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**THE BAPTIST HISTORY COLLECTION**  
**SPECIFIC HISTORICAL ISSUES**

**Baptist Heritage Abandoned**

*by I.K. Cross*

*The Protestant Position of the Southern Baptist Convention*

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth*

— ~~1904~~ Psalm 60:4

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**BAPTIST  
HERITAGE  
ABANDONED**

**THE PROTESTANT POSITION OF THE  
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION**

**By**

**I. K. CROSS**

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1955 I published a book under the caption, *The Truth About Conventionism*. It has now gone through three editions, the last one now out of print. Since the information in this work is still true why have we not just reprinted it in the fourth edition? The answer to that should be obvious.

In the last two and a half decades since the original work was written there have been so many changes in the Southern Baptist Convention leadership that what was then important is now obsolete. Unfortunately the changes have not been for good. As the reader will find, there has been much abandoning of the Convention's own original stand on biblical doctrines held for centuries by Baptists as distinctives. This departure has been so drastic in some areas it is felt that concerned people, both in and out of the Convention, should be informed. That is what this work will do.

No organization is completely free from imperfections; no doubt all of us have dragged our anchors a bit in the Baptist harbor at times. However, the charge made in this book is that those in control of the Southern Baptist Denomination have deliberately weighed anchor and *set* sail with the fleet of Protestantism. This means they no longer recognize a distinction between Baptists and Protestants; therefore, they are no longer a part of the true Baptist heritage — but have become a part of the ecumenical Protestant denominationalism.

To give evidence I am not a novice in this field, allow me, with tongue in cheek, to establish myself by Southern Baptist authorities as an authority whom they have themselves accepted on several occasions.

When the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* was being prepared for publication in 1958, I was requested by the publishers themselves to write the section on United Baptists. I did so and the item appears in Volume II, p. 1435, published by Broadman Press, 1958. Not only did I write the article at their request for their own encyclopedia, but when they published it they liked it so well they inserted the following statement without my knowledge or approval: "Southern Baptists largely came from this union, dropping the word 'united' in their name. However a small group of United Baptists perpetuates the name." This of course is not the lily-white truth, but we'll not go into that here.

When, in 1971, Broadman Press published a third volume to update the encyclopedia, they dropped their own editor who had written the item on the American Baptist Association they had used in the 1958 edition. That copy appears in this later edition over my name. Check Volume III, p. 1567.

Now if you think these are isolated cases of the SBC quoting me as their authority you are wrong. In the *Baptist Advance*, published by Broadman Press in 1964, on p. 370, a whole paragraph is quoted from my writings listing me as their authority. In the same volume, p. 383, my name is again picked up.

Now, while the SBC would probably not want me to write their next history for them, if they quote me without question themselves, you should not need to take the documented pages which follow with the proverbial “grain of salt.”

This will not be an exhaustive manuscript, nor will it endeavor to deal with the whole system. But it will endeavor to deal with present positions in the SBC which have vastly departed from their original moorings.

I. K. Cross  
Downey, CA  
Nov. 1, 1980

# 1. — ORIGIN AND NATURE OF CONVENTIONISM IN AMERICA

In updating the change in posture of any movement, it is wise to look again at their origins. The origins of the convention system in America begin with a movement bearing the title of “The General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions,” but which came to be commonly known as the “Triennial Convention” due to the fact it met triennially. It was organized on May 18, 1814 (*Ency. of So. Baptists*, Vol. II, p. 1427).

The background of this first organization is interesting. It was formed as the result of two Congregational ministers sailing for India as missionaries. Their names were Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice. In February, 1812, these two preachers sailed for India as missionaries of the Congregational Church.

“On the long voyage Judson studied the New Testament mode of baptism. Shortly after landing in India, he became convinced of the Baptist position and in turn convinced his wife. The two were baptized in Calcutta on September 6, 1812, by William Ward, an English Baptist missionary” (*Ency. of So. Baptists*, Vol. I, p. 713).

Luther Rice had much the same experience.

“Following a study on shipboard which continued after his arrival in India, Rice accepted the Baptist position on baptism and was immersed November 1, 1812. This was two months after Judson and his wife had taken the same step” (*Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 1165).

The formation of the Triennial Convention was the result of Luther Rice’s return to America to set up some plan to raise funds to keep Judson on the field as a foreign missionary for Baptists.

“The convention was to consist of delegates, not to exceed two in number, from each missionary society and other religious bodies of Baptists contributing at least \$100 a year to the work of the convention” (*Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 1427).

Thus the nature of America’s first convention is established. It was established for the purpose of raising funds to support, originally, one foreign missionary. Representation in the convention was based upon the amount of money raised (*Baptist Advance*, p. 30), a principle never abandoned. It was not made up of church delegates only, but any Baptist group which contributed the required

stipend. This is the course set by the first convention, established under the promotion of a recently converted Congregational missionary — interestingly within two years of his baptism to the faith of Baptists. Or, to put it another way, within two years of the time he had arrived in India as a Congregational missionary.

## SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Most people think the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention was purely a division over the question of slavery, but this is not fully true. For some time prior to the division, there had been dissatisfaction, led by the south, over the organizational form of the Triennial Convention. Many in the south wanted a more centrally controlled organization (Ibid).

However, the question of slavery did bring the matter to a head and,

“In May, 1845, the formal and official separation was effected in Augusta, Ga., in the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention. It was a convention in fact, for while it *carried over the financial basis of representation of the old convention*, it put all the activities and benevolences under one convention, as boards, rather than societies” (Ibid, p. 34).

Thus the Southern Baptist Convention was born, and its object has never been any secret. It is clearly stated in their charter of incorporation which is published annually, in their record of proceedings of their annual meetings, as follows:

### *“An Act to Incorporate the Southern Baptist Convention*

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

“Approved December 27, 1845.

“(Should be ‘A Dockery’ as given in 1846 Minutes Reporting charter.)”

The above copy is taken from their 1963 annual.

In all honesty it must be pointed out that the formation of this new convention had no more church authority than did the Triennial Convention from which it departed. According to *The Southern Baptist Convention: 1845-1953*, by W.W. Barnes, p. 26,

“The Virginia Baptist Foreign Mission Society ... took the lead and issued a call for a consultative convention.”

There was much discussion at this meeting, as might be expected, but it finally came down to this:

“In the opinion of Dr. Johnson and others, this body, called to consult about the current situation existing between Baptists in the South and in the North was only *empowered* to recommend.”

However, the other view prevailed.

“The convention then proceeded to organize a provisional government under the Constitution” (Ibid, p. 31).

Let me quote further from Dr. Barnes’ history, page 32: “Although the action taken under the Jeter resolution on Saturday, May 10” (1845 mentioned above)

“... the formation of a ‘provisional government,’ and the invitation of those interested to meet in person or by delegation in Richmond the *following year to perfect* a permanent organization ... suggests that they considered the transactions at Augusta tentative, plans were made that indicated a sense of permanent action. A charter was secured under the laws of Georgia, December 27, 1845. The newly appointed boards began to function ...”

This charter establishing the goals of the Convention is quoted above, and thus the SBC was formed — *before* duly elected representation from the churches could be heard from at the appointed time the following year. The SBC was chartered in Augusta, Georgia, in 1845, absolutely without authority from the churches, with the stated goal of combining, eliciting and *directing* the energies of the Baptist Denomination — a job it continues to do with authority.

The old Triennial Convention was eventually organized as the Northern Baptist Convention in 1907, and later changed its name to the American

Baptist Convention in 1950 (*Ency. So. Baptist.*, p. 36). The organization is now known officially as the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

## 2 — SBC AND THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

Since this paper deals only with the Southern Baptist Convention, we will not go further into the developments which have taken place in the convention system in the north.

The first major step of the SBC toward a capitulation to Protestantism was their acceptance of the theory of the universal church.

### HISTORY OF THE ISSUE

Honest historians are aware that the idea of a universal invisible church is a child of the Reformation. The Protestant Reformers were determined they would not be bound again by the universal, visible church with the Pope as its head. Yet they had all been a part of that universal system all of their ministry prior to their rebellion in the Reformation itself. It was impossible therefore for them to free themselves completely of a universal concept of the church. The final outcome, accepted by Protestantism until this day was what is commonly referred to as the universal, *invisible* church, which, by the most commonly accepted definition, is composed of *all* the redeemed — no matter what their doctrinal differences may be.

The late Roy Mason, author of *The Church That Jesus Built* and a number of other books, in his book, *The Universal Invisible Church Theory Exploded*, says on page 7,

“I have read rather widely in the writings ... of the Christian leaders who lived in the early days of Christianity, all the way from Polycarp who knew John the apostle, on down. In their writings they don't speak of an ... invisible church. Doubtlessly they would have been amazed at such a doctrine.”

On page 8 he then quotes these words from Dr. R. K. Maiden,

“former editor of the Word and Way of Missouri ... ‘Following the Reformation period and born of the Reformation movement, there emerged a new theory of the church — the UNIVERSAL, INVISIBLE SPIRITUAL THEORY.’”

Bro. Mason then says of the Reformers,

“With what would they replace the doctrine of the Universal Visible Church? They solved the problem by coining the doctrine of the

Universal INVISIBLE Church. So the Universal, Invisible, spiritual theory of the church WAS INVENTED!”

Thus it is very clear that the concept of a universal, invisible church is a Protestant innovation, and the concept of a New Testament church exclusively local in nature is still supported by honest scholarship today. In the late Dr. S.E. Anderson’s book, *Real Churches or a Fog*, he quotes many scholars who support this New Testament concept; among them is Dr. Henry M. Morris. On page 110 he quotes from Dr. Morris’s book, *The Bible Has the Answer*, page 132,

“In the present world, therefore, New Testament usage compels us to recognize that the true church is a local group of Christian believers, not an ‘invisible’ or ‘universal’ entity of some kind with no physical substance. ...”

This has been a Baptist distinctive through the centuries, a fact clearly stated by Norman H. Wells in his book, *The Church That Jesus Loved*, page 32, “If the universal, invisible church theory is to be received by Baptists, then we lose our identity.”

With England being virtually surrounded by the reformers and their theology, it was inevitable that the Reformation would make an impact upon the thinking of Baptists who settled in the American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries, since many of them came from England and Wales. The extent of this impact is seen in the fact that a number of the Anabaptists even joined the Reformation movement. In some cases the confessions of faith of others drastically changed during that period, as seen in the histories of that era, such as *The History of the Churches of Piedmont*, and others. During this period even the great Particular Baptist theologian, Dr. John Gill, became influenced to some extent by the newly born universal, invisible church idea of Protestantism. In *Baptist Concepts of the Church*, edited by Winthrop S. Hudson, John W. Brush states,

“Gill, in his interpretation of the Peter-Rock passage (~~40613~~ Matthew 16:13-20), sees the church as basically ‘the elect of God, the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.’ Since God alone, of course, knows who the elect are, we have here what may be called the Church Invisible, however many the attempts that have been made to define that familiar but often hazy term” (pp. 57, 58).

Since the Philadelphia Association of Baptists, the first ever formed on this continent (1707), was composed of Particular Baptists from England and Wales, it is not too surprising that this Reformation concept of the church

should appear in its first confession of faith, taken largely from the London Confession of 1688.

In a reprint of the Philadelphia Confession, their definition “of the Church” appears on page 58, as Chapter XXVI, item 1.

