

Elder S. T. Tolley Rectified and Corrected

By the Editor 

The February 1981 issue of THE CHRISTIAN BAPTIST paper carried an article on the front page entitled "Primitive Baptists Are Not Opposed to Bible Missions." The editor, Elder S. T. Tolley, of Atwood, Tenn., denounced our paper for its account of Elder John Alderson in the January 20, 1981 issue. It is generally our policy not to fire upon until some person shoots at us. Since Elder Tolley has taken it upon himself to attack our paper, I shall be delighted to reply to his remarks.

In a later article I will take him to the task on saying that the kind of Baptist that I am began "in the latter part of the 18th century." In the next article I will deal with the historicity of my people and his. Hence this subject will not be much treated upon in this present article.

Elder Tolley says in the article: "Primitive Baptists have never (as a body of people) been opposed to anything that the Bible teaches—including missions, IF the Bible authorizes it." He further says: "Surely, there are some 'missions which could be termed as Scriptural or Bible missions.'" He goes to great length to tell how many sermons his brethren preach in a year, their radio programs, and hints such things are "truly a missionary effort." He goes on to comment: "When the facts are all considered it can be said of Primitive Baptist that they are more missionary minded, scripturally speaking, than many of our friends who hold that the gospel is a means unto eternal salvation. Judge for yourselves, is this not truly a scriptural mission? Many of our

believes in "Bible Missions." He does find in the Holy Writ such a thing as a "Bible missionary." Amen! They are a "missionary minded" people. Amen! They "do mission work." Amen. This is a most noble confession from Elder Tolley. I ask all of my brethren to take note of this most unusual concession. This is all that my brethren and I have pleaded with them to do for years.

Elder Tolley seems to suggest in his editorial that the only common ground of agreement between he and I is that we both believe in calling ministers of the gospel "elders." He did not bother to tell his readers that I believed in the doctrines of grace—the entire T. U. L. I. P. Neither did he tell his readers that I oppose missionary boards as much as he does. For this I may gently blame him for failing to make his readers aware of my position. He seems to have placed me in the Arminian camp as well as all other "missionary" Baptist that oppose Arminianism as much as he does.

THE JOHN ALDERSON DEAL

In the January issue of BBB I gave a brief report on Elder John Alderson (1781-1821), the frontier missionary of what is now West Virginia. I quoted Elder William Cathcart in THE BAPTIST ENCYCLOPEDIA who said Alderson was "an enthusiastic missionary; doing much personal work, and urging his brethren to spread the gospel over the State". Also there was displayed a picture of a historical marker which stands today in Alderson, West Virginia, which calls Elder Alderson "the frontier missionary."

Elder Tolley disagrees with Elder Cathcart the Baptist historian. He totally disagrees with the historical marker. He makes much of the fact that Bro. Cathcart was on the side of the "missionary movement," and that he said this in 1881 after the split between the so-called Primitive Baptist and Missionary Baptists. Please

being one of the most active ministers of the Greenbrier Association.

"On his preaching journeys he went into Giles, Monroe, Bath, and Nicholas Counties as well as throughout Greenbrier. Concerning him one biographer writes: 'He was justly called a doctrinal preacher, but seldom failed to apply the truth to the hearts of his hearers. He was a considerable reasoner. Some of his appeals to the unconverted in the latter part of his life were very powerful. He was an uncompromising friend to the cause of missions, and his addresses on this subject were productive of great good'" (ibid., p. 15).

Elder L. A. Alderson was pastor of the church in 1834-1837, 1839-1840, and 1847-1850. He was a grandson of the founder of the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church. In 1836 "he accepted a position as agent of the Sunday School Board of the Virginia Baptist Publication Society, and traveled through most of the eastern counties of Virginia preaching and organizing Sunday Schools" (ibid., p. 16). Page 149 of the old minutes of the Greenbrier Association say of him: "This church has the labors of Eld. L. A. Alderson two Sabbaths in each month. They report a Temperance Society of 150 members—two Sunday Schools, with 10 teachers and about 70 regular scholars, and a Female Domestic Miss'y Society. This church paid during the year \$73.50 for the support of the gospel, and many of the members contributed liberally to the Greenbrier Union Bible Society of the Baptist Denomination."

