

“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?” 1 Corinthians 14:8



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“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls...” Jeremiah 6:16

Sounding Out The Faith

October 2017

Conventionism Refuted—Part 2

The following is copied from an old-time book written by Bro. D. N. Jackson, Bro. Ben M. Bogard, Bro. L. S. Ballard, and Bro. M. P. Matheny. This book was not copyrighted when it was printed in 1927. We have done our due diligence to find other copies of this book and have been unable to locate them. The information found in this book is invaluable and we feel that it is imperative that we share it with our brethren. It is not our intention to benefit financially from this reprinting of these excerpts. We only wish to share the exciting truth that these brethren stood for so long ago that can strengthen our stand today in the Lord's work. We printed part 1 of this book in our July issue. This is the final issue taken from this book. We pray that it has helped to establish the truth concerning Conventionism.

Conventionism Refuted

Church Associations Scriptural

Part II of Ben M. Bogard's article

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

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

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

In the first place there are various kinds of associations

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

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

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

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

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

In II Corinthians 8:4, Paul says of the same Macedonian churches concerning their effort to raise a fund for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and impoverished missionaries:

“Praying (begging) us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift (contribution) and take on us the fellowship (associated service) of ministering to the saints.” Read the whole chapter and you will find: 1. The movement originated with the Macedonian churches themselves. 2. They begged Paul to receive the contribution. 3. That Paul with others were “chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace which is administered by us”, etc. (The word “administered” is “diakoneo” and means a service rendered to the associated churches.) 4. That Paul wrote to other churches besides those in Macedonia about the matter, for the letter from which we are quoting was written with others. 5. The context shows that not only Paul but Titus visited other churches and thus, by correspondence and visits raised the fund, which was afterward carried to Jerusalem by Paul but Titus visited other churches and thus, by correspondence and visits raised the fund, which was afterward carried to Jerusalem by Paul and others whom we have seen were elected or chosen treasurers by the churches for this purpose.

We have already seen that the Macedonian churches were associated in raising means for Paul's support as a missionary; now we see these same churches, and consequently the same association, also cooperating to raise funds for benevolence. So it is absolutely sure there was an association of churches in Macedonia in Paul's day for both missions and benevolence.

Those who served the churches as officials were “chosen of the churches”, and that those thus chosen traveled, wrote letters, took collections and disbursed them according to the wishes of the churches.

We have seen: 1. There was an association of churches in Macedonia for both missions and benevolence. I call it the Macedonian Baptist Association. 2. That Paul wrote to the church at Corinth and was endeavoring to secure

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

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

Now, this was the model followed in the formation of the American Association of Baptist Churches, for both missions and benevolence. It is a Scriptural example as plain as the Ten Commandments or the Golden Rule. Now let those who asked for the proof take this and see to it that they come “over into the Macedonia (association) and help us”. They say there is no Scripture for the way they are at work, and we agree that there is none, but there is Scripture for the way we are doing it and they should quit their extra-Scriptural method and get with us on the Bible.

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

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

Thus the churches declare it their principle that the work shall be done according to New Testament law; and this abrogates all human laws whether made by association, convention or other bodies, and puts Baptists on the New Testament as the only law, thus harmonizing Baptist practice with Baptist principles.

This is not a delegation of episcopal powers to boards, by which they appoint, control and remove missionaries at their pleasure. In the New Testament model, the missionary was sent from the local church by the Holy Spirit, to the field. (Acts 11:22; Acts 13:1-4; Acts 8:26; Acts 10:20), and no man, association or other organization than the local church of which he was a member had any power or control over him. The missionary was amenable to the local church and under the law of Christ for his Christian deportment and doctrine, just as any other member. This is proven by the fact that the church at Antioch sent messengers to inquire of the Jerusalem church concerning the teachings of certain persons who went out from the Jerusalem church and taught circumcision; the Antioch church recognized both the responsibility and jurisdiction of the Jerusalem church over the doctrine and conduct of its members, and the Jerusalem church disavowed and disowned the doctrine thus taught by its own members. (Acts 15) Here is church authority over its own members, under the laws of Christ, and there was no board to manage the question, to appoint or remove the missionary. Besides, the laws of Christ are specific on the matter of the powers now exercised by episcopacy and Baptist mission boards; “The princes of the Gentles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you.” (Matthew 20:25-26) The Convention boards do exercise authority over the missionaries and they violate the above plain law of Jesus Christ. For this reason we see the inter-church representatives of the association of churches, which we found in the New Testament, did

not either appoint or control the missionaries in any way; their work was to give information to the churches, travel, collect and/or disburse funds. These representatives collected and/or administered money; they did not control men. But convention boards control both money and men.

