

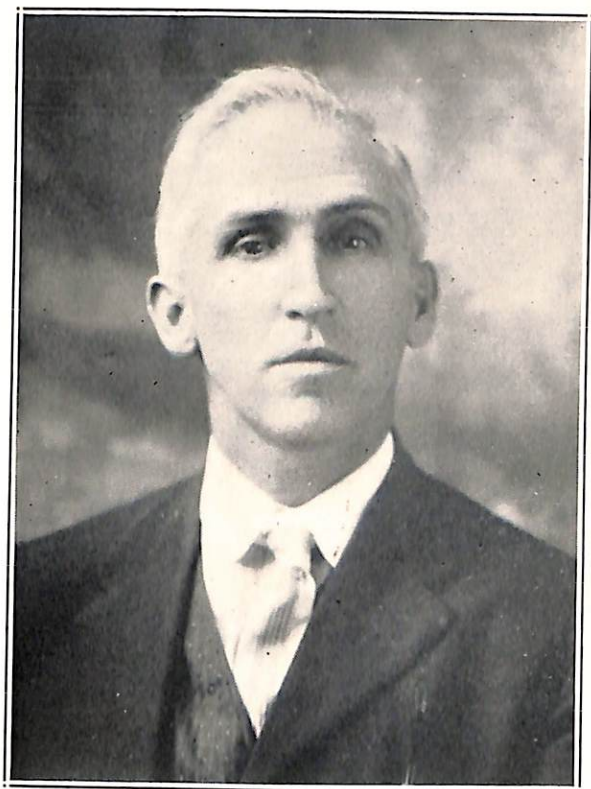
*CONVENTIONISM
REFUTED*

BY

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1. Baptists.

Conventionism Refuted

An Appeal to Baptists for
Orthodoxy in Faith
and Practice

BY

D. N. JACKSON
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

We deem it superfluous to introduce the authors of this booklet to the Baptist brotherhood, as they are men of honored standing in the denominational realm, and live in our midst, with the exception of the late Elder M. P. Matheny who departed this life a few years ago, but some time before his death he wrote the great treatise which we are reprinting in this booklet.

We feel confident that our brethren will appreciate the assistance that this booklet will give them in their respective fields in their fight on the evils of conventionism. By placing it in Baptist homes it will silently preach the truth in your absence.

BAPTIST S. S. COMMITTEE
C. A. GILBERT, Business Manager

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INTRODUCTORY

Truth must be defended even at the risk of life, for life is of no value apart from truth. Our Lord suffered the humiliation of the cross to honor and sustain the truth which we believe we have written a defense of in a refutation of the errors of the people called Convention Baptists.

We do not decry the departures from the Word of God of the Convention Baptists because of any personal grievance, but as watchmen on Zion's wall we feel the responsibility as imposed of God to make known in unmistakable terms the approach of all sins either in faith or practice among Baptists.

Believing that this booklet will do much good toward encountering the evil tendencies among Baptists, we send it forth with a prayer for its acceptance by a generous circle of readers.

AUTHORS.

Conventionism Refuted

The Despotism Rule of Conventionism

By D. N. JACKSON

"Man, know thyself" was the nucleus of a Grecian philosophy which turned the great mind of Socrates from natural to moral philosophy. An acquaintance with self helps wonderfully in the conflicts and problems of life; it is one of the indispensable factors in rightly directing human destiny.

He is a hero who can master environment, but this can not be done apart from a mastery of self. The task begins at home.

Man is naturally prone to go astray; and whenever he is left unguided, his path is marked by amazing wanderings. For example follow the Apostle Paul through Athens and take a view of the numerous symbols of religions.

The most interesting of all was an altar erected "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." That was the best that human wisdom could construct. It was the sum total of thirty philosophies, the logical deduction of the thought and speculation of ten centuries, the climax of the brilliant history of Greek intellectualism.

Man has always needed and will always

need a standard as the measure of his life. God supplied this need by the revelation of His will, the Bible. The ambitions of a life unguided by the divine standard will erect as strange an altar as did the pagan religionists of Athens.

Paul, who was bold to preach the God whom the world by its wisdom can not know, also testified to the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures in faith and practice. To concede this point will cover a multitude of sins, for there is no limit to man's inventions outside of the pale of "holy ground."

Human hands have built towers and have erected pyramids and monuments as an echo of their ingenuity. Long before the Spanish conquerors arrived and Anglo-Saxon history began the Pueblo Indians invented symbols of worship on the plateaus and in the canyons of New Mexico; in India, where early religions found a cradle, inventive minds sought out ways of worship undisciplined by a perfect standard; in China, long before Romulus laid the foundation of Rome and Homer amused the Greeks with his "Iliad," human thought was bent toward religion of an imperfect type; and in Egypt, whose science and learning became proverbial before Moses looked upon the splendor of the Pharaohs, people worshipped but after their own inventive skill; and in every age and among every people the like has been practiced.

Time rolled on and found its climax in the beginning of a new epoch in the mani-

festation of the Son of God. Angels sang His glory and inspired men wrote about and preached His merits. His authority was assailed from every angle, but His cause has upturned kingdoms of men and toppled thrones of dignitaries.

But scarcely had the bones of His apostles rotted in their graves when the "mother of harlots" flaunted her crimson garments on the banks of the Tiber, where she erected the temple of her gods. Hers was an earthly ambition and her desires were finally reached, then she began to decline. Her moral grip was loosened and her peddlers of vice and corruption flooded the country.

It is an indication of a loss of aspirations when a people stop their progress to look upon their achievements. "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" and from that time Babylon began to decline. Egypt began to decline the very day she finished her great Pyramid. No Virgils, Ovids or Horaces walked her streets when Rome became Marble. No first-class poets were found in Athens seventy-five years after the Parthenon was built. The deepest philosophies are embodied in the ages when people are found aspiring to a goal and not after they think they have found it.

The Christian goal is in heaven, and therefore our achievements may be great in this life. To fold our arms and think only on the past will seal our destiny in denominational efforts. But let us rise up as "citizens of the household of faith,"

shake off the robes of self-appointed authority and submit to the will of God in all matters of life.

All error is related. In this system there are what may be called departments, one of which is that of religion. All departures from the faith of the Gospel come through this source. Such was felt even during the apostolic days, when the "mystery of iniquity" was at work. That was the incipient stage of a gigantic force that came forth wearing swaddling clothes in A. D. 251, and reached maturity by A. D. 610, and has remained more or less mysterious to this day. This force is Catholicism, a term synonymous with despotism, bossism, overlordism, tyranny, autocracy! From it have come kindred spirits, of different ages and of varying powers.

Baptists have not been entirely free of that spirit. It found a nursery among them in 1792 and has been nourished to great size, until today it has the audacity to claim the right to dictate the policies of the churches. The general system which is formed among Southern Baptists is known as the Southern Baptist Convention. Turning to the Constitution of this convention one can readily see that a despotic purpose underlies it. The preamble

"The messengers from missionary societies, churches and other religious bodies of the Baptist denomination in various parts of the United States, met in Augusta, Georgia, for the purpose of carrying into effect the

benevolent intention of our constituents by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the denomination for the propagation of the gospel." (Annual, 1925, p. 11).

This is reinforced by the charter of the convention. Here it is:

"CHARTER

"An Act to Incorporate the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Georgia, in General Assembly met, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that from and after the passage of this Act, that William B. Johnson, Wilson Lumpkin, James B. Taylor, A. Dorey, R. B. C. Howell, and others, their associates and successors, be and they are hereby incorporated and made a body politic by the name and style of the SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION, with authority to receive, hold, possess, retain and dispose of property, either real or personal, to sue and be sued, and to make all by-laws, rules and regulations necessary to the transaction of their business, not inconsistent with the laws of this State or of the United States; said corporation being created for the purpose of eliciting, combining and directing the energies of the BAPTIST DENOMINATION OF CHRISTIANS, for the propagation of the gospel, any law, usage or custom to the contrary notwithstanding." (Annual, 1925, p. 14.)

How can the purpose of the convention be more emphatically stated than this? But we add still another declaration to the same end:

"Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure co-operation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over

each other or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner." (Annual, 1925, p. 74.)

