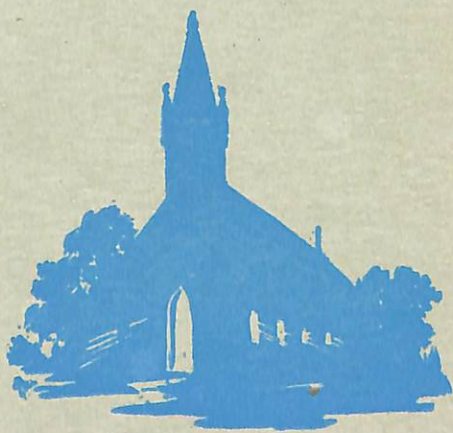


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**D. N. Jackson**

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# Studies In Baptist Church Doctrines and History

D. N. Jackson



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## WHAT THE CHURCH IS

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## WHAT THE CHURCH IS

### I. The Church Defined

#### 1. Lexicon definition.

The Greek word translated **church** in the New Testament is **ekklesia**, a compound word composed of **ek**, meaning "from," or "out of," and **kaleo**, "to call." Together the two words mean, called from, or out of, denoting a company of people chosen and called.

There are three stages of meaning of **ekklesia**, as follows: (1) The Greek usage, specifying a lawful assembly of persons assembled in a city to transact business. They were summoned or called out from among the whole population. (2) Jewish. The term was applied to the company of Israelites in the wilderness, whom God had chosen and called out of Egypt (Acts 7:38). The same word is employed in the Septuagint (Greek) version of Psalm 22:22, a prophecy of our Lord's singing in His church. A fulfillment of this prophecy is seen in Matthew 26:30 where it is said that Christ sang after instituting and partaking of His Supper. The prophecy is quoted in Hebrews 2:12. (3) The higher Christian sense. When employed in the Christian or New Testament sense, **ekklesia** designates a company or assembly or congregation of persons chosen by the Lord, whom He has called out and separated from the world. In all three uses—Greek, Jewish and Christian—the assembly was called out for a definite purpose. In the Christian sense, the purpose of the assembly is to worship and serve the Lord. While the word is applied to the confused mob at Ephesus (Acts 19:32), still we know those people had



been called out by Silversmith Demetrius (Acts 19:25) for the purpose of considering their business and idolatrous worship in the light of the effects the Apostle Paul's preaching was having upon them.

Of the hundred and fifteen or more times the term *ekklesia* is used in the New Testament, it is used a hundred and ten times in reference to the institution known as the **church**. In these instances the original classical idea prevails, being an organized assembly. The term, then, was not coined by our Lord, nor His disciples, as they found it already in use, and its etymological meaning, therefore, was carried over into Christian literature. When Christ says, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18), the possessive pronoun "my" distinguishes His *ekklesia* or assembly from that of the Greeks. It is His *ekklesia* frequently mentioned in the New Testament writings.

The word "church" is used in two ways in the New Testament. In its primary sense it means a visible, local congregation, or an organized company of disciples meeting at a given place and for a given purpose. More than ninety of the hundred and ten instances in which "*ekklesia*" is rendered church in the New Testament," says Dr. Hiscox, are applied to a visible, local congregation or assembly. "This is the primary and literal signification of the word. Thus it is said, 'Paul called the elders of the church'; 'The church of God at Corinth'; 'The seven churches of Asia'; 'The churches of Galatia.'"

In its secondary sense, the word "church" is used with an abstract, or figurative, or institutional meaning. In only a few instances is the word thus used. Jesus says: "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). While this may indicate His *ekklesia* as an institution as distinguished from that of the Greeks, it is a fact that Christ established a visible, local congregation which followed with Him in His travels. As pointed out by Dr. B. H. Carroll, although the church may be referred to in its institutional sense, "whenever the abstract or generic finds concrete expression,

or takes operative shape, it is always a particular assembly."

For instance, we frequently speak of a man being tried before the jury, an institution of law. But when the jury is in operation, it is always a particular group of persons. There can be no such thing as a universal jury, whether visible or invisible. Neither can there be a universal church, except only as an institution and referred to in an abstract sense. As Dr. Hiscox further points out: "To call the aggregate of those who profess the Christian faith—of all names in all the world—'the Christian Church,' is a misuse of the word not warranted by the Scriptures. There is no such thing as a universal church on earth embraced in one grand communion. Equally baseless and unsupported by Scripture is the claim that all the religious congregations of a nation, or of a given form of faith in a nation, constitute a national, or denominational church. It contradicts the New Testament idea" (Directory for Baptist Churches, pp. 25, 26).

The theory of a universal church finds no proof, as frequently claimed, in Eph. 5:23: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." If by "the church" is meant a universal church, then by "the husband" would necessarily mean a universal husband! In this instance, the word "husband" designates a family relationship which may be affirmed of all married men; and the word "church" designates the kind, the genus, of institution which is applicable to all groups of like constitution.

## 2. Theological definition.

A church is a congregation of baptized believers united by covenant to carry into effect the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The New Hampshire Confession defines a church in this way:

"A visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances



of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word" (Article XIII).

In both definitions a congregation must be bound together by covenant in one body to attain a common objective. People of like faith and order may assemble for worship without forming a church, instance gatherings in an associational capacity.

The Church of England defines a church in this way:

"A congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinances, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same" (Thirty-Nine Articles, Art. XIX).

The Westminster Assembly defines a church after this manner:

"Particular Churches in the primitive times were made up of visible saints, viz., of such as being of age, professing faith in Christ, according to the rules of faith and life taught by Christ as his Apostles, and of their children."

The Augsburg Confession says:

"A congregation of saints, in which the gospel is purely preached, and the sacraments are rightly administered" (Augsburg Confession, Art. VII).

In 1643 seven Baptist churches in London set forth this statement:

"Jesus Christ hath on the earth a spiritual kingdom which is His church, whom He hath purchased and redeemed to Himself, as a peculiar inheritance: which church is a company of visible saints, called and separated from the world by the Word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the gospel; being baptized into that faith, and joined to the Lord, and to each other, by mutual agreement, in the practical enjoyment of the ordinances by Christ their head and King."

The foregoing definitions speak of a local congregation. With the Baptists this is the primary meaning of a church, but with the others a congregation is but one unit of a universal church. Baptists have never

issued a confession which they made binding on the churches, for the Scriptures constitute their only creed.

The Greek Catholic Church offers this definition:

"The church is a divinely instituted community of men, united by the orthodox faith, the law of God, the Hierarchy, and the sacraments."

The Roman Catholic Church says:

"The company of Christians knit together by the profession of the same faith, and the communion of the same sacraments, under the government of lawful pastors, and especially of the Roman bishop, as the only vicar of Christ on earth."

Baptists may be said to be the only ones who, by virtue of their constitutional belief, are qualified to give a Scriptural definition of a church. When Protestants look beyond a local congregation, their idea of the church is a universal, invisible body; and the Catholics, a universal, visible body.

### 3. Analogical definitions.

The New Testament employs certain analogies or relations of likeness between churches and the nature and purpose of their work. In this way what a church really is may more closely be understood than by any lexicon or theological definition we might give. The following are some of the analogies with a descriptive word following each one:

**Pillar and ground of the truth—support.** ". . . the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15b). This specifies the church to be the main support of truth, which has held true in all ages since the days of Christ on earth. If, as some claim, the church ceased to exist during the Dark Ages, truth perished from the earth, as a bridge would collapse, were its pillars pulled from beneath it.

**House—a place of dwelling.** "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 . . ." (I Tim. 3:15a). As a house its members should live in it daily, by way of honorable Christian conduct and devotion to its ideals. We should not neglect the "assembling of ourselves together" (Heb.



10:25). In the Old Testament economy, David sought to "dwell in the house of the Lord" all the days of his life (Psalm 27:4).

**Flock—denoting special care.** "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Christ is the true Shepherd who cares for His flock, even giving His life for the sheep. "Fear not, little flock" (Luke 12:32), is our Lord's gentle admonition to His sheep.

**Salt—preserving and flavoring qualities.** "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13). The Master spoke this to His church that had followed Him into the mountain. Salt preserves meats by arresting the chemical action of decomposition and flavors foods. The ancient pagans considered salt as a substance "dear to the gods." Homer sang of "divine salt." The ancient Germans built their temples of worship in salt districts. Without salt life on earth would perish, and no food would be palatable to the taste. This pictures the worth of a church to community life. It helps to preserve a better kind of life and makes a community a desirable place in which to live.

**Light—a mission of righteousness.** "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" (Matt. 5:14). A church is a divinely appointed light-house which is equipped to emit rays of gospel light into a darkened world. This mission is world wide. The Apostle Paul speaks of the "light of the glorious gospel of Christ" (II Cor. 4:4), which is designed to shine unto the lost.

**Temple—a place of worship.** "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21). The word temple means sanctuary, a building dedicated to the purpose of worship. As applied to the church institution, it denotes an assembly which carries on the worship of God. For a church to be used for secular causes is to degrade her high and holy purpose.

**Body—specifying unity.** "There is one body" (Eph.

4:4). That is, one of a kind, not one in the sense of a universal body composed of all professed Christians in the world. When we consider the common faith which is peculiar to all churches of like communion, we take note of the prevailing unity. In an abstract sense all who are members of churches and hold to a common belief compose a body, but the Scriptures do not teach that all the saved, regardless of their church affiliation, compose a universal church.

**Bride—denoting affinity.** "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom" (John 3:29). Our Lord, while on earth, had His bride, the church. In a generic sense, the churches of our Lord constitute the bride of Christ, now betrothed to Him. When He comes again they shall be ceremonially married in the royal palace of the universe, as we are told in Revelation 19:7: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him. For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Then only the saved who were and are members of Scriptural churches will be recognized as the bride. All others who are saved will be guests at the royal wedding. Salvation alone does not make one a part of the bride any more than being a woman makes her a bride. It is basic, like being a woman is essential to being a bride, still one may be a woman without being a bride.

## II. The Nature of a Church

By the nature of a church is meant her character or constitution, or her distinguishing qualities. The church is the only divinely organized community on earth. It was organized by Christ in person and commissioned to carry out His will in all the world. The following facts show what the nature of the church is.

### 1. A church is composed of human beings on earth.

Church members are literal human beings, not angels, or spirits. Only people are subject to gospel address, who are required to profess faith in Christ and be baptized in order to become members. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the



same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

The earth is the only location of the church, not part of it on earth and part in heaven. Death removes a person from church membership. As the church was commissioned by Christ to preach the gospel and administer the ordinances until He shall come again, it is unreasonable to hold that any part thereof could thus operate in heaven. The family of God, consisting of all the redeemed in all ages, resides both in heaven and on earth (Eph. 4:15). Therefore the church and the family of God are not synonymous terms, the latter being far more comprehensive in scope.

Some speak of "the church in the aggregate," meaning the assembly of all the redeemed in all ages who shall be gathered by the Lord unto Himself in glory. Only in the sense of the redeemed having been called out of the world and gathered unto the Lord can such an assembly be termed the **ekklesia** or church. In this sense is the word **ekklesia** applied to the whole assembly of the Israelites whom God called out of Egypt and assembled in the wilderness. Such an assembly in glory does not now exist in fact but in concept only. Moreover, the ordinary and theological definition of **ekklesia** is not applicable to the future assembly in glory, for this assembly will not require an observance of the church ordinances. Therefore this assembly cannot be equated with that founded and commissioned by Christ.

## 2. A church is essentially independent.

(1) Because the congregation founded by Christ multiplied by certain of her members going abroad and establishing like churches. "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily" (Acts 16:5).

(2) Because a church is recognized by Christ as being the highest ecclesiastical tribunal on earth. "And if he shall neglect to hear them (the one or two witnesses) tell it unto the church. . . . Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall

be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:17a, 18). This was spoken by our Lord to a local congregation, for how could anything be reported to a universal church? Whatever a church does, according to the divine will, is approved in heaven. And there can be no appeal by anyone from the authority of a local church.

(3) Because the churches, in the very nature of their existence as separate congregations, do not constitute a hierarchy. Hence the Scriptures speak of "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2), not "the church of Galatia"; "the seven churches" of Asia (Rev. 1:20), not "the church of Asia," etc. Accordingly, it would be a misnomer to speak of: "The Church of America," or "The Church of Europe," or the church of any state.

The Roman Catholic system is that of a hierarchy, founded by Constantine the Great in the fourth century. It is a body of ecclesiastical rulers disposed organically in ranks and orders each subordinate to the one above it, with the Pope as the chief, the Pontifex Maximus, to whom the Catholic congregations throughout the world are subject.

Other denominations, such as the Episcopalians and Presbyterians, compound their congregations in one ecclesiastical system, making the word "church" mean the aggregate of all their local congregations. In all these human systems the local church loses its meaning in the light of the Scriptures.

(4) Because the Scriptures recognize the equality of churches. They are not equal in numbers, or material possessions, or even resourcefulness, but as units in all associated capacity. In I Corinthians 12:12-27 the Apostle Paul likens a church to the human body—made up of many members but still one body. One man may be much larger than another, still the smaller man is as much man as the other. He has as much right as a citizen and can vote at the polls as often as the larger man.

In sum, the nature of the church is shown by the fact it is local as to sphere, visible as to appearance and independent as to relationship. This is corroborated by history. Dr. Thomas Armitage points out the



independence and quality of churches when he says: "All the Apostolic churches were independent of each other, and equal in rank and authority. No general council was held or known in this century" (*History of the Baptists*, p. 160).

Three significant facts are shown: (1) The first century churches were independent of each other, being self-governing and autonomous bodies; (2) they were equal in rank and authority; and (3) no general council was known in the first century, that is, apart from the churches. Inter-church councils were held in New Testament times, instance the Jerusalem council (Acts 15), but as Mosheim testifies, "It was not until the second century" that many traces of councils apart from church authority appeared.

After saying that all New Testament churches were independent in nature, although bound together by the common tie of faith and practice, Mosheim declares, "That every one of them enjoyed the same rights, and was considered as being on a footing of the most perfect equality with the rest" (Mosheim's *Historical Commentaries*, Vol. 1, p. 196).

EDWARD GIBBON, famous historian, says of sister churches:

"United only by the ties of faith and charity. Independence and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution by which the Christians were governed for more than a hundred years after the death of the apostles. Every society formed within itself a separate and independent republic; and although the most distant of these little states maintained a mutual, as well as a friendly, intercourse of letters and deputation, the Christian world was not yet connected by a supreme or legislative assembly" (*Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. 1, pp. 554, 558).

