

# The Baptist Examiner

A nation-wide, independent paper, standing foursquare for the distinguishing doctrines of Baptists, and shunning not to declare all the counsel of God.

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

Vol. 2, No. 12

ASHLAND, KY., FRIDAY, JULY 15, 1932

Whole Number 28

## How Pastors Are Bound, Gagged, and Hog-Tied by Apostate Ecclesiastical Machines

PASTOR W. D. HERRSTROM, Akron, Ohio

The mistake of the present day religious world is that it makes ecclesiasticism synonymous with Christianity, and the denominational machines synonymous with the kingdom of God.

The title of this message may at first be a little shocking to the uninformed who do not distinguish clearly between ecclesiasticism and Christianity. Christianity centers in Christ. Modern denominationalism is more and more centering in man and human organizations, and therein lies the heart and core of the problem of the impotency of the modern church.

There is no such thing as an ecclesiastical machine in the Scriptures—No, I'll take that back. There is a record of one—just one. It was called the Sanhedrin and was composed of a group of outwardly pious religious men who wanted to dictate the religious policy of the people. Inwardly they were wolves and it was this ecclesiastical machine that crucified the Lord of glory.

I would like to emphasize three important truths in this connection. First, the Lord never founded or sanctioned anything like our present denominational machines. Second, since it was an ecclesiastical machine that crucified the Lord of glory we need not expect any better treatment of our Lord by the present modern, apostate ecclesiastical machines. Third, pastors, and church members should not allow themselves to be bound, gagged, and hog-tied by these organizations, when loyalty to our Lord and God's word is involved.

There are some who say, "We'll stay in our Modernistic denomination and straighten it out." There are two things wrong with that attitude. One is that God commands you to come out and be separate. The other is that staying on the inside to straighten out a modernist machine doesn't work. No one has been able to do it, and no one will ever be able to do what is contrary to God's command—it just doesn't work—never has—never will. Another important fact is that if you are true to God and cry out against the corruption of Modernism, you'll not be able to stay in your apostate organ-

*This article is written, of course, from the standpoint of the Northern Baptist Convention. The conditions it depicts are not so aggravated in the South as they are in the North. But it shows the trend of denominational machinery today everywhere. It shows the fallacy of trying to reform denominational machinery from the inside, and emphasizes the need of separation. The Son of God did not come to this world to reform man-made systems. He planted his own church in the world and gave it a commission. That church is still here with the same commission. It is sufficient for the work Christ commissioned it to do. It is well for God's people to meet (call the meeting what you will) as did "the apostles and elders and brethren" (Acts 15:23) at Jerusalem for the purpose of discussion, counsel, and inspiration. And such a group may properly make such recommendations to the churches as seem good to the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28) but neither such a group nor any similar agency has any right to dominate the churches or undertake the discharge of the commission Christ entrusted to the churches.—ED.*

ization. You will not be wanted. You'll lose your denominational standing and soon find yourself on the outside if they can freeze you out. With a lot of pastors—well, they'd rather be dead than lose their denominational standing. Something like the woman who'd rather be dead than out of style. But God's styles never change. They were perfect from the start and cannot be improved. So I'd rather be the John the Baptist, Elijah, Daniel, Peter, Paul style of uncompromising messenger, than the pious, pussy-footing, petticoated, pink-lemonade type of preacher who is just as truly ruled by his denominational leaders, as any priest is ruled by the Pope.

The purpose of some of the denominational machines is to get a deed to every church property, a mortgage on every pastor's soul, and a lien on every pastor's message. There are too many pastors who are willing to mortgage their souls to an apostate denominational machine in order to be assured of a meal ticket. Let us illustrate the method used to bind and gag pastors and churches.

The July 25, 1929, issue of "The Ohio Baptist," publishes a report of the "survey committee" which was "Adopted at Cleveland Monday, May 20." The following is an excerpt:

"Any church receiving aid from the State Board toward any PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT must first have inserted in its deed a Reversionary Clause returning the property to the Convention when the church ceases to function as a Baptist church cooperating with the Ohio Baptist Convention."

Let us examine this paragraph carefully and illustrate what it means.

Suppose you are building a church to cost \$100,000. The Convention aids you to the extent of \$1,500, we will say. By virtue of this comparatively small gift, the Convention inserts in your deed a REVERSIONARY CLAUSE.

Now we will suppose that after your church is built and paid for you decide that you are going to be true to God and no longer contribute your missionary money to the Modernistic

program of the Convention. What happens? You have CEASED TO COOPERATE with the denomination and that constitutes the unpardonable sin. The Convention by virtue of its REVERSIONARY CLAUSE can take your entire property because you fail to cooperate with them. You say, "No, the Convention gets only the \$1,500 it put into the work." I say, "Read over that Paragraph again and you will find that the Convention can take its \$1,500 plus your \$98,500 and you can't do anything about it." The Convention can take your **Entire Property** when you fail to cooperate. Call your trustees together and find out if the Convention has slipped one over on your church like that. If they have then they've got the preacher and the church. If the preacher won't do as they say they can take the church and the preacher is out. If the church won't cooperate they can take the church and the church has lost its property.