Thus three times in the 1925 Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention it is stated that the purpose of the convention is **TO ELICIT, COMBINE AND DIRECT** the energies of the denomination. The first quotation is found in the preamble to the Constitution; the second, in the Charter, and these two remain permanently in the Annuals. The third one is in the report of the Committee on Statement of Baptist Faith and Message as presented by E. Y. Mullins, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, to the 1925 convention at Memphis, Tenn. There is no mistake about it. "To elicit, combine and direct the energies of the denomination" is the convention's slogan. It was in the organization, in the Charter and in the statement of the convention's Faith and Message of 1925. The purpose reduced to analysis reveals the following facts:

(1) To **elicit** the energies of the denomination. The word "elicit" means to **draw out**, and the denominational energies are the things which the convention seeks to draw out.

(2) To **combine** the energies of the denomination. This means that the drawn-out energies of the denomination are to be combined by the convention.

(3) To **direct** the energies of the denomination. The purpose here is easily

understood. "To direct" means "to control." Not being satisfied with the power to draw out and combine the denominational energies, the convention rises up with the demand to **CONTROL** these energies.

Use the "thinker" which God gave you. The Southern Baptist Convention and the "denomination" are concerned. The convention is a human institution. This is admitted by the convention leaders themselves. There is neither precept nor example in the Scriptures for the Southern Baptist Convention. But the denomination, having reference to the churches, is a divine institution. Here, then, is the human institution demanding control of the energies of the divine. To control the energies of the churches is to control the churches themselves. This is Romish despotism, similar to the episcopacy invested in Methodist Bishops. When Catholicism arose it claimed no more authority than the convention claims now; and unless there comes a check, what shall we expect the end to be? Men who depart from the Scriptures far enough to found an institution to control the churches are likely to clothe themselves with despotic power. They are among those who practice wickedness in "high (heavenly) places." (Eph. 6:12.)

The despotic rule of the convention appears more corrupt when we consider the basis of its operation. Article III of the Constitution says:

"The Convention shall consist (1) of mes-

sengers who contribute funds, or are elected by Baptist bodies contributing funds for the regular work of the Convention, on the basis of one messenger for every \$250 actually paid into the treasuries of the Boards during the fiscal year ending the thirtieth day of April next preceding the meeting of the Convention; (2) of one representative from each of the District Associations which co-operate with this Convention provided that such representative be formally elected at the annual meeting of his District Association, and the election certified to the Secretaries of the Convention, either in writing or by copy of the printed Minutes." (Annual, 1925, p. 11.)

This is unmistakable language. "The Convention shall consist of messengers who contribute funds, or are elected by Baptist bodies contributing funds for the regular work of the Convention, on the BASIS of one messenger for every \$250 actually paid into the treasuries of the Boards," etc.

Delegates who contribute as much as \$250 may have a voice in the convention without an appointment by a church. And a Baptist body (and there are many Baptist societies) may appoint a delegate for every \$250 contributed to the convention work during the fiscal year. This makes the basis of representation in the convention and money inseparable. Talk about "sanctified common sense"; that sort of sense alone, to say nothing of the Bible, teaches that Christ nowhere and at no time enjoined upon His churches the rule of money. We can not substitute the jingle of the dollar for the voice of God, and get away with it. The money basis

was planted either by the hand of God or by man. The convention leaders themselves admit that it is not in the Bible; hence God had nothing to do with its origin.

Note—

(1) Every plant that the Lord did not plant shall be plucked up. (Matt. 15:13.)

(2) The money basis was not planted by the Lord.

(3) Therefore the money basis shall be plucked up.

This form of reasoning may be applied to the whole Southern Baptist Convention.

To carry into effect the purpose of the convention to control the churches "for the propagation of the gospel," this body elects at its annual meetings a number of boards which have full control of its enterprises during the recess of the convention. In Article V of the Constitution, we read:

"The Convention shall elect at each annual meeting as many Boards of Managers as, in its judgment, will be necessary for carrying out the benevolent objects it may determine to promote—all of which Boards may continue in office until a new election." (Annual, 1925, p. 11.)

What powers do these boards have? Here it is stated:

"To each Board shall be committed, during the recess of the Convention, the entire management of all the affairs relative to the objects with whose interests it shall be charged." (Annual, 1925, p. 11, Article V.)

There are several boards in charge of the convention affairs. The Home Mis-

sion Board, located at Atlanta, Georgia, has full control of the mission work in the homeland. The Foreign Mission Board, located at Richmond, Virginia, has full control of the mission interests of the convention on the foreign fields.

Mind you, these Boards are not elected by the churches direct, nor by messengers that are elected by churches. There is no church authority back of them. They are boards of the convention to which has been committed the "ENTIRE MANAGEMENT OF THE AFFAIRS." The convention is composed of individuals, not of churches, and the boards have absolute power granted to them by a convention of individuals without church authority.

The churches are the divine custodians of the gospel. Whenever their authority is infringed on, Christ Himself is likewise infringed on. As the churches are treated, so is Christ. "Why persecutest thou me?" spoke Christ from heaven to Saul of Tarsus who was persecuting Christ by persecuting His churches.

The churches are considered as units in the New Testament Scriptures. As so many units they should have equal rights of representation in associations. Just as well to give a large man more votes at the polls than a small man as to give a large body more representation than a small one, though this representation in the convention never carries with it local church authority. In this particular the autonomy of the churches is not respected.

It seems that the convention no longer seriously considers church authority, as money is its basis of representation. There are many churches too weak to contribute \$250 for the convention work, in which case not even an individual representation can come from it.

Conventionism is neither Scriptural nor expedient. It is a weight, an ultra-organic parasite on the churches. It is not the churches, nor is it the "denomination." It is institutional, human in nature, purposes and plans, apart from church authority and control, and despotic in practice.

The Origin of Conventionism and Church Associations Scriptural

By BEN M. BOGARD

PART I

The Origin of Conventionism

The Educational Secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention, Doctor T. B. Ray, has published a book which gives the origin of conventionism as well as I could do it, and he is the spokesman for the Southern Baptist Convention, possibly his word will be taken when what I say might be disputed. On page 15, "Southern Baptist Missions," he says:

"At a ministers' meeting at Kettering, October, 1792, after the public services of the day were ended, the ministers retired to consult further on the matter and to lay a foundation at least for a society, when the following resolutions were proposed and unanimously agreed to:

"Resolution: 'Every person who shall subscribe ten pounds at once or ten shillings and six pence annually shall be considered a member of the society'."

This was the first step the Baptists ever took toward modern conventionism. The newly formed society raised, the day of its organization, \$63.52 in cash to start the work, and conventionism was born.

It will be observed that there was not a church represented, and not a church was consulted in the formation of this first society or convention whose purpose was to take over the work the Lord had commissioned his churches to do.



BEN M. BOGARD

Thus conventionism began in England. In the United States the same sort of thing was done. In Ray's book, page 255, we read:

"We, the delegates from Missionary Societies and other religious bodies of the Baptist denomination in various parts of the United States, met in convention in the city of Philadelphia, for the purpose of carrying into effect the benevolent intentions of our constituents, by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining and directing the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort for sending the glad tidings of salvation to the heathen, and to nations destitute of the pure gospel light, do agree to the following rules and fundamental principles, viz:

"That a Triennial Convention shall hereafter be held, consisting of delegates, not exceeding two in number, from each of the several Missionary Societies and other religious bodies of the Baptist denomination now existing or which may hereafter be formed in the United States, and which shall each regularly contribute to the general missionary fund a sum amounting at least to one hundred dollars per annum."

Thus we see that American conventionism began in 1814, in Philadelphia, and not a church was consulted. Societies only were represented, and they only on condition that they pay at least \$100 a year to the general fund. Thus societies and money were recognized and the churches despised. Churches had nothing whatever to do with starting conventionism. It began independent of the churches, and then began the conquest of the churches. It has never been the policy of conventionism to follow the orders of the churches, but it

is the avowed policy of the conventions to "elicit, combine and direct the energies of the whole denomination." Such it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. There is not the slightest indication of any disposition to change this policy. If the churches submit to it, church independence is gone.

The Southern Baptist Convention was organized in 1845. It was simply a split off from the Triennial Convention, with no change in principle. The cause of the split was the slavery question. (See Ray's book, page 30.) The Southern Baptist Convention continues the policy of trying to control the churches. The first paragraph in the Constitution and also in the By-Laws of the Southern Baptist Convention says:

"Impressed with the obligations resting on the Convention to endeavor more energetically and systematically to elicit, combine and direct the energies of the whole denomination, in one sacred effort for the promulgation of the gospel, etc."