Writing strictly as a secular historian, Gibbon says that for more than a hundred years after the death of the apostles, Christianity knew nothing of "any supreme or legislative assembly," while at the same time the churches did have general messenger assem-

blies or associations but not "supreme or legislative assembly," such as were instituted by heretical teachers in the early centuries, who perverted the Scriptural plan of church polity. They maintained a "mutual as well as friendly intercourse of letters and deputations," that is, as we would say, messengers.

DR. JOHN T. CHRISTIAN, in his "History of the Baptists," Vol. 1, p. 14:

"In the New Testament sense of the church there can be no such an organization as a National or General Church, covering a large district or country, composed of a number of local organizations. The church, in the Scriptural sense, is always an independent, local organization."

DR. DAVID BENEDICT, "History of Baptists," p. 332:

"In process of time, so strongly were many inclined to constitute these bodies (associations and general assemblies) into courts of appeal, that it was found necessary to define their powers, and make them merely advisory councils, as Baptists in all ages and countries have done."

### 3. Church government.

Three forms of church government or polity are generally recognized by the denominations—Congregational, Presbyterian, and Episcopal. The first means government by the congregation—a democracy with all the members of a congregation exercising equal suffrage. The Presbyterian form is a government by the presbyters or elders. The Episcopal is a government by the rule of bishops.

Baptists champion the Congregational form, which is maintained by the following Scriptural reasons:

- (1) A church may receive members (Romans 14:1).
- (2) A church may dismiss members (1 Cor. 5:13; 2 Cor. 2:6; 2 Thess. 3:6).

The Corinthian church expelled from membership an incestuous man by majority vote. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many." The word "many" comes from an original



word meaning "majority." This shows the church maintained a democratic polity.

(3) A whole church voted in the election of an apostle (Acts 1:26).

(4) A whole church acted in the election and ordination of the first deacons (Acts 6:2-6).

(5) A whole church acted in sending forth missionaries (Acts 13:1-2; 14:26-27).

### Questions on Lesson I

1. What is the lexicon definition of the word **church**?
2. What is a theological definition of **church**?
3. Name the analogical definitions.
4. What is meant by the nature of a church?
5. Give some reasons for your answer.
6. What does Historian Edward Gibbon say of the early churches?
7. What do Drs. John T. Christian and David Benedict say relative to the nature of the church?
8. What is meant by church government?
9. Name the three principal forms of church government.
10. Which one is Scriptural? Give five reasons for your answer.

## Outline of Lesson II

### CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- I. **The Significance of Church Membership.**
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  2. Obligations entailed by church membership.
  3. The Church Covenant.
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  1. By letter.
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## Lesson II

### CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

To be a member of a Baptist church is a matter of primary importance. It carries the significance of honor, entails grave responsibilities, and brings the member face to face with new challenges in his Christian life. It is a way of cross-bearing for Christ, a flag-bearing in the Christian race, a sword-bearing in battles against the forces of unrighteousness, and withal a relationship that signals joy and unfurling of the banner of victory. Let us consider some things that touch upon church membership.

#### I. The Significance of Church Membership

##### 1. The dignity and honor of church membership.

This is affirmed of the person who meets the qualifications for membership, for the following reasons:

(1) The church is the greatest institution known to man. To be a member of it, then, means one occupies a position in the highest and noblest rank on earth. This is borne out by the testimony of Jesus Himself: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11:11). As a prophet and as a man of God none excelled John the Baptist, but the least in the kingdom of heaven is **positionally** greater than John, for he was never a member of the church which is the earthly phase of the kingdom. So then a member occupies a position far greater than that of the best of men outside the church.



(2) The church is the only institution dedicated with the blood of Christ. The dedication of the temple by Solomon with the blood of animal sacrifices was a type of the dedication of the church with the blood of Christ. He shed His blood after the church had been established. The institutions of men in the world today are at best dedicated by human beings apart from the blood of Christ. Church denominations founded by men cannot claim this honor. Civil governments, although essential and mighty, are void of it. The claim of popes as vicars of Christ to possess power to give rank and dignity to the church is nothing better than "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

(3) The church is the only institution divinely authorized to carry out the Great Commission. Individuals outside of church membership may testify to the love, mercy and saving grace of God through Christ, by which sinners may be saved, but they fail of the full authority comprehended in our Lord's commission to His church. Therefore members of the church founded by Christ possess authority unknown to all outside of the church.

## 2. The opportunity of church membership.

The Jerusalem church set an example for churches in all ages, as we read in Acts 2:42: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

(1) The church was steadfast or firm in her practices, not being turned aside by the opposition of the critics.

(2) The members enjoyed sweet fellowship with no thought of one rising above the other in authority. The term "fellowship" signifies equality of partners or comrades in a common cause. When applied to the members of a church, it denotes a relation based on a common status.

(3) Being in church fellowship, in doctrine and personal relationship, the members are eligible for the observance of the Lord's Supper, hence the Jerusalem church was faithful "in breaking of bread." No one outside a New Testament church has this opportunity.

This is true for the reason the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance.

(4) A prayer life in church fellowship. The Jerusalem church continued "in prayers." While prayer is a personal privilege and is granted to the children of God everywhere and under all circumstances, nevertheless it is an essential part of a church worship service. The three outstanding features of a worship service are: praying, singing and preaching.

(5) The unique fellowship enjoyed only in church relations is conducive to the highest Christian growth in grace. It makes possible a necessary training in all departments of church work. And it makes effectual the ministry of the Word of God at home and in foreign lands. The Apostle Paul recognized this fact when he requested prayers of the Ephesian church, that "utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. 6:19).

## 3. Obligations entailed by church membership.

While church fellowship is highly desired and essential, being basic and primary, it must not be stressed as if it were the summation of Christian responsibility. The obligations of a church member are numerous.

(1) Church devotions must be put ahead of all worldly affairs and personal concerns. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). When we reverse this order, we not only question the veracity of our Lord's word, but we also show our primary attachment to the material things of life and a distrust in the divine benevolence to fulfill the promise. Hence we act as if we are more capable than God in managing our business.

(2) Church attendance must be regular and done in the right spirit (Hebrews 10:25; Psalm 122:1).

(3) Financial support of the church. Our giving should be: systematic (I Cor. 16:1, 2); cheerful (II Cor. 9:7); willing (II Cor. 8:12); generous (II Cor. 9:6); sacrificial (II Cor. 8:2, 9; Heb. 13:16); with the right purpose



(II Cor. 9:7); and on the basis of equality (II Cor. 8:14; Heb. 7:8). Equality in giving is not measured by an equal amount by each member, but proportionately according to what each possesses (II Cor. 8:12). But before any gift is acceptable to God, the giver must first give himself to the Lord (II Cor. 8:5; I Cor. 13:1-3). All phases of the church and associated work should be supported.

(4) Ministering to the needs of others. One of the greatest privileges a Christian has is to minister to the material needs of others. The Lord accepts such a service as done to Him, especially when His children are the recipients (Matt. 10:40-42). When done unselfishly, we help ourselves when we help others in need, for blessings are certain to return to us (I Kings 17:13-16).

(5) Winning others to Christ. Every church member should not only be saved but also a soul winner, not leaving this greatest of all privileges to the ordained ministers alone. To all the saved Jesus speaks as He said to Peter and Andrew: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). Soul winning is declared by Solomon to be an act of wisdom (Prov. 11:30), and the soul winner is assured a great reward (Psalm 126:5, 6; Dan. 12:3). The method used by Philip the evangelist in winning the Ethiopian officer to Christ is exemplary (Acts 8:26-40). First, he was led of the Lord, verse 29. Second, he took interest in the call. "Philip ran thither to him," verse 30. Third, he put himself on the level with the officer, thinking along his channel of thought, verse 31. Fourth, he was lovingly persistent, verse 29. He was told to "join thyself to this chariot." He glued himself to the chariot and stayed on the job, as the original word rendered "join" means "glue." Fifth, Philip preached Jesus, verse 35. He showed that salvation is in Christ when a person believes in Him, verse 37. Sixth, he instructed the officer touching his obligation to baptism after salvation, verses 38-39.

(6) Enlisting the unenlisted members. It has been estimated that about sixty percent of the average

church are unenlisted. This means that the burden of responsibility is borne by the minority. How to correct this fault is a problem difficult to solve. Its solution is not the pastor's problem alone, as all members are held responsible by the Lord. Some churches find success in an organized visitation program, while others pursue a more or less haphazard method. Any method used, if it is to claim the blessing of the Lord, must be in keeping with the demands and potentials of the church. One way to enlist members in the activities of the church is to keep before them the

### Church Covenant

Let us first study the origin of the Covenant, which most Baptist churches adopt, and then analyze its text.

#### 1. Origin of the Covenant.

The history of the Church Covenant, familiar to many by its appearance in various formats, is interwoven with that of the "Declaration of Faith," both found in Pendleton's Church Manual whose first printing was in 1867. A footnote in this manual reads: "This Declaration of Faith was framed many years ago by J. Newton Brown, D.D."

Speaking of Dr. Brown, Dr. William Cathcart says:

**"He was the author of the little creed so commonly adopted in newly organized Baptist churches, and known as 'The New Hampshire Confession'" (Baptist Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, p. 146).**

The first effort toward the preparation of what became known as the "New Hampshire Confession of Faith and a Covenant" was begun on June 24, 1830, by a committee of three authorized by the New Hampshire State Baptist Convention. The committee, consisting of N. W. Williams, Wm. Taylor and I. Pearson (also spelled Pearson), was discharged the following year, and Pearson was authorized to complete the work. At the annual State meeting in 1832, Pearson made his report, which was approved, and then it was referred to a select committee of four, including Dr. Brown. This committee reported favorably on the Pearson articles, with some alterations. The matter



was then referred to two members of the select committee, Brethren B. Stow and Brown, to be revised. This was done in October, 1832, when Dr. Brown became the leading character in preparing the final form of the Declaration and Covenant, and it was recommended to the churches of the State by its endorsers. Thus B. Stow and J. Newton Brown were joint authors of the document, although Dr. Brown, because of his leading role in the work, was given credit for its authorship.

In 1853 Dr. Brown republished the Declaration and Covenant, "under the title of **The Baptist Church Manual**, 'with such revision as on mature reflection he deems called for after the lapse of twenty years,' and also 'supplying two new articles, one on Repentance and Faith, and the other on Sanctification.' In the advertisement to this pamphlet Mr. Brown claims the authorship of the original publication, and this would seem to settle the question, which is otherwise obscure" (The New Directory for Baptist Churches, pp. 541, 542).

Thus we see that the work of preparing "The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith and Church Covenant" was instigated by a State Baptist organization and finished by Dr. J. Newton Brown. Being only recommended to the churches, it was never intended to be an iron-clad creed and covenant to be binding upon any church, as Baptists believe and teach the Bible alone to be their authoritative standard of faith and practice.

## 2. Text of the Church Covenant.

As appearing in Pendleton's Manual, the Covenant reads as follows:

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit,

to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, to the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## 3. Analysis of the Covenant.

The following analysis reflects the fact that the obligations of the Covenant are backed by the Scriptures.

### A. The Spirit's Work in Salvation.

"Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the LORD Jesus" (Eph. 2:1; John 6:63; 16:8-11; Acts 16:14).

Note: The Spirit leads a sinner to Christ in the sense of moving him through conviction of his sins in connection with the word of God.

### B. Salvation in Christ Jesus.

"To receive the LORD Jesus as our Saviour" (John 1:11, 12; Rom. 2:4; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:8-10).



Note: A sinner, through the Spirit's convicting power, is moved toward Christ, not any system of good works or self-righteousness, in order to be saved.

**C. Profession Before Baptism.**

"On the profession of our faith" (Acts 8:37; I John 4:15; I Cor. 12:3; Acts 2:41; 10:46-48).

Note: A profession, in some manner, is made before baptism; and, being Spirit-led, it signifies the professor is saved before baptism.

**D. Baptism Divinely Authorized.**

"Having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 16:30-33; 19:1-5).

Note: Baptism is a divine command to a child of God, not the sinner. Anywhere the Scriptures speak of baptism being administered by the authority of Christ, the authority of the triune Godhead is implied, as the office work of the Persons of the Trinity is essentially related yet distinct. (See John 5:30; Eph. 2:18-20.)

**E. United by Covenant as One Body.**

"We do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ" (Amos 3:3; Matt. 18:19, 20; I Cor. 12:27).

Note: A covenant is a mutual agreement between two or more persons.

**F. Spirit Leadership of God's Children.**

"We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 8:14; I Cor. 2:13-14; John 14:16; Acts 13:2).

Note: The Spirit, never leading contrary to the word of God, personally aids the believer in his work and worship.

**G. Obligations to the Church.**

1. Brotherly walk. "To walk together in Christian love" (Acts 2:1, 46; John 13:34-35).
2. Mutual advancement. "To strive for the advancement of this Church, in knowledge, holi-

ness and comfort" (II Tim. 2:15; II Peter 3:11; II Cor. 1:4).

3. Growth of church. "To promote its prosperity and spirituality" (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; I Cor. 15:58; Phil. 1:27).
4. Loyalty to the church and her doctrines. "To sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines" (Heb. 10:25; John 4:23; Matt. 28:19, 20; Rom. 6:4; II Thess. 3:6; Acts 2:42; Jude 3).
5. Regular and systematic financial support of the church's work. "To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations" (II Cor. 9:7; I Cor. 9:14; 16:1-2; II Cor. 8:1-14; 9:6, 12; Gal. 2:10; Heb. 7:8; Rom. 10:15). Some of these references were previously given.

**H. Obligations in Personal Conduct.**

1. A prayer life. "We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion" (II Tim. 1:5; Matt. 6:6; I Tim. 2:1-2; Acts 17:11; I Thess. 5:17).
2. Religious education. "To religiously educate our children" (Eph. 6:4; II Tim. 1:5; Deut. 6:4-8).
3. Soul winning. "To seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances" (Mark 5:19; John 4:28-29, 46-53; Prov. 11:30).
4. A worthy walk. "To walk circumspectly in the world" (Eph. 4:1; 5:1, 15).
5. Honesty. "To be just in our dealings" (Rom. 12:17; Phil. 4:8).
6. Reliability. "Faithful in our engagements" (Rom. 12:11; Luke 9:62).
7. Godly example. "Exemplary in our deportment" (II Thess. 3:9; Phil. 2:14-15; I Peter 2:12).
8. Brotherly attitude one toward another. "To avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger" (II Cor. 12:20; I Tim. 5:13; Eph. 4:31).
9. Abstinence. "To abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage" (Prov. 20:1; Hab. 2:15; Eph. 5:18).
10. Godly zeal. "To be zealous in our efforts to



advance the kingdom of our Saviour" (Col. 4:12-13; James 5:16; Jude 3; Rev. 3:15).