If that hasn't got Tammany Hall beaten a million miles, I'll move my residence to the moon.

Do you wonder why I say, "Don't give your missionary money where it will be used to promote apostate ecclesiasticism?" God wants you to give your money where it will preach the gospel, not where it will be used to bind, gag, and hog-tie pastors and churches so they can't preach the gospel.

All right, that's strike number one. Let's get ready for the next one. There are folks who don't believe that a Baptist church has to bow down to the dictates of the machine in order to retain its denominational standing. (And what I say about the Baptist denomination is largely true of other apostate denominational machines. I'm talking about Baptists because I am one of them—because I was once on the inside and I know the inner workings of the organization).

If you are among those who boast that a local Baptist church can have LIBERTY and still have DENOMINATIONAL STANDING then your pet hallucination is going to blow up like a toy balloon, in about five minutes.

The First Baptist Church, Niles, Ohio, decided to ordain its acting pastor, Mr. Thomas Short. They called a council of sound, independent Baptist pastors and delegates. The day the ordination service was to take place, the church received the following letter, which speaks for itself more eloquently than anything I could say concerning the method of thumb-screwing pastors and local churches: (Copy of letter)

#### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

High Street, Warren, Ohio  
Frank Wallace Stanton, Minister  
245 Washington St., N. E.  
Warren, Ohio, Jan. 16, 1932.

Mr. Wm. Titus, Clerk, First Baptist Church,  
Niles, Ohio.

My Dear Brother:—

I have just learned indirectly of the proposed Council for Ordination of your acting pastor, Thomas Short, on Tuesday, Jan. 19, '32, by your Church. Since being the Moderator of Trumbull Baptist Association and not having had any official notice of this Council, I wondered if the church was aware of the Baptist procedure in the matter of Ordination for the Churches in Trumbull Association.

The method of procedure is as follows, First the candidate must be a member of the Church that wishes to ordain him. Second, The Church should vote as a unit in their desire that their Pastor should be set apart by Ordination to the Baptist Ministry. Third, A request should be made to the Association, of which the Church is a member, for a meeting of The Permanent Council of the Association, which is made up of the Pastor and two elected delegates from each church in the association, to consider the advisability of ordaining the candidate for the Baptist ministry (Rev. Joseph H. Lloyd, D. D., Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Youngstown, is the President of this Council in our Association.)

At the meeting of this Council the Candidate will be ex-

amined as to his Christian Experience, his call to the Ministry, and his statement of Christian Doctrine. After examining the candidate the Council will report to the Church desiring the ordination its findings and also its recommendations. If the Ordination is to be held, the Candidate with a Committee from the Council will arrange for the Ordination service at an early date.

At the Ordination service the pastors and laymen of the Association are invited to participate in the service as arranged by the Ordination committee. At this service the candidate will be given the full authority as a Baptist Minister in the Baptist Denomination.

I fear however, that your church has not carried out the methods of procedure as outlined above, and if the proposed ordination is held without the endorsement of the Permanent Council and the Association, it will be an irregular Ordination and will not be in harmony with Baptist practices and customs. The Church by this procedure will automatically put herself outside of the friendly fellowship of the Baptist Denomination. The Candidate who is ordained, will only be an Ordained Minister of the church that ordained him, and not a regularly ordained Baptist Minister of The Baptist Denomination, and he will not be recognized by the Denomination as such.

Please understand that this is not a personal matter, but a statement of fact in relation to irregular Ordination Councils. As Moderator of this Association I thought it only fair to your church that you be informed of the rules governing such Councils.

I know I speak the mind of the other brethren of the Association when I say, that we shall feel very badly if your church proceeds in this Ordination in this irregular manner. We most earnestly wish to have you continue your relations with our Association in a Christian manner as in former years.

As Moderator of this Association if I can at any time be of any assistance or give any to you as a Church I shall be most happy. With the sincere wish that God and the Great Head of the Church shall guide you in this matter, I am

Yours in His service,

FRANK W. STANTON,

Moderator of Trumbull Baptist Association.

P. S. A copy of this letter is being sent to Mr. Short.

Thus ends the epistle to the church at Niles, Ohio. The letter calls for several comments. First, it proves that when the local church will not jump at the crack of the ecclesiastical whip and obey its dicta, the church "automatically" places herself "outside of the friendly (???) fellowship of the Baptist Denomination."

Second, when a Baptist Church exercises its Baptist prerogative and ordains a man to the ministry without consulting the "autocratic" and "automatic" machine, this ordination will not be recognized by the Baptist Denomination. If Romanism can beat that I'd like to hear about it. You've got to be a Roman Catholic Church or you're not a church at all according to Romanism. But who ever thought that Baptists,—once champions of religious liberty, would adopt the tactics of Romanism and say, "You've got to do as we say or we won't even recognize what you do?"