Under New Testament law, adopted by the American Association, every man is free and equal and we have fellowship and peace; under convention laws and board dominion and authority, the missionary is under board authority and rule, a slave, there is no equality, no fellowship and no peace unless forsooth the missionary quietly admits to slavery and secures peace by the destruction of liberty.

The New Testament laws governing mission work are full and complete. The mandatory law is that we shall “go forth and preach the gospel to every creature.” Matthew 28:19 The prohibitory law is that we shall not “exercise authority” over each other in doing the work. (Matthew 20:25-26)

Now therefore, in order to harmonize these laws we must go, but we must not exercise authority over each other as we go. Hence in the American Association of Churches the missionaries go out from the local churches, there are inter-church representatives on information without any power at all over the missionaries. The missionaries are responsible to the church of which they are members, the churches cooperate through the associations to support them. This is Baptist practice that is harmonized with New Testament laws and examples, we have harmony, equality and peace, and the work goes on.

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

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

This does not mean destruction or division. The local associations have a proviso in their constitutions that they can change them. It is their right to change from human to divine law, and it is their duty to do so. So, too, the State Conventions, can change from their own constitutions or laws they have made, and agree to submit to the laws of Christ, declare their principles and get on Bible ground, as we have asked the Southern Convention to do, to no avail.

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

We think the Macedonian Association was the first one; that the churches of Macedonia took the initiative in associate work, both in supporting Paul the missionary, and then in raising a fund for the poor saints at Jerusalem. There had been mission work by individual churches as when the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas, Acts 11:22-23, and the church at Antioch sent Saul and

Barnabas, Acts 13:1-4, but it was not until after the Macedonia churches had been established and Paul had preached and established a church at Corinth that he wrote, “I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.” Then later came the other matter of benevolence and not only the Macedonian churches, which led the movement, but the churches also of Corinth, Galatia and all the “churches of the Gentiles” were enlisted by the efforts of Paul, Titus, Timothy and perhaps others. How many, we do not know, but they were “chosen” of the churches for the purpose. Of them Paul says, “They are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ,” and through them as inter-church representatives the churches were associated in the work, just as in the American Association.

There was no vast concourse of thousands of “delegates”, no large gathering at any one place, no glorifying of “great leaders”, no useless organization, machinery and expense, no lording it over God’s heritage, no masters over the brethren, but a sufficient, capable, earnest, selected representatives, which wrote, traveled and laid the matter before the churches explaining definitely the object of the effort and rendering a faithful service for the churches in the work. There was no violation of the fundamental laws laid down by the Master, but there was association of the churches in work, through their own representatives.

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

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

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

By the book of God an association of churches is Scriptural, for such an association was formed in Paul’s day, of the churches of Macedonia, Corinth and Galatia. Let us go forward to the New Testament.

**Conventionism Versus the
Baptist Faith
By L. S. Ballard**

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

The law of the New Testament governing the churches in the evangelization of the world was not give only, and specifically for the churches of the first century to be constantly changed, or set aside as man’s wisdom might suggest, but it is the unchangeable law of God, divinely and specifically enacted by which the churches of the first and last, and all intervening centuries are to be governed in their work. If on the ground of expediency men are justifiable in governing, changing, or setting aside the law governing the preaching of the gospel, on the same grounds they would be justifiable

in overrunning, changing, or setting aside the law governing immersion, or any other New Testament doctrine as to that matter.. Such a method of procedure would soon lead to the worst sort of chaos, and finally to the complete destruction of every New Testament doctrine and principle.

Baptist ideals, faith and practices were born, originated and established with Christ and His apostles. When Jesus set up the first church He gave it the law of baptism, the gospel of salvation, and finally the world as its field of operation, and said to that church, “Go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Spirit), teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

This commission was not given to a board, committee, convention, or an association, but to the church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it follows that if the commission to preach the gospel can be taken out of the hands of the churches and turned over to boards, committees, conventions, or associations, then the authority to baptize can be transferred to such institutions, and so the church is a useless agent in the world. We would not, however, be understood as opposing the use of those things by the churches; but what we oppose is the churches being used and controlled by them. This is one of the charges we lay at the door of modern conventionism, which proves beyond a doubt that Convention Baptists are not keeping pace with the old-time Baptist faith.

