other houses of witness. It is a local assembly, I Cor. 1:2, and the body of the Lord Jesus, I Cor. 12:27; and is by divine will composed of twice-born souls. The House of Seth and the House of Abraham were family affairs, not necessarily composed of born-again souls, each preaching betimes the glorious Gospel of the Son of God, while the Church of the Living God knows no family lines and (Continued On Page Four)

Six Things For The Young Convert

1. Keep Looking To Jesus In Prayer. Prayer is God's child talking to Him. It is through prayer that God speaks to us. Pray daily. Pray about everything. Pray as you work. Have a place of secret prayer. We cannot grow without this. "Pray without ceasing." I Thes. 5:17.

2. Read Your Bible Daily. The more you read it, the more it will mean to you. The Bible is God's voice speaking to us. II Tim. 2:15.

3. Attend Your Church Regularly. You will need constantly the worship hour and the Christian fellowship, both because of what it will mean to you and because of what it will mean to others. "Neglect not the assembling of yourselves together as the custom of some is." Hebrews 10:25.

(Continued On Page Two)

STEER CLEAR

A steamboat was stranded in the Mississippi River, and the captain could not get her off. Eventually a hard-looking fellow came on board, and said:

"Captain, I understand you want a pilot to take you out of this difficulty?"

The captain said, "Are you a pilot?"

"Well, they call me one."

"Do you know where the snags and sandbars are?"

"No, sir."

"Well, how do you expect to take me out of here if you don't know where the snags and sandbars are?"

"I know where they ain't!" was the reply.

Beware of temptations. "Lead us not into temptation," our Lord taught us to pray; and (Continued On Page Four)

By Millard A. Jenkins

It was in a South Georgia town where I was conducting a revival meeting in the Baptist church. As the pastor and I were walking along one of the streets, we passed a small office building. Over the door was the sign, "Law Office."

"There is a hard old sinner in there," he said.

"Who is he?" I asked.

"He is old Judge So-and-So."

"Let's go in and talk to him about his soul," I proposed.

"Talk to him?" exclaimed my friend. "He would curse you out of the place if you dared to talk religion to him. He has no use for preachers and churches."

"Well," I replied, "I wouldn't mind taking a little 'cussin' for Jesus' sake. We might do him some good and he can do us no harm."

"If you want to try it, go ahead," said he, "and I will follow; but I doubt if you will do him any

good; it has been tried before and got nowhere."

We went in. It was a small one-room place and didn't look as if it had a cleaning in months.

"Howdy, Judge," I began.

I took his hand and gave it a good shake. I had learned he was from North Carolina; and if a fellow is a fool about anything, it is being from the Old North State. There is a common bond between Tarheels.

"I hear you are from North Carolina," I said. "That's my state, and when there's a North Carolinian around I want to meet him."

We were soon acquainted and talking about men, and families,

Mused Uncle Mose

Ole Uncle Zach say dey chopped out de ice to baptize him. Religion mought melt ice, but hit don't have to, to be ginuwine.

-- The First Baptist Pulpit --

"THE THORN IN THE FLESH"

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."—2 Cor. 12:7.

Our text is taken from Paul's experience when contending with the false teachers in the city of Corinth. Everywhere he went, he insisted that he was a God-called preacher and that he himself was thus sent of God. In

the city of Corinth, there were many false teachers who, when they heard Paul's claims, likewise declared that they were God-called and God-sent. In his experience of contending with these false teachers, he was compelled to boast of his experiences in the Lord. One after another of these experiences Paul related in order to convince both the false teachers and his hearers that he was definitely God's man. It was not that Paul was boasting in the usual sense of the word as men boast and brag

about their possessions, but rather, he told his experiences in order to convince all gain-sayers that he was truly being used of God.

Finally, he came to this one outstanding, unusual, extraordinary experience which is recorded within the chapter which likewise contains our text. He told of this one experience whereby he was caught up unto the third heaven. You understand, of course, that the scriptures make clear that there are three heav- (Continued On Page Two)

BATHING BEAUTIES

It is still true that "he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." An investigation as to what happens to the majority of young girls who engage in bathing beauty parades would bring a shocking revelation. The American Weekly states that of the fifteen "Miss Americas" who have been chosen in the Atlantic City tournament, eight have been in the divorce courts and several have encountered more grievous difficulties. One came very near losing her life at the hands of an outraged wife whose husband had "fallen for" the bathing beauty. One married a millionaire theater operator, whom she later shot and killed in France. An indulgent French jury accepted her self-defense plea. When she came to (Continued On Page Four)

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SIX THINGS FOR A YOUNG CONVERT TO REMEMBER TO DO

(Continued From Page One)

4. **Acknowledge Your Stewardship.** God gives only one plan of church finance in the Bible and that is by the tithes and offerings of His people. Secure your package of envelopes and "on the first day of the week, follow God's only plan." Malachi 3:8-10; I Cor. 16:2; Mt. 23:23.