“The catholic or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit, and truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole ... number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the Head thereof ...”

Why have I gone to such length to show that one of the strongest wings of Baptists came out of the Reformation tainted with the universal, invisible church idea? To show that it was an *acquired* concept — acquired from the reformers, whose help against the oppression of Rome they had first welcomed.

But, while it was momentarily acquired under Reformation influence, it was not the concept which endured among Baptists. By 1833, what came to be known as the New Hampshire Confession, was first published. In 1853 J. Newton Brown revised the confession and published it in *The Baptist Church Manual*. This confession omitted the universal, invisible church concept, and has become the standard, with occasional revisions, for most Baptists since that date. It, not the Philadelphia Confession, is the one which has been most universally accepted, and also adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. (*Bapt. Confessions of Faith*, by W. L. Lumpkin, pp. 360-365.)

## **SBC’S ORIGINAL CHURCH POSITION**

That the Southern Baptist Convention originally held firmly to the concept of the New Testament church being only local in nature is seen from the writings of their leaders from earlier years. That the Convention has done an *about face* is also clear from the official records of recent years, and we are now going to take a look at that evidence.

Early in the 20th century Dr. J.B. Moody, who once hosted the Convention in Hot Springs, Ark., wrote,

“Some think he (Christ) used it (church) in a universal sense, including all the saved in all ages. They commenced it in the garden of Eden, and there never was a time when such a church was on earth. ... What sort of a church did he build ...? Was the church at Jerusalem a universal church? Did the Lord add the saved to the universal church? Then the saved were not in it, and his church is not made up of all the saved.

“The church at Jerusalem was called the CHURCH OF GOD. So every Baptist church is the CHURCH OF GOD” (*My Church*, by J. B. Moody, 1974 reprint, Attic Press, pp. 60, 61).

A book published by the Western Recorder Publishers, Louisville, Ky., in 1937, contains eleven chapters by as many outstanding Southern Baptist writers, and deals with many of the major issues of the time. The Western Recorder is the official Southern Baptist periodical for the state of Kentucky, and the oldest seminary in the SBC is also located in Louisville. Since the book was designed “for Church Study Classes” under these conditions, it could hardly be said to contain less than the denomination’s official thinking at the time.

In this 1937 publication called *Re-Thinking Baptist Doctrines*, and edited by Victor J. Masters, Dr. J. E. Skinner of Jackson, Tennessee, says on page 85,

“Many good people confuse church membership with membership in the family of God, a view utterly foreign to the thinking of Baptists.”

On page 91 and 92 he continues,

“New Testament church is a scripturally organized body of baptized believers capable under the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit of being assembled for worship and of the faithful performance of every duty involved in the Great Commission. ... The word ‘church’ is nowhere used in the New Testament except in the sense of an assembly. ... For the present we are considering only that institution which is now in existence, the visible body of Christ.”

On page 157 of this same book, Dr. R.K. Maiden of Kansas City, Missouri, introduces an *entire chapter* under the caption of “‘*Universal Church*’ Heresy.” The entire chapter exposes every facet of the so-called universal church, which he makes very plain he considers to be a heretical teaching. So, it is very clear that as late as 1937 the idea of a universal, invisible church was considered heresy among Southern Baptists.

One other quotation and we shall consider the fact well established that the official position among Southern Baptists, for many years, was that the New Testament concept of the church was always a local and visible assembly. In 1922 the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention copyrighted a two-volume history published by Broadman Press, and written by Dr. John T. Christian, called *A History of the Baptists*. At that time Dr. Christian was Professor of Christian History in the Baptist Bible Institute of New Orleans, La.

This was for many years the Baptist History text-book in the seminaries and Bible institutes of the Southern Baptist Convention. Most Southern Baptist preachers learned much of what they knew about Baptist history from these two volumes. In Volume 1 of this history, page 14, Dr. Christian says,

“The church, in the Scriptural sense, is always an independent, local organization.”

## **SBC DOES AN ABOUT FACE**

But this is no longer the official position of the Southern Baptist Convention. What their leaders once called heresy is now the *official position* of the Convention. What they once taught in their schools their leaders now denounce. The SBC has indeed done a 180-degree turn. Let's look at the record.

The first official embracing of the universal church position appears to have been in the Convention's annual meeting in Oklahoma City, May 17-21, 1939. There can be no mistaking the statement that appears on page 115 of the minutes of that meeting under the heading, “Free Churches Within a Free State.” The exact quote states:

“We hold that the church of Christ, which in the Bible is called ‘the body of Christ,’ is not to be identified with any denomination or church that seeks to exercise ecclesiastical authority, but *includes all the* regenerated whoever and wherever they are, as these are led by the Holy Spirit. *This church is a body without formal organization*, and therefore cannot enter into contractual relations on any basis with the state.”

Though subtly encased in a statement about church and state, there can be no mistaking the language — the SBC had gone on record as believing in the concept of the universal church born of the Reformation. Once the step had been taken the indoctrination process was not long in following.

At the annual meeting of the Convention in St. Louis in 1954, a charter was approved for the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. — their oldest. Under the Abstract Principles of the Charter there is an item XIV, which defines the church. The first sentence reads, “The Lord Jesus is head of the Church, *which is composed of all his true disciples.*” Thus the universal church is approved as the official definition for their oldest seminary — a theory which is obviously now to be taught to all the students enrolling in the institution. It is unthinkable that the rest of their seminaries will not follow the standard set by “Old Southern.”

The subtlety of this indoctrination process is seen in such publications as the *Review and Expositor*, the official quarterly publication of the faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. In an article by Hugh Wamble, under the caption, “The Beginning of Associationalism Among English Baptists,” he introduces the 17th century English Baptists as

“possessing a doctrine of the church which sees the local congregation as the visible expression of the true spiritual church” (Oct., 1957, Vol. LIV, No. 4, p. 544).

As he proceeds with the article he adds,

“Baptists held that local churches are related to the universal church as integral parts of the whole. However, they refused to admit that the universal church is restricted to the membership of local churches; the universal church is more than the sum total of particular churches” (Ibid).

He continues this kind of “historical” writing, finally naming the Particular Baptists specifically (Ibid, pp. 545, 546). Note that the writer identifies this concept of English Baptists with the Reformation period. As we have seen, this is when it originated. Other reasons for this attempt at close identification with the Reformation will be discussed in a later chapter.

As late as October 2, 1980, as reported on the front page of *The Alabama Baptist*, the SBC Executive Committee passed an action which

“assured the convention that the professional staff of the Executive Committee over the years has accepted the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted in 1963.”

Thus the ruling force behind the program of the Southern Baptist Convention emphasizes that they have not departed from the 1963 revision, if there has ever been any doubt about it.

When the official *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* was published a year later (1958) the editors were very careful to weave the universal church concept into the long article under the listing of “CHURCH.” For example, this statement on page 273 in Vol. I,

“In the New Testament the church (ecclesia) appears as the result of God’s redemptive action, as the object of his continuing interest, and as the organ of his saving purpose for the world. It is constituted through Christ; i.e., as the new and true Israel.”

The idea of a universal church is not only cleverly woven into this statement, but also the amillennial concept that the church becomes the Israel of the New

Testament, in which the unfulfilled prophecies concerning the nation of Israel are being fulfilled. This seems to be the new prevailing millennial theology among Southern Baptists — which is very little better in the light of the Scriptures than their older post-millennial theology which once prevailed.

But to continue with this definition of the church in their official encyclopedia, note this added statement:

“Those who by faith saw that this was so, who by grace were incorporated into his divine life, and upon whom the Spirit came in regenerating power, were made to be the church.”

This same concept appears in at least two other places in the article on page 274.

Thus, ever so subtly, yet ever so surely, the universal church doctrine introduced in Oklahoma City in 1939 is becoming the official definition of the church in their major publications. It is certainly a far cry from the chapter they published two decades earlier under the caption of “The Universal Church Heresy.” A new generation is taking over who care not to know the “Josephs” of earlier times.

By 1962 the Convention, meeting in San Francisco, apparently decided the time was ripe to now make the universal church an official doctrine of the SBC. So, the stage was set. The following motion was passed to get the show on the road:

“Since the report of the Committee on Statement of Baptist Faith and Message was adopted in 1925, there have been various statements from time to time which have been made, but no overall statement which might be helpful at this time as suggested in Section 2 of that report, or introductory statement which might be used as an interpretation of the 1925 Statement.”

It was then recommended that the Convention president call a meeting of the presidents of the state conventions to prepare a new statement to be presented at the meeting in Kansas City the following year. I would say that the statement these men prepared would quite well represent SBC officialdom.

When this report of the Committee on Baptist Faith and Message was presented in 1963, one of the major changes was the closing paragraph of Article VI,

“The Church.” It reads: “The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ which includes all of *the redeemed* of all *the* ages.”

Thus the doctrine of the universal church, born in the 16th century Reformation, became the official doctrine of the Southern Baptist Convention. Of course the minutes of the 1962 and 1963 sessions record this information. The statement on the universal church appears on page 275 of the 1963 annual. But, to be sure this action got into the hands of as many of their people as possible, the Sunday School board of the SBC published these whole proceedings in a little booklet as a tract in 1963, called “The Baptist Faith and Message.”

A book copyrighted in the next year (1964) under the caption, *Baptists North and South*, is very significant. It was written by Samuel S. Hill, Jr., and Robert G. Torbet, and published by Judson Press. Though it carries a disclaimer as speaking officially for either convention, both authors stand too high in the ranks of their respective conventions for their writings to be ignored. At the time of the writing Dr. Hill was chairman of the department of religion at the University of North Carolina, and Dr. Torbet was dean of church history at Central Baptist Theological Seminary.

The book was obviously an effort at bringing the ultra-modernistic American Baptist Convention closer to the more conservative Southern Baptist Convention, since the subtitle of the book is, “What Keeps Baptists Apart?” It is also obvious that the authors agree on the contents of the book, so let’s take a look at what they say about the church.

The authors struggle to establish the universal church as the “historic” concept in Baptist life, and blame the New Hampshire Confession of Faith and the Landmark Baptist movement for changing all this. Documentation of this is clearly set forth in the same chapter of the book just quoted (p. 20):

“A spirit of interdenominational goodwill and cooperation prevailed in the early part of the nineteenth century, giving expression to a basic faith in the *reality of the church universal of which all denominations were a part*. During the middle years of the nineteenth century, however, the previous acceptance of this *ecumenical ideal* by Baptists began to fade away as many ‘stressed the local congregation to the near exclusion of the larger *church*.’ An indication of this changing viewpoint was the publication of the new New Hampshire Confession of Faith in 1833, which omitted for the first time in the history of Baptists *any reference to the universal church*. It defined the church solely in local terms. This confession rather quickly won wide acceptance and became a formative influence in Baptist thought.”

Three things should be noted here.

- 1.** It is obvious from this quotation that the ideal for both conventions, north and south, is an “interdenominational, ecumenical” church.
- 2.** When the expression, “for the first time in the history of Baptists,” is used, it should be remembered that Southern (and Northern) Baptists only trace their history back to the 16th century Reformation. This will be discussed at length later.
- 3.** While these writers deplore the church concept in the New Hampshire Confession, it was the Confession upon which the SBC was formed, and it was almost one hundred years before anyone dared introduce the universal church concept for the Convention’s official record.