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

Modernism seeks to set aside and replace New Testament law by substituting human wisdom and expediency. Such unwarranted propaganda has led to much confusion and division among Baptists. For well informed Baptists who love the cause of Christ more than the praise of men, and who fear to disobey, or tamper with New Testament law, are not going to follow such unscriptural leadership. And for this reason divisions and sub-divisions, rebellions and revolts have already arisen among Baptists. Since Convention Baptists broke away from New Testament law and adopted modern methods, following the plans devised by human wisdom and expediency, as an argument to convince the unsuspecting that they are right and that God is with them, they point to their great church-plants, eleemosynary institutions, schools, and universities (all of which are hopelessly involved in debt), and say, “Look what we’ve done.” But in answer to their unsound logic, and method of argumentation history points to Egypt with its gold and silver; its great kings and its wonderful institutions of learning; its brick-yards and pyramids; its temples and more than thirty thousand false gods, and says, “Look what they did.” But who were the people of God in Egypt? They were not found among the rich, nor the wise so considered, not the aristocracy; they founded no cities, built no schools, and erected no temples; they were the Hebrew slaves under the iron hand of oppression. History points to Babylon with its Nebuchanezzar, hanging gardens, and gates of pearl, and says, “Look what they did.” But God was not in it. The people of God in Babylon had no kings, built no palaces, established no schools, and improved no lands. They were the poor, despised Hebrews of the land. But coming a little closer to our day I point you to the great Temple of Diana in the city of Ephesus whose wealth and magnificence had attracted the attention and admiration of the world (Acts 19:27), and say, “Look what they did.” If we accept the progress that a people make in building and fostering wealthy institutions as proof that God is with them, who were the people of God in the city of Ephesus; Paul and his co-laborers, or the worshippers of Diana? The worshippers of Diana have the best of the

argument, for at that time the disciples of Christ had built no temples. Again, I point you to Romanism, the wealthiest religious machine on earth and ask you to look at her financial achievements in the world; her colleges and universities, sanatoriums, and houses of the Good Shepherd; temples and cathedrals and ask you to note what she has done. She has hundreds of dollars in brick, and stone, dirt and commerce to where Convention Baptists are so deeply in debt it is doubtful whether they will ever be able to pay out. If the truth and loyalty of a religious people are to be determined by their financial status then the Roman Catholic church is beyond doubt the church of Jesus Christ. This we are not willing to accept, neither do we think our convention brethren are ready to accept it. We prefer to measure and determine the Scripturalness of a people by their love and loyalty for the inspired Word of God.

New Testament churches were associated in their work by means of messengers elected by the churches. See II Corinthians 8:23. This is exactly the way Association or Missionary Baptists do things today. In the apostolic gatherings there were no messengers present sent from boards, conventions, or societies but they were all church messengers clothed with church authority. This is the law of the New Testament, and was the practice of Baptists until modern Conventionism was born of human wisdom in 1792 at which time human wisdom was set over against the wisdom of God; church authority was disregarded; Baptist faith and practice were trampled under the feet of self-appointed leaders; and the law of expediency was substituted for the law of Christ.

Eld. J. H. Milburn, in Missions and Mission Methods, page 161, remarks on II Corinthians 8:19-23, as follows: *“Those primitive churches had messengers whom they elected by popular vote as necessity required. Those messengers represented the churches which elected them and what those messengers or representatives of the churches did in the capacity of messengers, the churches themselves did, for they were acting through their messengers whom they had chosen. How natural and reasonable it is, that the churches of Christ adjacent to each other would communicate and confer with one another through messengers and use this method of advancing their common spiritual interests and their Master’s kingdom and how unnatural for them not to thus communicate with each other, as has been shown clearly they did.”*

We should like to enlarge upon this phase of the subject but space forbids. However, this will suffice to show how New Testament faith and practice differed from the organized work of the conventions. In New Testament associations the churches were the units and were represented in all cooperative meetings by means of messengers strictly on a church equality basis. Whether their meetings were doctrinal, missionary, benevolent or ethical in spirit and purpose they were composed strictly and wholly of church-sent messengers. Conventionism has reversed this practice and operates exclusively on a money and society basis with the churches as a side-line.