Thus conventionism started out on its mission to control the churches; "to elicit combine and direct the energies of the whole denomination," and it has never let up on that determination. It is for the churches to decide whether they will thus surrender their God-given liberty to a crowd of self-appointed dictators who come to the churches as directors and not as servants.

Conventionism Is a Modern Invention, But Missionary Work Is of Divine Origin
Conventionism is only a fraction over

a hundred years old, but Missionary Baptist churches have been doing missionary work all through the centuries since the Lord gave the commission to the Baptist church at Jerusalem. There was never any excuse for the formation of conventionism, because the Lord's churches have all along done the work the Lord commissioned them to do, and the record is clear on this point. Before conventionism was invented missionary work was successfully carried on by the individual churches and by associations of churches, and a record of this missionary work can be traced clear back to the apostolic age. To that record your attention is now cited:

Main in 1789

The Bodenheim Association was actively missionary in 1789. Millett describes the work as follows: "This plan consisted in the appointment of a committee to employ a suitable ordained elder as a missionary to travel into the eastern part to preach and administer the ordinances of the gospel." * * * It was decided to carry the gospel not only to destitute churches, but to new and destitute settlements, where Christ was not preached.

See Millett's History of the Baptists of Maine, page 425. This was three years before conventionism was invented.

Missions in North Carolina in 1787

In Read's and Burkitt's History of the Old Kehukee Association we have the following: "That not only ordained preachers, but young gifts also be advised and called upon by the church to which they belong, to engage in the work, not only amongst the churches, but in other places where it may appear necessary." (Page 92.)

This was twenty-seven years before there was a Baptist convention in America. This Association finally lapsed into Antinomianism and ceased to be a "Missionary" Baptist body, as it originally was.

When was that? In 1787, before there was any convention. Hence we find the Association plan before any convention existed.

Missions in Pennsylvania in 1765

"Before leaving the shores of America for Europe, we wish to make one or two quotations from the Minutes of the Philadelphia Association. In 1765 the Philadelphia Association sent out two missionaries, an account of which is given in Read's and Burkitt's History of the Old Kehukee Association of North Carolina, as follows: 'Divine Providence disposed the Philadelphia Association to send Messrs. Vanhorn and Miller, two of their ministers belonging to that Association, who lived in New Jersey, to travel into the Southern Colonies, and visit the churches and preach the gospel. * * * Through their instrumentality, many people were awakened; many of those churches were convinced of their error, and were instructed in the doctrines of the gospel and some churches were organized anew, and established upon the principles of the doctrine of grace. These churches, the newly constituted, adopted the Baptist confession of faith, adopted in London in 1689. The churches thus reformed, although few in number, entered into Associational compact about the year 1765.'" (Pages 33, 36.)

This was twenty-seven years before there was a convention; an association, carrying on missionary work.

Again, we have the following:

"A motion being made for raising a fund,

the interest of which is to be apportioned to the particular and express purpose of preaching the gospel in destitute places among the back settlements, at the discretion of the Association; agreed to recommend the same to the churches and that the interest of whatever may be raised for that purpose shall be strictly apportioned to that purpose only." (Minutes of Philadelphia Association for 1778, page 158.)

This was thirty-six years before there was a Baptist convention in America.

English Baptists in 1689

The assembly which adopted the "London Confession of Faith" was undoubtedly a representative body and correctly represented the faith and practice of Baptist churches at that time. We shall quote from Armitage's History of Baptists. He says: "The first 'General Assembly' was held in 1689, on a call from the London churches, signed by Kiffin, Knollys and Keich, with three others. The request was for 'a general meeting here in London of two principal brethren of every church of the same faith with us, in every county respectively.'" (Page 207.) We now quote from Benedict's History of Baptists respecting this meeting, as follows: "Resolved among other things to raise a fund for missionary purposes and to assist feeble churches, also for the purpose of ministerial education." (Page 336.)

Those churches were then evidently Association Baptist churches. Two messengers from each church—church equality. This was 103 years before there was a Baptist convention on earth. Honestly, what do you think of those editors and authors who persistently assert that those who refuse to adopt conventionism have "split off," but will never tell what they

have "split off" from? There were no Baptist conventions, nor Convention Baptists, nor churches co-operating with organizations of similar character or kind, for over 1,700 years. We ask again: In the name of right and justice what is it that those churches refusing to co-operate with conventions have split off from?

Missions in Wales in 1654

"In the Association held at Swansea in 1654 the church at Llantrisant proposed to assist the churches of Abbergavenney and Llanwenarth to support their ministers, which also they did. From the messengers of Llantrisant, also, they proposed to revive the ancient order of things, that is, to encourage the support of the missionary cause." (Davis' History of Welsh Baptists, page 85.)

This was 138 years before there was a Baptist convention in the world. There are numbers of good Baptist brethren we know (outside of their unnecessary infatuation for conventions and human inventions) who would like the best imaginable, occasionally, to take an excursion on the old Baptist ship of Zion, up the stream of time, along Baptist succession lines. But, dear brethren, as much as we would love to have you go with us, we tell you the truth, you cannot go back to Jerusalem and old Judea and Galilee, along the line of Baptist succession, unless you leave the boat you are now in. At 1792 is where a conventionism begins. Conventions have a succession back to 1792, but beyond that point, back to Jerusalem, it is all an unexplored region to conventionites. Association Baptists don't have to change

boats to get back to where Christ and the apostles planted gospel churches all over the country. Don't go back there, brethren, don't try to unless you change up.

I plead and entreat my convention brethren who are disposed occasionally to teach and preach and write about Baptist succession, to try convention succession just one time. If you want succession you have to take church succession—your convention line is over 1,700 years too short.

Waldenses in 1229

"By the assiduous and unceasing efforts of the elders and teachers to instruct and qualify every member of the community to inform the ignorant of the way of salvation by the system of local itinerancy, while others undertook more extensive journeys. Those united efforts of the whole body were attended with incalculable good and such organized exertions promised fair to evangelize the world." (See Orchard's History, Vol. 1, page 195.)

Here is co-operative mission work on a large scale. We have Jones' History of the Waldenses and shorter accounts by a number of other historians. All of them speak of their churches and of their zeal and activity in the propagation of the gospel, but not one mentions anything like a convention existing among them. It was simply organized co-operative church work and effort referred to in the quotation just given. This was 563 years before there was a Baptist convention on earth. I wonder what those ancient Waldensean Baptists and Welsh Baptists and all other Baptists down to 1792 "split off" from?

If Convention Baptists never "split off" from anything, of course they have an unbroken succession back to Christ. Let them try to run the succession.

Paulician Baptists in 7th, 8th and 9th Centuries

The Paulician Baptists were believers in church missions in the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries, as the following account of Orchard shows: "An evident mark of the Apostolic spirit possessed by this people must be admitted by all. Without funds or public societies to countenance or support the arduous undertaking otherwise than their respective churches, the Paulicians fearlessly penetrated to the most barbarous parts of Europe, and went single-handed and single-eyed into the conflict with every grade of character." (Page 139.)

Here the historian positively asserts that those Paulician Baptists had no societies to countenance or support their arduous undertaking, but went to the conflict against every grade of character with nothing to support them "otherwise than their respective churches." Considering the fact that the order which Christ established remained intact until the fourth century, and that it was heathen persecution which drove the true worshipers of God into obscurity, and Papal persecution from the 9th to the 15th century, we have every century covered with missionary churches back to Christ and the apostles.

Now, come back to the word of God: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, accord-

ing to His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph. 3:10-11 (Revised version.)

Again:

"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever." Eph. 3:21. (Revised version.)

Once more:

"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. 3:14, 15. (Revised version.)

So we have it in the beginning, coming straight on down to the present time—associational missions all the way through.

Conventionism is an invention of men. But scriptural mission work is of God. We should not be Hardshells, neither should we be Conventionists, but we should be Scriptural Missionary Baptists.

PART II

**Church Associations
Scriptural**

(Note: The following is the substance of a speech made by Ben M. Bogard in his debate with I. N. Penick, and which Penick did not attempt to refute. It remains to this day unanswered.)