The writers lament the rise of “Landmarkism,” and the fact that “there was no doubt in the minds of Land-mark Baptists that this early Christian church (in Jerusalem) was a Baptist church,” and that they also believed the Jerusalem church was “purely local” (p. 21).

## SUMMARY

From the facts presented here this picture comes clearly into focus.

**One**, the universal, invisible church idea originated in the 16th century Reformation, and is characteristic of all Protestantism.

**Two**, in the earlier years of the Southern Baptist Convention their leaders considered the doctrine to be heresy, and declared this point of view very strongly in their writings.

**Three**, the Southern Baptist Convention has done a complete about face, and now has declared the universal church to be the Convention’s official position — what the SBC once called heresy they now teach in their seminaries. They have indeed reversed their course. Even their outstanding conservative former president, Dr. W. A. Criswell, states in his notes on ~~4123~~ Ephesians 5:23 in *The Criswell Study Bible*, “The church is made up of all those who have been regenerated by faith in the atoning work of Christ.” It is tragic indeed when such great stalwarts on other fundamentals of the Baptist heritage abandon this central doctrine formerly held by their own forerunners of the faith.

### 3 — INFALLIBILITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

The Southern Baptist Convention was born in the “Bible Belt,” and as Harold Lindsell says in his book, *The Battle For the Bible*,

“probably no other geographical region in the United States has had a better record for belief in the infallibility of the Word of God. And no group has done any better in this regard than the Southern Baptists” (p. 89).

There can certainly be no doubt that this was the original position of the SBC. Such early stalwarts as John A. Broadus, who helped plan the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and became a member of its original faculty, a position he held for 36 years (*So. Bapt. Ency.* Vol. I, p. 195), preached with great power because they never questioned the full validity of the Bible. In fact Dr. Broadus published his own translation of the Bible. Contemporaries and successors to this man for many years preached the full authority of the Scriptures, never questioning their validity.

Among these was B. H. Carroll, standing out like a towering peak on the Southern Baptist horizon. He was a successful pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waco, Texas, for almost 30 years. He served as secretary for the Texas Baptist Education Commission, and taught theology and Bible in Baylor University, and in fact organized the Baylor Theological Seminary. He also led in the founding of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and served as its president until his death (*Ibid*, p. 233). Surely this man could speak with some authority as to what Southern Baptists believed about the Bible as they crossed their half century mark during his lifetime.

Fortunately Thomas Nelson Publishers has recently reprinted his book, *Inspiration of the Bible*, originally published in 1930. In it he speaks out very clearly on the subject. He introduces his first chapter with this quotation:

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true centre of the Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

Adding, “This is the first Article of Faith of a great many Baptist churches in our Southland.” Then he adds his definition of inspiration:

“The theological meaning is to breathe on or to breathe into for the purpose of conveying the Holy Spirit, *in order that those inspired may speak or write what God would have spoken or written. That is inspiration*” (p. 15).

Again,

“If the book is God-inspired, then it is God’s book and not man’s book” (p. 16).

Of the Old Testament he said,

“The advantage is that these Old Testament books were entrusted to them (the Jews), not as man’s books, but as containing *the speeches of God, as well as the works of God*” (p. 17).

Dr. George W. Truett, long time pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, and intimate friend of Dr. Carroll, places his endorsement upon this position in an introduction to his book with these words,

“I am more indebted to him for my reverence for God’s Holy Word than I am to any other human being.”

Dr. W. A. Criswell also adds his endorsement with these words,

“No monograph of Dr. Carroll is any more crucial than this one ... our gratitude is expressed ... for reprinting this Baptist classic at such a crucial time in our history.”

Dr. Criswell’s statements not only approve Dr. Carroll’s strong emphasis on inspiration, but strongly imply that this historic position is now endangered within the Convention — a fact we will fully document.

In fact, the challenge to the infallibility of the Scriptures is presently so great in the SBC that Dr. Criswell felt compelled to publish his personal view in a book captioned, *Why I Preach That the Bible is Literally True*, published by Broadman Press in 1969. In the Foreword to the book Dr. Criswell states that its purpose is to “encourage other ministers to preach the Bible as the literal, inspired, God-breathed truth of heaven.”

As evidences of the inspiration of the Scriptures Dr. Criswell makes the following statements, among many others in the book:

“The most convincing of all the proofs and arguments for the verbal inspiration of the Bible is the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ regarded it and treated it as such” (p. 25);

“The Bible is the Word of God, not merely contains it” (p. 33);

“One cogent reason (that the Bible is literally true) can be found in the literal fulfillment of its prophecies” (p. 40);

“The testimony of archaeology to the Scriptures is another sure and certain reason” (p. 49).

The book leaves no doubt whatever that this former president of the Convention believes that the Bible is purely and completely the inspired Word of God without error of any kind. Concerned about the drift in the denomination’s seminaries on this issue he felt compelled, not only to write the book, but to set up the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas. Dr. Paige Patterson, president of the Center, has been one of the leading forces in recent years in calling attention to the departure of Convention leadership from a firm stand on the in-fallibility of the Scriptures. Dr. Criswell’s concern for this danger is also seen in the Foreword to the Criswell Study Bible published in 1979.

### **TERMITES OF DOUBT**

The termites of doubt as to the inspiration of the Scriptures began eating at the SBC foundation early and they have continued until the very foundation of validity is now endangered. Again, where the leaders were once positive, today’s leadership is wavering — or has done a 180-degree turn.

The first problem in the Convention concerning inspiration of which I find any record appears to involve a Crawford Howell Toy, first appointed by the Foreign Mission Board as missionary to Japan. He later studied in Germany and returned to teach Old Testament in Southern Seminary. It is well known that many of the questions raised about divine inspiration originated in writings coming out of Germany, and Toy’s studies there seem to have been influenced by them. In a paper setting forth his view of the Bible, prepared in 1879, he indicated it was not essential for the Bible to be absolutely accurate on matters such as “geography, or astronomy, or similar matters.” He says of Paul’s writings in ~~4014~~ 1 Corinthians 1:14, 15,

“Paul first says he had baptized nobody at Corinth but Crispus and Gaius; then, a while later, remembering himself, adds that he had baptized also the household of Stephanas; and finally coming to doubt his memory, declares that he doesn’t know whether he had baptized any other person.”

Obviously his paper was rejected by the Board of Trustees and his resignation was accepted (*A Baptist Source Book*, pp. 168, 169). In those days such views were not to be tolerated in the seminaries of the SBC. But things began to change.

## DANGER AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Even as Southern Baptists turned the corner into the 20th century, Dr. B.H. Carroll, who spoke out so positively in his classroom and elsewhere for the full inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, also found it necessary to speak out just as forcefully in a warning against those who were even then daring to raise questions about the validity of the Bible. That warning is also recorded in a chapter of his recently reprinted *Inspiration of the Bible*.

He declares,

“Within the memory of old men now living, the question of the inspiration of the Scriptures, which had been settled eighteen hundred years, has been re-opened and the agitation on the subject has surpassed anything in the history of religion. ...

“*There is not a church in the United States* but has members in whose mind the question of inspiration of the Scriptures has been raised. For the first time in the history of the discussion *the attack comes from the inside*. ... This time it comes from the pulpit, the religious commentary and the professors in Christian schools” (p. 28).

Dr. Carroll goes on to point out that the agitation is done in the name of

“the progress of modern science,” and adds pointedly, “Not a word of it is true ... science has nothing in the world to do with such a question ... science can have nothing to say about the ultimate origin and destiny of things and beings. It cannot sit as a judge or as a jury upon questions of the supernatural. It can only discuss the natural, not the supernatural” (pp. 28, 29).

Then he adds that the real disturber is “speculative philosophy.” And so the record stands. Will Southern Baptists denounce their most outstanding leader and scholar of the past and give him the lie — they still quote him in their classrooms — or will they frankly acknowledge that even in his day there were those among them who, in the name of “higher criticism,” were casting doubt upon the infallibility of the Scriptures?

Though Dr. Carroll forcefully dealt with the issue as a founder of two of their seminaries, the termites kept boring at the foundation of the Scriptures from within. The issue waxed warm again in 1961-62 over a book written by Ralph Elliott, called *The Message of Genesis*. At the time Elliott was a professor at Mid-Western Baptist Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

According to a statement by James L. Sullivan, executive secretary-treasurer of the Sunday School Board (SBC), in *Facts and Trends*, this book was

approved by three groups of individuals, the BOOK COMMITTEE and the ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF of the SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD before it was published. In spite of the uproar the book created, the 54-man Sunday School Board at its January 29-31, 1962, meeting, again approved it and agreed to continue its publication. This decision was dropped only after a compromising reprimand by the Convention in San Francisco the following May, and Professor Elliott was dropped from the seminary staff.

What did the book advocate? In summary the book denied that Moses wrote Genesis; denied that Genesis is historically correct; said the ages of men in Genesis were exaggerated and that Melchizedek was a priest of Baal. In brief it charged that Genesis is a myth.

Thirty-seven Southern Baptist college professors issued a statement condemning the firing of Dr. Elliott because of his stand, calling the charges against him “irresponsible attacks.” The seminary’s trustees who dismissed him cleared the book of heresy and affirmed him as a Christian scholar. It is quite evident therefore that Elliott was not dismissed because of his reflection upon the inspiration of the Scriptures or because there is not a strong force inside the Convention that agrees with him — he was simply made a “scapegoat.”

After his dismissal Professor Elliott is reported in the Louisville [Kentucky] Times as telling a group at the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville that *seventy-five percent* of the professors in Southern Baptist Seminaries teach along the same lines he advocated. He added that

“if 50 per cent of the professors who teach from the same perspectives would say so publicly, we would not be in the present crisis.”

It is obvious no attempt was made to purge any further these termites boring from within. They had made a show of orthodoxy by firing one of their number who had made the mistake of putting into print what he taught and thus they quieted the clamor of true Bible believers among them — at least for awhile.

## **OTHER SBC LEADERS SPEAK OUT**

Harold Lindsell has served as vice-president and professor of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, professor at Columbia Bible College in South Carolina, and also at Northern Baptist Seminary, Chicago, and at the time he wrote *The Battle For The Bible*, copyrighted by Zondervan Publishing House in 1976, was editor of *Christianity Today*. He is also the editor of the *Harper Study Bible*.

A man of this background is hardly to be taken lightly, and would certainly not be guilty of careless journalism, especially where Southern Baptists are concerned since he is a member of a cooperating SBC church himself.

In his book, *The Battle For The Bible*, he quotes Dr. Robert S. Alley, a graduate of Southern Baptist Seminary and an “active member of the Southern Baptist Convention,” as writing,

“While some persons may continue to hold that ‘the historic Christian belief in Biblical infallibility and inerrancy is the only valid starting point and framework for a theology of revelation,’ such contentions should be heard with a smile and incorporated in the bylaws of the Flat Earth Society.”

He further quotes the professor as saying,

“Many who promote the infallibility of the Bible are simply dishonest.”

In the same book Dr. Lindsell quotes Dr. Howard P. Calson as writing,

“Some people still argue that the Bible is a perfect authority even in scientific matters. But if that were so, how does it happen that the conception of the earth’s shape as found in Scripture has been shown not to be a literal fact? The earth as the Bible writers speak of it is flat.”