The Rev. Mr. Stanton makes it plain that this is not a personal matter, but that he is only carrying out the edict of the machine in informing them that they would have to find themselves "without the camp, bearing his reproach," if they dared to disobey the orders of the great Denomination.

This statement from the Rev. Mr. Stanton's letter falls upon the ears of Every True Liberty Loving Baptist like a ton of brick: "Your Church Has Not Carried Out The Methods Of Procedure As Outlined Above."

Now I will confess that this makes me a little warm under the collar when I think about it. The Convention will place Harry Emerson Fosdick on its platform at the annual Convention. Fosdick has trampled under foot the precious doctrines



of God's word—but that's all right. Come on Brother (?) Fosdick, you're a good scout, Bishop McConnell appeared on the platform of the Denver Convention. In his book, "The Christlike God", (1927) page 15. Bishop McConnell says, "Is not this tendency to Deify Christ more heathen than Christian? Are we not most truly Christian when we cut loose from a heathen propensity and take Jesus simply for the character that he was and for the ideal that he is?" On page 17 he says, "Back in the early 2ges of the church there were some—probably only a few—thinkers who taught that Satan had a claim on the souls of men which only the death of the Son of God could satisfy, and that God met the obligation by sending the Son to the cross. As an intellectual construction this theory arouses pity today." Go ahead Bishop McConnell—deny the Deity of Christ if you want to, deny the personality of Satan, deny the depravity of man, deny the blood atonement—that's fine, you're a good sport. That just suits us denominational leaders. Sure go ahead—disobey all the commands of God, and deny the precious doctrines of the Bible and you are just what we want in the Denomination, but if a church, in being true to God and His word refuses to obey one of the edicts of the Convention there comes a thunderbolt from the Denominational Mt. Sinai which says: "Your church has not carried out the methods of procedure as outlined above." What methods? Some man-made methods. Disobey God, deny His word and your denominational standing will improve. You'll probably get the largest church they have to offer. But disobey one of the commandments of men sent out by the convention and the lightning will strike and place you outside the "Friendly (???) Fellowship of the Baptist Denomination."

The most ridiculous statement in the entire letter is the one that insinuates it is "Unchristian" to oppose corrupt ecclesiasticism. Note the statement: "We most earnestly wish to have you continue your relations with our Association in a Christian manner as in former years."

Now it seems to be "Christian" to allow a Bishop McConnell and a Fosdick to deny the faith, but it is not "Christian" for a church to obey God rather than man.

I am happy to say, and the readers of Postscript will be happy to know, that the First Baptist Church at Niles, Ohio, proceeded with the ordination of Brother Short, in spite of the attempted over-lordship of the Trumbull Association. I am happy to say that just recently the church severed its connection with the Denomination and henceforth it will be an Independent church, because both church and pastor, refuse to be bound, gagged, and hogtied by the Convention.—From "The Postscript."

(We take it that the writer of this article uses the term "Denomination" as equivalent to modern denominational machinery. We trust that neither the church he pastors nor the one he mentions at Niles has gone into unionism, nor surrendered a single item of historic Baptist faith and practice. Historic Baptist faith and practice, free from all modern additions, alterations, and innovations, is based on the Scriptures and is separable from affiliation with denominational machinery. A surrender of even the name "Baptist" is far too great a concession to the machine. It appears to be an admission that the machine and its supporters alone have a monopoly on the name. Denominational machines are wholly unbaptistic. Also a surrender of the Baptist name makes only confusion worse confounded by adding one more to the long list of denominations. Some differentiating designation is necessary. That being true, we believe the name "Baptist" is the best that can be found. It is the name given to that flaming messenger that God sent to prepare the way and a people for Christ's first advent. Today the true churches of Christ proclaim the same message of the first Baptist, as well as every other tenet of New Testament faith, and are commissioned to prepare the way and a people for Christ's second advent. It is fitting, therefore, that in the providence of God (not by their own choice) their churches should have the name Baptist applied to them. We are satisfied with the name and proud of it. There is not one sound reason for dropping it, but there are several good reasons for not doing so. Tune in on Station WADC, Akron, Ohio, and hear Pastor Herrstrom.—Ed)

## Churches And Conventions

PASTOR C. D. COLE, Plant City, Fla.

In a recent Fifth Sunday Meeting the topic for round table discussion was, "Representation Without Taxation." The question implied was this: "Shall churches be represented in conventions without being taxed?" The expression was most unfortunate. It smacks too much of ecclesiasticism. It implies human lordship over the churches. However, the discussion turned on the point as to whether churches had the moral right of representation in conventions with which they do not cooperate. There seemed to be no issue here. Certainly no church should desire to be represented in anything it does not support. And the writer feels sure that we are in no danger at this point. There is rather a danger in the growing tendency of "Taxation Without Representation." To illustrate: **How much representation do the churches have in the management of schools that have a self-perpetuating board of trustees? And yet, they are asked and expected to contribute to their support without asking any questions.**