### I. Obligations to Fellow Members.

1. Brotherly care. "We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love" (I Thess. 3:12; Rom. 12:10; Gal. 6:2; I Peter 1:22).
2. Praying one for another. "To remember each other in prayer" (Eph. 6:18; James 5:16).
3. Help given in time of need. "To aid each other in sickness and distress" (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 6:10; Matt. 25:40).
4. Christian courtesy. "To cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech" (Heb. 13:2; I Peter 3:8).
5. Patience under pressure. "To be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay" (James 1:19; Eph. 4:26, 32).

### J. Obligation to Active Membership and Service.

"We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word" (Acts 9:26-28; 11:19-21; 18:24-28; 28:30-31).

Note: On moving to a new location, a person should not delay moving his membership to a Scriptural church, if one is found there or nearby. But if not, he should seek assistance of a missionary or some minister in the organization of a church in which he can find fellowship.

### II. Qualifications for Membership

For a person to be qualified for membership in a Baptist church, he should meet four conditions.

#### 1. Salvation of the soul.

A church is supposed to be a home of saved people, a congregation with a regenerate membership. The unsaved therefore are out of place as members. The following reasons are given to sustain this position.

- (1) Salvation is in Christ, not in the church. "Neither

is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The Scriptures nowhere even intimate that salvation is obtained by church membership. The church is not the saviour.

(2) On the day of Pentecost the saved were added to the church. "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily **such as were being saved**" (Acts 2:47, R. V.). When the church numbering a hundred and twenty received the saved into her membership on that occasion, the Lord added them for the reason He sanctioned in heaven what the church did. (See Matt. 18:18.)

(3) Jesus declares that our light should be put "on a candlestick" (Matt. 5:15). Christ in us is our light (II Cor. 4:6) and the candlestick is a church (Rev. 1:20). Instead of entering a church to find the light, we possess it before entering as members.

(4) The cleansing by the blood of Christ must precede the washing by water, the latter taking place at the time of obtaining church membership. The cleansing by the blood is inward (I John 1:7), while the washing by the water of baptism, being applied to the body, is outward, and is therefore a symbol of the inward cleansing. It is blood before water. This truth is taught in the national deliverance of the children of Israel the night when the blood of the paschal lamb was applied to the doors of the houses where they dwelt, which took place before their baptism at the Red Sea. (See Exodus 12:11-14; I Cor. 10:1-2.)

#### 2. A profession of faith.

On seeking membership in a church on condition of baptism, one is required to make public a profession of his faith in Christ as Saviour. This was exacted of the Ethiopian officer by Philip. "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). Profession of faith precedes water baptism, and water baptism precedes church membership, therefore a profession comes before church membership. In all the New Testament



instances, the act of baptism was preceded by a profession of repentance and faith.

### 3. **Baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

Baptism is one way of making a confession of faith in Christ, which act is to be performed by the authority of the triune God (Matt. 28:19-20). No one is qualified for membership in a church without baptism, still baptism does not wholly qualify him. It is the ceremonial qualification he is required to meet. It is the first act, in order, of Christian obedience after one's profession, although one may have the opportunity to witness for Christ as Saviour before he is baptized.

### 4. **Christian deportment.**

After meeting the qualifications to become a member of a church, one may disqualify himself to retain membership by unchristian deportment (II Thess. 3:6).

Note: As in New Testament times, false brethren may obtain membership in a church, who sooner or later will be discovered and should then be expelled (Gal. 2:4-5).

## III. Modes of Admission

There are three ways of admission of persons into church membership: (1) baptism; (2) letter; and (3) statement.

### 1. **Baptism.**

The rite of water baptism, as a mode, is a condition of membership. It is a primary condition, as membership cannot be Scripturally obtained without it. Note that it is a condition and not the **door** into a church. The "door" is the voice of the church by which members may be received and by which they may be dismissed. Any act that is made the door of admission must of necessity be made the door of dismissal. Baptism, therefore, cannot meet this requirement, as it would be impossible to "unbaptize" a person! In New Testament cases baptism always preceded one's initial church membership (Acts 2:41; 10:47). But baptism is a primary condition of church membership

only as it presupposes the subject's regeneration and profession of faith in Christ.

### 2. **Letter.**

This method is used when a member transfers from one church to another of the same faith and order. The letter is not his membership, being only a recommendation that he leaves his church in fellowship and a certificate of his Christian deportment to the church with which he seeks to identify himself. The custom of writing letters of recommendation finds Scriptural precedent (Acts 15:23). While this incident does not relate particularly to church membership, it served a kindred purpose and therefore justifies the custom. When the converted Saul of Tarsus first appeared to the disciples at Jerusalem and attempted to join the church there, he was at first repulsed as a false disciple, and it took the recommendation of Barnabas for him to be accepted (Acts 9:26-28). This was an oral recommendation, answering the same purpose as a letter or written recommendation. Baptists use the letter method, as it is not feasible for an oral recommendation to be given at all times when a member transfers membership.

### 3. **Statement.**

A member is received by "statement" or by Christian experience, when for any acceptable reason he has lost membership in a church. Membership is lost when a church disbands without granting letters of dismissal to the members. Churches are also known to change from their original doctrinal position or affiliation, so that one seeking membership elsewhere does not desire a letter of dismissal, neither would the church receiving him desire a letter. But no one should ever be received on statement who does not furnish acceptable proof of having been Scripturally baptized.

## IV. Modes of Dismission

There are three ways practiced by Baptists and sustained by the Scriptures for the dismission of members from a church.



### 1. By letter.

With the intention of becoming a member of another church of like faith and order, a member may be granted a letter of dismission upon his request, provided he is in fellowship with the church of whom he makes the request. In the event he is not in fellowship, the church, by her Scriptural right of discipline, must demand reconciliation before granting the letter. In this way it may be determined who is at fault and the guilty person led to make amends. The same Scriptural right by which a church receives a member by letter, as previously shown, gives a church the right to dismiss one by letter. The church may protect herself from an abuse of the letter by stating in it that the member is dismissed "when joined to another church of like faith and order." In the event the letter holder abuses the letter by overstepping his rights, the church may proceed to withdraw fellowship from him.

### 2. By exclusion.

A church may exercise her Scriptural prerogative of expelling a member, an act which is commonly referred to as "withdrawing fellowship" from the member. This may be done after all efforts toward reconciliation have failed (Matt. 18:15-17). When a member has broken fellowship with his church, charges may be laid against him by a majority vote of the body in regular order. If the charges are sustained, the vote is then taken for exclusion. If they are not sustained, the person charged should be forgiven by the church.

New Testament churches exercised this right of discipline when a member was found guilty of fornication (I Cor. 5:1, 13); of disorderly walk and heresy (II Thess. 3:6); or of unchristian conduct in general (I Cor. 5:11).

Note: A member may be dismissed by letter or exclusion upon a majority vote of the church; but, conversely, the reception of a member must be done by a unanimous vote, else the fellowship of the church

### 3. By death.

A person's church membership is automatically terminated by death. No conference action of the church is necessary for her clerk to have authority to make a note in the records of the member's decease.

The practice of **dropping** a name from the church register has no Scriptural warrant. Such a practice has come about ordinarily because of a member's extended absence from any activities of the church. In this event proper investigation should be instigated to determine the cause of the absence. If found justifiable, no act of discipline against said member should be taken. However, if found otherwise, steps should be taken to correct the situation.

## Questions on Lesson II

1. Give three reasons for the dignity and honor of church membership.
2. What are the opportunities of church membership?
3. What are the obligations entailed by church membership?
4. Explain the origin of the Church Covenant.
5. Now read the text of the Covenant.
6. Explain the analysis of the Covenant.
7. What are the qualifications for church membership?
8. What are the modes of admission to membership?
9. What are the modes of dismission?



### Outline of Lesson III

## ORIGIN AND IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH

- I. **Origin of the Church.**
  1. During Christ's earthly ministry.
  2. The church not founded at Pentecost.
- II. **Identity of the Church.**
  1. Identified as Baptist in organization.
  2. Identified as Baptist by doctrine.
- III. **Origin of Other Denominations.**

### Lesson III

## ORIGIN AND IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH

In this chapter we shall prove by the Scriptures that Christ founded His church during His personal ministry on earth and that it has the Baptist identity.

### I. Origin of the Church

1. **During Christ's earthly ministry.**

This is sustained by plain Scriptural proof, as follows:

(1) The typical significance of the building of the temple by Solomon to the building of the church by Christ. Note this comparison.

#### The Analogy (Hebrews 3:3-6)

##### The Temple

1. Built by divine order, I Chron. 17:2-12; 22:6-11.
2. Patterned after the tabernacle, II Chron. 4.
3. Material prepared by David, I Chron. 22:5.
4. It was built by Solomon, II Chron. 5:1.

##### The Church

1. Built by divine order, John 4:34; 14:31; 17:4.
2. Bears comparison with the temple, Heb. 3:3-6; I Cor. 9:13, 14.
3. Material prepared by John the Baptist, Luke 1:16, 17, 77.
4. It was founded by Christ, Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:19-22.



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| <p>5. It was served by a priesthood, II Chron. 5:11-14.</p> <p>6. It was finished before Solomon's death, II Chron. 5:1.</p> <p>7. It contained the Book of the Law, II Chron. 5:7-10.</p> <p>8. There were 120 priests sounding trumpets, II Chron 5:12.</p> <p>9. It was dedicated with the blood of beasts, II Chron. 5:6.</p> <p>10. Prayer of dedication and intercession offered, II Chron. 6.</p> <p>11. Fire came down upon a completed structure, II Chron 7:1.</p> <p>12. The glory of the Lord came upon a finished house, II Chron. 7:1.</p> | <p>5. It was served by an ordained ministry, Mark 3:14; John 15:16.</p> <p>6. It was founded before Christ's death, John 17:4.</p> <p>7. It was given the Great Commission, Matt. 28:19-20.</p> <p>8. There were 120 saints praying, Acts 1:15.</p> <p>9. Dedicated with Christ's blood, Heb. 9:12, 23.</p> <p>10. Prayer of intercession and sanctification offered, John 17.</p> <p>11. The church completed before the hour of fire, Acts 2:3, 41, 47.</p> <p>12. Divine glory revealed after the church had been founded, Acts 2.</p> |
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This analogy, therefore, proves that the church was founded by Christ Himself during His personal ministry on earth.

(2) The charter members of the first church were John, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael (John 1:35-47). They were called by Christ and they followed Him not long after His baptism and temptation, somewhere in the rural area not far from Jerusalem.

(3) The call of the first disciples occurred before the imprisonment of John the Baptist (John 3:24). He did not open His ministry in Galilee until after John's imprisonment (Matt. 4:12-18; Mark 1:14). The call by the

seashore of Galilee was His second, when the disciples were called preparatory to their ordination as apostles (Mark 3:13-19).

(4) The company of our Lord's disciples went with Him to the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee and returned with Him to Jerusalem (John 2:1, 12, 13).

(5) The company increased in number (John 2:23).

(6) The conversion of Nicodemus (John 3:1-7; 19:39).

(7) Our Lord's company administered baptism in Judaea while John the Baptist was baptizing "in AEnon, near to Salim" (John 3:22-23; 4:2).

(8) John the Baptist called the Lord's company the bride of Christ, which he testified was then in existence (John 3:29).

(9) This company was with Christ in Samaria, on His way to Galilee, when the Samaritan woman was converted (John 4:3, 10-15, 29, 31). Many of the Samaritans believed on Christ because of the testimony of the woman and also because of His own testimony (John 4:39, 41). John 4:43 marks the time of the opening of Christ's regular ministry in Galilee, harmonizing with Matt. 4:12 and Mark 1:14.

(10) The company that followed Jesus from the baptism of John the Baptist is said to be the church, which attended to business by electing the successor to Judas Iscariot, and continued in prayer during the interval of ten days between the ascension of Christ and the dawn of Pentecost (Acts 1:14, 21-26; 2:41, 47). The company assembled at Jerusalem consisted of "about a hundred and twenty," to which the three thousand were added on the first day of Pentecost. The company of a hundred and twenty is called the church, Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," or were being saved. This small company of a hundred and twenty, called the church, had "compared with us," says Peter, "beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day he (Christ) was taken up from us."

**2. The church not founded at Pentecost.**

No institution was founded on the day of Pentecost



mentioned in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Those who teach the Pentecostal origin of the church use three sets of Scriptures: (1) The ones that mention Pentecost but say nothing of the church; (2) the ones that mention the church but say nothing of Pentecost; and (3) the ones that say nothing about either one. The case cannot be made out by this sort of proof.

### A Compendium

Having proved by the Scriptures that Christ founded His church during His earthly ministry, here are some pointed facts proving the existence of the church before Pentecost:

- (1) Jesus was Lord and Master before Pentecost (John 13:14).
- (2) Jesus was Head (John 13:14; Mark 12:10).
- (3) Jesus was King (John 18:37).
- (4) Jesus was the Shepherd (John 10:14).
- (5) The Shepherd had a flock (Luke 12:32). Paul called the flock the church (Acts 20:28).
- (6) There was a company which had been in existence from the baptism of John the Baptist (Acts 1:21). This company was the church (Acts 2:47).
- (7) Jesus had all power, so He did not have to wait until Pentecost to receive power (John 3:35; 10:18; Matt. 28:18).
- (8) Power was exercised by our Lord's disciples (Matt. 10:1; Luke 9:1). In the latter reference it is said the disciples were given both power and authority. They were to receive additional power on the day of Pentecost to meet the needs arising at that time—power to speak in other tongues, to witness to multitudes assembled from seventeen nations at Jerusalem, and power to inaugurate a world-wide mission program (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-18). Heretofore the church had operated under a limited commission (Matt. 10:5).
- (9) The gospel was preached (Matt. 11:5; Luke 4:18). Therefore the world did not have to wait until Pentecost to hear the gospel.
- (10) Sinners were saved (Luke 7:49-50; 23:42-43; John

3:1-6). Salvation was not withheld from people until Pentecost.