From time to time those who have participated in the work of forming a general association of churches, and in opposing the principles and methods by which Conventionism carries on its work, have been challenged to "prove there is Scripture for an association." They confessed there was and is none for the convention system, and then pointing at us say, "Prove associations if you can." That challenge is fair. If we demand that they produce Scripture for what they do before we will aid them, they have a right to demand that we produce Scripture for what we do before they aid us. They have produced none, confess they cannot produce it, and so give it up.

They say there is no Scripture for the convention and we agree with them; but they say there is none for a general association either, but we do not agree with them in that. They are trying to place us in the same fix they are in. They have surrendered their old contention and now

they wish us to surrender too.

In the first place there are various kinds of associations formed on different principles and for various purposes. Of course, we do not claim there is Scripture for any and all sorts of associations, for any and all sorts of purposes under any and all sorts of laws. **But there is Scripture for an association of churches in work to support missionaries, to raise funds and disburse them, under the law of Christ.**

The word "association" is derived from the Latin, "adsocaire." It is the Latin equivalent of the Greek "koinonia." But we have an English translation, and in the English version the translators used the Anglo-Saxon word "fellowship" as the equivalent of the Greek "koinonia." They also translated it by the words "ministration" (Rom. 15:31), "service," (2 Cor. 11:8), where the word is "diakonia," "dia" meaning through and "koinonia" fellowship or association. It was applied specifically to the work which Paul performed both as missionary and as treasurer for the churches in contributing for the relief of the poor saints. Read: "I robbed other churches (notice it is churches) taking wages of them (plural them) to do you (diakonia) service." 2 Cor. 11:8.

The churches which supported Paul as missionary to Corinth were in fellowship or association in the matter of supporting him and he was a missionary supported by churches associated together for the purpose of supporting him. He says "taking wages of them (plural, them—more than

one), to do you service." Here is a scriptural example of an association of churches in the matter of supporting Paul while he preached at Corinth. He was a missionary of an association or fellowship of churches and received wages or pay from them for his work as missionary. In verse 9, he says: "And when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man, for that which was lacking unto me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied," etc. So it was the Macedonian churches which were associated in the work of supporting Paul, the missionary of the churches to Corinth. And Paul calls this work "dia-konia," meaning work done through an "association" of churches.

How large was that association? I do not know, probably only the churches of Macedonia. I contend for an association of churches in work, raising funds, giving the churches information, etc.

Remember that the Greek word "dia-konia" means work done through associated effort.

In 2 Cor. 8:4, Paul says of the same Macedonian churches concerning their effort to raise a fund for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and impoverished mission-

"Praying (begging) us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift (contribution) and take on us the fellowship (associated service) of ministering to the saints." Read the whole chapter and you will find: 1. The movement originated

with the Macedonian churches themselves. 2. They begged Paul to receive the contribution. 3. That Paul with others were "chosen of the churches to travel with us," etc. (The word "administered" is "diakoneo" and means a service rendered to the associated churches). 4. That Paul wrote to other churches besides those in Macedonia about the matter, for the letter from which we are quoting was written with others. 5. The context shows that not only Paul but Titus visited other churches and thus, by correspondence and visits raised the fund, which was afterward carried to Jerusalem by Paul and others whom we have seen were elected or chosen treasurers by the churches for this purpose.

We have already seen that the Macedonian churches were associated in raising means for Paul's support as a missionary; now we see these same churches, and consequently the same association, also cooperating to raise funds for benevolence. So it is absolutely sure there was an association of churches in Macedonia in Paul's day for both missions and benevolence; that those who served the churches as officials were "chosen of the churches," and that those thus chosen traveled, wrote letters, took collections and disbursed them according to the wish of the givers.

We have seen: 1. There was an association of churches in Macedonia for both missions and benevolence. I call it the Macedonian Baptist Association. 2. That

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Paul wrote to the church at Corinth and was endeavoring to secure their co-operation in the contribution to the associated fund. 3. Now look in 1 Cor. 16:1, and read: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders (instructions) to the churches in Galatia, even so do ye," and you will see that Paul had written to the churches in Galatia about the same thing and was trying to enlist their help in the same enterprise. Therefore the churches of Macedonia, Corinth and Galatia were all enlisted in this work, and that included all the churches then in existence, on both sides of the Aegean Sea, in both Asia Minor and Europe. In few words, all the churches of the Gentiles formed into a general association, in the work of contributing to the relief of the poor and persecuted Jewish Christians and impoverished missionaries.

Now I have proven there is Scripture for an **Association of churches in work**, mark you, **Association in work**.

I have also proved that there was an inter-church committee chosen of the churches to travel, receive and disburse contributions, and it was strictly a committee on information and finance, not to appoint and control missionaries.

Now, this was the model followed in the formation of the American Association of Baptist Churches, for both missions and benevolence. It is a scriptural example as plain as the Ten Commandments or the Golden Rule. Now let those who asked for the proof take this and see to it that

they come "over into the Macedonia (association) and help us." They say there is no Scripture for the way they are at work, and we agree that there is none, but there is Scripture for the way we are doing it and they should quit their extra-Scriptural method and get with us on the Bible.

I have shown Scripture for both local and general associations of churches in work; for inter-church committees to receive and disburse funds, travel, write letters, give information to the churches, and carry out the will of the churches.

What I oppose is: 1. The making of constitutions or laws by associations and conventions, for the government of the work of the churches in missions. Churches have no authority to legislate or make laws and if they have none they can delegate none to associations or conventions; and when these bodies make laws to govern the work, they violate the Baptist principle that "churches are executive, not legislative bodies," and overturn the whole Baptist position. For this reason, when the old General Association of Baptist Churches was formed we simply "declared principles," the first of which says:

"The object of this association of churches is the evangelization of the world according to methods found in the New Testament." Thus the churches declare it their principle that the work shall be done according to New Testament law; and this abrogates all human laws whether made by association, convention or other bodies, and puts Baptists on the New Tes-

tament as the only law, thus harmonizing Baptist practice with Baptist principles.

This is not a delegation of episcopal powers to boards, by which they appoint, control and remove missionaries at their pleasure. In the New Testament model, the missionary was sent from the local churches by the Holy Spirit, to the field, (Acts 11:22; Acts 13:1-4; Acts 8:26; Acts 10:20), and no man, association or other organization than the local church of which he was a member had any power or control over him. The missionary was amenable to the local church and under the law of Christ for his Christian deportment and doctrine, just as any other member. This is proved by the fact that the church at Antioch sent messengers to inquire of the Jerusalem church concerning the teachings of certain persons who went out from the Jerusalem church and taught circumcision; the Antioch church recognized both the responsibility and jurisdiction of the Jerusalem church over the doctrine and conduct of its members, and the Jerusalem church disavowed and disowned the doctrine thus taught by its own members. (Acts 15). Here is church authority over its own members, under the laws of Christ, and there was no board to manage the question, to appoint or remove the missionary. Besides, the laws of Christ are specific on the matter of the powers now exercised by episcopacy and Baptist mission boards; "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon

them, but it shall not be so among you." (Matt. 20:25-26.) The Convention boards do exercise authority over the missionaries and they violate the above plain law of Jesus Christ. For this reason we see the inter-church committee of the association of churches, which we found in the New Testament, did not either appoint or control the missionaries; their work was to give information to the churches, travel, collect and disburse funds. That committee collected and administered money; it did not control men. But convention boards control both money and men. Under the New Testament law, adopted by the American Association, every man is free and equal and we have fellowship and peace; under convention laws and board dominion and authority, the missionary is under board authority and rule, a slave, there is no equality, no fellowship and no peace unless forsooth the missionary quietly submits to slavery and secures peace by the destruction of liberty. The New Testament laws governing mission work are full and complete. The mandatory law is that we shall "go forth and preach the gospel to every creature." Matt. 28:19. The prohibitory law is that we shall not "exercise authority" over each other in doing the work. Matt. 20:25-26. Now, therefore, in order to harmonize these laws we must go, but we must not exercise authority over each other as we go. Hence in the American Association of Churches the missionaries go out from the churches, there is an inter-

church committee on information without any power at all over them. The missionaries are responsible to the churches of which they are members, the churches co-operate through their committee to support them, Baptist practice is harmonized with New Testament laws and examples, we have harmony, equality and peace, and the work goes on.