5. **Do Something For Jesus.** God wants us to be a faithful witness all through the week. Let us ask ourselves daily, "If every Christian were just like me, what kind of church would my church be?" **HELP SOMEBODY TODAY!** Visit the sick, help the poor, etc., but do something!

6. **Win Someone Else To Christ.** Every Christian can and should bring others to the Savior. This work saves souls from hell, brings joy on earth and in heaven, and is the greatest means of Christian growth. Let the Holy Spirit lead you day by day and you will grow to be a strong Christian. "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Mt. 4:19.—Selected.

"SHALL WE KNOW EACH OTHER IN THE LIFE TO COME?"

(Continued from page one)

earth and knew that they remained lost. And Abraham recognized him and they conversed. No escape from this teaching. If this Scripture is a parable, it is of a historical nature. The events took place.

Other Arguments

The "souls" of Revelation 6:9-11 knew what was going on on the earth. They were conscious and knowable.

Jesus was recognized after his resurrection. To be sure he withheld his identity from certain ones at the first, but for a definite purpose. Apart from this, he was immediately recognized.

We shall certainly know MORE in the life to come than we do now. It is not conceivable that it should be otherwise.

How Shall We Be Recognizable?

On this point we do not have full explanation. Surely it will not merely be by some ugly characteristic such as often makes conspicuous now. Our bodies will be glorified and immortalized. "We shall be like Him"—that is, have a body like unto the glorified body of Christ. Somehow it

will be the identity—the real self—the genuine person, that will be recognized. When a loved one through sickness has wasted away, do we love them the less? What DO we love—the body, or the self that inhabits the body? Let us remember that the PERSONALITY—the IDENTITY remains. When a friend gets a new suit he is still the same person—only he looks lots better. When the soul has gotten a "new suit" it is the same person—but will look better.

As to the DETAILS of recognition let us trust God. We know that we SHALL recognize others. We know that we shall be perfect. We know that we shall be parted from them no more. And we may be sure that all of the meanness will be out of us, and all of the unlovely characteristics of the present will be done away. Paul illustrates in I Cor. 15:35-58. This is a great passage, be sure and study it carefully.

THREE PILLOWS

Old John Foster lay dying and, after a night of weariness and pain, was asked by a friend, "How are you feeling this morning?" "Ah," said he, "wonderfully well. I have my head down on three pillows: The pillow of God's infinite wisdom, the pillow of God's infinite power, the pillow of God's infinite love. I am well. I am resting on three pillows."

"THE THORN IN THE FLESH."

(Continued from Page One)

ens. The first heaven is that in which the birds fly, and where the clouds are. The second is that which we can see at night—where the stars, the moon, and the constellations are. The third heaven is the heaven of heavens—God's abode. Paul declares that he was caught up unto the third heaven. He says he did not know whether he was in the body or out of it, or, in other words, he did not know whether he was dead or alive. Doubtlessly, this took place at the time of some persecution. It may be that it was the aftermath of his stoning in the city of Lystra where he was left for dead. It could have been there or at the time of some other experience of like nature. At any rate, he declared that such an experience came to him and that he was caught up into the abode of God.

Logically such an experience would cause him to become proud. In fact, an experience of this type would be enough to cause any individual to become exceedingly haughty. I have observed that many times testimony meetings give rise to more pride and more opportunity for the flesh to be glorified than most any other type of service which man renders to God. Naturally when one has had some unusual experience with the Lord, it is so easy in retelling it to allow pride and the vain glory of life to creep in. In order to keep down the pride which may, or may not, have been developed in Paul as a result of this one unusual experience of being caught up into the third heaven, God gave him an affliction. You know that affliction is always a great antidote to pride. Thus God gave Paul an affliction which Paul called "a thorn in the flesh." Concerning

this thorn in the flesh, Paul prayed three times asking that it might be removed, and each time God shook His head and answered in the negative, finally giving Paul a most marvelous answer by way of assurance in that He said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Following this revelation, from the Lord, Paul became completely resigned to the will of God, even to the extent that he took pleasure in his thorn in the flesh. Listen:

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."—2 Cor. 12:10.

IT IS EXCEEDINGLY INTERESTING TO NOTICE JUST WHAT PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH WAS. Frankly, beloved, I don't know. I have heard many preachers argue at length as to this thorn, and I have read many commentaries wherein varied and divergent views were offered as to Paul's thorn. Yet, frankly, I can say that I do not know nor do I have any conviction as to the exact nature of this thorn.