### The Southern Baptist Convention

The Southern Baptist Convention is the most powerful body in Baptist life. True it does not possess legal or moral power over the churches; but it has the power of prestige, the power of leadership, and the power of organization. **With this power it undertakes to transact business for the churches.** Be-

fore this body comes all the boards and agencies of Southwide interests with their plea for help. With this body originates the budget, which includes every interest fostered by the Convention, to which the churches are expected to contribute. But there is an uncontrovertible fact: **THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION IS NOT A REPRESENTATIVE BODY.** It does not represent the churches that are supposed to furnish the money for the work of its agencies. It represents the agencies that spend the money, but it does not represent the churches that give the money. We go further and say that the Southern Baptist Convention cannot represent the churches. To illustrate: There are nearly 24,000 churches within the bounds of the Convention territory. If each church were to send but one messenger to the Convention, it would be impracticable if not impossible for these messengers to sit in council. Many think the Convention is too large as it is, with only a comparatively few of the churches represented. Now since the Convention is not and cannot be representative, it should not undertake to transact business for the churches. It is too far removed from the churches. It is not in touch with the vast majority of the churches. The Co-operative Program is the Convention's plan of business for the churches. Brother Walt N. Johnson calls the Co-operative Program a non-conductor

# The Baptist Examiner

Published Semi-Monthly By The Editor  
4758 Winchester Avenue  
Ashland, Kentucky

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## SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

Domestic Subscriptions, per year in advance - - - - \$ .50  
Foreign Subscriptions, per year in advance - - - - \$ .75

The paper will not be sent to any one beyond time paid for, except by special arrangement.

Entered as second-class matter Jan. 6, 1932, at the post office at Ashland, Ky., under the act of March 3, 1879.

between the Convention and the churches; ignition gets across only in spots.

The Southern Baptist Convention should be a meeting primarily for fellowship and inspiration. Its sessions should be characterized by prayer and praise and preaching. This would send the messengers back to their churches with new zeal and enthusiasm for missionary endeavor, whereas, many of them return disappointed. They leave the Convention under the burden of terrible debts the Convention agencies have fastened upon them. They are asked to pass upon questions without time for thought and prayer that committees have wrestled with in hotel rooms, oftentimes finding it difficult to agree among themselves. A brother who had attended the Convention for his first time, was asked to give his impression of the Convention. This brother, who had been delivered from Roman Catholicism, in a serious and thoughtful mood, said that the Convention made a very unfavorable impression upon him. The program was too much of a "cut and dried" affair to him. He was asked to vote upon things he knew nothing about. And the feeling of this brother is shared by many who attend the conventions. If the Convention is going to transact business for the churches, it is a needless expense to send messengers. Let the leaders meet and attend to the business, and save us the expense and "farce" of passing on what the leaders propose.

The Boards of the Convention should be clearing-houses for the churches. Let them spend what the churches send to them. They have no legal or moral right to mortgage the Baptist name and honor to the banks for funds with which to carry on their work. Under the present system of budget making by the Convention agencies, we have come to the place where the budget is actually made out by the bankers. The most important men in our councils now are the bankers. Now we attach no blame to the bankers, but to the system that has enslaved us to them. Brother J. W. Porter says that we are doing our work by the grace of the bankers rather than by the grace of God. In my heart I am glad the banks have refused to let us have any more money. God has not commanded His people to do His work on borrowed capital. The Scriptural basis of giving is "as God hath prospered," and not as God will prosper.

The budget should be made by the churches and not by the Convention. It should be made by the givers rather than by the spenders. Otherwise we have in principle, "Taxation without Representation." But it is objected that if each church makes its own budget some interests would get more than their share, while other interests would suffer. The Co-operative Program is to guarantee the rights of all the interests.

It would guarantee the prosperity of any cause that might be able to get itself into the budget. And there are brethren whose loyalty to the Co-operative Program means more than loyalty to Christ and His word. Some are supporting and insist that others should support the Co-operative Program when it includes that which they themselves admit is inimical to the word of God. And the reason usually given is that we cannot afford to lose such and such a piece of property. And thus they would crucify the truth on a cross of gold. **The objection against the churches making their own budgets is made on the ground of expediency. It does not appear to some to be the safe and wise thing to do. What do they mean? Do they mean to say that a church, which is a body of Christ, an habitation of God through the Spirit, under the Lordship of Christ and leadership of the Holy Spirit, cannot safely make its own budget? That is exactly what their objection involves.**

## Back To The Churches

One need of the hour is to get the burden of a lost world upon the hearts and consciences of the churches. We must keep the commission of Christ before the churches. The churches are the responsible agents for the evangelization of the world. And they cannot escape this responsibility. Nor can I believe that the saved in our churches want to escape it. I believe there is a missionary passion in the heart of every saved man. This passion needs to be kept aglow by direct appeal. And the most responsible man in any church is the pastor. He is responsible for his teaching and for the example he sets his church.