Church equality and church authority are unknown among Convention Baptists if we are to take their practice as our guide. The Southern Baptist Convention is the law-making body for all the churches cooperating therewith. The churches must either accept her laws and cooperate with her plans or stay out. Individuals are the units in the Southern Baptist Convention, and many of the state conventions, who are able and willing to pay for their seats. No individual can have a seat, or voice in that body as a church messenger without a money consideration. Hence the churches that represent must pay for the privilege of voting. Though a thousand churches should send messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention fully clothed with church authority the messengers would be refused seats unless the money was forthcoming or had already been contributed one way or another to pay for their admission as messengers. Thus the voice of the church is rejected while the voice of the dollar is accepted. The church that is able to buy many seats has many voices, but the poor church that is unable to pay is rejected and has no voice at all in that body. And yet you find people who claim to be Baptists who think it is a sin to oppose such unscriptural practices. They say, “It is such a small digression from the truth that it ought to be overlooked in order that the work may go on without opposition, and that peace and harmony may prevail.” You may call it a small digression if you will, but it is large enough if universally accepted by Baptists, to forever set aside New Testament law and destroy church authority, and render the inspired Word of God null and void so far as Baptists are concerned.

One digression from the truth leads to another. When Baptists begin to drift away from the Word of God if they do not see their mistakes and retrace their steps and right their wrongs there is no telling where they will land. But we know from history that they will go from bad to worse. Disregard for New Testament law and church authority in the evangelization of the world has already led to much heresy among Convention Baptists, to say nothing of the money, numerical and society basis in their general bodies. Many of their churches have shown disregard for the law of baptism by accepting the baptism of other denominations. This is contrary to the plain teachings of the New Testament in Ephesians 4:5, which says, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” New Testament Baptists were rebaptizers. That is they rebaptized those who came to them who had not been baptized by the proper administrator and according to the specified law governing the ordinance. (Acts 19:3-5) There was nothing wrong with John’s baptism, but those people had not been baptized by John, although they thought they had been Scripturally baptized. They were no doubt baptized by Apollos who was an eloquent man, but who knew nothing but the baptism of John. Although their baptism was by immersion Paul rejected it because of the purpose for which it was performed and the source from which it came.

The almost universal custom of Northern Baptists is to accept immersion from other denominations. This we know to be contrary to old time Baptist faith and practice. Not only do they practice alien immersion, but they are open-communists as well. Why not? Open communion and alien immersion go together, and are alike unscriptural. But Southern Baptists say, “We are not guilty of such loose practice.” And they are not to the same extent with Northern Baptists, but they are drifting into the same channel, and if the tide does not turn ere long they will be riding on the same boat. *For just last summer Dr. Major, pastor of the Gaston Avenue Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, supplied for a Northern Baptist church, and while there he set an open communion table, and the papers reporting the affair declared it to be one of the most liberal ever set among Baptists. Dr. Major was at that time pastor of a Southern Baptist Convention church in the city of Dallas. He was one of the leaders in this state (Texas), and his church is one of the strongest churches in Dallas. What did the Convention Baptist Association of Dallas county do with Dr. Major about his loose practice and disregard for Baptist faith? Nothing. What did the Gaston Avenue Baptist Church, of which he was pastor, do about it? Nothing. What did the General Convention of Texas do? Nothing. What did the Southern Baptist Convention do? Nothing. Did they indorse it? Silence gives consent. About two years ago there was published an article in the Searchlight, Dr. J. Frank Norris’ paper, in which the charge was made that some persons who were members of a different denomination offered themselves for membership in one of the strongest Baptist churches in the city of Dallas, and upon presenting themselves they were informed by the pastor that the Southern Baptist churches did not receive members on their baptism from other denominations, but told them that since they were going back North on a visit, that while there they could join a Northern Baptist church on their baptism, get a letter, and on their return to Dallas could present the letter and be received in to the Dallas church on the face of the letter. This they did according to the Searchlight article, and are members today of the Dallas congregation if they have not moved away. Did Southern Convention Baptists condemn the Dallas church for her departure from Baptist faith, and disregard for the Word of God? No. Did they indorse it? Their silence is the answer.* Those heresies are among our Southern Baptist folk and since they do not condemn the churches and preachers who are thus trampling the faith of Baptists under their feet, we charge it upon them that they indorse it. Now these are just two cases, the Lord only knows how many more could be found in the South-land.