Such dishonesty and theology is hardly what you would expect from the editorial secretary of the Sunday School Board, especially when writing for *Outreach*, an official publication of the SBC (Feb., 1971, p. 4).

In this work so thoroughly documented by Dr. Lind-sell he lists the writings of other such men as Dr. William E. Hull, at the time dean of the School of Theology, Southern Seminary, Louisville, Jack U. Harswell, editor of the *Christian Index*, the SBC state paper of Georgia, and others — all within the official ranks of the Southern Baptist Convention.

## **A HORNETS’ NEST**

As you might expect, Dr. Lindsell stirred up a real hornets’ nest with his book. The interesting thing was that SBC officialdom did not crack down on these men in their midst, but rather lashed out at Dr. Lindsell for exposing them — so much so that he found it necessary to write the second book, *The Bible in the Balance*, copyrighted by the Zondervan Corporation, 1979.

(Incidentally, if you are interested in a more complete study of this particular issue, I would suggest you get both Dr. Lindsell’s books.)

In this second book Dr. Lindsell not only answers his critics but submits more devastating evidence that leaders in high places in the SBC are indeed knowingly departing from the clear position on infallibility written into their 1925 statement of faith.

Dr. Duke McCall, for many years president of the SBC's oldest and most prestigious seminary, in Louisville, Ky., would certainly be called a leader in Southern Baptist life. This infallibility issue seems to be a sensitive issue with him. Dr. McCall is also a master of double talk. In lashing out at Dr. Lindsell's book he is quoted as saying,

“Even a master of imaginative rhetoric must know that you cannot say there are mistakes but there are no mistakes, there are errors but there are no errors, fallible men have been infallible scholars.”

Now, it doesn't take a very smart man to see here that the good doctor doesn't believe in the infallibility of the original writers of Scripture, and that he has tried to conceal the fact in a shroud of words.

... And this matter really gets touchy with him. Dr. Lindsell says that he (Dr. McCall) got a letter from an unnamed writer asking if he believed God inspired every word of the original manuscripts; and were there any errors in these manuscripts; and did he believe Adam and Eve were the first human beings, giving birth to real sons and daughters? To which he said,

“I sometimes get mail of such vicious intention that I am tempted to borrow this famous old response: ‘Some illiterate moron has written the enclosed vicious and unwarranted letter and has signed your name. I hope you can find out who did it and stop this slanderous letter writing.’”

Whew! Those questions certainly touched an exposed nerve. This is quite an answer to such serious questions for a man who has just been catapulted to the presidency of the Baptist World Alliance.

In a tape captioned “Southern Baptists and the Bible,” recorded by Dr. McCall in 1971, he leaves the listener with the same questionable answer to the matter of Biblical infallibility with this statement:

“On this basis interpretation of the Bible seeks the revealed truth of God's *intended* message. The study assumes that *both* the *writer* and the reader *have* human limitations. These limitations produce many problems for the interpreter but they reflect the freedom with which God has endowed man as well as the dignity and the responsibility entrusted to man by God.”

Surely the president of the Southern Baptists' oldest and most prestigious seminary, speaking from a carefully prepared manuscript to make an official tape on Southern Baptists' position on the Bible, could say clearly and simply that they believe in the infallibility of the Bible — unless he does not, and chose to deliberately cloud the issue.

It seems that whenever the question of infallibility comes up the “Duke” inevitably speaks out for the seminaries — much like Peter seemed to do so often for the apostles. But there the similarity ends. When Dr. Lindsell's second book came off the press in 1979 it was too much for the SBC seminary presidents to take — they all but panicked. Six of them hurriedly called a press conference at the Dallas-Fort Worth airport to “clear the air” on the issue. Again it seems to be Dr. McCall who spoke out with his characteristic hiding of the issue in a multitude of words.

Of course the presidents all vowed, in spite of the record, that there wasn't a teacher in a Southern Baptist school who taught the Bible was fallible. But then came this “explanation,” according to news reporters, from Dr. McCall. He said that seminary professors and scholars do not use the term “inerrant” in referring to the Bible because no original manuscripts exist. He added further that scholars do not use the word “because you cannot say anyone is without error ... and the scholar does not want to be heard saying what is not true is true.” And, this scholarly spokesman adds further, “If God had wanted us to have an inerrant manuscript, He would have provided us a golden one.”

From all this evidence it is very clear that SBC seminary heads simply cannot bring themselves to say clearly and simply,

“We believe the Bible was written by men divinely inspired of God, and is truth without any mixture of error.”

## GENESIS AGAIN

The reader will recall that we discussed earlier *The Message of Genesis*, written in 1961 by Professor Ralph Elliott of the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City. It was so heretical concerning inspiration that it got him fired, though he claimed a majority of Southern Baptist professors agreed with him.

We may not have emphasized that this book calling in question the Genesis record was not only written by a Southern Baptist seminary professor, but was also published by the Convention's official Broadman Press. A motion was made at the 1962 meeting of the Convention in San Francisco, by Ralph F. Powell, to instruct the Sunday School Board to *cease* the publication of *The Message of Genesis* and “recall from all sales this book which contradicts

Baptist convictions” (*Review and Expositor*, Winter, 1979, pp. 57-59). However, the motion was defeated, thus allowing the book to remain an official publication of the SBC until another publisher printed the second edition (*Ency. So. Bapt.*, Vol. III, p. 1967).

The Broadman Press of the Convention was not to be deterred, however. In 1969 they released Volumes I and VIII of *The Broadman Bible Commentary*. Volume I so called in question the validity of the Genesis account that the Convention, meeting in Denver in 1970, by a vote of more than two to one asked the Sunday School Board to withdraw it from further distribution and rewrite it with “due consideration of the conservative viewpoint” (*Ency. So. Bapt.*, Vol. III, pp. 1620, 1968).

## CRISWELL SPEAKS OUT

At this point, Dr. W. A. Criswell, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas — the largest church in the Convention — felt compelled to speak up. His book, *Why I Preach That the Bible Is Literally True*, copyrighted by Broadman Press in 1969, and referred to earlier, is a ringing testimony for the infallibility of the Scriptures. On page 51 he states plainly that

“In recent years the book of Genesis has been considered a hopeless collection of unsubstantiated myths.”

He then declares that archaeology has amply confirmed the Genesis record. His entire book is filled with reasons for his accepting the infallibility of the Scriptures, but he states on page 25 that

“The most convincing of all the proofs and arguments for the verbal inspiration of the Bible is the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ regarded it and treated it as such.”

I am sure there are many more pastors and a host of laymen in the Southern Baptist Convention who believe the Bible to be the infallible Word of God. However, I think overwhelming evidence has been submitted to prove that the leaders of the Convention’s organizations do not firmly accept this historic Baptist distinctive. If the SBC officially rejects distinctives which identify Baptists, can they rightfully claim the name? We leave the reader to examine the evidence and make his own decision. But Landmark Missionary Baptists want no part of this apostasy.

## 4. — OTHER DOCTRINAL DEPARTURES

While these “major” issues have captured the attention of the general public, several other departures from doctrinal stands historically held by Baptists have also been taking place. For example:

### THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN CLERGY

Even the Winston’s Dictionary copyrighted back in 1954 defines “clergy” as “the whole *body of men* properly ordained as ministers in the Christian church.” But Southern Baptists have joined the rest of the Protestant world in making that definition obsolete; they are now ordaining *women* as a part of the clergy — and with less fuss than occurred in some of the Protestant denominations.

Let’s begin with the statement of a pastor whose church represents in both the Northern and Southern Conventions, Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg, pastor of Delmar Baptist Church of St. Louis. Dr. Dahlberg has said,

“We should now in the equality of Christ and the gospel place the gavel of the church in feminine hands also, in order that there may be added to the convention rostrum, the pulpit, and the highest policy-making councils ... the radiant grace and initiative of our finest church women” (*Church Women in the Scheme of Things*, p. 1).

Just how many women are Southern Baptists ordaining? In a book published by Doubleday, 1979, *The Baptists in America*, by O.K. and Marjorie Armstrong, two Southern Baptists, they state on page 296,

Southern Baptists have no exact record of the number of ordained women, but the guess is somewhere between forty-five and fifty.”

So it is hardly an isolated or concealed matter.

The official approval of the Conventions continues to be placed upon this action. In the 1979 minutes of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, page 79, this action is recorded: “The Advisory Committee on Ordination May 11 and July 25 met to consider requests for ordination.” Among those requested were

“Miss Dianne Wisemiller of Briggs Memorial Baptist Church, Washington, D.C. The Advisory Committee on Ordination recommended that ... the Briggs Memorial Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., ordain Miss Dianne Wisemiller.”

Considerable biblical evidence could be given to support the case against the ordination of women as clergy, but one simple statement from the apostle Paul takes care of the matter quite clearly:

“A bishop then must be ... the husband of one wife ... one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (~~1~~ Timothy 3:2, 4).

Even a homosexual marriage can't achieve this. So in this matter it is evident that, though not all, entirely too many Southern Baptists have chosen to ignore the plain teachings of the Bible on this issue — and it comes very close to being the Convention's official position.

## TWO NATURES OF BELIEVER

One of the basic Bible truths historically believed and taught by Baptists is what is commonly called the two natures of the child of God. In fact, this has been one teaching which distinguishes us from Protestantism, and is the foundation of another distinguishing truth: the security of the believer, often known also as the perseverance of the saints. Yet, in the *Adult Sunday School Quarterly*, published by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention for the second quarter 1962, page 36, this statement appears:

“Some people claim the body sins but the spirit does not. There is no place in Christian *truth* for such a dualism. John says that every Christian does sin (~~1~~ John 1:8, 10). Man is an entity. *The inner man is responsible for the weakness of the flesh.*”

This blatant heresy published in a SBC official unit prepared for teaching throughout their entire adult constituency, in spite of the plain statement by John that

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his *seed* remaineth in him: and he *cannot sin, because he is born of God*” (~~1~~ John 3:9).

John certainly was not writing about this outward man whom the Bible records as sinning day by day, but he was writing about the inner man who is “*born of God.*”

I am sure many Southern Baptists did not believe this heresy when it was published — but it was officially published by the SBC, and so far as I know no one even received a reprimand for it.

## EVEN THE VIRGIN BIRTH?

Yes, even the virgin birth of Jesus Christ has been called in question. I recognize that the vast majority of Southern Baptist pastors still believe Jesus Christ was the virgin-born Son of God — at least I certainly hope that holds true. But let this begin to be questioned by the instructors in their seminaries, how long will their pulpits hold out against that influence? This is exactly where the question is being raised.

For example, Dr. Dale Moody, for many years professor of theology at their most prestigious seminary in Louisville, Ky., has been quoted as stating he builds his doctrine of the “Conception of Jesus — not on His virgin birth.”

Again, Dr. Eric Rust, who has written feature articles for the *Review and Expositor* (July 1961 issue in particular), official quarterly periodical published by the faculty of Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky., is quoted by the Louisville *Courier-Journal* Aug. 14, 1961, as saying that “the Virgin Birth and Resurrection of Jesus *are* to be *classified* as myth.” Draw your own conclusions.

## A STUDY IN CONTRAST

Again we find the SBC leadership denying today doctrines and practices their leadership once embraced. The record speaks for itself.