Abolish man-made laws governing the work and the workers, everywhere, all along the line. This will embrace constitutions of associations and conventions. Instead of these laws let them declare their adherence and submission to the laws of Christ as given in the New Testament, and the **churches to co-operate in the work under those laws.**

Abolish board authority, set the missionaries free, let them be amenable to the discipline of the churches of which they are members, under the laws of Christ, just as all other members are, and go out as the Spirit calls and the churches send them, and we shall have harmony and Scriptural methods in mission work and peace.

This does not mean destruction or division. The local associations have a proviso in their constitutions that they can change them. It is their right to change from human to divine law, and it is their duty to do so. So, too, the State Conventions, can change from their own constitutions or laws they have made, and agree to submit to the laws of Christ, declare their principles and get on Bible ground,

as we have asked the Southern Convention to do.

These are the Biblical reasons and principles for which Association Baptists are contending. They have sought to reform abuse in associations and conventions and have met persecution from convention leaders all over the land. The abuses are admitted and we are told to "stay inside and reform these abuses," but those who stay inside are set down as "enemies to missions"; the very moment they move to reform the abuses they are asked to reform. Nothing remains then, but to make the appeal to the churches as against the errors and abuses of conventionism, in the face and in spite of the persecutions of the leaders of conventionism. And this we shall do without hesitation. Churches of the living God should quit convention laws and episcopacy and get on Bible ground and so save the denomination from error, division and decay. Pastors of the churches of Christ should open their mouths like men of God and show their people the way laid down in the Book of God. Urge the people to obey Jesus Christ though every convention leader under the sun persecutes you. Stop the manipulation of your local associations and churches by convention masters. Get on Biblical ground and "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

We think the Macedonian Association was the first one; that the churches of Macedonia took the initiative in associate work, both in supporting Paul the mis-

sionary, and then in raising a fund for the poor saints at Jerusalem. There had been mission work by individual churches as when the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas, Acts 11:22-23, and the church at Antioch sent Saul and Barnabas, Acts 13:1-4, but it was not until after the Macedonia churches had been established and Paul had preached and established a church at Corinth that he wrote, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service." Then later came the matter of benevolence and not only the Macedonian churches, which led the movement, but the churches also of Corinth, Galatia and all the "churches of the Gentiles," were enlisted by the efforts of Paul, Titus, Timothy and perhaps others, how many we do not know, but they were "chosen" of the churches for the purpose, and of them Paul says, "They are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ," and through them as an **inter-church committee the churches were associated in the work, just as in the American Association.**

There was no vast concourse of thousands of "delegates," no large gathering at any one place, no glorifying of "great leaders," no useless organization, machinery and expense, no lording it over God's heritage, no masters over the brethren, but a sufficient, capable, earnest, selected committee, which wrote, traveled and laid the matter before the churches explaining definitely the object of the effort and rendering a faithful service for the

churches in the work. There was no violation of the fundamental laws laid down by the Master, but there was association of the churches in work, through their own committee.

(I have borrowed much of the foregoing arguments from J. A. Scarboro, for which I gladly give credit.—B. M. B.)

Don't forget that the association we have shown, was formed just as soon as churches had been established to form it, before much of the New Testament was written and the organization of churches, the FORMATION OF AN ASSOCIATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WERE SIMULTANEOUS ACTS, and thus it is incorporated in the New Testament canon. Therefore a local and a general association of churches in both missions and benevolence are Scriptural, while the convention system is by its own confession an extra-scriptural affair, and I say an unscriptural affair, because it violates the prohibitory law governing associated work, laid down in Matt. 20:25-26, which says we must not exercise authority over one another.

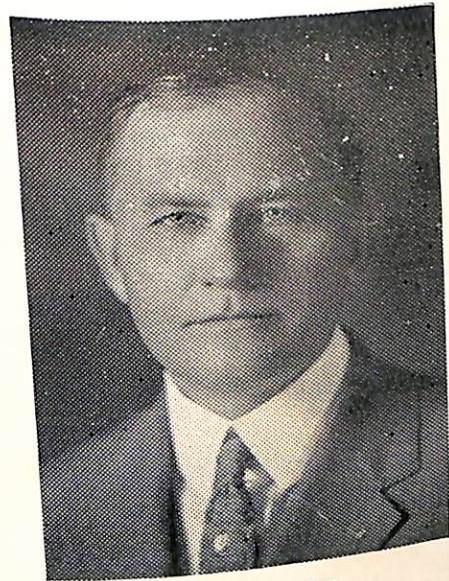
By its own confession the convention experiment is extra-scriptural and over 1,700 years too young to be Scriptural.

By the Book of God an association of churches is Scriptural, for such an association was formed in Paul's day, of the churches of Macedonia, Corinth and Galatia. Let us go **FORWARD TO THE NEW TESTAMENT.**

Conventionism Versus the Baptist Faith

By L. S. BALLARD

It will sound somewhat incongruous no doubt to our Convention brethren to charge it upon them that they are not keeping pace with the Baptist faith. Nevertheless their indifference to and departure from New Testament law in their efforts to evangelize the world calls for the indictment. We do not call for their zeal for God, nor impugn their motives in seeking to reach every nook and every corner of all the countries of the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ, for this is the express command of the Son of God in Matthew 28:19, 20, but we do honestly and sincerely demur to any disregard for the established law of the New Testament governing the evangelization of the world. The New Testament is our only rule of faith and practice; take that away from us and we have no specific guide in matters of religion, nor established basis for our Baptist faith. The law of the New Testament governing the churches in the evangelization of the world was not given only, and specifically for the churches of the first century to be constantly changed, or set aside as man's wisdom might suggest, but it is the



L. S. BALLARD

unchangeable law of God, divinely and specifically enacted by which the churches of the first and last, and all intervening centuries are to be governed in their work. If on the ground of expediency men are justifiable in governing, changing, or setting aside the law governing the preaching of the gospel, then on the same grounds they would be justifiable in over-running, changing, or setting aside the law governing immersion, or any other New Testament doctrine as to that matter. Such a method of procedure would soon lead to the worst sort of chaos, and finally to the complete destruction of every New Testament doctrine and principle.

Baptist ideals, faith and practices were born, originated and established with Christ and His apostles. When Jesus set up the church He gave it the law of baptism, the gospel of salvation, and finally the world as its field of operation, and said to that church, "Go ye therefore, baptize (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Spirit), 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."

This commission was not given to a board, committee, convention, or an association, but to the church of Jesus Christ. Therefore it follows that if the commission to preach the gospel can be taken out of the hands of the churches and turned over to boards, committees, conventions,

or associations, then the authority to baptize can be transferred to such institutions, and so the church is a useless agent in the world. We would not, however, be understood as opposing the use of those things by the churches; but what we oppose is the churches being used and controlled by them. This is one of the charges we lay at the door of modern conventionism, which proves beyond a doubt that Convention Baptists are not keeping pace with the old-time Baptist faith.

Modern conventionism with its domineering boards was not known among New Testament churches, and is nowhere authorized by New Testament law. The germ from which it sprang was laid in Kettering, England, in October 1792, at which time a missionary society was formed by certain ministers who were self-appointed, and acted wholly without church authority. Not a single church was known, or had any voice in the affair. The society was founded strictly on a money basis, and no one was allowed membership in it unless he paid the specified sum. Conventionism in America was organized and has been operated after the same pattern, with very slight changes along the line. The only way churches are known in it now is they are expected to pay the bills and abide by the laws enacted and enforced by said conventions, boards and societies. How different this is from New Testament procedure.