It has been suggested that Paul's thorn was his bad eyesight which came about as a result of his experience while go-

ing to Damascus. He was blind, as you know, for three days following the time when God struck him from his horse. There are indications that Paul had poor eyesight possibly as a result of this experience. When he wrote to the churches at Galatia, he said:

"Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand."—Gal. 6:11.

Literally this verse says, "You see with how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand." This would indicate that he had no amanuensis, and that in order to write to these churches of Galatia, it was necessary that he do his own writing, and that because of his failing eyesight he had to write with exceedingly large letters. Well, it could be that this was Paul's thorn in the flesh, but I don't know.

Then there are others who say that Paul's thorn was epilepsy. Apparently his thorn was of a recurring nature, and since epilepsy is of this nature, it is therefore argued that this was his thorn. It is further indicated by his letter to the churches of Galatia that there was something wrong with his flesh, but that these Galatian Christians passed it by and received him as an "angel of God, even as Christ Jesus."

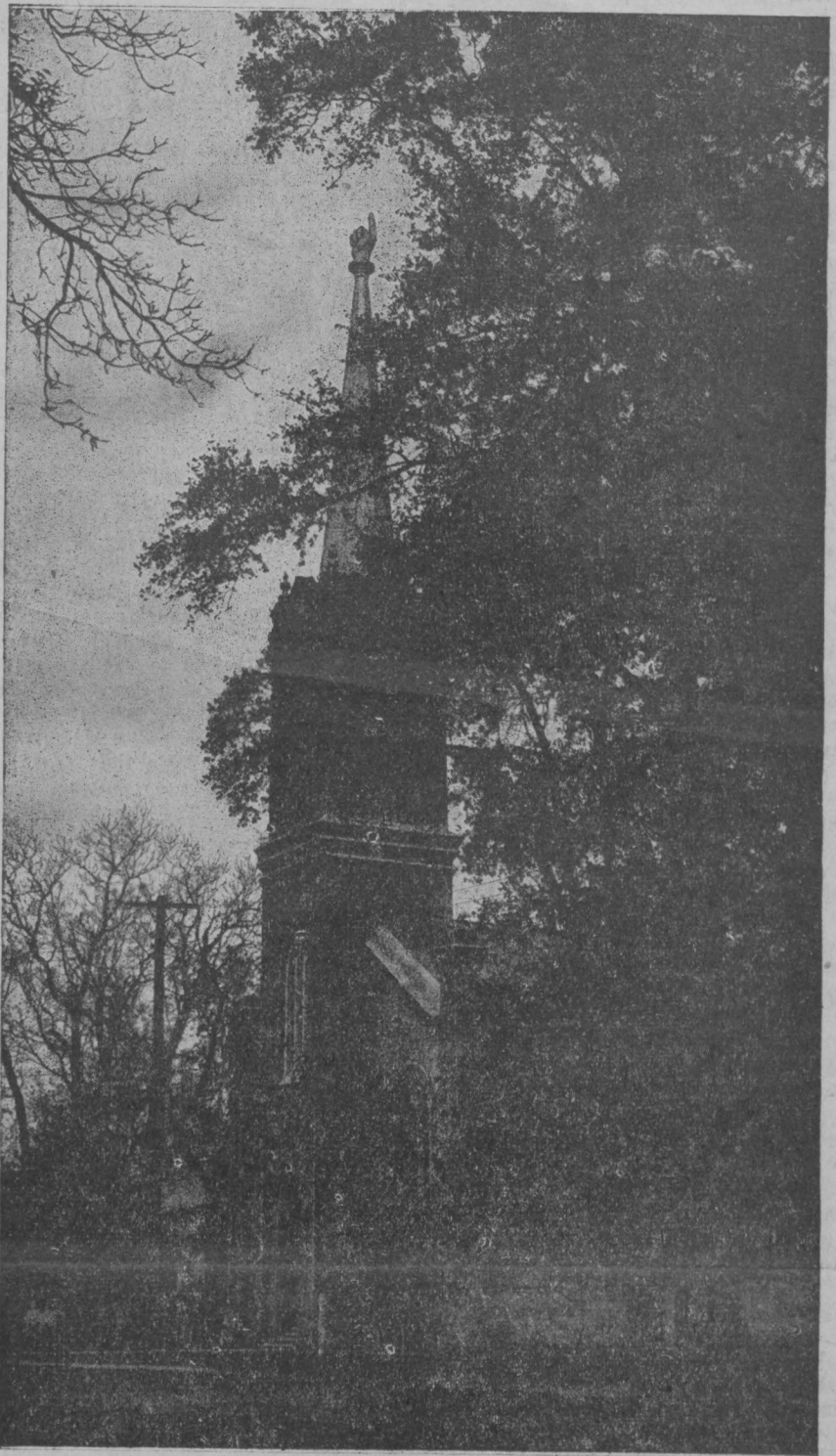
—Gal. 4:14.