Dr. J.B. Moody, already cited in this manuscript, served as pastor in Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas and Florida. He was also a prolific editor and author during the latter half of the 18th century (*Ency. So. Bapt.*, Vol. II, p. 923). In his book, *My Church*, reprinted by Attic Press, 1974, in discussing the characteristics of the first church, says of its members,

“They were baptized by a Baptist preacher. God had him thus named as the characteristic of his mission. ... If one knows he was baptized by a Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Mormon, Campbellite, Christian, etc., then he knows he was not baptized by a Baptist, and weighed in this balance, he is found wanting in *this very important particular*, as seen in this next characteristic ... they were Baptized By One Who Had *Authority from Heaven*. ... Those can't be churches of Christ that have the baptism of men” (pp. 55, 56).

Moody was not alone in advocating proper authority in baptism. It was standard for the writings of Southern Baptists of that early period of their history.

Dr. Lee R. Scarborough was a “pastor, evangelist, seminary president, denominational leader, and writer” around the turn of the century. He was

director of the ill-fated 75 Million Campaign in 1919; president, Southern Baptist Convention, 1939-40; and president, of Southwestern Theological Seminary, 1914-45, among many other such positions of denominational leadership in the SBC (*Ency. So. Bapt.*, Vol. II, pp. 1186, 1187).

He wrote a chapter in *Re-Thinking Baptist Doctrines*, previously cited under the caption, “An Immortal Memorial.” In it he says,

“He (Christ) gave the church baptism. He sent John the Baptist to establish it. He submitted to it. He commanded His church to observe it and to baptize every believer who obediently followed Him. *Baptism is not a free lance affair*. He did not commit it to preachers: *He committed it to His Church*. Nobody should be baptized unless beforehand he is approved by one of His churches” (p. 125).

And again, under “Baptismal Requisites:”

“A *proper administrator*. This being an ordinance committed to Christ’s churches ... who shall administer this ordinance by *the authority of the church*” (Ibid, p. 127).

Under “Pre-requisites to the Lord’s Supper,” he lists

“Membership in a New Testament church, a church matching the model church set up by Jesus Christ and outlined by the teachings in the New Testament” (Ibid, p. 129).

But Southern Baptists are rapidly turning their backs on these truths espoused by those to whom they once looked for leadership — and still honor in their own *encyclopedia*. They are ignoring the warning of the wise King Solomon: “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set” (~~1028~~ Proverbs 22:28).

The Elkhorn Association is the oldest Baptist association in Kentucky. In 1964 it was hosted by the Trinity Baptist Church in Lexington. This church stated boldly to the meeting that they had been receiving immersions other than those administered by a Baptist church over a period of the last five years, and when it was challenged their action was supported by the association — alien immersion endorsed by the oldest SBC association in Kentucky.

In the August 14, 1961, issue of the *Courier-Journal* (Louisville) Dr. Dale Moody, professor at Southern Seminary in Louisville, is charged by some Oklahoma pastors as saying,

“he favored receiving members into our churches by *alien immersion*, and that he accepted the practice of open communion.”

Quite a number of churches now hold dual membership in both the American and Southern Conventions. When Congressman Brooks Hayes was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, he held membership in a church in Washington, D.C., where at the same time the president of the American (Northern) Baptist Convention was also a member — it made quite a news story at the time.

With these churches holding dual membership, it is only natural that their members be received without question into other Southern Baptist churches. This has caused many Southern Baptist churches to now receive any “Baptist” into their membership without questioning his baptism, as long as he has been immersed, and this involves them directly in alien immersion and open communion, because this has been the practice of Northern Baptists for decades (*Baptists North and South*, p. 95). It is also logical with the official universal church position taken by the SBC — you can’t consistently say that the church is composed of all true believers and then refuse their baptism.

Private communion was recently practiced by an Alabama pastor who went to the home of one of his members and took the Lord’s Supper — an action which was condoned and recommended for others by the editor of the state paper (Editorial, *Alabama Baptist*, Aug. 30, 1979).

So, the church ordinances once so clearly stated and carefully practiced by SBC leaders are today being treated in a much more careless manner.

## 5. — ALLIANCES

The Northern Baptist Convention has allied itself freely with other denominations and organizations from its beginning.

“In 1908, one year after the Northern Baptist Convention was formed, it became a founding member of the Federal Council of Churches in America, an organization that brought together in numerous activities several major denominations” (*The Baptists in America*, p. 416).

In 1950 the Northern Convention became the American Baptist Convention, and the Federal Council became the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America — but their relationship with each other has continued.

Southern Baptists have not been so bold in their alliances, though oft invited. Theirs has been characterized more by the adage, “Birds of a feather flock together.”

This is most clearly seen in their affiliation with the Baptist World Alliance.

“The Southern Baptist Convention has had close relations with the Baptist World Alliance from that organization’s beginning. ... The idea of the Baptist World Alliance originated with the Southerners. The Convention fostered the proposal and has had close relations with the Alliance from the beginning. Two of the six presidents (1954) have been from the South” (*The Southern Baptist Convention 1845-1953*, pp. 268, 269).

And a third has just been elected this year (1980) — Dr. Duke McCall, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

While the Northern Baptist Convention helped to form the Federal Council of Churches, and the Southern Baptists led in the formation of the Baptist World Alliance, they both work together in this alliance. In other words, the SBC will not affiliate with the National Council of Churches, but they are freely allied with the Northern (American) Convention, who *are* in this “Baptist” alliance.

The 1980 session of the Baptist World Alliance, at which Dr. Duke McCall was elected president, welcomed Communist representatives from Russia and Czechoslovakia whose representatives checked in with the state before leaving and upon returning (*East West News Service*, August, 1980). Thus Southern Baptists find themselves entangled with alliances very foreign to Baptist history and teaching.

Another example of SBC involvement in interdenominational alliances is their strong participation in the uniform Sunday School series of lessons. As their own writers put it:

“A striking example of *Baptist leadership in interdenomination cooperation* was given in the production of uniform Sunday school lessons, starting in 1921 when Dr. John R. Sampey became chairman of the International Sunday School Lesson Committee. This was a plan on the part of *most of the major protestant* denominations to furnish an outline of study with the same subjects and Scripture passages for Bible classes” (The Baptists in America, p. 421).

“Among Southern Baptist leaders of the early twentieth century, Dr. I. J. Van Ness was an outstanding example of personal ecumenism ... he was an officer of the International Lesson Committee, the editors’ section of the *International Council of Religious Education* (later the *Division of Religious Education of the National Council of Churches*) ... the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations” (Ibid, p. 422).

In a letter from the office of *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, August, 1980, addressed to “Baptist denominational leaders,” the following statement is included:

“You may be interested in a special issue of the Journal of Ecumenical Studies — devoted entirely to ‘Baptists and Ecumenism.’ Edited jointly by W. Jerry Boney ... (soon to go to the National Council of Churches as assistant General Secretary for Faith and Order) and Glenn A. Ingleheart (who is director of the *Southern Baptist Convention’s Inter-faith Witness Department in Atlanta*).”

So, the claim that Southern Baptists do not have affiliations with Protestants and modernists, is not the lily white truth. If they do not affiliate openly with the apostate National Council of Churches, but are knowingly allied in an official and working relationship with the American Baptist Churches U.S.A. (Northern Baptist Convention) which helped get the organization on its way and has had a close affiliation with it ever since — what is the difference, and who do they think they are fooling?

Since we introduced this chapter with a “Birds of a feather” relationship, we may as well close it with the same. In the *Birmingham [Alabama] News*, August 22, 1980, a feature article by Carl Carter, News religion editor, under the caption, “Catholics, Baptists Anticipate Dialogue,” reveals that some very strange birds are keeping company. The article states,

“Catholic priests and Baptist preachers from all over Alabama will get together next week to discuss their differences. ... The dialogue, which will include about 25 Baptists and 25 Catholics by invitation only, is seen as a way of helping leaders of the two denominations build bridges that may help them work together more often than they have in the past. ... Dr. Dotson Nelson, pastor of the Mountain Brook Baptist Church, says he thinks it is time for Baptists and Catholics to get serious about learning to work together better.”

Southern Baptists, at least in Alabama, *were* apparently quite proud of this meeting of the representatives of the mother of harlots and the Baptist clergy, for on page 5 of the September 8, 1980, issue of the *Alabama Baptist*, they carried a picture of some of the Roman Catholic officials meeting with the Southern Baptist officials.

Can you imagine how the 50,000,000 Baptists, whose lives were taken by order of the Roman pontiff, would feel about such an ecumenical gathering! We thought Southern Baptists had gone the limit when some of their major congregations came under charismatic leadership, (The First Baptist Church, Fort Smith, Ark., for example) but this dialogue with those who sought to destroy us — and have no love for our teachings yet — is a very revealing kind of alliance. Where will it all end?

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## 6. — REWRITING CHURCH HISTORY

This chapter contains perhaps the most severe charge in this book. The record of history does not change. Two things, however, can happen to the recorded facts of history:

1. Men can tamper with the record and change it.
2. Men may write, or teach, new interpretations of the historical record, an action they claim is sometimes justified by new information they have discovered.

To presume to change a commonly accepted historical record is a serious matter. For this reason the information in this chapter has been carefully documented.

For centuries Baptists have claimed as one of their distinctives *that they are not Protestants*, but that their faith predates the Reformation by at least 15 centuries. Protestants originated with what is commonly referred to as the 16th Century Reformation, or at some point this side of that period.

Dr. Chester E. Tulga wrote in a booklet, *Why Baptists Are Not Protestants*,

“The Reformers must share with the Roman Catholics the responsibility for the bloody persecution and death of a great host of Anabaptists. It is true that the history of the Baptists can be traced by their bloody footprints on the sands of time; it is also true that the hands of the Reformers are stained with the blood of many of the saints of God who dared to stand by the Word of God and oppose their sinful compromises” (p. 16).

This was not a casual statement on the part of Dr. Tulga, but was made after spending some 40 years fighting modernism in the major Baptist movements in the north. During this time he spent 20 years doing research. As a result he became convinced that his Protestant baptism, which had been received by these groups, was not valid, so he submitted himself for rebaptism to a church which did not recognize Protestant baptism — he wanted to be a Baptist, not a Protestant. His research led him to write the manuscript, first printed under the caption, *Why the Baptists Did Not Cooperate With the Reformation and Refused Reformation Doctrine*. After further study the second printing, at his suggestion, was copyrighted in 1960 by the Eastern Baptist Institute, Somerset, Ky., under the present title, *Why Baptists Are Not Protestants*. It was reprinted in 1965 by the Baptist Sunday School Committee of the American Baptist Association. have given this detailed information to point out that this man’s

conclusion was reached after exhaustive research in the field of church history, and that his conclusion was reached with such deep conviction that he submitted to baptism at the hands of a Baptist church, though he was a seasoned preacher of 40 years' experience — and that he was convinced of the validity of the churches of the American Baptist Association. (I was the preacher who baptized him.)

## **HISTORICAL POSITION OF SOUTHERN BAPTISTS**

This was the interpretation of church history by outstanding Southern Baptist historians for almost 100 years after the Convention was founded.