Modernism seeks to set aside and replace New Testament law by substituting

human wisdom and expediency. Such unwarranted propaganda has led to much confusion and division among Baptists. For well informed Baptists who love the cause of Christ more than the praise of men, and who fear to disobey, or tamper with New Testament law, are not going to follow such unscriptural leadership. — And for this reason divisions and sub-divisions, rebellions and revolts have already arisen among Baptists. Since Convention Baptists broke away from New Testament law and adopted modern methods, following the plans devised by human wisdom and expediency, as an argument to convince the unsuspecting that they are right and that God is with them, they point to their great church-plants, eleemosynary institutions, schools, and universities (all of which are hopelessly involved in debt), and say, "Look what we've done." But in answer to their unsound logic, and method of argumentation history points to Egypt with its gold and silver; its great kings and its wonderful institutions of learning; its brick-yards and pyramids; its temples and more than thirty thousand false gods, and says, "Look what they did." But who were the people of God in Egypt? They were not found among the rich, nor the wise so considered, nor the aristocracy; they founded no cities, built no schools, and erected no temples; they were the Hebrew slaves under the iron hand of oppression. History points to Babylon with its Nebuchadnezzar, hanging gardens, and

gates of pearl, and says, "Look what they did." But God was not in it. The people of God in Babylon had no kings, built no palaces, established no schools, and improved no lands. They were the poor, despised Hebrews of the land. But coming a little closer to our day I point you to the great Temple of Diana in the city of Ephesus whose wealth and magnificence had attracted the attention and admiration of the world (Acts 19:27), and say, "Look what they did." If we accept the progress that a people make in building and fostering wealthy institutions as proof that God is with them, who were the people of God in the city of Ephesus; Paul and his co-laborers, or the worshippers of Diana? The worshippers of Diana have the best of the argument, for at that time the disciples of Christ had built no temples. Again, I point you to Romanism, the wealthiest religious machine on earth and ask you to look at her financial achievements in the world; her colleges and universities, sanatoriums, and houses of the Good Shepherd; temples and cathedrals and ask you to note what she has done. She has hundreds of dollars in brick, and stone, dirt and commerce to where Convention Baptists have dollars. Romanism has her property clear of debt, while Convention Baptists are so deeply in debt it is doubtful whether they will ever be able to pay out. If the truth and loyalty of a religious people are to be determined by their financial status then the Roman Catholic church is beyond

doubt the church of Jesus Christ. This we are not willing to accept, neither do we think our convention brethren are ready to accept it. We prefer to measure and determine the Scripturalness of a people by their love and loyalty for the inspired Word of God.

New Testament churches were associated in their efforts to evangelize the world, and had their channels of co-operation in the days of the apostles. And after the death of Jesus Christ everything was done by church authority, or under the direct leadership of the Holy Spirit. There was an association of churches in the days of Paul effected solely for the purpose of preaching the gospel. (2 Cor. 11:8-9.) Here it is plainly stated that Paul received wages from a plurality of churches for mission work done in different parts of the country. Those churches from which he received wages were associated together and co-operating with one another in the evangelization of the world, and were organized to the extent that they had a perfect understanding among themselves as to the wages that should be paid for the work. But remember that it was from the churches, and by church authority that Paul received his wages.

New Testament churches were associated in their work by means of messengers elected by the churches. See 2 Cor. 8:23. This is exactly the way Association or Missionary Baptists do things today. In the apostolic gatherings there were no messengers present sent from boards, con-

ventions, or societies but they were all church messengers clothed with church authority. This is the law of the New Testament, and was the practice of Baptists until modern Conventionism was born of human wisdom in 1792 at which time human wisdom was set over against the wisdom of God; church authority was disregarded; Baptist faith and practice were trampled under the feet of self-appointed leaders; and the law of expediency was substituted for the law of Christ.

Eld. J. H. Milburn, in *Missions and Mission Methods*, page 161, remarks on 2 Cor. 8:19-23, as follows:

"Those primitive churches had messengers whom they elected by popular vote as necessity required. Those messengers represented the churches which elected them and what those messengers or representatives of the churches did in the capacity of messengers, the churches themselves did, for they were acting through their messengers whom they had chosen. How natural and reasonable it is, that the churches of Christ adjacent to each other would communicate and confer with one another through messengers and use this method of advancing their common spiritual interests and their Master's kingdom and how unnatural for them not to thus communicate with each other, as has been shown clearly they did."

We should like to enlarge upon this phase of the subject but space forbids. However, this will suffice to show how New Testament faith and practice differ from the organized work of the conventions. In New Testament associations the churches were the units and were rep-

resented in all co-operative meetings by means of messengers strictly on a church-equality basis. Whether their meetings were doctrinal, missionary, benevolent or ethical in spirit and purpose they were composed strictly and wholly of church-sent messengers. Conventionism has reversed this practice and operates exclusively on a money and society basis with the churches as a side-line.

Church equality and church authority are unknown among Convention Baptists if we are to take their practice as our guide. The Southern Baptist Convention is the law-making body for all the churches co-operating therewith. The churches must either accept her laws and co-operate with her plans or stay out. Individuals are the units in the Southern Baptist Convention, and many of the state conventions, who are able and willing to pay for their seats. No individual can have a seat or voice in that body as a church messenger without a money consideration. Hence the churches that represent must pay for the privilege of voting. Though a thousand churches should send messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention fully clothed with church authority the messengers would be refused seats unless the money was forthcoming or had already been contributed one way or another to pay for their admission as messengers. Thus the voice of the church is rejected while the voice of the dollar is accepted. The church that is able to buy many seats has many voices, but the poor church that

is unable to pay is rejected and has no voice at all in that body. And yet you find people who claim to be Baptists who think it is a sin to oppose such unscriptural practices. They say, "It is such a small digression from the truth that it ought to be overlooked in order that the work may go on without opposition, and that peace and harmony may prevail." You may call it a small digression if you will, but it is large enough if universally accepted by Baptists, to forever set aside New Testament law and destroy church authority, and render the inspired Word of God null and void so far as Baptists are concerned.

One digression from the truth leads to another. When Baptists begin to drift away from the Word of God if they do not see their mistakes and retrace their steps and right their wrongs there is no telling where they will land. But we know from history that they will go from bad to worse. Disregard for New Testament law and church authority in the evangelization of the world has already led to much heresy among Convention Baptists, to say nothing of the money, numerical and society basis in their general bodies. Many of their churches have already shown disregard for the law of baptism by accepting the baptism of other denominations. This is contrary to the plain teachings of the New Testament in Eph. 4:5, which says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." New Testament Baptists were rebaptizers. That is they rebaptized

those who came to them who had not been baptized by the proper administrator and according to the specified law governing the ordinance. (Acts 19:3-5.) There was nothing wrong with John's baptism, but those people had not been baptized by John, although they thought they had been Scripturally baptized. They were no doubt baptized by Apollos who was an eloquent man, but who knew nothing but the baptism of John. Although their baptism was by immersion Paul rejected it because of the purpose for which it was performed and the source from which it came.

The almost universal custom of Northern Baptists is to accept immersion from other denominations. This we know to be contrary to old time Baptist faith and practice. Not only do they practice alien immersion, but they are open communists as well. Why not? Open communion and alien immersion go together, and are alike unscriptural. But Southern Baptists say, "We are not guilty of such loose practice." And they are not to the same extent with Northern Baptists, but they are drifting into the same channel, and if the tide does not turn ere long they will all be riding on the same boat. For just last summer Dr. Major, pastor of the Gaston Avenue Baptist church, Dallas, Texas, supplied for a Northern Baptist church, and while there he set an open communion table, and the papers reporting the affair declared it to be one of the most liberal ever set among Baptists. Dr. Major was at

that time pastor of a Southern Baptist Convention church in the city of Dallas. He was one of the leaders in this state (Texas), and his church is one of the strongest churches in Dallas. What did the Convention Baptist Association of Dallas county do with Dr. Major about his loose practice, and disregard for Baptist faith? Nothing. What did the Gaston Avenue Baptist church, of which he was pastor, do about it? Nothing. What did the General Convention of Texas do? Nothing. What did the Southern Baptist Convention do? Nothing. Did they all indorse it? Silence gives consent.