I say, beloved, that Paul's thorn might thus have been epilepsy, but I do not know.

Then there are those who say that his thorn was his carnal longings. Naturally Paul was subject to the same temptations, passions, desires and worldly longings as all of us. I remember some months ago that one of the best men of my acquaintance rode with me all the way from Lexington, Kentucky, to Ashland, Ohio, and that the subject of our conversation for practically all the journey was that of Paul's thorn. This one, who is one of the most Godly men that I know, said that he had come to the conclusion that Paul's thorn was his carnality and his base desires. We certainly this could have been Paul's thorn, and may have been Paul's thorn as it is likewise today a thorn in the flesh of many.

Then there are those who say that Paul's thorn was the opposition which came to him from his enemies. Only a preacher knows what a thorn this can be. Through the years of my long pastorate here, and as editor of a paper which has almost 10,000 weekly circulation, I know what it is to have opposition from enemies. Surely this is a thorn in many a man's flesh, and it could be Paul's thorn.

(Continued On Page Three)



The steeple of a church in Port Gibson, Mississippi (the city which Gen. Grant said was too beautiful to burn), is surmounted by an enormous hand instead of a Cross. Surely every church ought to be pointing men upward. In fact, any church which does not do so is a cumbrance to the ground it occupies. If God's people do not point others upward, even we ourselves are failures in God's sight.

(This cut was loaned us through the courtesy of Scenic South, the advertising medium of Standard Oil. Their products are sold locally by Sparks Brothers of West Russell, through whose generosity we receive Scenic South gratis.)

THE THORN IN THE FLESH.

(Continued From Page Two)

That these enemies were his thorn.

Then there are others who say that Paul's thorn was some prominent adversary. While Paul had adversaries in general most everywhere that he went, he also had some particularly bitter and violent and prominent adversaries in some of the communities where he preached. While it is bad enough to have a number of adversaries, often some individual, because of his prominence, can become a very definite adversary and a thorn in one's flesh. It may be that this was true of Paul.

There are still others who say that Paul's thorn was his defective speech. I am satisfied that Paul was not a great orator as most folk usually think him to have been. One of the criticisms that was brought against him was his defective speech. Listen: "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."—2 Cor. 10:10.

Even Paul admitted that his speech was quite simple, for he said:

"For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things."—2 Cor. 11:5, 6.

As I have said repeatedly, I don't know what his thorn was, but it may be that this was the thorn.

Then there are others who say that Paul's thorn was a scolding wife. I'm rather of the opinion that many a preacher has had such a thorn in the flesh, but I do not now think that this was true of Paul. I am sure that Paul was a widower. Listen:

"I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I."—1 Cor. 7:8.

There are still others who say that Paul's thorn was his bad temper. I'm ready to grant you that Paul was the subject of an unusually violent temper. There are several indications of this temper to be found in the Word of God. When he was making his defense before the Sanhedrin, Paul spoke with unusual venom, indicating exceeding great temper when the high priest commanded that he be smitten. When anyone reads this story, they are convinced thus that Paul had his share of temper, and perhaps a little more. Listen:

"And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for thou resistest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?"—Acts 23:1-3.

Then again, we have another indication of his temper when he rebuked Elymas the sorcerer with unusual bitterness in his speech.

"And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"—Acts 13:10.

In fact, even before Paul was saved, we have one indication of the violence of his temper. Listen:

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,

went unto the high priest."—Acts 9:1.

That temper again manifested itself when he and Barnabas disputed as to the taking of John Mark on their second missionary journey. We read:

"And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other; and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed to Cyprus."—Acts 15:39.

These and other references would thus indicate that Paul was subject to a very bad temper, and it may be that this was his thorn.

As I have said, I do not know what it was. God probably has concealed the nature of the affliction in order that no one may say, "Why I have Paul's thorn." Since no one knows exactly the nature of this difficulty, then everyone, regardless of what his difficulties may be, may comfort himself in the light of this Scripture which brought so much assurance, confidence, consolation and comfort to Paul.

II

REGARDLESS OF THE NATURE OF THIS THORN, SATAN WAS VERY DEFINITELY CONCERNED ABOUT IT. It is rather conspicuous that Satan did not try to take Paul out of God's hand. A long time ago the Devil tried to take one man out of God's hand. His name was Job. Though he destroyed the family and the property of Job—though he caused Job's wife to forsake her husband—though he caused Job's friends to repudiate him—and though he destroyed Job's health—in spite of all these, he could not take Job out of the hand of God. He had boasted to God that he would do so, but in this instance he failed completely. Never since has the Devil attempted to take any individual away from the Lord. He learned then his inability in that God defeated him, and from that time on, Satan has never attempted to take any man away from the Lord.