The Co-operative program is to most of our churches nothing more than a "huge abstraction." Our leaders should know by this time that it is not popular with the masses. There are many objects included in it that make no appeal to the rank and file of Southern Baptists. Many of our educational institutions are in disfavor with the people. Nearly all of them are under suspicion. The churches are expected to support them, but they have precious little to do with the management of them. There are some sad and yet interesting facts about our schools. We have four theological seminaries (including the Training School), with combined assets of seven and one-half million dollars. We have twenty-nine Senior Colleges with combined assets of more than forty-one million dollars. Twenty-four Junior Colleges with combined assets of nearly ten million dollars. Twenty Academies with combined assets of over two million dollars. To summarize, we have a total of seventy-seven (77) educational institutions with property assets of over thirty-eight million dollars, and endowments of nearly twenty-three million dollars, making the total assets of nearly sixty-one million dollars. And yet, nearly all of them are in financial distress, and most of them are also suffering from lack of students.

The report of the Education Commission should be read by every Baptist. It breathes with the spirit of honesty and frankness. I now copy a paragraph from this report (found on page 33 of the reports of Boards, etc., to the Convention at St. Petersburg):

"We hear it said over and over that we must resell Christian education to our people. This is scarcely technically correct. We have a new generation with which to deal as well as a complete system of tax-supported, therefore tuition free, educational institutions in all states. Our statistical survey shows that more Baptists are in state schools than are in our own Baptist schools. The ratio ranges from approximately two to one in some states to fourteen to one in others. And the ratio in the same direction grows year by year. The people to whom the selling is to be done have never been sold on Christian education, hence there is no re-selling to do. Our people as a whole are sold on state education partly because tuition is provided by enforced taxation and partly because a new argument is being made that is having weight with many of our people. The new argument is like the old argument of the Christian college, namely, that there is a dif-



ference between church college education and state college education. Once the recognized difference was in favor of the church college. But in the minds of many the difference is now in favor of the state college and those who hold this view are outspoken and present facts which to large numbers of our people prove their contention."

**The writer belongs to the class that does not believe in denominational schools in the realm of secular education.** In the first place they are not needed. We pay taxes for secular education in the grammar schools and on to the highest seats of learning. In the second place our denominational schools are little, if any, better than the state schools. Our denominational schools can hardly be called Baptist schools. Our Senior Colleges hold membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, which fixes certain standards and requirements. There are salary requirements for the teachers, and some of the schools are having a hard time in meeting these salary requirements, thereby jeopardizing their standing in the Southern Association. Then there are academic requirements for the teachers. They must have so many teachers with a Ph.D. degree. **A certain college president was explaining why he had an Episcopal rector on his faculty. He said that out of a group of 50 Ph.D. men who were available only two of them were Baptists. And these two accepted work elsewhere, and he had to get a man who was not a Baptist. A certain college that wears the Baptist name and is in the Co-operative Program has a self-perpetuating board of trustees, and the charter requires that only three-fourths of the trustees shall be Baptists. Few, if any of us, would be willing to call a church by the name Baptist that had one-fourth of its deacons other than Baptists. Then with what consistency can we call a school by the name Baptist when some of its trustees are not members of any Baptist Church?**

**The only kind of teaching the churches are responsible for is the teaching of the word of God.** Every Baptist church should be a Bible school. Every pastor should be "apt to teach." It is a miserable piece of exegesis that seeks to include the denominational college in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19, 20). In view of the fact that most of our boys and girls are in state schools, one of our Southern editors recently suggested that we build dormitories adjacent to the campus of state schools, and support teachers of the Bible to minister to these students. He further says: "Let such religious subjects as desired be taught by teachers paid for by the denomination and correlated and credited by the state schools. This is what we are approaching. It is economical both for the state and the denomination. All academic courses would be given by the state, for which we pay taxes; all Biblical, religious and denominational subjects given and paid for by the denomination."—Florida Baptist Witness, March 31, 1932.

#### **The Co-Operative Program And Designation**

This article is getting too long, but some other things need to be said. **Every one knows that the spirit and aim of the Co-operative Program is to stop the designation of funds.** But this is clearly in conflict with Article XI of the Constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention. Lest this article might not be familiar to some of my readers, I quote it in full:

**"All who contribute to the work of this Convention have the right to designate the object or objects to which their contributions shall be applied; but when no such designation is made, distribution shall be made as determined by the Convention."**

According to this article those who designate their gifts are just as loyal to the work of the Convention as those who do not. But the spirit of most of our leaders would brand as disloyal those who operate under this article of our Constitution. For the sake of consistency this article should be amended or the Co-operative program abandoned, thereby allowing each interest to appeal to the churches for support on its own merit. **The writer boldly declares himself to be in favor**

**of the principle of designation, not as a matter of rights but of responsibility. God holds us responsible for what we support. Second John, verses ten and eleven, might as well not have been written so far as the attitude of some of the brethren is concerned. But its importance will become apparent some of these days.**

The principle of designation runs through the Bible. The offering in Exodus 35th chapter was for the building of the tabernacle and its furniture. Beginning with Pentecost there was a long continued revival in the Jerusalem church, and B. H. Carroll tells us that the liberal offerings of that time were for the expenses of the revival. In 1 Cor. 16:1 the offering was for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