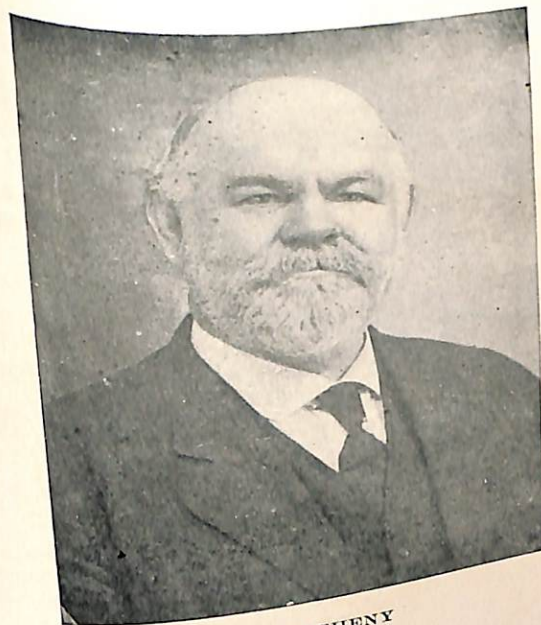
About two years ago there was published an article in the Searchlight, Dr. J. Frank Norris' paper, in which the charge was made that some persons who were members of a different denomination offered themselves for membership in one of the strongest Baptist churches in the city of Dallas, and upon presenting themselves they were informed by the pastor that the Southern Baptist churches did not receive members on their baptism from other denominations, but told them that since they were going back North on a visit, that while there they could join a Northern Baptist church on their baptism, get a letter, and on their return to Dallas could present the letter and be received into the Dallas church on the face of the letter. This they did according to the Searchlight article, and are members to-day of the Dallas congregation if they have not moved away. Did Southern Con-

vention Baptists condemn the Dallas church for her departure from Baptist faith, and disregard for the Word of God? No. Did they indorse it? Their silence is the answer. Those heresies are among our Southern Baptist folk and since they do not condemn the churches and preachers who are thus trampling the faith of Baptists under their feet we charge it upon them that they indorse it. Now these are just two cases, the Lord only knows how many more could be found in the Southland.

They are not keeping pace with the Baptist faith in that many of their strong leaders, preachers, and teachers have denied the inspiration of the Bible, and they are still retained and indorsed as leaders. Their schools (many of them) are hot-beds of heresy. They teach the fiendish doctrine of Evolution, which seeks to set aside every doctrine and principle of the inspired Word of God. But somebody says, did not the Southern Baptist Convention in its last session at Houston, Texas, go on record as being against every phase of Evolution? Yes, that was done. But it is one thing to pass a resolution, and quite another to enforce it. Are not Drs. Mullins and Brooks still considered leaders among Convention Baptists, together with hundreds of others who have taught, and are still teaching Evolution? Dr. S. P. Brooks is still president of Baylor University, and is one of the outstanding leaders among Convention Baptists. So is Dr. Mullins, who is

now and has been for many years president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Space forbids naming others of their leaders who are rank Evolutionists. These cases will suffice to show the drift of Convention Baptists.

There are thousands of Baptist churches in the Southland that never did and never will affiliate with the Southern Baptist Convention, and no doubt there are thousands more that have co-operated with it in one way and another that would like to withdraw from it and be free, but they are kept under the thumb of the leaders and have no one to lead them out. There are thousands of good men and preachers who would love to throw off the yoke, but they are afraid to declare their independence. May God give them grace to come out and accept the old-time Baptist faith once for all delivered to the saints.



M. P. MATHENY

Methods of Work of Convention Baptists in Foreign Lands

By M. P. MATHENY*

Before discussing the above subject, I want to write down what I conceive to be New Testament methods in the evangelization of the world.

First. The gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation, and this to be preached by Spirit-called and Spirit-directed men, unaccompanied by any kind of pecuniary inducement to the people who hear it.

Second. The churches of Christ, either singly or in co-operation, give this gospel to all the world without the intervention of any outside organization, whatsoever.

Third. Consecrated and self-denying labors by both churches and missionaries, both at home and abroad.

There are two distinct methods of work among Convention Baptists that are at variance with these New Testament principles and policies, which we have announced, and these departures are subversive of New Testament principles in carrying out the commission of Christ, with which the churches have been entrusted.

I. What is known as the "subsidy system" among the heathen.

* Deceased.

We mean by the subsidy system in mission work the use of anything that is intended to influence the conduct of the heathen outside of the preaching of the pure word of God, not depending altogether upon the Holy Spirit to make the preaching effective in bringing the people into the churches; such, for instance, as—

(1) the employment of native church members to do religious work on a salary, out of the mission treasury, five times greater than they can earn at ordinary employment. (2) Furnishing free, for the heathen and their children, out of the mission treasury, school houses, hospitals, medical treatment, teachers, books, clothes, board, instruction in farming, smithing, carpentering, housekeeping and all sorts of domestic employment. No doubt these heathen people need all these things and should be encouraged to have and pay for them; but that is not in the commission of Christ, and is made no part of the business of the churches. That the convention does these things in the name of missions, see minutes of Southern Baptist Convention, session 1911, pages 142-156, 157, 158, 166, 161; minutes of 1913 convention, pages 264, 268, 247, 227. And so on and on.

Not only is this contrary to all precept and example of New Testament mission work, but it is exceedingly hurtful to the work itself. On this point I will let Missionary McRae, one of the strong conven-

tion missionaries in Chefoo, China, speak; he sent this information to the foreign mission board and to the convention papers, but they all suppressed it.

In writing to the foreign mission board of the miserable failure in mission work, he says:

"We have worked here in this mission for sixty years and have not one single self-supporting church. It seems to be a sort of religious thing run by foreigners, and paid for by them, and the main body of the workers and members seem quite content that it should be so, the responsibility being on the foreigner.

"It is pitiable, indeed, that we foreigners have held such a strangle hold upon these native churches which we have founded that intelligent Chinese are not willing to enter them because they are 'dominated by foreigners.' They are not to be blamed, because they could not do otherwise and maintain their self-respect. The Chinese are a democratic people and have been accustomed to local self-government in political affairs for 4,000 years. Naturally and rightly they are not willing to have their religious life dominated by foreigners. These Chinese have been accustomed, for countless generations, to local self-government by a system of village eldership which is the exact equivalent in the state to the New Testament eldership in the church. Let us get back as quickly as possible to New Testament self-government and self-support.

"1. The large emphasis that has been placed upon educational work has caused and is more and more causing the neglect of evangelistic work. Protestant missions claim one million Christians out of China's four hundred millions. We are concentrating our efforts upon the million to the large neglect

of the four hundred millions. Fully two-thirds of the Southern Baptist money that is sent to China is being used in educational work.

"2. Our colleges and universities have not been the successful evangelizing agencies as was claimed they would be. The number of college graduates who are active, working Christians today is not sufficient to justify this claim. I place little importance upon the fact that many students are baptized while in school; they are of no value to Christianity after leaving school, and many are a positive disgrace. What else could be expected? We have a premium upon deceit. With China's present eagerness for western learning the wily Oriental does not hesitate to forswear himself for the advantage of getting a fine education at the expense of the foreigner, especially when even books and board are furnished, as the case in many mission schools.

"Another evil that grows out of the foreigner's strict control of the native churches is that the Chinese of the middle and higher classes who are convinced of the truth of Christianity are not willing to enter the church because they look upon it as a foreign organization, financed and controlled by foreigners.

"Now this failure is not a failure of Christianity. It is a failure of our pauperizing mission methods. The Christianity which is revealed in the New Testament, and which turned the Roman world upside down, has not yet been given a trial on the modern mission field. I mean, of course, the organized Christianity that is embodied in a self-growing and self-supporting local church, that Scriptural entity that is so dear to the Southern Baptist hearts. But there can be no development of character where there is no responsibility.

"But our mission to China is religious, and

the higher schools have failed at this point. My study of the question has forced me to the conviction that the kingdom of Christ is not much nearer as a result of the great sums of money that have been expended in this work. And to the extent that the evangelistic work has been weakened to furnish the men and money for this work, it has been a positive hindrance."

These are but extracts from Missionary McRae's letters, but they were published in full in the Baptist and Commoner.

Missionary McRae speaks more particularly of the baneful influence of the school feature of convention work, but the other features to which attention is called are just as hurtful as well as unscriptural.

II. The complete episcopal system which the convention holds over the churches and pastors in foreign lands.

The Methodist system of episcopal rule over her churches and preachers in the home land is not more complete than is the convention system in their mission work in foreign lands.

I am aware that this is a grave charge which I am bringing against Convention Baptists and ought not to be brought unless it can be thoroughly sustained by irrefutable evidence, and this I proceed to furnish. Their own records ought to be sufficient to establish their position.

First let us find the source of authority for this episcopal system. Did it come from the churches themselves? Hardly. You will find it provided for in the constitution (fundamental law) of the convention. Here it is: "A plan for eliciting,

combining and directing the energies of the whole denomination." Preamble to the constitution. "To each board shall be committed, during the recess of the convention, the entire management of all the affairs relating to the objects with whose interests it shall be charged, all of which management shall be in strict accordance with the constitutional provisions adopted by the convention." Art. V of the constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Remember that this constitution was adopted without the authority of a single Baptist church and has never been submitted to one for ratification.