The historians who lived nearest in distance and time to Elder John Alderson called him "an enthusiastic missionary" and "the frontier missionary." The historians of the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church speak of his "extensive missionary labors" and cite him as "a fervent missionary." The Greenbrier Baptist is today a Missionary Baptist Church and has always

preaching the gospel to sinners in the later 1700's and early 1800's as true Baptist have always done.

The term "Old School" and "Primitive Baptists" came into being in the 1800s when Elder Tolley's people withdrew from the true Baptist churches. They took to themselves this title and honored us with the name "Missionary" Baptists. In other articles to follow I will prove that the old Baptists believed in preaching the gospel to lost sinners and in Bible missions.

DISAGREEMENT?

Bro. Tolley makes much of my being in disagreement with Elder Cathcart as to the term "Rev." Then implies that I should not have quoted him as I did not agree with some of what he said. But is Elder Tolley consistent? No. He goes on to quote Webster (a Pedobaptist) as to the meaning of "missionary." Now get this! It was wrong for me to quote Elder Cathcart a Baptist historian, but it is all right for him to quote a Pedobaptist! He chides me for quoting a "missionary Baptist" such as Cathcart, then cites David Benedict (a "Missionary Baptist") in an attempt to prove his group of Baptists are older than mine! Does Elder Tolley agree with what David Benedict said about his people? Or does he disagree? Does he agree with what Webster says on baptism? Or does he disagree? Oh, consistency, thou art a jewel divine!

WHAT IS A MISSIONARY?

Bro. Tolley quotes Webster's definition of a missionary as "a person sent on a mission; specifically a person sent out by his church to preach, teach, and proselytize . . ." He then adds: "Thus every preacher who goes out to preach is a missionary. Would Elder Cockrell and his brethren agree that every preacher who goes out to preach with

travel more miles and preach to more people than most of the preachers who boast of being a 'missionary.' They do mission work without taking the name."

Speaking of the work of their preachers: "They preach in places other than in Old Baptist churches if the way opens up. They are vitally interested in the cause of Christ and the truths of the gospel. They believe in feeding the sheep, but they also are interested in saving erring sheep from the broad way that leads to destruction and death in this life. Although we do not believe that the gospel is used as a means to call the elect to regeneration and the new birth, it nonetheless renders the vital message of truth which the Lord called and sent them on a Bible mission to fill."

These statements from the able editor of THE CHRISTIAN BAPTIST cause me to desire to ask him a few questions? If his people do not oppose "A Scriptural mission," then why did they separate from the "missionary" Baptists? If there is such a thing as a "Bible mission," then why all the opposition toward "missionary" Baptists? If he believes the gospel should be preached, why write against another Baptist paper which believes also the gospel should be preached? If his people do "mission work," why all the fuss because "missionary" Baptists do some too? Indeed, if his people are as "missionary minded" as he says, why has he disfellowshipped other Baptists who believe in the doctrines of grace and, like him and his people, are "missionary minded"? Verily, if we are all not opposed to missions, then why has there been this division in the ranks of the Baptists since the early 1800's?

I thank my sovereign God that Elder Tolley has conceded that he and his brethren are "Not Opposed to Bible Missions." This clearly proves he

of the so-called "Primitive Baptists," and that he said what he did in February 1981—one hundred years after Cathcart wrote. Furthermore, he pretends to know more than the historical society of West Virginia. He offers no proof for this position from history, but for all of his ideas we must simply take his word. Just whose word should we take? The word of one of the greatest Baptist historians who ever lived and who wrote 1,323 pages of Baptist history in two large volumes? Or the word of Elder Tolley? Should we believe the historical society of West Virginia who surely knows their own history and have all the important records? Or Elder Tolley who has probably never even read the minutes of the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church? I shall leave the conclusion to the intelligent reader.