(11) Jesus declared Himself to be: the door (John 10:9); the bread of life (John 6:35); the way (John 14:6); and the light of the world (John 8:12).

(12) Baptism and the Lord's Supper were administered (John 3:22; 4:2; Matt. 26:26-28).

(13) There was an ordained ministry (Mark 3:13-14).

(14) Christ, the Bridegroom, and His bride, the church, were together (John 3:28, 29).

(15) There was a rule of discipline for the church who possessed authority to exercise the same (Matt. 18:16-18).

(16) Christ had a house which He left on earth (Mark 13:34). Paul called the church a house (I Tim. 3:15).

(17) The church transacted business, voting in the selection of an apostle before Pentecost (Acts 1:26).

(18) The apostles were set in the church in the second year of our Lord's ministry (I Cor. 12:28; Luke 6:12-19). Being set in the church, it stands to reason a church had to exist, as they could not have been set in nothing.

(19) Christ had a kingdom while He was on earth (John 18:36). The church was co-existent with the kingdom. The first church was Christ's kingdom established on earth.

(20) The elements of the kingdom were in existence then. (a) There must be a king. Christ declared He was King (John 18:37). (b) There must be subjects. His disciples were His subjects. (c) There must be laws. Christ's commands were His laws. (d) There must be a territory. The world is the territory (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). During Christ's ministry the world of operation was limited.

(21) The kingdom was preached from John the Baptist's day, and men pressed into it (Luke 16:16). How can people press into something that does not exist?

(22) Some were hindered from entering the kingdom (Matt. 23:13).



(23) The kingdom in existence suffered violence (Matt. 11:12).

(24) Jesus declared the kingdom was in existence (Luke 17:21). "The kingdom of God is within you," that is, "among (Greek, *entos*) you."

(25) Jesus expressed no doubt of the kingdom's existence (Luke 11:20).

(26) Christ rebuked people for not repenting and entering the kingdom (Matt. 21:31-32). Would it be reasonable, if a father should rebuke his son for not entering a house, when there was no house in existence? Jesus said the publicans and harlots, repenting and believing, "go into the kingdom of God before you," the critical Jews.

(27) In fulfillment of prophecy Jesus sang in the church which He had built (Psalm 22:22; Heb. 2:12; Matt. 26:30). The church had to exist for Him to sing in it.

## II. Identity of the Church

The church of our Lord's day on earth was in all essential elements Baptist. The characteristics that distinguish a Baptist church are peculiarly set forth in the Bible as having belonged to the New Testament church.

Originally, (1) none but believers were baptized; (2) baptism was held strictly as immersion; and (3) each church was an independent republic, knowing nothing of extraneous powers to dictate her policies. These principles characterize both Baptist churches of today and the New Testament churches. The banner that waves over true Baptist churches is that of Jesus only; the ordinances that distinguish Baptist churches have their pattern in the Scriptures; the governing principles of Baptist churches are backed by divine authority; and the Founder and Head of Baptist churches is none other than Jesus. Accordingly let us consider:

### 1. The church identified as Baptist in organization.

(1) John the Baptist prepared the material for the first church (Luke 1:77).

(2) Fifteen times in the first three New Testament books John is called Baptist. His name was not "Baptist" but "John" (John 1:6). John was called Baptist because of the divine authority back of him, by which authority he preached and administered baptism.

(3) Both Christ and His first disciples received baptism at the hands of John. They went to a Baptist minister for baptism. If one should go to a Mormon for baptism, no one would consider him anything but a Mormon, because of his identifying stand. Jesus and His first disciples identified themselves with the doctrine and ministry of John the Baptist.

But some may demand that we point out in the Scriptures the particular name, "The Baptist Church." Why should such a demand be made in the face of all the array of facts that show that the first church was in all essential elements Baptist? For instance, a house built of brick does not require a sign across its facade reading—THIS IS A BRICK HOUSE. Having brick material in it, anyone could see what kind it is. So Christ, the builder of the church, took Baptist material prepared by John the Baptist and built His church. This makes the first church easy to identify.

Again, some may want to know how John could be a Baptist and administer baptism since no one ever baptized him. This is easily understood. No one can be a man unless he is born of a woman, yet Adam was a man. The Lord started the human race by creating a man and his companion. So when the Lord wanted a Baptist, He made one, and then authorized him to preach and baptize.

(4) Jesus, baptized by John, was Himself a missionary, as was John (Matt. 4:23; John 6:57; 1:6).

(5) The first disciples, who were baptized by the Baptist minister, were missionaries, and as a church administered baptism (Luke 9:1; John 4:1-2).

An objection has been raised to the effect that the title "Baptist" came from John and not from the Lord, and therefore Baptists obtained their name from a man. This is a mistake. The title came from God Himself, proving John had nothing to do with it



origin. He wore it with distinction, and in like spirit we wear it today. However, in identifying the first church as Baptist, the people by this name today do not claim salvation for themselves alone, as they teach one should be saved before church membership. Church membership is not held to be synonymous with salvation.

(6) The first church, composed of members baptized by John the Baptist and sent on a mission by the Lord, was in fact a missionary Baptist church.

(7) The baptism of John was Christian baptism, as it belonged to the gospel dispensation (Mark 1:1-3). The ministry of John is here said to mark the "beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." As John's baptism was the only baptism Jesus and the first members of the church ever received, it stands to reason the church today is without Christian baptism, if John's baptism were not Christian.

(8) The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), given to the church which we have shown to be essentially Baptist, enjoins upon His churches to make disciples, baptize them and teach them as He had taught His disciples. Then Jesus promises: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This assures the continued existence of the church. Starting out essentially Baptist, therefore, we conclude that it is Baptist now. This should be sufficient to show the identity of the New Testament church. It is missionary Baptist.

## 2. The church identified as Baptist by doctrine.

We can know a church by its peculiar doctrines as well as by its history. These constitute its distinguishing marks by which Baptist identity has been known across the centuries back to the time of Christ on earth. The doctrines taught by the churches of the first century are today taught by Baptist churches.

In a brief treatise like this, we are bound by limitations. Accordingly, we shall set forth only the distinguishing doctrines which identify Baptists along their pathway from the first Christian century until now.

(1) Salvation by grace without any admixture of meritorious works (Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 11:6; Titus 3:5).

The first effort on record to prostitute this doctrine is found in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, when certain Judaizing teachers undertook to conjoin an observance of the Mosaic law with grace as a condition of salvation required of Gentile converts. This was near the middle of the first century.

By the end of the second century, the baptismal regeneration theory arose to disturb the churches. And with infant baptism as its child, the two theories have been perpetuated throughout the centuries as the most disturbing and damaging heresies known to the Christian world.

(2) Congregational form of church government (Matthew 18:15-19).

By this is meant that each church has the authority, under the Lord, to govern her own affairs. Such a form of government necessarily implies three things: first, equality of the members touching their voice in the governing affairs of the congregation; secondly, independence of each church; and thirdly, each church is the highest tribunal in ecclesiastical matters.

In the first part of the third century the episcopal form of church government was an innovation imposed upon certain churches. This system robbed the churches adopting it of their autonomous rights and placed church government in the hands of bishops whose office was by that time a corruption of the New Testament bishop as a pastor without governing power over his church, except by his Christian conduct and Scriptural teaching.

(3) Immersion as the Scriptural mode of baptism (Acts 8:38-39; Romans 6:4).

Baptists contend that immersion, or dipping in water to a complete submersion of the body and rising again, is the only way of administering the ordinance as taught by the Scriptures and practiced by the New Testament churches.

**Baptizo** is the Greek word used in the New Testament about seventy times to designate the ordinance



of baptism. In Greek lexicons the word is defined as follows: "To dip, to plunge, to submerge, to immerse." **Rantizo** is the word meaning "to sprinkle." It is not used one time in the New Testament to designate the ordinance of baptism. While sprinkling, or pouring, was practiced by certain individuals in the early centuries, it was not until A.D. 1311, at the Council of Ravenna, that sprinkling was decreed as a law of the Roman Catholic Church. Thereafter untold thousands of Christians were put to death for refusing to be sprinkled.

(4) Christ as the sole head over His church (Mark 12:10; Eph. 1:21-23).

The headship of Christ which He exercised over His church while on earth was retained after He ascended to heaven. He did not leave it at Jerusalem, or Rome, or any other place on earth. Roman Catholics make the false claim that the popes are successors of the Apostle Peter, and their bishops successors of the apostles.

Christ possessing the sole headship over His churches, it stands to reason He is the sole Lawgiver. The churches, therefore, have no authority to legislate or make laws but to execute the will of their Lord and Master.

(5) Baptists hold that the Scriptures are their only written guide and standard of authority in religious affairs (II Timothy 3:16-17).

This has been an identifying mark of Baptist beliefs throughout their illustrious history. They also believe in the leadership of the Holy Spirit who never leads contrary to the word of God, which He inspired. The Scriptures, then, constitute the ultimate authority for Baptist faith and practice.

Catholics hold that their church, with the Pope as the head, is the ultimate authority in matters of religion and other affairs. This doctrine has led to the Pope's arrogant claim of having authority to change the Bible at his will and to make Catholic traditions of equal standard with the Scriptures.

(6) The right of private judgment in the interpre-

tation of the Scriptures (II Timothy 2:15; John 5:39).

For the exercise of this right untold numbers of Baptists have lost their life in the dark days of popery. Every man is called upon to read the Scriptures and decide for himself the course he is to pursue, being responsible to God for his decisions. Priestcraft imposed itself early upon the Christian world by denying the right of private opinion in matters of religion, demanding upon penalty of death for infraction that individuals subject their thoughts and activities to priestly authority.

(7) Freedom of worship, of conscience and of speech. Every man has a civil right to worship as he feels dictated to by his conscience, but he does not have a right to dictate to the conscience of others. And not only does he possess the civil right to worship as he pleases, but also to declare openly what his belief is. However, no one has a Scriptural right to believe anything that is displeasing to God.

The early Christians avowed and taught religious liberty. Tertullian, a Christian writer of the second and third centuries, said:

**"Every man should worship according to his own convictions; one man's religion neither harms nor helps another man. It is assuredly no part of religion to compel religion."**

Justin Martyr, a Christian writer of the second century, said:

**"Religion cannot be imposed by force; the matter must be carried on by words rather than by blows. Torture and piety are wildly different; nor is it possible for truth to be united with violence, or justice with cruelty. Nothing is so much a matter of free will as religion."**

Baptists in every century have championed the cause of religious liberty.

(8) Separation of church and state (Luke 20:21-25). Baptists have contended that the one should not control the other, but both church and state should work harmoniously for the good of each. There can be no absolute freedom of religion and worship where



there exists a union of church and state.

(9) Individual priesthood of all believers (Heb. 4:14-16; 7:25; Rev. 5:10; John 14:13).

By this is meant that each believer in Christ has a divine right to approach God through Christ for himself, not being compelled to seek mediation through a human priest on earth. It was quite early in the Christian era, but sometime after the close of the apostolic period, the priesthood was introduced into the Christian economy contrary to the plain teaching of the Scriptures. This arose from a growing desire for power on the part of some ministers. It arose as vitally connected with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. It has been a distinction of Baptists in every century to oppose this heresy, and at the same time to advocate the individual priesthood of all believers.

In addition to the above articles of faith, Baptists believe and teach:

Inherent depravity of man (Eph. 2:3); the convicting and converting power of the Holy Spirit in connection with the word of God (Acts 16:14); a regenerate church membership (Acts 2:41, 47); the security of the believer (John 5:24); a restricted Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42; I Cor. 11:17-20); the blood atonement of Christ (II Cor. 5:21; Hebrews 2:9) as essentially related to His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:23); our Lord's resurrection from the grave (Matt. 28:1-6); His ascension back to heaven (Luke 24:51); His personal and visible and pre-millennial second coming (Acts 1:11); a bodily resurrection of the dead (I Cor. 15:51-53); an eternal hell (Luke 16:19-26); and an eternal bliss in heaven (Rev. 21:1-4).

### III. Origin of Other Denominations

For a church denomination to have a Scriptural origin, it must meet these requirements, as often urged by Baptists: 1. The right founder—Jesus Christ. 2. The right country—Palestine. 3. The right time—during the earthly ministry of Christ. Baptists alone can meet these requirements. Note how other denomina-

tions fall short of them, as follows:

ADVENTISTS, by William Miller, in America, A.D. 1843.

CAMPBELLITES, by Alexander Campbell, in America, A.D. 1827.

CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS, by Mary Baker Eddy, in America, A.D. 1866.

CATHOLICS, Roman, an organic nucleus appearing from the rupture of the church at Rome, A.D. 251. From this time the movement gradually grew toward its present form. The hierarchy was established by Constantine the Great as a growth out of the union of church and state which he effected in A.D. 313. The Papacy was fully established in A.D. 606, when the first universal pope was recognized by Phocas, emperor of Rome, who invested Boniface III with the office of universal bishop.

CATHOLICS, Greek or Orthodox, appearing distinct from the Roman or Western Catholics in A.D. 1054.

CONGREGATIONALISTS, by Robert Browne, in England, A.D. 1583.

DUNKARDS, or Brethren, by Alexander Mack, in America, A.D. 1708.

EPISCOPALIANS, by King Henry VIII, in England, A.D. 1540.

FREE-WILL BAPTISTS, by Benjamin Randall, in America, A.D. 1780.

HARDSHELL BAPTISTS, alias Primitive, in America, by Daniel Parker, A.D. 1832.

HOLINESS SECTS: Pentecostals, Church of God, Assembly of God, Church of God in Christ Jesus, Church of Jesus Christ, et al., have had their beginnings since the Nazarenes, the parent of the Holiness movements, came out of the Methodist Church in 1885.

LUTHERANS, by Martin Luther, in Germany, A.D. 1530.

METHODISTS, by John Wesley, in England, A.D. 1729.

MORMONS, by Joseph Smith, in America, A.D. 1830.

NAZARENES, by S. F. Breese, in America, A.D. 1885.

PRESBYTERIANS, by John Calvin, who labored in



France and Switzerland, A.D. 1535.  
QUAKERS, by George Fox, in America, A.D. 1648.  
RUSSELLITES, or Jehovah's Witnesses, by Russell, in  
America, A.D. 1884.  
UNIVERSALISTS, by John Murry, in America, A.D.  
1770.