Dr. John T. Christian was professor of Christian History in the Baptist Bible Institute, New Orleans, an SBC school, when he wrote *A History of the Baptists*, published by Broadman Press and copyrighted by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1922. Dr. Christian was “pastor, professor and historian,” and “made seven trips to Europe for postgraduate work.” He served as chairman of a group who met to consider the founding of a theological seminary at New Orleans, and finally brought the matter before the SBC in 1917. He “traveled repeatedly in Europe and the Near East for study and the collection of books.” His library consisted of 15,000 volumes. He was “a member of the Society of Christian Archaeology of Greece, the Academy of History of France, the Academy of Science, Arts and Belles Lettres of the Mediterranean, and the American Society of History” (*Ency. So. Bapt.* Vol. I, pp. 257, 258).

These credentials as an active Southern Baptist, scholar and historian speak for themselves. In the introduction to Volume I of his two-volume history of Baptists he states,

“Many examples might be introduced to show that some of these parties might not be recognized by some Baptists now-a-days. The Montanists, the Novatians, and the Donatists held diverse opinions ... perhaps absolute and unconditional uniformity is unattainable. ... The wonder, however, is not that there were variations in these diverse conditions, but that there could be any homogeneity or unity. Through all the variations, however, there has been an insistence upon some great fundamental truths. There has ever appeared the vital necessity of a regenerated life; a church pure and separate from the ungodly; believers' baptism; a simple form of church government; the right of free speech and soul liberty; and the permanent and paramount authority of the New Testament. Whatever may have been the variations ... the voice of the Baptists has rung out clear and distinct” (p. 5).

It is very obvious that, as far as Dr. Christian was concerned, Baptists certainly were not Protestants, and did not originate with the Protestant Reformation. If it was necessary for churches and pastors to agree in every particular to be Baptists then we would have few Baptists — even in our day. However, as Dr. Christian points out there are some fundamentals which always identify Baptists, and they pre-date the 16th century Reformation by many centuries.

But, even though Dr. Christian's scholarly work was used by Southern Baptists for many years, when it went out of print they refused to reprint it. *Why?* Because those recognized in their seminaries as historians *no longer agreed with it*. The leadership of the denomination had done an about face, and was now proclaiming that Baptists were Protestants coming out of the 16th century Reformation. This we will thoroughly document shortly.

Fortunately the churches of the American Baptist Association were given permission to reprint this great history, and it still remains in print. In fact, most of their schools use it as a textbook on Baptist history — but Southern Baptist “scholars” have denounced it, preferring histories with a Protestant concept.

Another outstanding Southern Baptist who spanned the turn of the century, and also made it very clear he did not consider Baptists to be Protestants, was J.M. Carroll, brother of the better known B.H. Carroll. He was “pastor, college administrator, Texas Baptist historian.” Though overshadowed by his brother,

“He served as secretary of the Texas Baptist Education Commission, statistician of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, corresponding secretary of the Sun-day School Convention of Texas, and agent of the Foreign Mission Board. Founder and first president of San Marcos Baptist Academy, Carroll was also president of Oklahoma Baptist University and Howard Payne College.” He also wrote *A History of Texas Baptists* (Ency. So. Bapt., Vol. I, p. 233.)

Obviously, measured by the Convention's own official records, this man was an outstanding representative of Southern Baptist thought in his generation. The late Clarence Walker, another Southern Baptist of Lexington, Ky., says in his introduction to *The Trail of Blood*,

“Dr. Carroll not only became a leader among Texas Baptists, but an outstanding figure of Southern Baptists, and of the world.”

Bro. Walker also states on page 2,

“This research for the truth ... enabled him (Dr. Carroll) to gather one of the greatest libraries on church history. This library was given at his death to the Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.”

What did this great historian among Southern Baptists believe about Baptists and Protestants? It takes but one look at a chart of church history he prepared which is included in his little book, *The Trail of Blood*, (copyrighted by Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., 1931) to see that he in no way connected the origin of Baptists with the Protestant Reformation. Rather, he puts the Reformers in an entirely different category, while tracing the Baptists century by century all the way back to their origin in the first century. His many historical statements in the book are always made upon this premise. Some idea of how widely this little history book has been used by Baptists can be gleaned from the fact that by 1978 1,385,000 copies had been printed. Few, if any, histories of Baptists have reached one million copies in circulation.

## **THE “PROTESTANT-BAPTIST” CONTROVERSY BEGINS**

It appears that the first open move of Southern Baptists toward the position of Protestant origins came with what history has recorded as the Whitsitt Controversy. “William Heth Whitsitt became professor of church history in Southern Seminary in 1872 and its president in 1895.” He wrote some articles on church history for a periodical and an encyclopedia.

“In 1896 those views brought a storm of protest. In 1897 he read a conciliatory statement to the Board of Trustees at Wilmington, but the attacks continued. He resigned as professor and president in 1899” (*A Baptist Source Book*, copyrighted by Broadman Press, 1966, p. 172).

In the same book, page 173, Dr. Whitsitt himself says of the controversy,

“That on the historical questions involved in the discussion I find myself out of agreement with some honored historians.”

A more complete record of this controversy is found in *Kentucky Baptist History*, by William Dudley Nowlin, published by Baptist Book Concern, 1922. This history states that in the article written by Dr. Whitsitt for Johnson’s Encyclopedia,

“he sent forth his theory that the English Baptists did not begin to baptize by immersion until 1641, when a part of the Anabaptists, as they were then called, began immersion” (p. 142).

In an extract from the article he stated,

“The earliest organized Baptist church belongs to the year 1610 or 1611 ... Ezekiel Holliman baptized Williams and the rest of his company. The ceremony was most likely performed by sprinkling; the Baptists of England had not adopted immersion” (p. 143).

Nowlin's history then records a storm of protests which arose over the article, including the *Western Recorder*, the state paper of the Kentucky Convention. He says that in the absence of the editor, in Europe at the time, "Mrs. Joe Eaton Peck," who had charge of the paper in his absence,

"took up the matter in the Recorder and most vigorously assailed Doctor Whitsitt's position, maintaining that the Baptists, under different names, had a continuous history, and a uniform practice on baptism, from the beginning of the Christian era" (p. 143).

"The controversy spread through the entire South, and even into the North, until it was finally taken up by the Southern Baptist Convention." There was an attempt on the part of Dr. Whitsitt to satisfy the seminary trustees and smooth the matter over, and it seemed to be succeeding, but

"Dr. B. H. Carroll, Texas, not only refused to accept the ... action, but started the controversy afresh."

The end result was the forced retirement of Dr. Whitsitt (Ibid, pp. 147, 150, 151).

It is obvious that Dr. Whitsitt was fired for his introduction of Protestant origins into Baptist history. It is also obvious that Southern Baptist scholars of the caliber of B. H. Carroll totally refused this concept. But the irony of it all is that the concept which got Dr. Whitsitt fired at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is now the official position of the seminary, and is being taught in the classrooms and advocated in its publications — the denomination has made another 180-degree turn. What was once historical heresy for Southern Baptists is now being taught in their schools and written into their historical records. This is not idle talk, but a fact we will now document.

## **W. MORGAN PATTERSON**

Dr. W. Morgan Patterson for a number of years taught church history in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. — the same school from which Dr. Whitsitt was dismissed for his Protestant writings. He is presently an instructor in the Golden Gate Seminary at San Francisco. He is among the more outspoken SBC historians and apparently has their full blessing — yet he now teaches and advocates in his writings the very thing for which Dr. Whitsitt was dismissed from Old Southern. It is no wonder then that he *defends* Dr. Whitsitt.

In his book, *Baptist Successionism; a Critical View*, copyrighted by Judson Press, 1969, on pages 28, 29, he states with reference to Dr. Whitsitt's book, *A Question in Baptist History*:

“In it he maintained that certain English Anabaptists had recovered the mode of immersion about 1641, and only with its resumption should they be called Baptists. Therefore, it was improper to speak of Baptists prior to the seventeenth century. ... Whitsitt was not alone in his scholarly researches. ... In America Whitsitt’s thankless task and spirit had been shared by three competent colleagues.”

Then he names Henry C. Vedder, Albert H. Newman and George Lofton, and concludes the paragraph by saying that, “Each of these three scholars fully concurred in the conclusions of Whitsitt.”

Dr. Patterson points out that Dr. John T. Christian, their former historian, strongly attacked the Whitsitt position. He concludes his defense of Whitsitt with these words:

“Although those who were opposed to Whitsitt’s view of Baptist antiquity mustered sufficient strength to pressure him into resigning, they were unable to suppress his findings and influence. In the early years of the twentieth century the *newer views* quietly and gradually gained strength. ... Specially trained historians increasingly rejected a rigidly conceived Baptist succession, thereby, contributing to its partial subversion and decline.”

Thus we have a clear and bold description of the revolution which has taken place in the ranks of Southern Baptist historians. It is not difficult to see how and why they repudiated their own history written by Dr. Christian, and why they refused to reprint it — *Southern Baptists have become Protestant historians.*

Dr. Patterson makes no attempt to conceal his Protestantism. While a professor of Church History at Southern Seminary in Louisville, he wrote an article in *The Quarterly Review*, April-June, 1964. On pages 5 and 6 he writes,

“As far as a historical written record is concerned, *Baptists arose from the Separatists in England.*”

After criticizing earlier historians he continues,

“The view of Baptist history reflected in these criticisms is known as *church succession. It is a position that can no longer be substantiated or defended* in the light of present knowledge of Baptist beginnings. It is a view of Baptist history which is held by few, if any, recognized or trained historians.”

*Recognized by whom? Trained by whom?*

But this brazen revolutionary historian isn’t through yet. He continues,

“Most scholars have concluded that *Baptists have not been Donatists, Paulicians, Waldenses, Albigenses, Anabaptists*, or a half dozen other groups often included in their genealogy. ... *It is only after 1610* that one finds an unbroken succession of what came to be known as Baptist Churches. ... *It was in the latter year (1641) that immersion as a scriptural mode of baptism was recognized among them.*”

O, these brethren are just broken out with humility! John T. Christian, B.H. Carroll, and your contemporaries — turn over in your graves. Your successors have written you off as unrecognized and untrained historians, and have joined the Protestant camp, surrendering the battle to them.

## HANDBOOK OF DENOMINATIONS

I have three or four editions of *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, edited by Frank S. Mead and published by Abingdon Press. Under the general category of “Baptists” the introductory statement is: “Baptists constitute one of the major Protestant forces in the United States.”

The American Baptist Association emphatically repudiates this identification in their section, but not the Southern Baptists — or American Baptist Churches U.S.A. They are apparently completely at ease again with the Protestant label.

## REVIEW AND EXPOSITOR

The *Review and Expositor* is “A Baptist Theological Quarterly, edited by the Faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.” As such it certainly is a mirror of leading Southern Baptist thought and teaching, and it reveals the same Protestant concept of Baptist history.

In an article by C. Howard Hopkins in the April, 1956, issue, on page 144 he says,

“As Baptists look back upon their heritage, they must not forget that they stemmed from revolutionary generations in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.”

And on page 145,

“The Baptist heritage from the sixteenth century stems from the struggles of the almost humanly leaderless common people who, in the wilderness of a Europe gasping to save its soul while holding on to all possible leeks and fleshpots of medievalism, sought a restitution of the New Testament ideal. ... When they faced Luther with fundamental questions, a new denomination was born, and before long there came to

be a Protestant scholasticism as inflexible as and probably less productive than the older medieval one,”

which he points out were referred to in the Augustana Confession as “damnant Anabaptistas.”