#### **The Materialism Of Our Denomination**

It seems to the writer that we are submerged in the sea of materialism. We profess to believe in the "Primacy of the spiritual," and practice the primacy of the material. We have become possessed with the passion for property. We have sought prestige with the world and have lost power with God. Our material wealth has climbed to unheard of heights while our spiritual poverty has reached alarming depths. Our denomination has become a huge business concern with an army of legal advisers and efficiency experts. And now the material things in which we have been glorying are about to become our shame. We are property poor. Southern Baptists have put enough money into their work within the last two decades to girdle the globe with missionaries, if it had been used under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The estimated value of our church buildings is nearly two hundred and twenty millions of dollars, with only four hundred and fifteen foreign missionaries employed (including the wives of married men). These figures represent a travesty in missionary endeavor. Ornate church buildings, costly pipe organs, and extravagance along other lines, have represented that which is sensual rather than the spiritual worship. Jude 19. It represents "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). If pipe organs and trained singers and other modern equipment are an aid to worship, then the early Christians were not able to worship in Spirit and in truth, for they had none of these things.

#### **The Way Out**

The need of the hour is confession, humility, and self-judgment. We have followed the ways of the world long enough. Worldly wisdom has been tried and found wanting in the work of Christ. We have sought honour one of another; let us now seek that honour that cometh from God only. John 5:44. **Let churches and groups of churches assume the support of particular missionaries. Let these missionaries make reports to these churches. The churches that support them are responsible for what they do. Most of our larger churches could support one or more missionaries without hindering other Scriptural work. The smaller churches near each other could work together in the support of one or more missionaries. Let neighboring pastors meet together for prayer and counsel. Every church that has not quenched (put out) the Holy Spirit can be reached by a direct missionary appeal. Let us practice the "Primacy of Missions."**

And while emphasizing missions let every church study the whole denominational program in the light of God's word, seeking heavenly wisdom and grace as to what it supports. **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"** (2 Chron. 7:14).

**"Just received Mar. 1 copy of your paper, and I thank God for such a paper."**—W. R. Powell, Huntsville, Texas.

**"I have seen a few copies of your most excellent paper . . . It would please me greatly to see this paper coming into every home on my field."**—Elder F. G. Wilborn, Boaz, Ky.

## The Present State of the Dead

By THE EDITOR

In our last issue we promised to discuss the teaching of Seventh Day Adventists concerning the present state of the dead. Their teaching concerning this matter is commonly referred to as the theory of soul sleeping, but the real substance of the theory is that the dead are non-existent between death and the resurrection. This is logically true and it is so represented by Seventh Day Adventists. It is logically true because when a man is physically dead there is nothing left of him but the spirit; and a sleeping spirit (if such were possible) would be a non-existent spirit. The idea of a spirit being alive and yet being unconscious is the limit of absurdity. But we do not have to depend upon reasoning on this point; we can take the Seventh Day Adventists' own view of the matter. In commenting on Job 7:21, Carlyle B. Haynes, one of the most prolific writers of Seventh Day Adventism, in "Signs of the Times" (issue of Dec. 15, 1931), says: **"Surely no more forceful expression could possibly be used to show the utter cessation of existence than this. In death 'I shall not be.'"** Therefore, we shall discuss this matter in this light.

Against this theory we assert and undertake to prove from the Scriptures that man's spirit does not cease to exist in death. By the term "spirit" we mean the immaterial nature of man in its higher relationship. We use the term "spirit" in preference to the term "soul" because we believe spirit best expresses the immaterial part of man in distinction from bodily life. Sometimes soul is used synonymously with spirit (as in Matt. 10:28 and Rev. 6:9), but usually, we believe, they are differentiated (as in 1 Thess. 5:23). And when differentiated we believe the distinction between them is as follows: **"The immaterial part of man, viewed as an individual and conscious life, capable of possessing and animating a physical organism is called psuche (soul); viewed as a rational and moral agent, susceptible of divine influence and indwelling, this same immaterial part is called pneuma (spirit)"** (A. H. Strong). The spirit is man's immaterial nature looking Godward, and the soul is man's immaterial nature looking earthward. **"The spirit is the highest, deepest, noblest part of man. By it he is fitted to comprehend eternal things, and it is, in short, the house in which dwell faith and the word of God. The . . . soul is this spirit, according to nature, but yet in another sort of activity, namely, in this, that it animates the body and works through it"** (Luther). **"Soul is spirit modified by union with the body"** (Hovey).

Sometime both the Hebrew and Greek words for spirit denote wind or breath; but that they do not always do so is evidenced by Matt. 26:41; Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59; Cor. 2:11; 5:5; 7:34; 14:14; and 1 Thess. 5:23. Let those interested study these passages and substitute breath in the place of spirit and see what sort of sense is made. Then we know that spirit may signify more than breath because **"God is a spirit"** (John 4:24).