### Questions on Lesson III

1. When did our Lord found His church?
2. Explain the argument based on a typical analogy.
3. Give other reasons from the Scriptures for the time of the origin of the church.
4. State some reasons why the church was not founded on the day of Pentecost.
5. Is the original church in any sense identified with any group on earth today? If so, which one?
6. How is the Baptist identity sustained in the original organization or founding of the church?
7. In what other way is the church identified?
8. Give nine Scriptural reasons why the Lord's church may be identified as Baptist.
9. By what simple rule may we determine if a church denomination was founded by Christ?
10. How does the rule work in regards to the founding of other denominations?



## THE CHURCHES ACROSS THE CENTURIES

### I. Testimony of the Scriptures.

1. Assurance of Christ the Founder.
2. The immutable foundation.
3. The pre-eminence of the Head of the church.
4. Preservation by the Head.
5. God's purpose to get glory in the church.
6. Christ's tender love of His church.
7. Backed by the Great Commission.

### II. The Testimony of History.

1. The Bohemian line.
2. The Welsh line.
3. The Anabaptist line.

### III. The Testimony of Scholars.

## THE CHURCHES ACROSS THE CENTURIES

Perpetuity of the church is a doctrine cherished by missionary Baptists. By perpetuity is meant that there has never been a day since Christ founded His church when there was no Scriptural church on earth, and that the church shall continue in existence until He shall come again. Church succession is another term denoting perpetuity, implying that churches have succeeded in all ages the one founded by Christ in person. This is a succession of churches, not of the apostles, as taught by the Romish doctrine of "apostolical succession." Roman Catholics hold that their bishops are the successors to the apostles.

In this chapter we shall appeal to the Scriptures in the main and also to history and the testimony of some scholars in support of the doctrine of church perpetuity.

### I. The Testimony of the Scriptures

#### 1. The assurance of Christ the Founder.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Rather, against "her," as the Greek pronoun here translated **it** is in the feminine gender. The "gates of hell," suggestive of death, shall never be powerful enough to destroy or kill the church. Death being the opposite of life, the church will continue to live, if death cannot effect its end. "Will build" is in the future tense, meaning, in this instance, that Christ will continue building or enlarging the church, the



church having already been founded when Christ made this promise. This work shall go on through the centuries, because all the Satanic intrigues even in their heinous forms of inquisition, the thumb-screw and rack, the auto-de-fe, the Smithfield flames, and the sufferings like those in Piedmont Valley, could not destroy the church of the living God. The old ship of Zion moves on in face of dungeon, fire and sword.

## 2. The immutability of the church's foundation.

(1) It is the immovable Rock of Ages. "Upon this ROCK I will build my church." Not upon the Apostle Peter, nor his confession, nor mere truth as such, but upon Christ himself. "Thou art Peter," from the Greek **petros**, meaning a stone that could be moved, metaphorical of Peter whom Satan threw around yet was he never crushed. The Greek word for rock on which the church was built is **petra**, meaning a large and immovable rock. (2) It is a sure foundation. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah 28:16). The sure foundation is declared by Paul to be Christ. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). This calls to mind the illustration used by Christ in Matthew 7:24-27, where He speaks of two houses being built, one by a wise man who built his house on a rock, which withstood the severest tempests and floods; the other by a foolish man who built his house on the sand, whose house perished under the mighty impact of winds and floods. The church has stood through all the centuries despite the storms and floods of persecutions.

## 3. The pre-eminence of the Head of the church over all enemies and powers.

"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his

body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:21-23). The headship Christ maintained over the church while He was on earth (Mark 12:10) He took with Him to heaven, whence He stands supreme in dignity and power over His church on earth. Being supreme He will never capitulate before the forces of darkness and allow His church to be destroyed.

## 4. The preservation of the church by the Head.

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23). The original word in this passage translated "saviour" means "preserver," thus declaring Christ to be the preserver of His body. In Eph. 4:4 we read: "There is one body," meaning one of a kind, not a universal church. The term is used in an abstract or institutional sense. This one kind of body Christ gave His life to preserve throughout all ages. This affirms that the church as such shall be preserved or kept from decaying, not merely the principles of the church. Both the church and her principles of truth shall never perish from the earth.

## 5. The purpose of God to obtain glory in the church throughout all ages.

"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages" (Eph. 3:21). The rendering in the American Standard Version is quite emphatic: "Unto him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen." Based on this divine assurance of the perpetual life of the church, we might as well expect Christ to cease to live as to expect the death of the church. While He was with His church on earth He said: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19b). Conclusively, it stands to reason that the church must continue to live, if God is to get glory in it "throughout all ages."

## 6. Christ's tender, loving care over His church.

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Eph. 5:29). "Nourish" is a translation of an original word meaning "to maintain, to support, to bring up." And the word translated "cherish" means "to warm, to



keep warm, to cherish with tender love, to foster with tender care." The word is used in I Thess. 2:7: "But we are gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." Both nourishing and cherishing the church, some day Christ shall present "it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). So great is this loving care that Christ, the true Shepherd, testifies that He will give His life for the protection of the sheep (John 10:11). The sheep of His flock were told not to fear (Luke 12:32). Therefore the very life of Christ is pledged for the protection of the sheep of His flock.

#### 7. **The guarantee in the Great Commission.**

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:20). This definite promise of the Master's unceasing presence with His church, "even unto the end of the world" (age), is as sure as any promise found in the word of God. Might as well to doubt His promise of salvation, or His promise to return the second time, as to doubt His promise to be with His church throughout this age. This being true, the church must exist throughout this age.

## II. **The Testimony of History**

Despite the persistent efforts of the pagans in the first three centuries of the Christian era and the Catholics in the Dark Ages to destroy not only the witnesses of the truth contrary to their views but also every vestige of history favorable to these witnesses, footprints of Baptists are found in every century. In their forays of spoilation and death, the enemies of the Baptists unwittingly left testimony of the existence and some of the work of these people. Space will permit only a summary of this testimony, here presented as lines of descent of Baptists across the centuries.

### 1. **THE BOHEMIAN LINE.**

In the first century the general region out of which modern Bohemia was carved was called Illyricum and Dalmatia (Romans 15:19; II Timothy 4:10). It lay across the Adriatic Sea from Italy and northwest of Greece.

Here Paul preached the gospel in the first century. Situated in this region was the famous Hercynian forest, where many first-century Christians dwelt.

Primitive Christianity survived in that area, the inhabitants of which fleeing there to escape the yoke of Rome. According to Mosheim, Baptists were found there before the rise of the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

When those people learned of the stand of Erasmus of Holland (1467-1536), the learned scholar who bucked Roman Catholicism, they wrote him a letter, commending him for his outspoken opposition to the rule of the Pope and informing him of the fact they had avowed such principles for all the preceding centuries. Then they sent a delegation to confer with him, but he refused their overtures and branded them as Anabaptists.

Every word of those people's letter to Erasmus showed that they were Baptists, as it set forth these facts: (1) They owned no other authority in ecclesiastical matters than the Scriptures. (2) They rejected the Pope and all forms of Catholic worship. (3) Practiced believer's baptism and rejected alien baptism. (4) Along with other Romish practices, they refused the auricular confession, prayers for dead saints, and the deified wafer.

In later centuries, the descendants of those first-century Baptists spread over other parts of Europe and mingled with the Waldenses. They were among the forerunners of the Reformation. Were they in existence today as a group, missionary Baptists could give them the hand of fellowship.

### 2. **THE WELSH LINE.**

The Baptists of America are able to boast of a line connecting them with the Welsh Baptists. John Miles, a Baptist minister, and others came over from Wales and organized a church in Massachusetts, at a place called Rehoboth.

"In 1663, John Miles came over from Wales, and began the church which has continued to this day. . . . Some of Mr. Miles' company came over with him, and



at the house of John Butterworth, in Rehoboth, they, to the number of seven, united in a solemn covenant. Their names were: Elder John Miles, James Brown, Nicholas Turner, Joseph Carpenter, John Butterworth, Eldad Kingsly, and Benjamin Alby" (History of the Welsh Baptists, by J. Davis, p. 39).

The Penepek Baptist Church came over from Wales in a body and settled in Pennsylvania in 1701.

From those churches other churches and ministers of like faith have come in America. These all, therefore, have direct connection with the Baptists of Wales, where Baptists have lived, at times in the mountainous retreats, since the year A.D. 63. The title page of Davis' history reads:

**"History of the Welsh Baptists from the Year Sixty-Three to the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy."**

According to Davis' history, among the several visitors to Rome from Wales were Pudens and his wife Claudia. These two coming under the influence of the Apostle Paul, who was then a prisoner at Rome, "about the year of our Lord 63," were converted to the Christian faith. They were among Caesar's official household. Soon thereafter they returned to Wales and planted the gospel in their native land. Says Davis in his history, p. 7:

**"The Welsh lady, Claudia, and others, who were converted under Paul's ministry in Rome, carried the precious seed with them, and scattered it on the hills and vallies of Wales; and since that time, many thousands have reaped a most glorious harvest."**

Davis comes to the year 180 to report an event that took place among the Welsh Baptists. He says:

**"We have nothing of importance to communicate respecting the Welsh Baptists, from this period (A.D. 63) to the year 180, when two ministers by the names of Faganus and Damicanus, who were born in Wales, but were born again in Rome, and there becoming eminent ministers of the gospel, were sent from Rome to assist their brethren in Wales" (Ibid., p. 7).**

There were Baptists in Wales from the year 63 to 180.

Davis gives an account of Baptists suffering persecution in Wales in the year 300, as he says:

**"About the year 300, the Welsh Baptists suffered most terrible and bloody persecution, which was the tenth pagan persecution under the reign of Dioclesian. Alban had the pain, and honor, to be the first martyr on the British shore" (Ibid., p. 8).**

David Benedict, in his "General History of the Baptist Denomination," page 343, quotes Josiah Taylor, an early English historian, as saying:

**"From the coming of Austin, the church in this island was divided into two parts, the OLD and the NEW. The old, or Baptist church, maintained their original principles. But the new church adopted infant baptism, and the rest of the multiplying superstitions of Rome."**

Austin (also called Augustine) came to the British Isles in the year 597, being sent there as a missionary by Gregory the Great, Catholic bishop of Rome. He divided the Christians and persecuted those who rejected his overtures. The true Baptists rejected as being old as new doctrines, who were considered as being old as a church group as early as 597. There were no Catholics in those islands before the coming of Austin.

Connecting the early Baptists of Wales with those of modern times, Benedict goes on to say:

**"The Welsh Baptists contend that Baptist principles were maintained in the recesses of their mountainous principality all along through the dark reign of popery" (Ibid., p. 344).**

Thus Baptists of America are connected with the Apostle Paul at Rome and the first church in Palestine of the first century through the Bohemian and Welsh lines.

### 3. THE ANABAPTIST LINE.

The Anabaptists were dubbed with this name because they rejected the baptism of others. They were charged with baptizing people again (from *ana*, again) who came over to them from other faiths, but they said the ones who came to them on their baptism had not in reality been baptized. The people who held to



this doctrine, along with other Baptist views, were called Anabaptists as early as the second century, but the movement made prominent under this name was distinguished for its work in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They were among the forebears of Baptists of today. There was a fanatical group whom the enemies of Baptists called Anabaptists who had no common ties of faith and worship with the regular Anabaptists. This group arose and disappeared during the German Reformation of the sixteenth century. Note the testimony of Dr. John A. MacKay, for some time president of Princeton Theological Seminary, who wrote as a Protestant:

**"The Baptists, who are the successors of the Anabaptists of pre-Reformation times, have stood for the necessity of personal religious commitment as the prerequisite for Christian baptism. They constitute the largest body of Protestant Christians in the United States and have been marked, especially in the South, by great evangelistic fervor" (The Great Religions of the World, edited by Edward J. Jurji, p. 347).**

Dr. MacKay connects Baptists of America with the Anabaptists who lived before the Reformation, who continued on through this period and were absorbed into the English Baptist movement in the seventeenth century, when the prefix **ana** was dropped. Those people were never connected in any essential way, in respect to their distinguishing marks, with the fanatical group whom Catholics and Protestants alike called Anabaptists. Most of these were dissenters from the Catholics, but the original line of Baptists called Anabaptists never had any organic connection with the Catholic Church. This is the line we shall now give a brief account of step by step from Palestine to America. Bear in mind the names here given which Baptists have borne through the centuries were imposed upon them by their enemies, as our Baptist lineage from the first century is more distinctly traced by the earmarks of doctrine and practice than by names.

**STEP NUMBER ONE.** The Scriptures support the

declaration that the Christians of the first century were Baptists. Dr. John Clarke Ridpath (Methodist), historian of DuPaw University, said: "I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist church as far back as A.D. 100, though without doubt there were Baptists then, as all Christians were then Baptists" (Church Perpetuity, by Jarrell, pp. 58, 59).

**STEP NUMBER TWO.** Baptists were called Montanists in the second century. The name originated in Phrygia, from a prominent leader named Montanus who avowed the Christian cause that had spread over Asia Minor and other regions of the Roman world before the close of the first century. "The Montanist churches were Baptist churches" (Church Perpetuity, by Jarrell, p. 76). The great Tertullian identified himself with these people.

**STEP NUMBER THREE.** In the third and fourth centuries Baptists were dubbed Novatians, from Novatian who rose up against the corruptions of the church at Rome. Fusing with the Montanists, they extended throughout the Roman Empire.

"The Novatians demanded pure churches which enforced strict discipline, and so were called Puritans. They refused to receive the 'lapsed' back into the churches, and because they held the Catholics corrupt in receiving them, they re-immersed all who came to them from the Catholics. For this reason alone they were called 'Anabaptists,' although they denied that this was rebaptism, holding the first immersion null and void, because it had been received from corrupt churches" (History of the Baptists, by Armitage, p. 178).

**STEP NUMBER FOUR.** In the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries Baptists were called Donatists, the name itself originating in A.D. 311, and taken from a prominent leader, Donatus of North Africa, who both denounced Catholicism and defended the purity of the faith.

Fuller, an Episcopal historian of England, said: "The Anabaptists are the Donatists new dipt." Osiander testified:



"Our modern Anabaptists are the same as the Donatists of old."

Bullinger:

"The Donatists and the Anabaptists held the same opinion."

The Montanists, Novatians and Donatists held to the same fundamental beliefs and enjoyed fellowship in places where they met together. In all essential respects they were Baptists.