The Protestant concept is equally clearly seen in the opening statement of another article by the same writer in the July, 1956, issue, page 341:

“In this lecture we shall witness the making of a major American denomination, for in the nineteenth century the Baptists grew to maturity and to numerical primacy among Protestants.”

In the January, 1958, issue, in an article by William R. Estep, Jr., page 44:

“The first Anabaptist baptism of which there is any record took place on the night of January 21, 1525, when a small group of Christians who had been associated with Ulrich Zwingli in advancing the cause of the Reformation in Switzerland met in the home of Felix Manz in Zurich.”

This assertion is made in spite of the fact that every group which refused Catholic baptism since the second century had, at one time or another, *been* called Anabaptists.

On page 45 he continues:

“What the Anabaptists accomplished seems even more remarkable when one realizes that almost without exception every outstanding Anabaptist leader came directly out of the Roman Catholic Church. Many came from the ranks of its clergy.”

Well, you read it! If you find such writing difficult to comprehend, coming from an official “Baptist” publication, take another look. He totally ignores the major contribution of the Waldenses — who preceded the Reformation by several hundred years, and also made up the real Anabaptist movement.

But to cap off the official “Baptist” writings in the *Review and Expositor*, let’s look at the issue of Winter, 1980. On page 38, in an article on “Baptists and Ecumenicity with Special Reference to Baptism,” Thorwald Lorenzen writes,

“Baptists need to ask whether the same Lord who called them to a separate way does not now call them *to give unity a priority over the baptismal issue*. In any case, the refusal of fellowship to other Christians around the table where Christ is host is a *direct act of disobedience to the Lord of the Church*. There is, however, the rising awareness that in an increasingly secular age *Christian identity is more important than Baptist identity*.”

Here, not only is the concept of the modern day *Protestant* church, but that also of a universal and ecumenical church all dumped into one short paragraph.

Bear in mind that these statements have come from the pages of a periodical which is published by the *faculty* of Southern Baptists' oldest and most respected seminary. They certainly should give us a clear idea of what young Southern Baptist preachers are being taught today — and what a sizable portion of Cooperative Program funds are going to support. We believe that a large number of Southern Baptists including many of their preachers, do not believe this Protestantism — but their leaders certainly do, and they are spreading throughout the denomination as rapidly as they can.

Further evidence of this is seen in a booklet written by Lynn E. May, Jr., and published by The Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville. The booklet, under the simple caption, “Baptists,” and originally published in 1959, continued to be published at least as late as 1976, as a part of their “Baptist History and Heritage” series, and obviously represents the official position of the Convention. In the opening paragraph the author makes the statement that Baptists believe they “are in a line of spiritual succession from Jesus and the churches of the New Testament.” After this evasive statement he then declares,

“Baptist churches as they are known today cannot *be found* in every century of *Christian history*. Competent scholars have discovered Christian groups prior to the 17th century which *resembled them* in many respects. In most instances, however, these groups advocated some unacceptable doctrines and practices.”

Unacceptable to whom? In every age, including our own, there were teachings by some under the name of Baptists which have not been acceptable to all, but have they seriously violated the teachings of the New Testament, and do they represent the main stream of thought in that particular century, or were they simply fringe groups of their time?

To make the issue clear as to where the SBC stands, according to their own historical commission, the author adds on page 2, “The early 17th century in England marked the emergence into history of a people called Baptists as we know them today.” Get the emphasis — as *Southern Baptist historians* know them today, but certainly not as Southern Baptists once knew them, nor as many Baptists *now* know them.

## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOUTHERN BAPTISTS

An official record of the revolution in the historical writings of present day Baptists is found in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, Vol. I, page 626,

under the item, “Baptist Historiography.” After mentioning the writings of David Benedict, Thomas Armitage, and William Cathcart, they state arbitrarily,

“With the growing interest in Baptist history there was unfortunately not a commensurate improvement in objective research and accuracy. Some histories were characterized by excessive use of and dependence on secondary sources, inclusion of irrelevant and unverified material, and gross carelessness in the use of quoted material. An unscientific disposition was further displayed by the attempt to project partiality rather than letting the primary source material dictate the conclusions.”

The writer then cites what he calls typical examples of this kind of historian. They include G. H. Orchard, S. H. Ford and W. A. Jarrel. He follows this with the bold declaration that,

“It was not until the last quarter of the 19th century that modern techniques of historical research were scrupulously applied to the study of Baptist history. Baptist historians had been more apologetic than critical, resulting in volumes of questionable worth.”

He then lists the works of some of the men who he says brought about the revolution in Baptist history. They include George Gould, H. C. Vedder, William Heth Whittsitt, and says with them “A new era in historical competence began,” of course including his own writings. He also adds A. H. Newman and George Augustus Lofton, as well as Robert G. Torbet and W. W. Barnes. If the reader is familiar with these writers he knows they are all favorable to the Protestant Baptist concept.

To add salt to the wounds of writers who differed with them the writer states,

“Throughout the transitional period the older positions were maintained by many, of whom two were John Tyler Christian ... and D. B. Ray.”

The reader has probably determined by now that the writer who contributed this section to the encyclopedia is none other than our Dr. W. Morgan Patterson, who sided boldly with Dr. Whittsitt in the beginning of this chapter. The ego of these self-styled authoritative historians who arbitrarily set aside the writings of great Baptist historians of earlier years to establish their own Protestant concepts is difficult to comprehend. *They are rewriting the history of Baptists.*

## **BAPTISTS NORTH AND SOUTH**

A book, called *Baptists — North and South* was written by Samuel S. Hill, Southern Baptist, and Robert G. Torbet, Northern Baptist, and copyrighted by

Judson Press, 1964. It is made clear by the publishers that neither of the men speak officially for their respective denominations. However, two things seem obvious:

1. They are both respected and influential men in their conventions or the book would not have been written or published.
2. Both men obviously agree on the content of the book.

It has some interesting statements. On page 12:

“The casual observer may ask, ‘Who are these Baptists?’ The simplest answer is that *they are Protestants* who hold in common with other Christians the great doctrines of the faith as set forth in historic Christianity.”

Such an answer would have prompted the dismissal of a Southern Baptist professor not many years ago.

On page 15:

“It is important, therefore, to recognize that the Baptist movement arose out of the Protestant Reformation in England in the sixteenth century.”

That’s exactly what I’ve been charging their modern historians with advocating.

On page 16:

“He (John Smyth) disbanded his congregation and baptized himself (pouring water on his head) and as many others as followed his teaching. In all, about forty men and women joined him in organizing in 1609 what became the first Baptist Church.”

If this is one of their “trained” historians he needs some more training. I have students who could do better than that.

On page 17:

“Reflection upon these three instances of Baptist beginnings indicates that Baptists began to diverge from other Protestants at the point of the doctrine of the church.”

How could they diverge from what true Baptists were never a part of?

On page 24:

“Baptist origins are found in many areas of Protestant history, and Baptist cooperation with various branches of Protestantism through the

years has been frequent and significant. ... More specifically ... Baptists belong to the Puritan movement within the English Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”

That’s strange! As I remember history, it was the Puritans who kicked Roger Williams out of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and he finally found a friend in the person of John Clarke, a Baptist in Rhode Island.

If the fact hasn’t been documented by now that present day revolutionary Baptist historians are writing Baptists out of their historical succession and into the Protestant camp, then nothing in history can be documented. This brings up another revolution among “trained” Southern Baptist historians.

## CHURCH SUCCESSION

The historical concept of Baptists has been that our Lord began His church while He was here upon the earth, and that, according to His promise in ~~<orig>~~Matthew 16:18, He has seen that the gates of hell have not prevailed against it in any period of history since then. If He has not kept that promise faithfully it is either because He *could not* do so, or did not *choose* to do so. He could not be God and not be *able* to preserve His church, neither could He be God and fail *His* promise. We therefore believe, according to the promise of the Scripture and the record of history, that our Lord has had churches on this earth in every age of history which have sought earnestly to follow the pattern set down in the New Testament. They have not been perfect. Neither was the original perfect — it had its Judas. Nor are there any perfect ones around today, but in every age there have been those who earnestly tried — this is Baptist church succession.

It is a position once held by leading Southern Baptists. In Dr. J. B. Moody’s *My Church*, reprinted by Attic Press, Greenwood, S.C., 1974, page 60, after laying down the marks of a Baptist church from the Scriptures, Dr. Moody states,

“Such churches were to continue *and* have continued till now,” adding, “We claim to belong, not only to a church like the one at Jerusalem, but to one, the like of which has existed in all the centuries since ... if Christ has not kept the gates of Hades from prevailing against His church, it was because He could not or would not. If He could not, His power failed; and if He would not, His promise failed; and in either case Christ is a failure, and there is no hope of the salvation of any man.”

Dr. Moody was an outstanding pastor and editor among Southern Baptists (*Ency. So. Bapt.*, Vol. II, pp. 922, 923).

Dr. M. P. Hunt was also an outstanding man among Southern Baptists, whose pedigree may be summed up in this quote from *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, Vol. I, page 661, where he is introduced as “Minister, organizer, hospital founder.”

In a chapter in *Re-Thinking Baptist Doctrines*, introduced earlier in this study, he quotes freely from such historians as J. M. Cramp, who said,

“When Luther blew the trumpet of religious freedom, the Baptists came out of their hiding places to share in the general gladness and take part in the conflict. For years they lay in concealment worshipping God by stealth.”

And Mosheim, who said,

“Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all countries of Europe, persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of the Dutch Baptists.”

And Zwingli, who said,

“They (Baptists) have caused a great disturbance for 1,300 years.”

And from a report to the king of Holland by Dr. Demont and Dr. Ypeig, which stated,

“The Baptists may be considered the only Christian community which has stood since the days of Christ and which has preserved the doctrines pure through the ages” (pp. 106, 107).

Dr. J. B. Cranfill was another outstanding Southern Baptist. His status is summarized in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, Vol. I, page 328, with this quote: “Editor, author and compiler of various religious books, Texas Baptist leader.”

In writing on the church he states,

“Therefore there is no point this side the New Testament at which the historian has been able to place his finger and say, ‘Here is where the first Baptist church known to history was organized’” (Ibid, p. 139).

Dr. R. K. Maiden, in his chapter on the “‘Universal Church’ Heresy,” in this same work, from which we quoted earlier, lists as one of the topic headings in the chapter: “*Baptists Are Not ‘Protestants!’*” He introduces the section by saying,

“When I use here the terms ‘Protestantism,’ I do not include Baptists, who should never be classified as Protestants. Such classification does

violence to the facts of history. Baptists were bravely protesting against the doctrines and practices of Rome long before there was any Protestantism” (pp. 157, 158).

Dr. John T. Christian, already identified in this manuscript as a former outstanding Southern Baptist historian, in Vol. I, page 21 of his *History of Baptists*, states,

“The author believes that in every age since Jesus and the apostles, there have been companies of believers, churches, who have substantially held to the principles of the New Testament as now proclaimed by the Baptists.”

Dr. J. M. Carroll, already introduced as a great SBC historian, delivered a series of lectures which were later published as a little book entitled *The Trail of Blood*, a book which has been literally circulated by hundreds of thousands. The content of the entire book is proof of the succession of the true church from Christ and the apostles to the present time in spite of a persistent trail of martyr’s blood. It is filled with such statements as:

“‘The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch’ (~~41126~~ Acts 11:26). This occurred about A.D. 43. Either the pagans or Jews gave them that name in derision. All the other names in that column were given in the same manner — Montanists, Novationists, Donatists, Paulicians, Albigenses, Waldenses, etc., and Ana-Baptists.”