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

tist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY. Space forbids naming others of their leaders who are rank Evolutionists. These cases will suffice to show the drift of Convention Baptists. There are thousands of Baptist churches in the Southland that never did and never will affiliate with the Southern Baptist Convention, and no doubt there are thousands more that have cooperated with it in one way or another that would like to withdraw from it and be free, but they are kept under the thumb of the leaders and have no one to lead them out. There are thousands of good men and preachers who would love to throw off the yoke, but they are afraid to declare their independence. May God give them grace to come out and accept the old-time Baptist faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Methods of Work of Convention Baptists in Foreign Lands—By M. P. Matheny

Before discussing the above subject, I want to write down what I conceive to be New Testament methods in the evangelization of the world. First, the gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation, and this to be preached by a Spirit-called and Spirit-directed men, unaccompanied by any kind of pecuniary inducement to the people who hear it. Second, the churches of Christ, either singly or in cooperation, give this gospel to all the world without the intervention of any outside organization, whatsoever. Third, consecrated and self-denying labors by both churches and missionaries, both at home and abroad. There are two distinct methods of work among Convention Baptists that are at variance with these New Testament principles and policies, which we have announced, and these departures are subversive of New Testament principles in carrying out the commission of Christ, with which the churches have been entrusted.

What is known as the “subsidy system” among the heathen? The subsidy system in mission work is the use of anything that is intended to influence the conduct of the heathen outside of the preaching of the pure Word of God, not depending altogether upon the Holy Spirit to make the preaching effective in bringing the people into the churches; such, for instance, as—1. the employment of native church members to do religious work on a salary, out of the missions treasury, five times greater than they can earn at ordinary employment. 2. Furnishing free, for the heathen and their children, out of the mission treasury, school houses, hospitals, medical treatment, teachers, books, clothes, board, instruction in farming, smithing, carpentering, housekeeping and all sorts of domestic employment. No doubt these heathen people need all these things and should be encouraged to have and pay for them; but that is not in the commission of Christ, and is made no part of the business of the churches. That the convention does these things in the name of missions, see minutes of Southern Baptist Convention, session 1911, pages 142-156, 157-158, 161, 166; minute of 1913 convention, pages 264-268, 227, 247. And so on and on.

Not only is this contrary to all precept and example of New Testament mission work, but it is exceedingly hurtful to the work itself. On this point I will let Missionary McRae, one of the strong convention missionaries to Chefoo, China, speak; he sent this information to the foreign mission board and to the convention papers, but they all opposed it. In writing to the foreign mission board of the miserable failure in mission work he says: *“We have worked here in this mission for sixty years and have not one single self-supporting church. It seems to be a sort of religious thing run by foreigners, and paid for by them, and the main body of the workers and members seem quite content that it should be so, the responsibility being on the foreigner. It is pitiable, indeed, that we foreigners have held such a strangle hold upon these native churches which we have founded that intelligent Chinese are not willing to enter them because they are dominated by foreigners. They are not to be blamed, because they could not do otherwise and maintain their self-respect. The Chinese are a democratic people and have been accustomed to local, self-government in political affairs for 4,000 years. Naturally and rightly they are not willing to have their religious life dominated by foreigners. These Chinese have been accustomed for countless generations, to local self-government by a system of village eldership which is the exact equivalent in the state to the New Testament eldership in the church. Let us get back as quickly as possible to New Testament self-government and self-support. The large emphasis that has been placed upon educational work has caused and is more and more causing the neglect of evangelistic work. Protestant missions claim one million Christians out of China’s four hundred millions. We are concentrating our efforts upon the million to the large neglect of the four hundred millions. Fully two-thirds of the Southern Baptist money that is sent to China is being used in educational work. Our colleges and universities have not been successful evangelizing agencies as was claimed they would be. The number of college graduates who are active, working Christians today is not sufficient to justify this claim. I place little importance upon the fact that many students are baptized while in*