The convention assumed this authority to manage the affairs of the church and then requires every church that would have representation in the convention to pay the sum of \$250 before they could do so. Having assumed all authority over the churches and having put this authority into the hands of the boards and shut out the churches, except through the payment of \$250, which constituted them a regular monied aristocracy, they proceeded to establish bishops over the work on the foreign field. They call these bishops "superintendents," but they have all the authority of episcopal bishops. Here is their record of their work:

1. "Sig. Amborsini was transferred to Genoa."
2. "Dr. Taylor sent Sig. Luginbuhl from Triest, Austria, to this little town."
3. "Our pastor is a good man, but lacks enterprise and is greatly discouraged. He

will be sent elsewhere soon."

4. "Sig. Scalera, who was sent here."
5. "The pastor, Sig. L. M. Galassi was transferred from Florence to this place by Dr. Taylor."
6. "The pastor, Sig. Chiera, was transferred to Palermo."
7. "Sig Pintus has charge of our work, and during the year baptized three * * * he could almost be called a 'circuit rider'."
8. "Sig. Barbera was put in charge of the work."

All the above we quote from the Board's report on Italian Missions for 1905, Minutes Convention, pages 107 to 112.

9. "Sig. Piacentini, the former pastor, has been transferred elsewhere."
10. "Sig. Scalera of Milan has been transferred to this city."

11. "The minister has few gifts as preacher and has had little success in his work. He will be either transferred or DISMISSED unless there is improvement."

"Brother Lumbley's failing health compelled him to place the oversight of the churches (bishopric) in the hands of John Agboola." Neg (ro).

13. "The work of this section has been for years under the direction of Brother C. E. Smith." (In Africa).

14. "Our quarterly mission meetings (corresponding to the Methodist quarterly conference) are largely taken up with careful discussions of how best to superintend the work at various stations and out-stations. But superintending the workers is accomplished mainly by visiting the stations."

15. "This church has had a year of severe trials. Some members disgruntled over the REMOVAL of the pastor, who had proven himself unworthy of the office, attempted to destroy the church, but they were promptly DISMISSED."

From No. 9 to 15 are quoted from Min-

utes of Convention for 1907, reports on Italy, Africa, etc.

Here are fifteen instances of transferring, removing, dismissing, sending, putting pastors of native churches on mission fields, by the bishops appointed over them by the Foreign Board.

Let us look into the Methodist discipline a moment and find out how they do this thing:

"What are the duties of a bishop?

"1. To preside in the General and Annual Conferences.

"2 To fix the appointments of the preachers in the annual conference, etc.

"3. To change when necessary elders, fix their stations and change them, when it judges it necessary, etc.

"4. To change, receive and suspend preachers in the intervals of the conference, etc.

"5. To decide all questions of law coming before him in the regular business, etc.

"8. To see that the districts be formed according to his judgment, etc.

"To divide a circuit, mission or station, etc.

"10. To travel during the year * * * to preach and oversee the spiritual affairs of the church, etc."

That is Methodist episcopacy. The bishop is master of the whole outfit.

Can any man read the above records from the minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention, and from the Methodist Discipline, and see a whit's difference between the two? If he can, he can see more than I can. As appalling as it seems, it is nevertheless true that Baptists, so-called, who pride themselves upon their loyalty

to Christ and His truth can do such things as their own records show that they are doing. But that is not all; but as bishops they rule the churches and expel the members exactly like Methodist bishops do. Here is the proof from their records:

"We had the church to call a quasi native pastor (Minutes Convention 1905, page 85).

"Two small churches revolted against the work of the missionary society, and were excluded from our fellowship. * * * We expect these churches to return soon, wiser and better for their fall." (Minutes 1907, page 98).

Churches of Christ expelled from fellowship for "revolting" against a "society!" Bishops expelling churches of Christ! Who was it said the "societies" were all under the churches?

"For the past year this church has been in the hands of a native pastor, who used his influence to destroy the work, not only in this church, but in the whole mission. He led off a group with him, and they were promptly excluded, but it left the church weak." (1907, page 99).

The pastor revolted against the bishop and the bishop turned him and his followers out of a Baptist church.

"This has been a year of great struggle for this church. The same man who attempted to destroy the work at Engenho de Dentro visited also this church. He only succeeded in cleaning out the church of its worst element. * * * Fifty were excluded." (1907, page 100).

This pastor was fighting episcopacy, and the bishop expelled all who followed him for independence!

"The Panindicuaro church was transferred to the Leon field." (1907, page 119.)

"On my arrival here (Mexico) my experience with the native preacher was like that of

the loved apostle with Diotrephes. Through his influence some discord spread both in the church and in the school. I then took personal charge of all services. * * * I had to expel two girls and suspend four others, all Baptists—among them the preacher's daughter. Since then we have had no trouble. We have matters in hand in Saltillo now better than we have had for years." (1907, page 127.)

The Baptist bishop arrived on the field. The native preacher did not like his interference. There was "discord." Then the Baptist bishop "expelled" two and "suspended" four, "all Baptists," he says. This is your Baptist bishop taking personal charge of a church, expelling, suspending members, etc. You Baptist preachers in this country let the churches receive and expel members.

The above records from the minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention on the questions of subsidizing the heathen and lording it over God's churches and preachers is enough to stir the heart of any true Baptist. No wonder the convention system has been a stupendous failure on the foreign field. But not only have they labored all the years and spent Baptist money in such a way as to create conditions that are more difficult to overcome than were the conditions in the beginning, but they have sought to destroy the efforts made to do work on New Testament lines. When Dr. T. P. Crawford and those associated with him were driven from the work under the convention system thirty years ago because of their protest against

these unscriptural practices and their plea for a return to New Testament principles and practices, they were crucified as it were, by the advocates of conventionism at home and abroad. That their plea for a return to New Testament methods was worthy of the deepest consideration, and really the only open door to the success of the work, has since been thoroughly demonstrated in the case of the Presbyterians on the same field; but I will let Missionary McRae speak again, as he has recently done in a communication to the convention paper—*News and Truths*, published at Murray, Ky. Read what he says:

"The second missionary who went to Korea told me in a conversation that wherever he went in Korea the missionaries said: 'Humanely speaking, we owe the wonderful success of our work in Korea to the late Dr. Nevius of Chefoo.' When I first began my agitation two years ago the senior missionary, to whom I refer above, said to me one day: 'We fought this thing all out in the days of Dr. Crawford and Dr. Nevius. Your views are the same as theirs.' So when I heard that the missionaries in Korea attributed the success of their work to their use of the Nevius method, I was immediately interested and made inquiries as to the history of the work in Korea. This is the story:

"Thirty odd years ago Dr. T. P. Crawford of our mission and Dr. J. L. Nevius of the Presbyterian mission in Chefoo became convinced that mission methods in China were wrong and that we ought to return to New Testament principles. Neither was able to convince a majority of his fellow missionaries that they were right. The subsidizing method is easier on the missionary, there is no doubt of that, and seems to gain more

adherents, such as they are, for the time being. But Dr. Nevius was able to convince his home board of the value of his views and when they began work in Korea thirty years ago they asked Dr. Nevius to go to Korea and advise the young missionaries how to avoid the mistakes made in China. The result was that the work in Korea was started and has been maintained on what the Presbyterians call the 'Nevius method,' or what some Baptists call the 'gospel mission method,' or what should be more properly called the New Testament method."

If the convention forces had been content to go on with their paralyzing and unscriptural methods and let those who, with Dr. Crawford, were forced out of the work and who appealed to the churches at home to co-operate with them, gone on with their work we might see the same glorious work going on now that Brother McRae reports from Korea. But no, they not only pushed their subsidy system for all it was worth against the men and women who were giving their lives for New Testament principles, but the agents of conventionism in the home land have done everything that could be done to destroy their source of support in the home land. Their conduct has been too bad to describe. What an awful reckoning awaits them when God comes to judge them according to the fruits of their doing. The record for indifference among sound Baptists on the evangelization of the world is appalling and heart-sickening, but convention methods at home and abroad are largely responsible for such

conditions in our churches. The unscriptural practices of Convention Baptists ought to make our people all the more zealous and determined to give the gospel to the world according to the plans and methods so clearly marked out in the New Testament. One thing is clear; if our people do not carry out the example of the New Testament churches, it will never be done. The Lord help us to do our best.