Dr. Carroll even prepared an extensive chart demonstrating this historical succession.

## **SBC’S ABOUT-FACE**

These were the SBC’s great men of yesteryear — *but not today*. Today’s Southern Baptist historians — “recognized” and “trained” historians — are writing church succession *out* of the history books. This is a harsh charge, but we shall proceed in our documentation.

## **BAPTISTS NORTH AND SOUTH**

*Baptists North and South* has also been introduced previously. On page 14 we read,

“For Baptists, this experience has not been without misgivings and some painful apprehension. Some have actually remained aloof from the process of revolution, preferring to cherish a view that theirs is the true church and in need of no self-evaluation. These have claimed to be

in the succession of a long line of local churches which have reproduced the marks of the early Christian church in Jerusalem.”

And so the present day historian begins his effort to make the church succession historian look like a man with a closed mind.

But the story continues on page 15:

“It is important, therefore, to recognize that the Baptist movement arose out of the Protestant Reformation in England in the sixteenth century.”

*This* is the target of the modern day Baptist historians. They want to sever themselves from the fifty million martyrs who paid for the preservation of the faith with their *own blood*.

## REVIEW AND EXPOSITOR

The official stand of the *Review and Expositor*, edited by the faculty of the oldest seminary in the Southern Baptist Convention, has already been established. Any statement from its pages should certainly reflect the trend of SBC thinking.

We don't have to look far to find that “Old Southern” has also joined the Baptist history revolution. In the July, 1957, issue, in an article under the caption, “Inter-Relations of Seventeenth Century English Baptists,” Hugh Wamble says,

“Baptists have not existed denominationally throughout the centuries; neither do they possess church succession back to the apostles. Moreover, *they are not related* by direct contact with all the dissenting sectaries through the centuries.”

That shouldn't leave any doubt in your mind. But if you think that is an isolated opinion, then read this footnote about it:

“This view was *practically unknown until the mid-nineteenth century*, but it has become *commonplace among Southern Baptists*.”

Well — they said it. Then add this statement:

“Baptists emerged out of the religious revolution which began in England in the mid-sixteenth century” (pp. 407, 408).

And apparently the revolution which started the rewriting of Baptist history began in the SBC's oldest seminary.

## PATTERSON AGAIN

Dr. W. Morgan Patterson and his strong Protestant views have already been introduced in this study, but in the field of church succession he is too outspoken to be ignored. His strong allergy toward effort to connect Baptists with any of the groups prior to the Reformation has been pointed out, along with the fact that he has held prestigious positions in the SBC's seminaries — especially in the field of church history.

In 1969, while he was associate professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Judson Press published and copyrighted a book he wrote, designed to “expose” the fallacy of all the historians who ever wrote who advocated Baptist succession. It was openly titled, *Baptist Succession: A Critical View*. Though he frankly acknowledges in his Foreword that “The view of Baptist history examined here is still widely held,” and “is probably the prevailing one among Baptists in the South,” though “certainly not restricted to that region,” he proceeds to pour out the entire contents of the book in an effort to discredit it. As he states it himself in the conclusion of his Foreword, the purpose of the book is to show “the rise, the problems, and the short comings of Baptist successionism.”

In an effort to be “kind” to pro-successionist historians, while at the same time discrediting them in his Foreword, he says,

“For the most part, Baptist historians have been preachers and pastors first of all, and historians second. They have thus usually lacked the special training and necessary leisure to give their efforts thoroughness and perspective.”

Of course Dr. Patterson, evidently, has had sufficient leisure to build a case in an effort to destroy their writings.

In the beginning of this book he shows very clearly that his whole case rests upon a fallacious interpretation of a clear Scripture when he says of ~~<orig>~~ Matthew 16:18,

“In this matter they allowed a precarious interpretation of the verse to influence the resolution of a strictly historical problem. The term ‘church’ in this verse was understood by them to be a reference to the local body of believers.”

Of course we have already thoroughly documented the fact that this was also the original concept of the church held by Southern Baptists.

While Dr. Patterson's entire book is obviously written for the purpose of invalidating the concept of Baptist succession, there are a few quotes which

should be noted for the purpose of further observing his, and apparently the SBC-approved, approach to the question. The book was published in 1969, and if his concept is not accepted in their seminaries, why is he still accepted as a seminary instructor? So far as I know he has never even been officially called in question.

The author very frankly acknowledges that

“The theory of unbroken succession of Baptists” is that “which most of the Baptist historians of the nineteenth century espoused” (p. 24).

He is also correct when he states that

“The successionist view of Baptist history coincided perfectly with the Landmark ecclesiology. ... So the theory became a distinctive tenet of Landmarkism” (p. 27).

Please remember that this was also the position of Southern Baptist historians originally also — and it remains so among the churches of the American Baptist Association today.

He then points out that,

“However, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century there appeared an *increasing dissatisfaction with the existing Baptist histories*” (p. 27).

Now, friend, biblical truth does not change, and neither do the facts of history which support it. It is the men who write about them who change.

The drift of Southern Baptist writers is then clearly acknowledged as the author states,

“In the early years of the twentieth century *the newer views quietly and gradually gained strength*. ... Specially trained historians increasingly *rejected* a rigidly conceived *Baptist succession*, thereby contributing to its partial subversion and decline” (p. 29).

This was among *Southern Baptist* historians, of course.

Now, if you think you detect a bit of egotism in Dr. Patterson’s statement, wait until you read what he has to say about those who disagree with him:

“During the period in which the successionist theory emerged, the Baptist community was composed primarily of people from the lower social strata. Economically, educationally, and culturally, Baptists were very modest” (p. 66).

What his pitiful view of Baptists holding the successionist viewpoint has to do with the facts of history, except to try to make him look like an expert I fail to see. But please bear in mind that these Baptists he is casting reflection upon here were capable of founding Southern Baptist seminaries, writing their histories, and teaching the men who built some of their greatest churches.

Adding to this evidence of Southern Baptist retreat from identity with the martyrs of the “dark ages” is their own official *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* again, Vol. I, page 135. In the item on “Baptists” written by Dr. W.W. Barnes, one of their well-accepted historians, he first freely admits that

“Baptists of the 20th century believe that they are in *a spiritual* succession from Jesus and the churches and Christians of New Testament days.”

But he then joins the parade of Protestant historians when he states:

“*Competent scholars* have located some Christian groups prior to the 17th century who believed and cherished various doctrines and practices now held by Baptists. In most instances these groups, however, held to doctrines and practices that *would disqualify them for membership* in the average 20th century Baptist church or association.”

Waldenses, Albigenses, Donatists — not qualified for membership in our churches today? Yet Southern Baptists can freely work with every shade and hue of compromise among the “Baptist” groups of the Baptist World Alliance — and even have “Old Southern’s” president, Dr. Duke McCall, elected as its president at a session where atheistic Russian state representatives were welcomed as legitimate delegates. Oh, but don’t send representatives from those groups who paid with their life’s blood — 50,000,000 of them!

For the reader with an open mind we have documented one fact clearly: Southern Baptist historians of today are *Protestant* writers, who cast Baptists in the historical role of Protestantism — severing themselves from the faithful martyrs who preceded the 16th century Reformation. The blood of more than FIFTY MILLION BAPTISTS cries out against this betrayal — the re-writing of church history.

## 7. — CONCLUSION

In conclusion let us summarize what we have documented in these pages:

- 1.** I am fully aware that there are many members of Southern Baptist churches who do not believe the teachings acknowledged in writing by the “scholars” of the SBC. I am sure there are yet a number of Southern Baptist pastors who likewise do not identify with these teachings. However, we have thoroughly documented that those in key positions in the Convention do believe and teach these innovations. With the young future pastors in the seminaries being taught these errors, it can only be a matter of time until the pulpits across the land will be filled with pastors who preach these same heresies.
- 2.** The Southern Baptist Convention is officially on record as holding the universal church theory, a doctrine which originated with the Protestant Reformation, and a complete reversal of their position in earlier years.
- 3.** SBC churches are now ordaining women, a thing unheard of only a few years ago.
- 4.** Some Southern Baptists are in print as denying the two natures of man, and the virgin birth of Christ — both are fundamental Baptist doctrines.
- 5.** We have also given unqualified proof that there are teachers in SBC seminaries who do not accept the complete infallibility of the Scriptures — a major and most dangerous error.
- 6.** Southern Baptist alliances today are very compromising, and more in tune with Protestantism than the true Baptist heritage.
- 7.** Finally, we have documented thoroughly that present day SBC historians are literally re-writing their own histories of Baptists, and joining the Protestant historical parade.
- 8.** All of this makes the Southern Baptist witness far more Protestant than Baptist.
- 9.** Finally, in spite of this great move toward Protestantism, there are still many Baptists left who refuse to join the compromise.

Their theology, and especially their ecclesiology, is referred to by Southern Baptist leaders as “Landmarkism.” Perhaps the largest organized group of Baptists holding to this historic position is the American Baptist Association.

However, there are other organized groups, as well as many “independent” Baptists who also still refuse the pressure to compromise with Protestantism.

## REBELLION IN THE CAMP

As I conclude the writing of this manuscript a UPI release of October 17, 1980, indicates a real rebellion is brewing in the Southern Baptist camp. According to the news release, the lines of battle are drawn between “efforts by the conservatives to enforce a narrow theology of biblical literalism and ‘inerrancy,’ by which they mean that the Bible contains no errors of fact, history or science;” and “Moderates within the convention” who “hold the view that the Bible is the inspired word of God and is without error in all matters essential to faith and salvation” only.

According to the news release the conservatives have become so concerned about the looseness in the denomination over the matter of biblical inerrancy that they have launched a campaign to take over the Convention, including control of its seminaries. They are credited with having elected the last two Convention presidents. This is considered a revolution by the “moderates,” and they are launching a counter revolution designed to prevent further efforts by the conservatives.

This news release is supported by a story in the *Baptist Standard* (the SBC state paper of Texas), October 8, 1980, page 5, in which the leader of the movement to stop the biblical literalists issues a call for “real Southern Baptists” to be present in the 1981 convention in Los Angeles to “refocus the convention on missions instead of doctrine.”

The UPI release states that this issue could split the Convention. It is very obvious that SBC leadership fears a take over of the Convention by those who are concerned about the Convention’s doctrinal looseness, and especially its loose stand on the complete inspiration of the Scriptures. This provides further evidence that Protestant apostasy is making strong inroads into the SBC.

The battle lines appear to be drawn, and the issue is now becoming clear: *Will Southern Baptists succumb to leadership in the reformed tradition, or retain their distinctives as New Testament churches?* Or, to put it another way: is the Southern Baptist denomination going to be taken over by Protestant leadership, or retain the true Baptist heritage proclaimed by their fathers?

As for the churches of the American Baptist Association, and others who refuse to relinquish the distinctives for which millions gave their lives, we have had all of Protestantism we want. We are not a *part* of the Reformation — we were the *victims* of the Reformation, and history will attest that the

leading Reformers shed Baptist blood as freely as did the Roman Catholics, once they achieved state backing to enforce their edicts.

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