school; they are of no value to Christianity after leaving school, and many are a positive disgrace. What else could be expected? We have a premium upon deceit. With China’s present eagerness for western learning, the wily Oriental does not hesitate to for-swear himself for the advantage of getting a fine education at the expense of the foreigner, especially when even books and board are furnished, as the case in many mission schools. Another evil that grows out of the foreigner’s strict control of the native churches is that the Chinese of the middle and higher classes who are convinced of the truth of Christianity are not willing to enter the church because they look upon it as a foreign organization, financed and controlled by foreigners. Now this failure is not a failure of Christianity. It is a failure of our pauperizing mission methods. The Christianity which is revealed in the New Testament, and which turned the Roman world upside down, has not yet been given a trial on the modern mission field. I mean, of course, the organized Christianity that is embodied in a self-growing and self-supporting local church, that Scriptural entity that is so dear to the Southern Baptist hearts. But there can be no development of character where there is no responsibility. But our mission to China is religious, and the higher schools have failed at this point. My study of the question has forced me to the conviction that the kingdom of Christ is not much nearer as a result of the great sums of money that have been expended in this work. And to the extent that the evangelistic work has been weakened to furnish the men and money for this work, it has been a positive hindrance.” (Extracts from Missionary McRae’s letters published in the Baptist and Commoner)

The complete episcopal system which the convention holds over the churches and pastors in foreign lands is simply the Methodist system of episcopal rule over and her churches and preachers in the home land is not more complete than is the convention system in their mission work in foreign fields. I am aware that this is a grave charge which I am bringing against the Convention Baptists and ought not to be brought unless it can be thoroughly sustained by irrefutable evidence, and this I proceed to furnish. Their own records ought to be sufficient to establish their position. First let us find the source of authority for this episcopal system. Did it come from the churches themselves? Hardly. You will find it provided for in the constitution (fundamental law) of the convention. Here it is: *“A plan for eliciting, combining and directing the energies of the whole denomination.” Preamble to the constitution. “To each board shall be committed, during the recess of the convention, the entire management of all the affairs relating to the objects with whose interests it shall be charged, all of which management shall be in strict accordance with the constitutional provisions adopted by the convention.” Article V of the constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention.* (Remember that this constitution was adopted without the authority of a single Baptist church and has never been submitted to one for ratification.) The convention assumed this authority to manage the affairs of the church and then requires every church that would have representation in the convention to pay the sum of \$250 before they could do so. Having assumed all authority over the churches and having put this authority into the hands of the boards and shut out the churches, except through the payment of \$250, which constituted them a regular monied aristocracy, they proceeded to establish bishops over the work on the foreign field. They call these bishops “superintendents”, but they have all the authority of episcopal bishops. Here is their record of their work: *Sig. Amborsini was transferred to Genoa. Dr. Taylor sent Sig. Luginbuhl from Triest, Austria, to this little town. Our pastor is a good man, but lacks enterprise and is greatly discouraged. He will be sent elsewhere soon. Sig. Scalera, who was sent here. The pastor, Sig. L. M. Galassi was transferred from Florence to this place by Dr. Taylor. The pastor, Sig. Chiera, was transferred to Palermo. Sig. Pintus has charge of our work, and during the year baptized three, he could almost be called a circuit rider. Sig. Barbera was put in charge of the work.* (Board’s report on Italian Missions for 1905, Minutes Convention, pages 107-112.) *The minister has few gifts as preacher and has had little success in his work. He will either be transferred or dismissed unless there is improvement. Bro. Lumbley’s failing health compelled him to place the oversight of the churches (bishopric) in the hands of John Agboola. Our quarterly meetings (corresponding to the Methodist quarterly conference) are largely taken up with careful discussions of how best to superintend the work at various stations and out-stations. This church has had a year of sever trials. Some members disgruntled over the removal of the pastor, who had proven himself unworthy of the office, attempted to destroy the church, but they were promptly dismissed.* (Minutes of Convention 1907, reports from Italy, Africa, etc.)