**STEP NUMBER FIVE.** The name Paulicians was applied to Baptists in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, because they earnestly contended for the teachings of the Apostle Paul.

Dr. John T. Christian:

"The Paulician churches were of apostolic origin, and were planted in Armenia in the first century" (*A History of Baptists*, p. 49).

The Paulicians became prominent and powerful in Armenia in the middle of the seventh century. They taught doctrines held by Baptists of today. Brockett said: "The Armenian Paulicianists were clearly Baptists" (*Jones' Church Hist.*, p. 245).

**STEP NUMBER SIX.** From the tenth to the middle of the thirteenth century Baptists were called Albigenses, deriving this name from the small city of Albi, in Southern France, which became the center of these people. Some historians hold them to be descendants of the Paulicians who came from Armenia and settled in France and Italy. Traces of them show that they had been "in the valleys of France from the earliest ages of Christianity." They were a people of reputable character and were very numerous, numbering "eight hundred thousand" in the twelfth century. (*A Concise History of Baptists*, by Orchard, p. 188.) They taught doctrines now held dear to Baptists.

**STEP NUMBER SEVEN.** The appellation **Waldenses** was also applied to Baptists from the twelfth century to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Apostolic in origin, they were found in the second century in the Piedmont Valley of Northern Italy. From "Waldenses," meaning valley dwellers, they were called

Waldenses. By the twelfth century they grew to be numerous and powerful, spreading out over France and into all the countries of Europe. Of sterling character and fidelity to their simple gospel faith, they suffered dreadful persecutions. Orchard, after saying their views were one with those of the Baptists, declared: "The Waldenses were, in religious sentiments, substantially the same as the Paulicians, Paterines, Puritans, and Albigenses" (*Ibid.*, pp. 258, 259). Dr. Armitage quotes Mosheim and Limborch as marking the likeness of the Waldenses and the Baptists of the sixteenth century, the latter further saying:

"To speak candidly what I think, of all the modern sects of Christians, the Dutch Baptists most resemble both the Albigenses and Waldenses" (*History*, p. 304).

The Waldenses were the predecessors of the true line of the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century and the people now called Baptists.

**STEP NUMBER EIGHT.** While Baptists were called Anabaptists as far back as the second century, for the reason they re-immersed all who came over to them from any irregular or alien group, it was in the sixteenth century when their cause was made prominent under the name. It was a great evangelical movement. The genuine Anabaptists were the same people as the Waldenses.

**STEP NUMBER NINE.** In parts of Europe the Anabaptists were called Mennonites, a name derived from Menno Simon who was converted to the Baptist faith from the Catholics in 1531. Turning from the Catholic priesthood, he drew a great following of Baptists after him, whom his enemies called Mennonites. These Baptists were the predecessors of the English Baptists. Says Orchard, in his history, p. 368:

"It was in 1536, under Menno, that the scattered community of Baptists were formed into a regular body and church order, separate from all Dutch and German Protestants, who at that time had not been formed into one body by any bonds of unity. . . . The Mennonite Baptists consider themselves as real succes-



sors to the Waldenses, and to be the genuine churches of Christ."

From the British Isles Baptists came to America in the early part of the seventeenth century. Thus we have a clear succession of Baptists from Palestine to America.

Other names by which Baptists have been known across the centuries are: Cathari, Bogomils, Paterines, Petrobrussians, Henricians, Arnoldists, Berengarians and Catabaptists.

### III. The Testimony of Scholars

MOSHEIM, Lutheran historian, in 1755, said:

"Before the rise of Luther and Calvin there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of the Dutch Baptists" (Cent. 16, Part 2, Sec. 2, Chap. 3).

SIR ISAAC NEWTON (1642-1727) said:

"The modern Baptists, formerly called Anabaptists, are the only people that never symbolized with the papacy" (Life of Whiston).

CARDINAL HOSIUS, Roman Catholic, in 1524 said:

"Were it not that the Baptists have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during these past twelve hundred years, they would swarm in greater number than all the Reformers."

This one testimony takes the Baptists back to within about two hundred years of the apostolic era.

T. R. BURNETT, in his day a well-known minister of the "Disciples Church," or "Campbellite Church," said:

"The Baptists have connection with the apostles through their line of succession, which extends back three hundred and fifty years, where it connects with the Waldensian line, and that reaches to the apostolic day. This is not a Baptist line but the Baptists have connection with this line, and through it have connection with the apostles" (Christian Messenger, Dec. 8, 1886).

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, founder of the "Disciples Church," said:

"The Baptist denomination in all ages and in all countries has been, as a body, the constant asserters of the rights of man and the liberty of conscience. They have often been persecuted by Pedobaptists; but they never politically persecuted, though they have had it in their power" (A. Campbell on Baptism, p. 409, editions of 1851 and 1953).

W. C. KING, whose associate editors were Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, David Jordan and Lyman Abbott, said:

"Of the Baptists it may be said that they are not reformers. These people are entirely distinct and independent of the Roman and Greek Churches, and have an unbroken continuity from the apostolic days down through the centuries" (Crossing the Centuries).

DRS. YPEIG and J. J. DERMONT, historians of the Dutch Reformed Church, said:

"We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists and in later times Menonites, were the original Waldenses and have long in the history of the church received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered the only Christian community which has stood since the apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrine of the gospel through all ages" (History of the Dutch Reformed Church, Vol. 1, p. 48).

### Questions on Lesson IV

1. Define the term "church perpetuity."
2. Give seven reasons from the Scriptures for church perpetuity.
3. Explain the three lines of historical testimony favoring church perpetuity.
4. Discuss the nine steps used in establishing the Anabaptist line.
5. What is meant by the term *ana* as a prefix to the Baptist name?

Note: This and several other names were given the Baptist people by their enemies through scorn.

6. Give the significance of the testimony of scholars favoring the apostolic origin of Baptists.



## BAPTIST CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS

### I. What Is an Association?

1. It is not "the church."
2. It is not the denomination.
3. It is not a convention.
4. It is not the bride.
5. It is a mutual relationship of churches.
6. Is an association Scriptural?

### II. Powers of an Association.

1. Not legislative.
2. Advisory through messengers.
3. Executive of the will of the Master.

### III. The Purpose of an Association.

1. Not to promote political ideologies.
2. Not to conquer the world.
3. Not to promulgate a social gospel.
4. Not to create a super organization.
5. To provide associate media for the spread of the gospel.

## BAPTIST CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS

### I. What Is an Association?

#### 1. It is not "the church."

It is grossly erroneous to speak of an association or a convention as "the church." An association, properly speaking, is composed of churches as units, while a church consists of individual members who have covenanted together to form an independent body.

#### 2. It is not "the denomination."

By "denomination" is meant a group of churches united by the common ties of faith and worship. Wherever churches thus bound together are found, regardless of color or race, they are of the same denomination. A church organized anywhere upon this basis automatically becomes one of the group or "denomination," as this is done by the spirit of principle rather than by a vote of an association, or convention, or council, or synod, or pontifical decrees. And as a church, newly organized, enters into the general group of churches, or "denomination," by the adoption of common ties of faith and worship, she can cease being in the "denomination" only by a rejection of them. While churches may choose to associate with other churches of like faith in a particular work and may even bar others who are not in sympathy with their system of association, still no church can be excluded from the "denomination" as such by vote or decree.

The word of God is the tie that binds Scriptural churches together. This is their "creed," besides which they have no creed, as taught by Baptists. Often and



in many places they have given expression to their creed either orally or in writing. This may be done in the form of a sermon, discourse, lecture or treatise; it may be put forth by memory, by notes on paper, slate, chart or blackboard, or in bookform, or in newspapers, or over radio or television. Whatever form or medium, it is a mere expression of the creed and not the creed itself. All denominations say they accept the Bible, but how do we know whether they do or not unless they give expression to their belief in some tangible form? The word "creed" is from the Latin verb "credo" which means "I believe." Luke begins the book bearing his name by saying: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are surely believed among us." Those things "surely believed" among the New Testament saints, being divine principles, constituted their faith or creed. This is the Baptist creed.

**3. It is not a convention.**

A convention is a body of delegates or individuals, therefore not an association of churches. An association as such does not meet, although it is spoken of as meeting, but in an accommodative sense. It is a travesty on the historic Baptist faith and practice for a convention to be called "the denomination." The "denomination" was in existence many centuries before the organization of the first Baptist convention.

**4. It is not the bride.**

It is absurd to equate an association with the bride of Christ for the reason there may be churches embracing members of the bride who are not in any associational group.

**5. An association is the mutual relationship of two or more churches.**

This relationship is formed by churches themselves who effect an associated work through messengers, letters or contributions. An association is formed the moment two or more churches mutually agree to cooperate. This may be done anytime, as the age of an association does not determine its Scriptural right to exist, whether formed in the first century or in mod-

ern times. This fact does not hold true of a "denomination" as such, as a church denomination must have lineal connection with the New Testament churches, if it is to boast of Scriptural origin.

When the church at Antioch (Acts 15) sent certain brethren to Jerusalem to confer with that church relative to a doctrinal issue, there was an association formed the moment the Jerusalem church agreed to consider the matter. The Antioch church did not bodily go to Jerusalem, but was authoritatively represented by certain brethren.

Accordingly, this idea of an association maintains:

(1) That an association as such is not organized and therefore does not meet. The messengers meeting by authority of the churches may organize that "all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40). An organization of messengers does not constitute a superior organization of churches, for the churches do not lose their authority by giving their messengers authority to transact business common to all of them, any more than a church loses her authority when she authorizes a building committee or any other committee to do work for her. The Antioch church, for instance, did not lose her authority by authorizing her messengers to attend to business at the Jerusalem council.

(2) The churches composing an association, being units of the association, must of necessity have equal rights and privileges. Individuals are the units of a convention.

(3) The churches being equal units, they must have the right to an equal number of messengers at a general meeting. This fact itself excludes two things: First, a numerical representation; secondly, a money basis. The numerical basis denies the churches as units of an association, and the money basis exalts material things above the spiritual. This system centralizes controlling power in the hands of the larger and wealthier churches.

**6. Is an association of churches Scriptural?**

An association is Scriptural if it is indeed a "joint-



cooperation and fellowship of the churches composing it," allowing each church an equal voice in all matters of common interest.

Authority for church cooperation in an associational capacity on the basis of equality is found in the 8th chapter of Second Corinthians. In modern parlance we would refer to this work as the "Macedonian Baptist Association," which appellation would be Scriptural to be applied in Paul's day. At the time Paul wrote this letter there were at least three churches in the province of Macedonia—the church at Philippi, the church at Thessalonica, and the church at Berea. But in their cooperation they did not form a provincial or state church, as each remained an independent unit.

These churches cooperated by means of contributions and by messengers. Their cooperation by means of contributions for the support of the poor saints in Judaea is shown in the first seven verses. (See also Romans 15:26.) Not only did the churches of Macedonia, also of Achaia (Greece), cooperate by means of contributions, but they also did this through a common treasurer, who was Paul himself. (See II Cor. 8:4.) And Paul had an assistant in the person of Titus, who also had an assistant, whose name is not given but is generally thought to be Luke. (See II Cor. 8:6, 18.) These contributions meant more than a mere idea of charity, for the material support sent them not only sustained them physically but also enabled them to carry on their work of preaching, teaching and worshipping.

In the second place, the churches of Macedonia and Achaia cooperated by means of messengers who held joint-meetings. In this capacity they selected Titus and the other brethren to handle the business of the churches in the distribution of the funds.

When one is a servant of all the churches in an association, he should be selected jointly by the churches acting through their messengers or representatives. According to the construction of II Cor. 8:19, we are certain that Titus and the other brethren were selected in this manner. "And not that only, but

who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us, with this grace, which is administered by us, to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind." They were **chosen of the churches**, or **by the churches**, as the original Greek word allows. The Emphatic Diaglott says **voted** by the churches. Rotherham puts it **appointed**, and other translations say **elected** by the churches. Whether we say chosen, elected, voted, or appointed, the will of the churches was made known by a single vote, not by each church voting separately and at different times. The original word used in verse 19 (a form of **cheirotoneo**) indicates the vote was taken by "stretching out the hand." This implies that there was but one group voting, the assembled messengers, for would all the churches, if voting separately and at different times, have employed this identical method? The Scriptures do not indicate that this was the only method the New Testament churches used to determine a majority voice. (Cf. Acts 1:26.) The brethren being chosen or elected by the churches by a common vote, the conclusion is positive: we have an example in the New Testament of business being jointly administered by churches in association.

## II. Powers of an Association

### 1. Not legislative.

No association of churches has Scriptural warrant to legislate, or make laws by which the churches are to be governed. Such a high-handed claim is peculiar to confederations and hierarchies, but not to Baptist assemblies whether meeting in church or associational capacity. On the other hand, with Scriptural backing, associational messengers may adopt "Articles of Agreement" for a due order of procedure, often termed "Statement of Principles of Cooperation." Such is merely a setting forth of a Scriptural plan of cooperation.

### 2. Advisory through messengers.

Messengers, in an associational capacity, often find it advisable to send back to the churches certain rec-



ommendations for work to be done. While no church is absolutely bound to accept any recommendation, most of them do for the reason they have adopted the "Statement of Principles of Cooperation," or "Articles of Agreement." The right to disagree on certain policies of work and still remain in fellowship is a Baptist heritage, for it has been an age-long trait of Baptists not to be pushed around.

### 3. Executive of the will of the Master.

Instead of legislating or making laws, the churches have been entrusted with the responsibility of executing or administering the will of Christ, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. This principle is taught and practiced by New Testament Baptists today.

NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, "Statement of Principles of Cooperation," Article VI:

**"The powers of this Association are limited to the execution of the expressed will of the churches composing it according to the teachings of the New Testament Scriptures; and the Association, in its annual sessions, will elect such officers as are necessary for the expediting of its deliberations and work, and appoint such committees as are necessary, and transact any business as may be directed by the churches composing it."**

This limits the work of the messengers to the will of the churches, in whom divine authority rests to administer the affairs of our Lord until He shall come again. This is backed by the Scriptures, as we herein show.

THE GREAT COMMISSION, Matthew 28:18-20:

**"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."**

Thus Christ, backed by full power or authority in both heaven and earth, commissions His church to

carry out His will "unto the end of the world," that is, this age.