It would seem that the best way to settle the matter as to whether Elder John Alderson believed in missions would be to examine the records of the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church. These records will confirm what I said was so of Bro. Alderson. They also prove that Elder Cathcart was right in his statement and so was the West Virginia Historical Society. Writing of Elder Alderson, the historian said: "In addition to his faithful ministry to the Greenbrier church he carried on extensive missionary labors in the surrounding area, and within a few years had established eight more churches" (HISTORY OF OLD GREENBRIER BAPTIST CHURCH, 1781-1965, p. 13). Again it is written: "Some time later he attended a Baptist meeting, joined a Baptist church, was ordained a minister, and became a fervent missionary of the Baptist denomination" (ibid., p. 1).

Elder James Ellison was pastor of the Greenbrier Baptist Church from 1821-1828. Of him it is written: "James Ellison, like John Alderson, traveled far and wide in dispensing the gospel,

being such as local residents will testify. There was never a split in the church over missions as was the case in some other Baptist churches in the early 1800s. Hence there is not one shred of evidence to prove it was a so-called "Primitive Baptist" church in the days of Elder John Alderson. That it was such is the pure assumption of Elder Tolley in an attempt to justify the departure of his people from the true, legitimate Baptist churches in the 1800s.

Elder Tolley would have his readers to believe Elder Alderson was a Baptist of his own variety, and that he did not come in a thousand miles of being a Baptist like I am. I believe in preaching the gospel and organizing churches. So did Elder John Alderson. I believe in preaching the gospel to the unconverted. So did Elder James Ellison, the successor of Elder John Alderson and so did the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church in the late 1700's and early 1800's. Does Elder Tolley believe in going out and preaching the gospel and establishing churches? Or does he believe only in "feeding the sheep"? Does Elder Tolley believe in preaching the gospel to the unconverted and making appeals to them? Or does he merely believe in "feeding the sheep"?

Was the Greenbrier Baptist Church ever a "Primitive Baptist" Church? Where is the proof? Was the Greenbrier Baptist Association a "Primitive Baptist" Association, or a "Missionary Baptist" Association? Let Elder Tolley please tell and give historical proof for his answer? Is the Greenbrier Baptist Church today a "Missionary Baptist" Church, or one of his variety? Let him please answer this question.

Elder Tolley says: "Elder Alderson did not make such claims, nor did the Baptists of his day term themselves as 'Missionary Baptists.'" Neither did they go around calling themselves "Primitive Baptists" either, Brother Tolley. There was no need for such descriptive adjectives in those days as all Baptists in that area believed in

the authority of their church are, in fact, Bible missionaries? Of course not. Nor will Primitive Baptists accept that proposition."

I shall not waste time commenting upon this definition of a missionary. I shall merely say that I basically agree with Webster, but not entirely. I will give my own definition of a missionary, not from the Pedobaptist Webster, but from the Bible. The word "missionary" means "a person sent on a mission." The twelve apostles were missionaries: "These twelve Jesus **sent forth. . .**" And he said unto them: "And as ye go, preach" (Matt. 10:1,5). The very word "apostle" is borrowed from the Greek word *αποστολος*, which means "one sent off" or "sent forth." This Greek word is translated "**one that is sent**" in John 13:16. John the Baptist was a man sent from God to preach the gospel (John 1:6; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 11:10). The seventy were missionaries because Christ sent them forth to preach (Luke 10:1). Paul and Barnabus were missionaries as they were sent forth by the church at Antioch to preach the gospel to the unsaved.