Let us look at the Methodist discipline a moment and find out how they do this thing: *“What are the duties of a bishop? To preside in the General and Annual Conferences. To fix the appointments of the preachers in the annual conference, etc. To change when necessary elders, fix their stations and change them, when it judges it necessary, etc. To*

change, receive, and suspend preachers in the intervals of the conference, etc. To decide all questions of law coming before him in the regular business, etc. To see that the districts be formed according to his judgement, etc. To divide a circuit, mission or station, etc. To travel during the year, to preach, and oversee the spiritual affairs of the church, etc.” This is the Methodist episcopacy. The bishop is master of the whole outfit. Can any man read the above records from the minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention, and from the Methodist Discipline, and see a whit’s difference between the two? If he can, he can see more than I can. As appalling as it seems, it is nevertheless true that Baptists, so-called, who pride themselves upon their loyalty to Christ and His truth can do such things as their own records show that they are doing. But that is not all; but as bishops they rule the churches and expel the members exactly like Methodist bishops do. Here is the proof from their records: *“We had the church to calla quasi native pastor. (Minutes 1907, pg. 85) Two small churches revolted against the work of the missionary society, and were excluded from our fellowship. We expect these churches to return soon, wiser and better for their fall.”* (Minutes 1907, pg. 98)

Churches of Christ expelled from fellowship for “revolting” against a “society”! Bishops expelling churches of Christ! Who was it said the “societies” were all under the churches? *“For the past year this church has been in the hands of a native pastor, who used his influence to destroy the work, not only in this church, but in the whole mission. He led off a group with him, and they were promptly excluded, but it left the church weak.”* (1907, pg. 99) The pastor revolted against the bishop and the bishop turned him and his followers out of a Baptist church. *“This has been a year of great struggle for this church. The same man who attempted to destroy the work at Engenho de Dentro visited also this church. He only succeeded in cleaning out the church of its worst element. Fifty were excluded.* (1907, pg. 100) The pastor was fighting episcopacy; an the bishop expelled all who followed him for independence! *“The Panindicuaro church was transferred to the Leon field.”* (1907, pg. 119) *“On my arrival here (Mexico) my experience with the native preacher was like that of the loved apostle with Diotrophes. Through his influence some discord spread both in the church and in the school. I had to expel two girls and suspend four others, all Baptists—among them the preacher’s daughter. Since then we have had no trouble. We have matters in hand in Saltillo now better than we have for years.”* (1907, pg. 127) The above records from the minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention on the questions of subsidizing the heathen and lording over God’s churches and preachers is enough to stir the heart of any true Baptist. No wonder the convention system has been a stupendous failure on the foreign field. But not only have they labored all the years and spent Baptist money in such a way as to create conditions that are more difficult to overcome than were the conditions in the beginning, but they have sought to destroy the efforts made to do work on New Testament lines. When Dr. T. P. Crawford and those associated with him were driven from the work under the convention system thirty years ago because of their protest against these unscriptural practices and their plea for a return to New Testament principles and practices, they were crucified as it were, by the advocates of conventionism at home and abroad. That their plea for a return to New Testament methods was worthy of the deepest consideration, and really the only open door to the success of the work, has since been thoroughly demonstrated in the case of the Presbyterians on the same field; but I will let Missionary McRae speak again. (From the convention paper News and Truths, in Murray, KY.) *“The second missionary who went to Korea told me in a conversation that wherever he went in Korea the missionaries said: “Humanely speaking, we owe the wonderful success of our work in Korea to the late Dr. Nevius of Chefoo.” ...I was immediately interested and made inquiries as to the history of the work in Korea. This is the story: “Thirty odd years ago Dr. T. P. Crawford of our mission and Dr. J. L. Nevius of the Presbyterian mission in Chefoo became convicted that mission methods in China were wrong and that we ought to return to New Testament principles. Neither was able to convince a majority of his fellow missionaries that they were right. The subsidizing method is easier on the missionary... But Dr. Nevius was able to convince his home board of the value of his views and when they began work in Korea 30 years ago they asked Dr. Nevius to go to Korea and advise the young missionaries how to avoid the mistakes made in China. The work in Korea was started and has been maintained on what the Presbyterians call the Nevius method.”* If the convention forces had been content to go on with their paralyzing and unscriptural methods and let those who, with Dr. Crawford, were forced out of the work and who appealed to the churches at home to cooperate with them, gone on with their work, we might see a work in Korea now. No, they pushed their subsidy system. What an awful reckoning awaits them when God comes to judge them according to the fruit of their doing. The unscriptural practices of the Convention Baptists ought to make our people all the more zealous and determined to give the gospel to the world by the Word of God.