The church is not left to battle alone in the execution of the divine will, for she has

THE PROMISE OF JESUS, John 16:7:

**"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."**

The administration of the will of our Lord, under the personal supervision of the Spirit, was assumed by the church the moment Jesus ascended back to heaven, as we read: "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22). Having already received the Spirit in His quickening and illuminating power, the disciples now receive Him in an administrative sense, the fulfillment of the promise made in Luke 12:32: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's al-good pleasure to give you the kingdom." It was already theirs in membership and service, but not until Jesus went away did they possess its administration. This the church is authorized to "occupy till I come," says Jesus (Luke 19:13).

### III. The Purpose of Associations

#### 1. Not to promote political ideologies.

When Jesus exhorted His inquirers "to render unto Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and unto God the things that belong to God," He established once and for all the principle of separation of church and state; and when He declared that "my kingdom is not of this world," He made manifest His will that His churches should not mimic the world in the execution of their work. They should not employ armies, navies, or any military powers like human governments or expeditions to effect the divine purposes through them. The example of the apostles and the first-century disciples is noteworthy. As they "went everywhere preaching the gospel," they neither condemned even the pagan



government of the time, nor advocated any political ideology. In their silence toward the form of government of the time, they proclaimed a gospel that eventually overthrew the pagan government by its acceptance in the hearts and lives of people. While human or civil government as such is ordained by the Lord, any unchristian enactments thereof are not ordained.

## 2. Not to conquer the world.

The conquest idea of the gospel is foreign to the word of God. The Master did not say to His church, "Go ye therefore and conquer the world," a scheme held by the Romanists, but to disciple peoples of all nations, thus taking the gospel to all mankind. The churches will never "take the world for Christ," but they can take Christ to the world. Our Lord's prophecy that the world will be godless at His second coming as it was in the days of Noah is grounds for the belief that the world will never be conquered by the gospel. But at His coming Christ will conquer the world by the brightness of His appearing and establish universal peace on the earth.

## 3. Not to promulgate a social gospel.

The social gospel proponents propose to usher in a Utopian world by perfecting the social status of the individual and society. They hold that no particular creed need to be believed and advocated, nor should any particular religious system be held up as the criterion. They shall create such an ideal state by fusing all the good points in all religions where they co-exist, let them be Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hindooism, and any others.

This theory denies the necessity of the new birth and smacks of universalism. In denying the new birth as taught by Christ, it improperly evaluates man's nature as being inherently holy, whereas the Apostle Paul declares that "We are by nature the children of wrath." Taking man in his natural holiness, as they teach, they propose to lead him on to heaven by a system of training. In the event he falls into debauchery, he need only to quit his sins and live an

upright life in order to get to heaven when he dies.

Not only does this theory deny the necessity of the new birth, it also denies the necessity of the cross of Christ. "I do not frustrate the grace of God," says Paul, "for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21). If the law of Moses could not effect the righteousness of God in the soul, neither can any other system of works. Therefore we are bound to conclude that the social gospel theory is contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures.

## 4. Not to create a superior organization.

Because churches as such do not meet together, they are not organized into a separate and superior organization when their respective messengers meet for fellowship and business. It is the messenger body that is organized in keeping with the Scriptural import of associated activities. The messengers must be subject to the churches, else there is created a power outside their jurisdiction without Scriptural authority. If churches of a district should merge into an organization, they would automatically create a district super-church; if the churches of a state should merge into a separate body, a state church would ensue; or on a national scale, a national church; and if the like should prevail throughout the world, the monstrous spectacle of a universal church would appear. This, in principle, would be a hierarchy.

On the other hand, churches may compose associations, such as the North American Baptist Association, and the various state and district associations of like principles. While these churches as such do not meet and organize into a separate body, they may scripturally authorize their respective messengers to meet as often as it is deemed necessary to attend to business that is common to all concerned and united in concerted efforts according to a scriptural declaration or statement of principles of cooperation. Churches may associate together by means of contributions alone, but the churches of such an association would be too loosely knitted together and therefore too haphazard in their procedure. In order that there might be unanim-



ity of purpose and plans and an effective operation, the churches should cooperate by means of messengers organized along scriptural lines that "all things be done decently and in order." Therefore when messengers meet and proceed with their business in accordance with the common agreement, they manifest an orderly cooperation of the churches as equal units in the association.

5. **But to provide associated media for a world-wide promulgation of the gospel.**

This complies not only with the Great Commission, but is also congruous with reason. We should logically expect churches to associate together, to pool their efforts in spreading the gospel seed in all the earth, as we know it would be utterly impossible for one congregation to accomplish so stupendous a task. The great Antioch church of Biblical fame, after inaugurating a foreign mission program, soon saw a necessity of cooperation by other churches to maintain and widen her efforts, as upheld by the Apostle Paul. She further saw a need of inter-church council and fellowship in order to iron out a bitter controversy that had arisen over a doctrinal issue.

The Scriptures support the effectiveness of associated work above that of individual churches going alone. The principle of added strength in association is seen in Deut. 32:30: "How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?" Note the decidedly ascending ratio of power in association—**one** putting to flight a thousand, whereas **two** in united effort are able to handle ten thousand. Nine thousand more are brought under subjection by the addition of only one more warrior. The two working together in the name of the Lord compose a company which can claim the presence and blessing of Christ (Matt. 18:19-20).

### Questions on Lesson V

1. What is meant by the term **association** when applied to inter-church work?
2. Explain what such an association is not.
3. Is an association of churches Scriptural? Give reason for your answer.
4. What is an association not empowered to do?
5. What are the powers of an association?
6. Can an association as such meet?
7. In what sense only can an association meet?
8. What is the purpose of an association?
9. Name some things which are not within the purpose of an association.



## Outline of Lesson VI

### MISSION SYSTEMS

- I. Direct Gospel Missions.
- II. Independent Systems.
- III. The Convention System.
  1. Its origin.
  2. The Triennial Convention.
  3. American Baptist Convention.
  4. The Southern Baptist Convention.
    1. Its money basis of representation.
    2. Unequal church power.
    3. The material before the spiritual.
    4. The convention over the churches.
    5. Founded apart from strict church authority.
    6. Made a test of fellowship.
    7. Tendency toward compromise.
- IV. The Association System.
  1. What it is.
  2. Associations before the convention.
  3. Early associations in foreign countries.

## Lesson VI

### MISSION SYSTEMS

There are various plans adopted by different Baptist affiliations in an effort to put into effect the Great Commission, but we will make mention of but four of them, in the following order: (1) Direct Gospel Missions; (2) Independent; (3) Convention; and (4) Associational.

#### I. Direct Gospel Missions

The ones who use this method are called "Gospel Missioners." They reject all organization in mission endeavors and hold that all moneys designated for missions must be sent directly to the missionaries, whence the name by which they are known. They further hold that all church enterprises of a general nature, such as schools and orphanages, must be owned and controlled by individual churches without regard for joint or cooperative ownership and control. Touching this method, the following thoughts are submitted:

1. There is no Scripture specifying that money cannot be sent to a missionary by the donor himself, but in most instances we have observed that after all a common treasurer is used. For instance, there usually is one prominent brother among the missionaries, especially those in foreign lands, who receives and disburses moneys sent to his particular field. We have failed to see any justification for a common treasurer in a foreign country and at the same time condemnation for the same type of a servant in the homeland.
2. This system is loosely knitted together so that any particular group of its advocates cannot be con-



sidered permanent and representative of all other groups of this school of thought.

3. Perhaps its greatest failing lies in its ineffectiveness. On the other hand, its admirable feature lies in its stout resistance to Modernism.

## II. The Independent System

Perhaps we should say "systems," as there are different groups calling themselves "Independent" Baptists. Some of them carry the titles of "Fundamentalist" and "Bible" Baptists.

A majority of the "independents" maintain some sort of inter-church relation through fellowship meetings. And some of them maintain missionary committees whose duty it is to supervise their mission work.

As a rule the "independents" are marked by their zeal for their causes. The larger groups among them are successful Sunday school builders and have thriving Bible schools or colleges. They are pronounced in their views on verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the Genesis account of creation, the virgin birth of Christ, His blood atonement, salvation by grace, and the pre-millennial coming of Christ.

They are, however, weak on some fundamental Baptist teachings. In some areas they have been known to receive members into their churches on their alien baptism and to practice open communion. It is also a fairly well established fact that a "preacher rule" over the churches is exercised by the pastors, who, in most instances, substitute for the use of Sunday school literature in their churches, helps prepared by themselves.

## III. The Convention System

The people who are identified with this system are known as "Convention" Baptists, thus called for the reason the term "convention" is applied to their national and most of their state organizations. Here are some facts we should consider.

1. The Convention system originated at Kettering, England, in the year 1792, without church authority.

It was organized in the back parlor of a private home by twelve ministers. In the Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention of 1890, page 11, we read:

**"The centennial of the modern missionary enterprise is at hand. In October, 1792, a little band of brethren gathered in a house of a Baptist lady, made the first contribution to the cause of modern missions."**

DR. RICHARD B. COOK, in his "Story of the Baptists," p. 305, speaking of the society formed at Kettering, says:

**"This was a small beginning for a missionary society, but it was a very respectable contribution for twelve ministers, in view of the times and their very small salaries."**

While we most heartily commend the zeal for the salvation of the heathen as manifested by the twelve ministers, it is difficult to understand why they would effect their movement apart from the churches. It was, therefore, at best a human society.

2. The Triennial Convention was organized in America, at Philadelphia, in 1814, as a missionary society, and called by this name because it met every three years. Its original name was: "The General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions." It consisted of societies and had a money basis for its membership.

ROBERT G. TORBET, in his "History of the Baptists," p. 268, says of this convention:

**"The constitution provided that not more than two delegates should be sent from each of the local and state mission societies and from other religious bodies of the denomination that contributed at least one hundred dollars a year to the missionary fund of the convention."**

In 1707 the Philadelphia Baptist Association was organized. This means that this association was one hundred and seven years older than the first general convention in America.

In 1845, when a division between the Baptists of the North and South took place over the slavery question, the Southern Baptist Convention was organized;



and in May of the following year the Baptists in the Northern States reorganized under the name of the American Baptist Missionary Union. (Encyclopedia of Missions, by Dwight, Turner and Bliss, p. 18.) This name prevailed until May, 1907, when, in Washington, D.C., another reorganization of the Baptists of the North was effected, which took the name of Northern Baptist Convention. At the annual meeting in Boston, May 24, 1950, this name was changed to American Baptist Convention.

Having sketched the beginnings of the convention system under its different organizational titles, let us direct our study to the particular system under the appellation of

### The Southern Baptist Convention

1. It has a money basis of representation.

"Art. III. The Convention shall consist of messengers who are members of missionary Baptist churches cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention on the basis of one messenger for every church contributing to the work of the Convention and one additional messenger for every \$250 actually paid to the work of the Convention during the calendar year preceding the annual meeting of the Convention, such messengers to be appointed to the Convention by the churches and certified by the churches to the Convention, provided no church shall be entitled to more than ten messengers" (Annual of S.B.C.).

Notice (1) while the churches name the messengers, they must be churches "contributing" to the Convention work. A church might contribute to the winning of a thousand or more souls, but unless it is done through the Convention channels, that church cannot be represented at the Southern Baptist Convention. (2) All messengers above one and up to ten are elected on the specific basis of TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS. The first messenger is elected on a money basis also, but the difference is, the exact amount is not named in his case.

2. Unequal church power.

The Southern Baptist Convention gives power to the wealthy churches. A church with the money may have as many as ten messengers, provided the sum of \$250 for each messenger above one and up to ten is paid to the Convention work. This system would allow a wealthy church to have as many votes at a convention as ten weaker churches. The inequality is not Scriptural.

3. The material before the spiritual.

The Southern Baptist Convention, in its messenger representation, respects the material in preference to the spiritual. It matters not how many souls a church may have won to Christ, she can have no representation at the convention unless she has contributed money to its work; and, vice versa, she may represent at the convention, if she has contributed money, whether or not she has won a soul during the year.

4. The convention over the churches.

The Southern Baptist Convention is a corporation of individuals, not an association of churches. This we read as follows:

"Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia, in General Assembly met, and is hereby enacted by the authority of this same. That from and after the passage of this Act, That William B. Johnson, Wilson Lumpkin, James B. Taylor, A. Docrey, R. B. C. Howell, and others, either 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.



**"Approved December 27, 1845" (Charter of S.B.C.).**

While circumstances may require that even religious institutions be chartered for the transaction of business, it is not required by the laws of any State or of the United States that a group of individuals form a "body politic" for the purpose of controlling the "energies of the BAPTIST DENOMINATION OF CHRISTIANS." The last phrase is a change of the wording as it appears in the earlier Annuals of the S.B.C., in which it reads: **"The energies of the whole denomination."** By this Charter we understand that the Southern Baptist Convention set itself up with legal authority to control the energies of the whole Baptist "denomination," and thereby makes of itself an incorporated dictatorship over the churches.

The Convention corporation was created for the purpose: (1) **To elicit**, or draw out, the energies of the BAPTIST DENOMINATION. (2) **To combine**, or put together the energies of the BAPTIST DENOMINATION. (3) **To direct**, or CONTROL the energies of the BAPTIST DENOMINATION. Here we see that a human institution is incorporated with legal authority to say to the divine institution, the churches of Christ, I propose to draw out, combine and CONTROL your energies. This makes a human institution a dictator over the divine, for if it control the energies of the churches it of necessity controls the churches themselves. It might be said in reply that no such prerogative is exercised by the Convention. Well, then, why does it lay claim to such a right? The claim is wholly contrary to the exhortation of the Head and Master of the church, as follows:

**"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that 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: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:25-27).**

This positively forbids the creation and practice of human lordship over God's heritage.

**5. Founded without church authority.**

The Southern Baptist Convention was founded apart from strict church authority, as shown by the following quotation:

**"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, May 8, 1845, 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" (Preamble to S.B.C. Constitution).**

The Southern Baptist Convention was organized by messengers from: (1) "missionary societies"; (2) "churches"; and (3) "other religious bodies of the Baptist denomination in various parts of the United States." This puts the authority of "societies" and "other religious bodies" on par with that of the churches. Therefore the Convention is backed by society authority, a thing wholly unknown in New Testament practice.