**1. Physical death does not end the existence of man's spirit because the spirit is not subject to physical death.** We have the proof of this in Matt. 10:28. If man cannot kill the spirit, then physical death has no power to end the existence of the spirit. Man can kill anything that is subject to physical death. In physical death the body ceases to function and begins to disintegrate, and man ceases to be a "living soul" in the distinctive sense of the term "soul." But the spirit cannot be killed and is never spoken of as ceasing in death. Instead we find Jesus at death committing his spirit into the hands of God and Stephen committing his spirit into the hands of Jesus (Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59). Physical death is merely the separation of the spirit from the body.

**2. The representation of death as sleep does not teach that the spirit sleeps, and is, therefore, non-existent.** Sleep is purely a physical phenomenon. Death is sleep only by analogy; not actually. And the analogy is in the appearance of the body, and not in either the state of the body or the spirit. In sleep the spirit is still united with the body, and, therefore, conditioned by it. But in death, as Adventists are forced to admit, the spirit and the body are separated. And the spirit separated from the body is no longer conditioned by the body.

Stephen fell asleep (Acts 7:50), but his spirit did not cease to exist, because he committed it into the hands of Jesus; and a non-existent spirit could not be committed into the hands of anybody. Paul described death as sleep (1 Cor. 15:6; 1 Thess. 4:14), but he did not teach the non-existence of the dead. Paul looked upon death, not as a cessation of existence, but as a departing to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23). To Paul being absent from the body meant not to be non-existent, but to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6). That which is non-existent cannot be present anywhere or with any one.

**3. Reference to the wicked dead as "spirits in prison" shows that the dead are not non-existent. (1 Pet. 3:19).** A non-existent spirit is a nonentity, and a nonentity cannot be anywhere; for to be is to exist.

**4. Moses did not cease to exist when he died, for centuries afterward he appeared with Christ on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17:3).** Will Adventists say that Moses was resurrected immediately after burial? If so, a refutation for them is waiting in 1 Cor. 15:20. Christ's being the firstfruits of the dead forbids the theory that Moses was resurrected immediately after his burial.

**5. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah did not cease to exist when they died (Jude 7).** Jude describes them in New Testament times as **"suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."** The word for suffering in this passage is a present participle, and a present participle expresses progressive, durative action. And that this is not a historical present is shown by the present tense of the verb "are set forth."

**6. The rich man and Lazarus did not cease to exist when they died (Luke 16:19-31).** This is not a parable, but no matter if it were. The Son of God did not resort to misrepresentation even in parables. All of his parables were true facts.

**7. Christ and the penitent thief did not cease to exist when they died.** Christ was not dependent on the body for life, for

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(We are personally acquainted with Brother Belt and can unreservedly vouch for him as being honest and dependable.—Ed.)

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he lived before he had a body (John 1:1, 2, 14). And on the cross Christ asserted that he and the thief would that day be together in paradise. Non-existent spirits could not be anywhere, much less together.

8. **The spirits that John saw under the altar had not ceased to exist** (Rev. 6:9).

9. **The resurrection proves that the dead are not now non-existent.** If they were, then there would need be a re-creation instead of a resurrection. And this would wholly destroy the basis of rewards, for those who come forth from the grave would be different individuals from those who wrought works here in this world.

10. **The fact that the righteous dead have not attained to their highest state of bliss, and must yet pass through the resurrection does not prove that they are now non-existent.** "That blessed hope" (Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2, 3) is the union of the spirit with the glorified body. This only will bring the full satisfaction of the believer's longing (Psa. 17:15). But God has chosen to suspend the realization of this hope until a future time. And while the disembodied state is not the ideal one yet it is better than continuing in the flesh (Phil. 1:23), and those who are in this state are present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

11. **The fact that the wicked dead are yet to be judged and cast into the lake of fire does not prove that they are now non-existent.** It has pleased God to confine the wicked dead in prison (Isa. 24:22; 1 Pet. 3:19), finally to bring them forth and consign them altogether to the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15). But that the wicked dead are already in conscious fiery torment we have previously shown (Luke 16:19-31; Jude 7). The final misery of the wicked, like the final bliss of the righteous, awaits the resurrection of the body; at which time the wicked will be cast, both body and soul, into hell (Matt. 10:28).

12. **The fact that eternal life is received through faith does not prove that those who do not possess it do not have eternal existence.** Eternal life in the Scriptures means more than eternal existence. It is in contrast with spiritual death (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13; 1 John 3:14). Spiritual death is inner slavery in a state of sin and separation from God. Eternal life is freedom and fellowship with God. Spiritual death makes one subject to the second death, which "is a continuation of spiritual death in another and timeless existence" (E. G. Robinson). Eternal life is exemption from the second death.

13. **The representation of immortality as something to be attained does not prove that those who do not attain unto it do not have eternal existence.** Rom. 2:7 and 1 Cor. 15:53 have reference to the body. The body is described as being mortal, but the spirit never. To put on immortality, in the sense of the above Scriptures, is to receive an immortal body, and therefore, to pass into that state in which we cannot no longer be effected by death. This putting on immortality is the joining of an immortal body with the immortal spirit.