A missionary in the New Testament sense is one sent forth to preach the gospel to the unconverted (Rom. 10:14-17). True scriptural missionary work is to preach the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit to the hearts of sinners and to leave the results in the hands of a sovereign God as to whether any one is saved or ever will be saved. The Bible knows nothing of mission boards who lord over Christ's churches. I am as opposed to mission boards and missionary societies as is Elder Tolley. But I believe if God calls a man to go and preach to the natives in Africa, he is to be sent forth by his church to preach to these people.

TO BE CONTINUED

Elder T. S. Tolley Rectified and Corrected



By the Editor

(Continued From Last Issue)

THE PHILADELPHIA ASSOCIATION

The oldest association of Baptist churches in America is the Philadelphia Association, which was organized in the year 1707. Was it a Missionary Association before 1832, or was it an Anti-Missionary Association? What are the facts of history? Dare we look at them? Yes!

I go to the year 1771, some 61 years before the division. "A motion being made in the Association, relative to the appointment of the Evangelist, it was universally agreed that such an appointment promised much advantage to the Baptist interests. Five ministers were put in nomination for the office, viz. Rev. Messrs. John Gano, Benjamin Miller, Samuel Jones, David Jones, Morgan Edwards. The choice fell on the last, which he accepted on the condition then specified." (MINUTES OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, p. 119.)

Now consider the year 1773: "The usefulness of a traveling minister on this continent appearing more manifest by trials, and Brother Morgan Edwards declining the office, it was agreed, that Brother John Gano be a messenger of the churches for this year; and that the treasurer do pay him the interest of the Association fund, to help defraying his expenses" (Ibid. p. 130).

In the year of 1778 this is recorded: "A motion being made for raising a fund, the interest of which to be appropriated to the particular and ex-

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press purpose of preaching the gospel in destitute places, among the back settlements, at the discretion of the Association; Agreed to recommend the same to the churches, and that the interest of whatever may be raised for that purpose, shall be strictly appropriated to that use only" (Ibid., p. 159).

I would like to ask Elder Tolley a few questions at this point. Do you and your people in your associations elect and send out evangelists? Do you send forth traveling ministers and pay their expense? Do you send men forth to preach the gospel in destitute places as the Philadelphia Association did? How can you say that the Philadelphia Association that permitted and did these things was a "Primitive Baptist Association"?

But please do not lose interest just yet, for there is much more to come before 1832. In the year 1794 this is recorded: "In consequence of information communicated to the Association by Brother William Rogers, it is desired that all donations for the propagation of the Gospel among the Hindoos, in the East Indies, be forwarded to him" (Ibid., p. 298). This was 38 years before the split.

Then 34 years before the split, in the year 1800, this is found: "Whereas, the church of Philadelphia have presented a query, on the propriety of forming a plan for establishing a missionary society: This Association, taking the matter into consideration, think it would be most advisable to invite the general committee of Virginia and different Associations on the continent, to unite with us in laying a plan for forming a missionary society, and establishing a fund for its support, and for employing missionaries among the natives of our continent" (Ibid., p. 351).

The next year this is recorded: "Letters were read by our Brother Rogers,

"In 1755"—77 years before the division began—"the association taking into consideration the destitute condition in many places in the interior settlements of this and the neighboring States (then provinces) recommend to the churches to make contributions for the support of a missionary to itinerate in those parts" (THROGMORTON — POTTER DEBATE, p. 126, 1888 edition). In this quote Bro. Throgmorton is quoting from Doctor Furman in Benedict, Vol., 2, edition 1813, page 135. Remember this book was written in 1813. This was before the division began, 19 years.

The quote continues: "Mr. Hart was authorized and requested, provided a sufficient sum should be raised, to procure, if possible, a suitable person for the purpose. With this view he visited Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the following year and prevailed with Brother John Gano to undertake the service, who attended the annual meeting, and was cordially received. The association requested Mr. Gano to visit the Yadkin settlement in North Carolina first and afterwards to bestow his labors wherever providence should appear to direct. He devoted himself to the work. It afforded ample scope for his distinguished piety, eloquence and fortitude; and his ministrations were crowned with remarkable success. Many embraced and professed the Gospel" (Ibid., p. 126).