In fact, the Devil has more sense than these Arminian preachers who talk about falling from grace. They say that the Devil can take a man out of God's hand, but the Devil never says it. In fact, he knows he can't, and in this case, he has more sense than these individuals who preach falling from grace.

Though the Devil never tried to take Paul out of God's hand, he did use the thorn to annoy, pain, depress and harass Paul. Paul had interfered much with the Devil's kingdom. He had travelled thousands of miles in the preaching of the Word of God. He had dotted the whole of the New Testament land with New Testament churches. He was the means of destroying idolatry and idol worship in many cities. Since he had thus interfered with the Devil's kingdom, it is no small wonder that the Devil sought to interfere with Paul.

However, though Satan attempted to annoy Paul with this thorn, he merely succeeded in drawing this saint closer to God. This was in reality all that he accomplished. Every time he caught hold of that thorn and twisted it, he merely drew Paul closer to the Lord, for on each of these experiences Paul cried out to God in prayer, and finally when God gave him assurance and confidence that all was well concerning the thorn, Paul then became perfectly content to carry this thorn the balance of his days.

This was as it was with Job. The Devil boasted that he would

take Job out of God's hand. His first blow destroyed all of Job's property, while his second blow destroyed Job's posterity. When all of his wealth was gone and his children were dead, instead of cursing God, old Job worshipped. We read:

"Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped; and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."—Job. 1:20, 21.

Thus, instead of driving Job from the Lord, he merely drew him closer unto the Lord and this is the way that Paul's thorn in the flesh affected him—it merely drew him closer to the Lord. It is the way that afflictions and thorns in the flesh affect us. They draw us closer to Him.

III

IT IS VERY INTERESTING TO NOTICE THAT PAUL PRAYED ABOUT THIS THORN IN THE FLESH. The indications are that Paul was a man who did much praying. In fact, we read of many experiences of prayer in his life. It is only logical then that he would pray about his physical condition, so in his distress, he went to the mere seat. Paul reminds us of Hezekiah. When he was king of Judah, God made a revelation to him that he was to die. Yet Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and in prayer besought the Lord that he might live. We read:

"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

"Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying,

"I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore."—II Kings 20:1-3.

You will notice that Hezekiah's affliction just drove him to the Lord and not away from God. Well, this is the way that affliction always affects the true child of God. While it may drive an unsaved man farther from the Lord, it always draws God's child closer to Him.

Thus it was that Paul prayed, and how he did pray! Truly we can say that he prayed with importunity. Though God shook his head and answered in the negative at Paul's first request, Paul was not satisfied, so he continued praying even though the same answer came back. He thus prayed three times just like Christ prayed three times at Gethsemane.

What a lesson this would teach us as to prayer. Many people in prayer want nothing, ask nothing and get nothing. Others ring the door bell of heaven in prayer and then run away before God can give the answer. Not so with Paul; this mighty apostle stood at the gate of Heaven, praying three times until God gave the answer. Doubtless it was because of this experience that later on Paul, under inspiration, exhorted the Hebrew Christians as to their prayer life. He said:

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that

we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Heb. 4:15, 16.

IV

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTICE GOD'S RESPONSE TO PAUL'S PRAYER. Paul got an answer from the Lord, yet it was not the answer which he expected; it was not the answer for which he asked. However, God did give him an answer.

It is interesting to observe in this respect that God always gives us an answer. We may not get just exactly what we pray for, yet God always answers every prayer that is offered. If nothing else, He gives to us His peace. We read:

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:6, 7.

Thus it was with Paul. He did not get his prayer answered exactly as he had hoped, yet in reality he got more than he asked for. To have taken away the thorn was a very small thing compared to that which God granted, for in this case God sanctified the very presence of the thorn so that its presence became a joy to Paul. Thus the thorn which he wanted to be rid of, now became his delight, to the extent that he wanted to keep it, for he said:

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in

distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."—2 Cor. 11:10.

How marvelous then God answered Paul's prayer concerning this thorn in the flesh, and how marvelous God answers our prayers and responds to us when we too come to him concerning the thorns which annoy and harass our flesh.

In closing, may I make a definite appeal to God's children. Each of us are troubled with thorns of one type or another. What a marvelous lesson we can thus learn then in view of Paul's experience. Our business is to trust God. We are not to worry about the thorns—we are not to be concerned about these problems of our flesh. Our business is to trust Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will. It is thus with assurance that we can fall back upon both God and God's Word. Listen:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28.