14. **The ascription of immortality to God alone (1 Tim. 6:16) does not mean that no others possess eternal existence.** The above Scripture means that God alone is wholly immortal in every part of his being, and unaffected by death, and that he alone possesses underived and independent immortality. While man is immortal as to only a part of his nature, and his immortality, both of spirit and body, is derived from God. The case of Elijah is a sufficient answer to the argument of "soul sleepers" on this passage. Did Elijah cease to exist at any time? If not, he had immortal existence.

15. **The statements of Jesus in John 3:13 and 13:33 do not teach that the righteous dead are non-existent.** Scripture must be interpreted in the light of Scripture. Therefore, the first passage above cannot be taken with absolute literalness. For in 2 Kings 2:2, 11 it is twice stated that Elijah was taken up into heaven. The meaning of Christ's statement here, then, can be no more than that Jesus alone had ascended up to heaven and come back to reveal the mysteries there communicated to

him. The second passage is explained by the thirty-sixth verse. Christ meant merely that for the time being those to whom he was talking could not follow him; not that they were never to follow him, for in that case they could never go to heaven.

16. **The statement of Peter in Acts 2:34 does not mean that David was non-existent.** This statement concerning David is elucidated by the statement of Christ to Mary Magdalene concerning himself (John 20:17). Christ said: "I have not yet ascended unto the Father." But Christ's spirit had ascended to the Father (Luke 23:43, 46; Rev. 2:7; 22:1, 2). The meaning, then, of Peter's statement about David and that of Christ about himself is that they had not ascended to God in body.

17. **Old Testament Scriptures do not prove the non-existence of the dead.** Scripture must be explained by Scripture. The incomplete and indistinct revelations of the Old Testament must be explained by the fuller and clearer revelations of the New Testament. And in the light of these fuller and clearer revelations some statements in the Old Testament concerning the state of the dead can be taken only as the language of appearance. Old Testament writers, not having a clear revelation concerning the state of the dead, often spoke of the dead from the standpoint of this life. It is in this sense that we are to understand such Scriptures as Job. 3:11-19; 7-21, 22; Psa. 6:5; 88:11, 12; 115:17; Eccl. 3:19, 20; 9:10; Isa. 38:18.

In an early issue we hope to write on the theory that the wicked will be annihilated at the last judgment.

## HAPPENINGS AT BRIAR RUN

### Zack Joins Church

Dere bro: i jest thot I'd write yo about jining church. fer a long spell i been thinkin about hit. every time i've had chills and roomatiz for the past ten yers i've wished i was alrede jined. So last week i ups and walks down the isle and shakes hands with the preacher. now i'm a member of the first baptiz church of Brire Run.

i'll tell you uf sum uf the members. Bro Cloudsmasher is our paster. he's a mighty umble man. uf kourse the church aims ter keep him sich, which is rite, don't you think. God kalls em to preach, and kalls us ter keep em umble. to much money spiles a preacher, so we calculates ter keep em umble and at the same time save a passel uf mune. Bro. Cloudsmasher shore is a reel comfortin preacher. i hain't gon to sleep on him but wunce in the last three Sundys.

Col. Tinkling Symbol seems to a rite important member. he wares a tall hat, a diamond stick-pin, and carries a gold-hedded cain. he always cums to meetin, when theys a weddin er funeral, but seldum eny other time. he runs the emporium, the departmint store in town.

Sister Gadby plays the organ. She jist seams to hav a nack fer moosic. shes president uf the chatter and stitch club and they say a rite pert wun to. she always nos the nus fust. when she ain't practisin organ shes out talkin. no wun nos anything she aint alrede herd.

theres unkle zeke Deafasapost, what kaint here good and carries a trumpet. i hev notised he has partiklar truble hearing when bro. cloudsmasher is prechin on missuns. the only time i kin rickollect him herin plain wus when sumbody suggested we each pay \$5 a yer fer preachin. he got all fainty and had to run to the town pump at wunce.

the widder Faith is a funny wun. she gives more than enybody but Sam Buford, and she seams so cheerful about hit. she never grumbles about payin fer prechin but acts like hit wuz a joy. i'd like to be as happy as her if hit didn't cost so much. speekin of Sam Buford, hes always talking about payin the preecher mor. ef i give as much as him. i'd hev ter sell wun uf my farms.

Rube Dillon is president uf the grumblers band. i think he

must a bin born in the objective case and kikative mood. he has an awful tender skin, and jest kant seam to stand much preechin. he gits real sore when the preecher speeks of muneey and missuns.

i'll tell yo uf wun or two more in this letter. theres Solomon Musselbound what has hart truble and roomatiz, and whose laigs creek whenever he sits down. ever time kuvetus-nuss is menshuned he has to go outside and git sum air. Dave Mardis is janiter. he and his yellor houn dawg keep the church hous. Jake Puttinstoff is trustee. they say hes a gude wun, only sumtimes he wates to long seeing after things.

i tell yo i feal a mity passel better since i jined church. i shore do feel at hom. i'll writ yo more about the church nex time.

Yor bro.

Zack.

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