**Witnesses Are Called**

The testimonies of the following witnesses attest the fact the convention system is not the New Testament plan of mission work, and therefore is without Scriptural authority:

DR. J. B. GAMBRELL, while "Superintendent of Missions" of the Texas Convention, said in the "Baptist Standard," organ of that Convention:

**"These general bodies (Convention and Boards) occupy a sphere of their own, entirely outside the limits of the churches."**

At another time Dr. Gambrell, once president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said this Convention was a human institution, but the churches were divine. What right, then, does the Convention have to assume authority to "elicit, combine and direct" the energies of Baptist churches? Should a human institution control the divine?

DAVID BENEDICT, "History of Baptists," p. 332:



"In process of time, so strongly were many inclined to constitute these bodies (associations and general assemblies) into courts of appeal, that it was found necessary to define their powers, and make them merely advisory councils, as Baptists in all ages and countries have done."

Then when the Southern Baptist Convention, from its very origin, assumed the dictatorial prerogative of "eliciting, combining and directing the energies of the BAPTIST DENOMINATION OF CHRISTIANS," it was a departure from the regular and historic principles of Baptists "in all ages and countries."

At different times and under varied circumstances, from the apostolic days until now, Baptist churches have formed associations, which the orthodox ones among them all along have considered advisory in their capacity. When an association or convention supersedes the advisory role, it becomes hierarchical, and if left without further restraints, it may drift into a "court of appeal" and even a state church. This is the thing most historians have in mind when they speak of the fact there were no general assemblies among the New Testament churches, that is, there were no courts of appeal and no state churches.

For an association to be only advisory means that no assembly of messengers can bind an independent, self-governing body as a missionary Baptist church to do as they may decide. However, a church may obligate herself, under the Lord, and this is what is done when churches mutually agree upon scriptural principles of cooperation, as we find expressed in a "Statement of Principles of Cooperation." Churches exercise their right of independence when they enter into a mutual agreement as much as they do when they disclaim any subjection to any higher tribunal or court of appeal. They are not bound to enter into an agreement, but when they do, according to the Scriptures, they neither lose their independence nor create an hierarchy. Entering into a mutual agreement, if true to the New Testament, churches will recognize and respect the principle of equality; that in

all matters wherein all in the agreement are concerned, all the churches must have equal rights; otherwise a virtual dictatorship is created.

DR. D. B. RAY, historian and founder-editor of American Baptist:

"There are no Scriptures pointing out such an organization as the Southern Baptist Convention."

DR. J. N. HALL, after Dr. Ray, editor of American Baptist, in his day called Baptist Flag:

"Surely such an organization (the convention) has no sort of right to take absolute control of the mission work of the churches, for the churches have no sort of control over the Convention. The whole thing (the Board system) as now constructed is in direct contradiction of genuine Baptist polity, and the wonder is how the fathers ever consented to the organization of such a convention. Let the churches get in the saddle, and with reins in hand, let them manage the mission work as the Lord directs" (Baptist Flag, May 26, 1898).

DR. J. R. GRAVES, author, editor, theologian and historian:

"Our missionary organism originated with our English brethren at the time of the revival of the missionary zeal, through the influence of Carey, Marshall and Fuller. . . . Let it be borne in mind then that our missionary machinery is of human origin, and of a very recent date, entirely outside and independent of the churches, and not known in the primitive ages of the church" (Tennessee Baptist, Sept. 8, 1860).

Hear the same witness again:

"The first radical fault in our missionary scheme is that it is a centralization—a centralized operation. It takes out of the hands of many of the churches and places our missionary operations in the hands of a few. Such has been the character of our missionary organizations and they have failed; the present is a failure; all the future ones of a similar kind will be. The churches are called upon to surrender all intimate concern in the management of and planning for, and directing the missionaries and the mission work into the hands of a central board; and content themselves



with supplying the funds called upon by agents."

By "our missionary organism" and "our missionary scheme," Dr. Graves means the Convention system, as he refers to the time of Carey, Marshall and Fuller as its origin. The mission zeal of those brethren is to be admired and commended, but what a blessing to the cause at large and for all time to follow had they channeled their efforts through the churches instead of formulating a scheme independent of the churches.

DR. W. A. JARREL, author of "Baptist Church Perpetuity," writing in the American Baptist Flag, June 16, 1898, said concerning the Texas Convention:

"They (convention leaders) boldly declare the churches have nothing to do with the Convention and Board, save to follow their dictates and grease the machinery with their money. . . . Dr. Gambrell, who calls himself 'Superintendent of Missions,' has had the boldness to declare in print that the Convention 'has a sovereignty of its own,' and that it is none of the business of the churches to even pass resolutions as to how the State work should be managed, as to how their money should go, and that the passing of these resolutions should be stopped. Of course this is POPYRY."

DR. FRANCIS WAYLAND, once President of Brown University:

"The Baptists have ever believed in the entire and absolute independence of the churches. By this, we mean that every church of Christ, that is, every company of believers united together according to the laws of Christ, is wholly independent of every other; that every church is perfectly of self-government; and that, therefore, no one acknowledges any higher authority, under Christ, than itself; that with the church all ecclesiastical action commences, and with it it terminates, and hence, that the ecclesiastical relations proper, of every member, are limited to the church to which he belongs" (Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches, p. 178).

With the above as a solid basis, Dr. Wayland goes on with his reasoning, as follows:

"The more steadfastly we hold to the independence of the churches, and adjure everything in the form of a denominational corporation, the more truly shall we be united and greater shall be our prosperity" (Ibid., p. 190).

Dr. Wayland's counsel that Baptists "adjure (re-nounce) everything in the form of a denominational corporation," is a solid blow to the dictatorial claim of the Southern Baptist Convention in its act of incorporation designed to control the whole denomination.

#### 6. Made a test of fellowship.

The Southern Baptist Convention has made the "Co-operative Program" a test of fellowship among their brethren. Let us hear the late Dr. E. P. Alldredge, once of high standing in the official ranks of the Convention:

"If for example, a given pastor or church does not support the whole Co-operative Program, as handed down to us by the Executive Committee each year, such pastors and such churches are forthwith black-listed and regarded no longer as true and loyal Southern Baptists. No State Baptist leader will recommend such a pastor to any position in the denomination."

Regardless of the importance of loyalty to a common cause, Baptists should not make anything a test of fellowship among them that is not found taught in the Scriptures, and even then it should be of a distinctive nature. It is contrary to inherent Baptist principles for a convention or association to project a program of work and then use it as a blackjack upon brethren who choose to exercise their liberty by not giving it full support. Christian service that is acceptable to God arises out of a voluntary spirit and not under coercion.

#### 7. Tendency toward compromise.

While the Southern Baptist Convention leaders will discredit a brother for not supporting the Co-operative Program, there seems to be among them a growing laxness in regards to their placing emphasis upon



historic Baptist teachings. Take note of the following facts:

(1) The historic doctrine of church perpetuity or succession is more or less compromised in at least some of its institutions of learning.

(2) A sizable percent of its churches accept alien baptism and practice "open" communion.

(3) Some of its ministers conduct so-called "union" meetings with ministers of other denominations.

(4) The American (Northern) Baptist Convention has been known to receive a Free-will Baptist Church into its fellowship without requiring the members to be baptized again. And it also has been known to hold in its fellowship a church that believes and practices baptizing for the dead.

(5) Certain of the Southern Baptist Convention leaders, in recent times, have discredited the historic Baptist principle of church independence by testifying in court that a church does not have a right to declare herself independent of the Convention, once she has lined up with it.

#### IV. The Association System

We shall now turn to a brief study of the plan of work as set forth by the North American Baptist Association, a national group of missionary Baptist churches doing work in the United States and foreign countries.

1. It is an association of churches, not a convention of individuals. Its annual messengers meeting is subject to the churches.

2. Its Missionary Committee is composed of twenty-five workers selected at the annual meeting and one chosen by each church in the fellowship. Thus the Missionary Committee has direct church authority in all its deliberations.

3. The principle of church and ministerial equality is taught and practiced. Hence the small churches, as units in the associated work, have a voice equal to that of the large churches.

4. A missionary, to be chosen, must show evidence

that he has been called of God (Acts 13:2).

5. He must have back of him a church or churches (Acts 13:1-4; 15:40; II Cor. 8:16-19; 11:8).

6. The missionaries are chosen by all the churches through their messengers, as no church is allowed to dictate to others what their responsibility shall be. Herein is involved the principle of church equality, which is seen operative at associational meetings where all churches represented are considered equals and therefore are allowed the same number of messengers. Churches have a right to express a voice in the selection of missionaries who are to serve all of them, which may be done through their messengers. Paul and Barnabas not only refused to work with each other at the beginning of their second missionary tour, but also made a choice of their companions (Acts 15:39-40). If they could make a choice, why cannot the churches?

7. The North American Baptist Association maintains four departments of work, as follows:

(1) MISSIONS. Missionary activities are carried on in the United States and several foreign countries. This department also maintains a Theological Seminary in Brazil and one in Mexico City.

(2) CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. The North American Theological Seminary is located at Jacksonville, Texas. On the district and state levels, the churches in line with the Association own and operate colleges and Bible schools and benevolent institutions.

(3) PUBLICATIONS. Books and general supplies are furnished for all the needs of the churches.

(4) RESEARCH AND PUBLIC RELATIONS. This department gathers general statistical and religious information and gives publicity to the work of the Association.

8. The churches in line with the North American Baptist Association, on the national, district and state levels, maintain Youth Encampments, Brotherhoods, and Women's Missionary Auxiliaries.



## Associations Before the Convention

Long before the Convention system was originated, Baptist churches associated together in different parts of the world for the promulgation of the gospel. The Philadelphia Baptist Association, in America, was organized in 1707, eighty-five years before the Convention system was started in England. The Charleston Association, South Carolina, 1751; Sandy Creek Association, North Carolina, 1758; Kehukee Association, 1765; Ketocton Association, Virginia, 1766; Warren Association, Rhode Island, 1767; Stonington Association, Connecticut, 1772; Red Stone Association, Pennsylvania, 1776; New Hampshire Association, New Hampshire, 1776; Shaftesbury Association, Vermont, 1781; Woodstock Association, Vermont, 1783; Georgia Association, Georgia, 1784; Holston Association, Tennessee, 1786; Bowdoinham Association, Maine, 1787; and the Vermont Association, Vermont, 1787.

By simple calculation we can determine the fact that the Convention system, which originated in England, in 1792, is younger than several associations even in America. Subtract the dates of the origin of these associations from 1792, and the answer will show how much older each association is than the Convention system. In the same manner you can determine how much older these associations are than the first Convention to be organized in America, the Triennial Convention, in 1814. Also subtract the dates from 1845 and 1907 and you will find how much older they are than the Southern Baptist Convention and the American (Northern) Baptist Convention, respectively.

By naming these associations we do not intimate that they are all now in line with the North American Baptist Association, neither do we mean to intimate that none of them ever afterwards worked in line with the Convention system. But what they have done after their beginning does not alter two facts, viz: (1) they originated before the Convention system came into being; and (2) in the main they respected the principles of cooperation as now set forth by the North American Baptist Association.

## In Foreign Countries

Let us here take note of two significant facts:

1. In the early centuries of the Christian era, churches were independent of each other, and were not joined together by any confederacy which destroyed their autonomy. They were bound together in their association by the ties of faith, love and mutual service. As early as the third century associations of ministers and churches became common throughout Greece, but in some instances they stepped beyond Scriptural bounds in the exercise of authority vested in the hands of individuals. This came about by the overwhelming ambition of certain men who craved pre-eminence. Soon distinction among ministers arose, while on the other hand humble ministers and plain churches associated together in different parts of the Christian world on the basis of equality.

2. We learn of the existence of a Baptist association in Wales as early as the year 600.

HISTORY OF THE WELSH BAPTISTS, by J. Davis, p. 187:

**"We have every reason to believe that the Welsh Baptists had their associations, and that Dyfrig, Illtyd, and Dynawt, were the leading men among them, long before Austin's attempt to convert them to Popery, in that association which was held on the borders of England, about the year 600."**

This was 1192 years before the beginning of the Convention system! As Davis also testifies, Baptists existed in Wales from A.D. 63 to the year 1770, when he wrote his book.

In the year 597, Austin, the papal proselyting emissary, was sent by Gregory the Great to Britain to convert the Saxons. Having succeeded in a large measure with these, he then undertook to convert the Christians of the country to Popery. Among other things he proposed that they submit to infant baptism. Says Davis:

**"However, they agreed to meet with Austin, in an association held on the borders of Herefordshire. . . ."**



First, he proposed infant baptism. He was immediately answered by the Welsh, that they would keep the ordinance, as well as other things, as they had received them from the apostolic age. On hearing this, Austin was exceedingly wroth, and persuaded the Saxons to murder one thousand and two hundred of the Welsh ministers and delegates, there present; and many more afterwards were put to death, because they would not submit to infant baptism" (History of Welsh Baptists, pp. 14, 15).

These martyrs went to death for standing true to the faith of Baptists. The carnage was instituted upon them while they were meeting in associational capacity after the plain, Scriptural order as now practiced by the churches of the North American Baptist Association.

A further statement in Davis' history, page 12, that Dynawt was president of the College of Bangor, and was "the chief speaker in the Conference or Association of Welsh ministers and messengers who met Augustine (Austin), with whom he had a debate on baptism."

Conclusively, therefore, in light of both the Scriptures and history, we declare that the true plan of doing mission work both at home and in foreign lands is founded on the churches of the Lord. They may do their work as individual churches, or like the churches in associations as after the order of the North American Baptist Association. In doing so, they will maintain equal rights and privileges and reject all efforts of dictatorship by either individuals or churches. One-church dictatorship is as contrary to the Scriptures as one-man dictatorship. Any church that goes alone in any phase of our Lord's work should not make her aloofness a test of fellowship. In the event of co-operation in an association, all the churches in the association should have equal rights, through their respective messengers, in the selection of missionaries. Thus the messengers act by authority given them by the churches that voluntarily enter into an association and mutual agreement.

## Questions on Lesson VI

1. What is the "Direct Gospel Missions" system?
2. The Independent system?
3. The Convention system?
4. When did the Convention system originate? How? Where?
5. When and where did the Triennial Convention originate?
6. When was the American Baptist Convention organized?
7. When, where and by whom was the Southern Baptist Convention organized?
8. State seven objections to the Southern Baptist Convention system.
9. What do the witnesses quoted say in regards to such a system as that of the Convention?
10. What is the Association system? Do you think this one is right? Why?
11. Name some associations that were organized before the Convention system was originated.
12. What may be said in regards to the early associations?