May I make an additional appeal to that individual who knows not the Lord Jesus Christ, and who has no consolation in times of difficulty. May I urge you to trust yourself in the hands of the crucified Saviour, believing upon Him and trusting His shed blood for your salvation, and as the days come and go, you too will find the peace and joy that comes by trusting Jesus through all the changing experiences of life.

God's Way And Mine!

I asked the Lord to lead me for a day,
I did not know or care what He might say;
So long as He would lead me, I'd agree
To follow paths I could or could not see;
Or try to carry loads I scarce could lift,
And move as He directed, slow or swift.

I would not murmur if the road were rough,
Nor ask for more when He had given enough
To meet my simple needs, both few and small,
I'd be content and thankful in it all.
But when He made me suffer and be still,
I then rebelled against my Master's will,
And said I would not have Him for my guide,
Because His will ran counter to my pride.

And yet I suffered, suffered once again;
I asked for joy, He gave me only pain.
I asked for rosetrewn pathways, sunny morns,
I chose to tread on petals, not on thorns;
But through the thorns He led me up the hill.
I murmured at His "Suffer and be still"—
I could not grasp His meaning; I was prone
To ask Him for His way, but keep my own.

But one day, when my struggles had been sore,
I asked my Lord to lead me just once more.
This time I would not murmur 'gainst His will;
I'd go or stay, or "Suffer and be still."
I would not have my own way—His was best;
I'd gladly do, endure His wise behest,
And then I understood why all my pain
And thorns came to me once again.

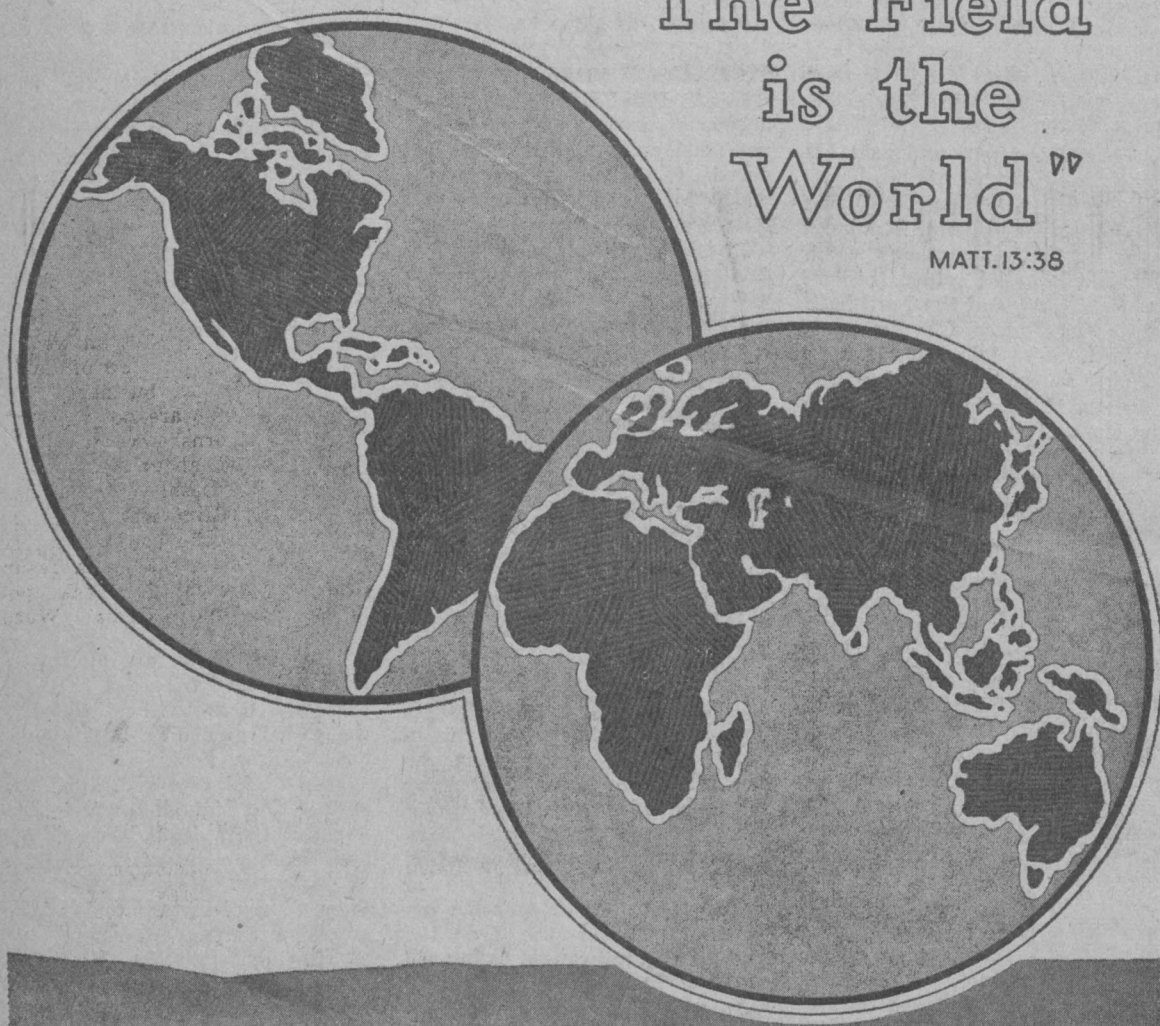
It was with drawing, by His gentle art,
The thorns which pride had thrust into my heart,
His oil and wine poured on sin's open sore,
The pain was just to heal, and nothing more.
His thorns were lances to relieve disease,
His hilly pathway led to plains of peace.