He goes on: "The following year"—I am reading from page 135—"he received from the association a letter of thanks for his faithfulness and industry in the mission" (Ibid., p. 126). Please remember that at this time there were no other associations except the Philadelphia Association and the Charleston Association. Were these people Missionary Baptist? Yes. In the year 1802 Bro. Throgmorton continues to quote, this time from page 146: "Provision was made for the employment of a missionary to travel

T. H. Pritchard, one of our most scholarly and critical writers, wrote: "I will begin with the Baltimore association, perhaps the most famous body of this modern sect in the United States. Their minutes for 1814 contain the following record: 'Received a corresponding letter from Bro. Rice, one of our missionary brethren.' This Bro. Rice was Luther Rice, who was then just from Burmah, where he, had gone as a missionary with Adoniram Judson.

"In 1816 these minutes in their circular letter say: 'The many revivals of religion which are witnessed in various parts of the country—the multiplication of Bible societies, missionary societies and Sunday schools, both in our own and foreign countries, are viewed by us as showing indications of the near approach of that day when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth.' The minutes of the same year state that 'the standing clerk was instructed to supply the corresponding secretary of the Foreign Mission Board with a copy of our minutes annually.' In 1817 'Bro. Luther Rice presented himself as the messenger of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions and was cordially received.'

"Elder James Osborne was a member of this body, which cordially received a foreign missionary and at this very session was appointed a home missionary. This man Osborne, who was a leader in the anti-mission secession, both in Maryland and North Carolina, I remember to have been in Charlotte when I was a small boy. He was a handsome, dressy man, full of conceit, and very fond of talking of himself and of selling his own books.

"From the same authentic source, the minutes of the Baltimore association, we learn that in 1828 they called themselves 'Regular Baptists,' just as we do now; the same year they express their joy at the intelligence of the conversion of the heathen, and as late as 1827 the association expressed, by

missionary in practice. True Baptist continued in the old paths of the apostolic churches until a new sect arose in 1827-1828 who called themselves "The Reformed Baptists in North Carolina," then a number of other names, until finally they dared to call themselves "the Primitive Baptists." But to call them the Old School or Primitive Baptists is to falsify the facts of history and to acknowledge that I and my brethren have departed from the faith of the Apostles and Baptist fathers. Therefore, I am obliged to call them "New School" or "Anti-Missionary Baptist," for this is what they really are.

It would seem to me that the so-called Primitive Baptists have a number of historical problems. Since they withdrew from associations which had for many years been Missionary Baptists in practice, how did they remain with the Missionary Baptists so long without corrupting their churches? Worst still, since the ancestry of Baptists even in England and Europe is replete with the practice of missionary work, how can a corrupt tree produce a good tree? These brethren will say to me, "But they in more modern times had mission board and missionary societies which you believe are wrong." Yes, I do believe these things are unscriptural, but I do not believe they are so wrong as to unchurch the Baptists in those days. However, those like Bro. Tolley say such practices cause a church to cease to be a New Testament Church.

I will at a later time write a brief history of the Kehukee Baptist Association which will show that they were originally Arminians and they became Calvinistic Baptists. I will also show that they were originally a missionary association in practice. Space will not permit my going into this in this article. Watch for this article in a later edition.

I conclude with the words of Elder D. B. Ray: "It is, therefore, evident that such of the Hard Shell churches as

The next year this is recorded: "Letters were read by our Brother Rogers, received by him from Brother Carey, at Serampore, in the East Indies, and from Dr. Hawes of England, respecting promising appearances among the Hottentots. This Association exult in every prospect of the success of the gospel, and wish the missionaries God speed" (Ibid., p. 360). This is 33 years before the division. Remember that Baptist are one great body in these days. It is also strange that no voice of opposition was heard in this old Association against these missionary enterprises.