He meant my life for joy, for power and bliss—
Pain was remedial, work was happiness,
And so my Lord has led me all the years;
Sometimes He leads through smiles, sometimes
through tears,
But each day shows me that His way is best.
For through its cloud or sunshine I am blest.

Unknown.

"The Field is the World"

MATT. 13:38



APPRECIATION

As we begin our eighth year of continuous publication of THE BAPTIST EXAMINER, it is with the deepest of heart-felt gratitude toward our readers and with abounding thanks to God that we salute you. Like the man of God, of old, we say, "Hitherto both the Lord helped us."—I Sam. 7:12. With but few exceptions, each week for seven years this paper has been sent forth with a prayer that its message might be blessed of God. Thousands of letters have been received telling of spiritual blessings that have been received by the saved. Many are the testimonies of those who claim to have been saved through its message. Now as we begin this new year, we thank God and take courage. Many are our enemies and many are our friends. "A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."—I Cor. 16:9. Our God reigns and He will lead and provide, "My God shall supply all your need."

WHAT HAPPENS TO BATHING BEAUTIES

(Continued from Page One) this country with her two children to take possession of the estate, it was found to be far less than was expected and most of it was consumed by legal claims. Quite a number of the "Miss Americas" have had tragic endings, and almost all of them know nothing but sin, sorrow, and ultimate shame as a result of their indecent exposure. One of the beauties, a suicide, declared before she died: "I might have been happy if I had been ugly." God's idea of beauty is modesty, virtue, simplicity, and grace coming out of a heart indwelt by His divine Spirit. "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ESTABLISHED BY JESUS

(Continued from page one) embraces the born-again of both Jew and Gentile races in its work of carrying on.

The First Church, a Baptist Church

We assert here that the Jerusalem Church, founded by the Lord Jesus, was a local Baptist Church, the first of its kind in all the ages. Our claim here

should surprise no one. Notwithstanding this fact, doubtless some will lift their eyebrows and scowl at our contention. Unless the Scriptures very definitely and very positively so teach, a man would be foolish to enter such a claim. We here and now invite the reader to follow as we search the Scriptures to see what the divine One has to say about this matter.

In entering this claim, we invite the reader to follow as we trace the source of the name "Baptist," and the divine identification of John as the Baptist, and the significance of the name.

The Source of the Name "Baptist"

When we seek out the source of the divine name, "Baptist," we do not find it stemming from the thought life of men during the ages. Its origin is not rooted in the experience of human beings. Its origin is rooted in the divine.

The Scriptures attest the Lord as being the author of the name. The Holy Spirit, the divine Chronicler of the Word, makes Matthew add the name "Baptist" to the name John, Matt. 3:1-2. The Lord confirms this act by recognizing John as the Baptist, Luke 7:28. Thus the Lord is the source of the Baptist name.

The Identification of John As The Baptist

It is vitally important in this connection to remember that John did not come as John, the Baptist, but came simply as John. Again we appeal "to the word and the testimony":

1. In announcing the promised birth of John to Zacharias, the angel said, "Thou shalt call his name John," Luke 1:13.

2. At the birth of John, neighbors came in and called the babe "Zacharias," but Elizabeth protested, saying, "Not so, but he shall be called John," Luke 1:59-60.

Thus the angel, and Elizabeth, and Zacharias all testify that the babe was named "John." Heaven further declares that his name was John. The Scriptures say, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John," Jno. 1:6, and they also tell us that John preached as John in Bethabara beyond Jordan, Jno. 1:15-17 and Jno. 1:29.