Now consider the year 1802: "It is recommended to the churches belonging to this Association, to appoint a day, to have a discourse delivered in each of them, upon the subject of a mission for propagating the gospel in destitute places; to make a collection for a fund to defray the necessary expenses of the missionaries, and to forward the money to Brother Rogers, between this and the first of April ensuing." (Ibid., p. 370). Reader, here we see the missionary work of the true Primitive Baptists in America. This was 32 years before the division. Again I ask: "Where were those in this old Association who opposed preaching the gospel to the unsaved by missionaries?" Indeed, if Bro. Tolley's people associated all these years with the Missionary Baptist in the Philadelphia Baptist Association before the split, how could they have been sound "Old School Baptists", seeing that he and his people today refuse to fellowship with those who believe in sending missionaries to preach to the heathen?

THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION

The second oldest Baptist association in America is the Charleston Baptist Association organized in 1751. It is the oldest association in the south. Was it a missionary body before the split, or a anti-missionary body? What does history say? Let's look and see for ourselves.

146: "Provision was made for the employment of a missionary to travel and preach in destitute places. The object failed of accomplishment for the want of a suitable person to undertake it. A mission, however, to the Catawba Indians which had for some time been contemplated, was now commenced. Rev. John Rooker was engaged for a year to preach them" (Ibid., p. 128).

THE BALTIMORE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

"The first meeting of the Baltimore Baptist Association was held at Fredericktown, in August 1793. Six churches, with 226 members, were represented there. It increased slowly, until, in 1820, it had 18 churches, with 1362 members. It was decidedly in favor of domestic and foreign missionary operations for more than forty years, with a few dissentients on the part of some pastors and churches. The anti-missionary spirit culminated at the meeting held in May, 1836, at Black Rock, in the adoption, by a vote of sixteen to nine, of resolutions against 'uniting with worldly societies,' and in a declaration of non-fellowship with those who had done so. By 'worldly societies' were meant missionary, Sabbath-school, Bible, tract, and temperance societies. The Association was at once divided, and the two sections have since had only a nominal existence" (THE BAPTIST ENCYCLOPEDIA, Vol. II, p. 754, 1881 edition).

Please observe that Elder Cathcart in this history says the Baltimore Baptist Association "was decidedly in favor of domestic and foreign missionary operations for more than forty years, with a few dissentients on the part of some pastors and churches." Is this true? or is it the overstatement of a "modern Missionary Baptists historian"? Why not as always examine the facts of the case. Please remember that this is supposed to be one of the oldest "Primitive Baptist" associations in America.

press their joy at the conversion of the heathen, and as late as 1827 the association expressed, by formal resolutions, their sorrow at the death of Mrs. Ann H. Judson and their great interest in the mission with which she was connected, and it was not till 1836, when the association met with the Black Rock church, and then by a vote of sixteen to nine, that fellowship was withdrawn from churches favoring foreign missions, Sunday schools, etc." (Cited by W. A. Jarrell in BAPTIST CHURCH PERPETUITY, pp. 427-428).

I have proven in a historical fashion that from the days of the apostles to the present time that the true, legitimate Baptist Church has ever been a Missionary Body. The oldest American Baptist associations were Missionary Baptists in practice, and even the so-called Primitive Baptists associations were before the division

I conclude with the words of Elder D. B. Ray: "It is, therefore, evident that such of the Hard-Shell churches as have not denied the peculiarities of the denomination, are still to be regarded as a part of the great Baptists family. Though it is equally evident that the most of them have impaired their usefulness by speculating on the decrees and purposes of god to the neglect of faithful preaching to sinners. There is a growing disposition on the part of many of these good brethren, to recede from some extremes in their manner of preaching, and co-operate with us again in the spread of the Gospel. And we fondly hope that the day is not far distant, when all prejudice of each party will be buried, and all true Baptists will stand together in the army of our Master, as in times past" (BAPTIST SUCCESSION, p. 91).