In the light of these Scriptures, we must know that he who came to be known as John the Baptist, was sent as John; was born as John; and was commissioned as John. Now, why did the Lord add the name, the Baptist, to the name John? The name, the Baptist, was obviously added because of his message and his method of baptizing. He was Baptist in these. To illustrate:

He preached Christ as "the Lamb of God which taketh away

the sins of the world," Jno. 1:24 and 34. This doctrine is basic because it involves all redemption truth.

He preached against sin and called people to repentance, Matt. 3:2. This doctrine is cardinal because it recognizes God to be the just One, and all sin is rebellion against Him.

He preached "confession of sins," Matt. 3:5-6. Thus demanded that sinners be brought to repentance, or be reconciled with God, before they can become members of the family of God, and before he would baptize them.

He demanded new creatures in Christ Jesus, Matt. 3:8. Following the confession of their sins and the giving of evidence of this new life, John baptized them. And surely he did so in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Matt. 28:19.

4. John's Baptist message and method were confirmed by a Triune God. Observe this fact in the actions of the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the Father.

Christ showed His approval of the message and the baptism of John by demanding and receiving baptism by John, Matt. 3:13-15. Thus He OKed the work of John, whom He later called "the Baptist."

The Holy Spirit showed His approval of John's message and method by appearing on Him in the form of a dove, Matt. 3:16. Thus He OKed the work of John, whom He later called "the Baptist."

The Father also shows His approval upon witnessing the baptism of His Son by John, saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," Matt. 3:17. So the Father, by acknowledging His pleasure in His Son and His Son's act of being baptized by John, also OKed the message and the method of John, whom the Holy Spirit and His Son later called "the Baptist."

According to the witness of these Three, we can but conclude that John was given the name "the Baptist" because of his message and his method, and we can but conclude that the disciples won unto the Lord and baptized by "the Baptist" must be of the same faith and practice as John. Accordingly, the baptized converts, brought to the Lord by John, were Baptist saints.

5. When Christ was ready to organize His Church, He went up into a mountain and called unto Him His disciples, converts won and baptized by John, the Baptist, Mark 3:13-14; Luke 6:12-13 and Acts 1:21-22. According to the Scriptures, we must conclude that John won and made disciples for Christ to use. This is disclosed in the following testimony of John:

"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Elaias," Jno. 1:23.

"I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose," Jno. 3:26-27; and

"He must increase, but I must decrease," Jno. 3:30.

Thus John puts the Lord ahead of himself to be a worker for the Lord.

Since the disciples out of whom the Lord organized His church were baptized converts of John; and since the Triune God had previously confirmed the witness and the work of John; and since the Lord had added the name "the Baptist" to the name "John"; and since disciples, won

and baptized by John, obviously embraced the same faith the Lord embraced, and approved the same method John practiced, they had to be Baptists, even John. Accordingly, we can conclude that the Lord organized His church out of Baptists. The first church was a Baptist Church.

The Significance of The Name Baptist

The Lord does not choose to use names loosely. The word "Baptist," had definite significance with the Lord, and meaning was surely found in the message and the method of John.

The name, "Baptist," is a symbol of blood redemption with all of its attendant truth. To verify this symbolism, the Lord called John, who preached redemption truth and baptized by burial in water, "the Baptist," and the baptism, practiced by John, not Baptist, showed forth the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the which would transpire during the death ahead. So John the Baptist's baptism was a pictorial of blood redemption.

The name "Baptist" stands for what John stood for. He stood for blood redemption, for the Saviorhood and the Lordship of Jesus Christ, for repentance toward God for sin, for the confession of one's own iniquity, for new creature in Christ Jesus, the immersion of believers in Christ, and for the whole heaven's work on earth.

The name "Baptist" stands for salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, for blood cleansing, pardon, for repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, for the new birth from above, and for the Saviorhood and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The name "Baptist" centers authority and all power and justice and all mercy in the name of Jesus Christ. Salvation comes only in and through the name of the Lord Jesus, Acts 4:12.

We, Baptists, have a mighty heritage in the name the Lord gave us. May we never betray it.

"I WILL BE AT YOUR MEETING TONIGHT"

(Continued From Page One) At seven o'clock the pastor I dropped in to do some planning. "Look," I said. There sat an old man on the front seat, his head bowed as if in deep meditation. When the service started, I could see he was all interest. I preached to him that night, and tried to make the way of salvation plain. When I gave the invitation he came forward with out stretched hand, his countenance lighted.

"I take Him as my Saviour," he said. "As long as eternity lasts I'll thank God for you." I visit this afternoon and you will be waiting to meet me up there."

—Baptist and Reformed

STEER CLEAR

(Continued From Page One) again He said, "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. We are weak and sinful by nature, and it is a good deal better for us to pray for deliverance rather than run into temptation and then pray for strength to resist.—Moody.