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# The Baptist Informer

LIGHT  TRUTH

Official Organ of the General Baptist Convention of North Carolina, Inc.  
Voice of 350,000 Baptists

VOLUME 91

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, AUGUST, 1969

NUMBER 8

## State S. S. And B. T. U. Session Greatest Yet

Meeting in the Sandy Grove Baptist Church, Lumberton where O'Kelly Lawson is pastor, August 5-7, the State Sunday School and Baptist Training Union Convention held a most outstanding session around the provocative theme: "Christian Education and the Challenge of Change."

To cap the three day meeting, profound addresses were delivered by Sunday School President, E. M. Butler of Wilmington and B. T. U. President, J. T. Hawkins of Durham. Both men stood tall as President Butler made a motion that was seconded by President Hawkins to support the proposed constitution of the General Baptist Convention. This motion was unanimously voted by the body.

Powerful sermons were delivered by the Reverend R. T. Gilchrist of Hamlet; Dr. Joy J. Johnson, Fairmont and the Reverend E. T. Thompson, Durham.

Addresses were ably brought by Dr. C. W. Ward, Raleigh, G. W. Dudley, Rocky Mount, and Miss Patsy Rice, Charlotte.

During the week, devotional periods were fervently conducted by C. L. Chambers, T. B. Giles, J. M. Kearns, Weddie Gabriel, W. H. McKoy and J. W. Grimes.

Instructors of the various classes were: W. B. Turner, J. C. Saunders, James Raye, Miss Darline Esters and Mrs. A. L. Bell.

Reporting was at an all time high. Seventy-four Sunday Schools reported over against 38 in 1968. Twenty-Seven B. T. U.'s reported over against 19 in 1968. Thirty-Nine Sunday School Conventions over against 20 in 1968. Eleven B. T. U. Conventions over against 5 in 1968.

The Reverend C. C. Craig, Assistant to the Executive Secretary, worked hard and long as

## Dr. Pitts Laid To Rest

Dr. Robert Mack Pitts, Sr., who for six years gave to the General Baptist State Convention some of the most glowing leadership as president in the convention's history, passed from this life on July 25 in Winston-Salem. where he served for forty years as pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church.

At the close of Dr. Pitts' colorful career as a gospel giant, in addition to his Winston-Salem pastorate, served the Cedar Grove Baptist Church in Davie County. Among the many other responsible places held by him, he was a trustee of Friendship College; Board member of the National Baptist Convention of America; First Vice President of the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention; Treasurer of the Rowan Baptist Association and Sunday School Convention.

Throngs gathered at the Shiloh Church on Wednesday, July 30 to pay their final respect. Dr. Pitts was greatly loved and respected as a great preacher, pastor and a wise Christian leader. We shall ever remember him as "Help Me Somebody" Pitts. May God's blessings of comfort and strength be upon his beloved widow and the other members of his family.

Program Coordinator. The high-type effective program was indicative of this.

### THE FINANCIAL REPORT IS AS FOLLOWS:

74 Sunday Schools reporting .....	\$1,255.25
27 B. T. U.'s reporting .....	243.00
39 S. S. Conventions reporting .....	3,156.12
11 B. T. U. Conventions reporting .....	400.00
Laymen's League reporting .....	5.00
Public Offering reporting .....	263.20
Two churches reporting .....	125.00
Baptist Informer reporting .....	22.00
One half regular fee .....	137.00

\$5,607.07

**THE BAPTIST INFORMER**  
ORGAN OF THE GENERAL BAPTIST STATE  
CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC.

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**FOUR GREAT CONVENTIONS**

Led by Executive Secretary, O. L. Sherrill, pastors and laymen will soon invade New York City for the Annual meeting of the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention. The sessions to be held September 2-5 in the Convent Avenue Baptist Church will reach another high mark for Foreign Missions. Dr. M. L. Wilson, pastor of the host church and also president of the convention will preside during the meeting and Dr. W. C. Somerville, Executive Secretary will give an account of the Convention's work.

Many of our pastors and laymen will attend the Progressive National Baptist Convention to be held in the Barcelona Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida, September 2-7. The convention is headed by Dr. W. R. Searcy of Atlanta, Georgia.

The National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc. will attract a large number of North Carolina pastors and laymen when it meets September 9-14 in Kansas City. Dr. J. H. Jackson of Chicago is the president.

The National Baptist Convention of America will meet in Jacksonville, Florida, September 9-14 under the leadership of Dr. J. S. Sams.

**SPECIAL NOTICE**

This notice comes to inform all pastors and church officials that the FISCAL YEAR of the General Baptist State Convention ENDS August 31, 1969. It is imperative that all reports reach the office of the Executive Secretary-Treasurer on or before August 31, 1969.

Baptist Headquarters  
603 S. Wilmington Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

O. L. Sherrill,  
Executive Secretary-Treasurer

**ASSOCIATIONAL NEWS**

By MRS. ROSA LEE PURVIS

The Woman's Auxiliary of the Middle Ground Association held their annual session, June 14, 1969 at Conetoe Chapel Baptist Church, Conetoe, North Carolina. T. R. Vines, pastor, Tarboro, North Carolina.

Highlights of the day's service were the President's Address. The Theme: Pure Religion.

1. A manifestation of Pure Religion is having the spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9)
2. A manifestation of Pure Religion is having the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5)
3. A manifestation of Pure Religion is bridling the tongue (James 1:27)
4. A manifestation of Pure Religion is visiting the fatherless and widows (James 11:27)
5. A manifestation of Pure Religion is to follow every good work (Timothy 5:10)

The evening message was delivered by Reverend J. H. Carraway, with a very fruitful subject: "Hold Fast".

**ACTIVITIES THAT DIRECTLY  
CONCERN GENERAL BAPTISTS**

**1 9 6 9**

- September 2-5—Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention, Convent Avenue Baptist Church, New York City
- September 2-7—Progressive National Baptist Convention, Miami, Florida
- September 9-14—National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc., Kansas City, Kansas
- September 9-14—National Baptist Convention of America, St. Petersburg, Florida
- October 27-30—General Baptist State Convention and Laymen's League, Sycamore Hill Baptist Church, Greenville

## THE BEAR CREEK HAPPENINGS

By SAMUEL BARNES

The Bear Creek Missionary Baptist Sunday School Convention met at Barnes Chapel Church June 19-20, 1969, in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

### Morning Session

The meeting was opened by Mr. E. S. Houston, president of the Convention. The Barnes Chapel Junior Choir rendered the music. The Reverend Richard Brown of Raleigh, N. C. gave the address. The theme of his message was "Youth's Place In a Competitive Society." He outlined three points — love, obedience, and sacrifice.

### Afternoon Session

Music was rendered by the Convention Choir. The guest speaker was Dr. J. Ray Butler. He was introduced by Reverend Earl L. Daniels, moderator. Dr. Butler spoke on the theme and the generation gap — emphasizing the youth's effort trying to find its place in a competitive world and he also emphasized that the old persons should teach and help them find their place.

### EVENING SESSION

Hooks Grove Junior Choir furnished the music. Rev. A. L. Morgan, pastor of said church delivered the annual sermon. He talked on the rich young ruler and six points that are vital in a person's life.

### FRIDAY MORNING

The Convention choir furnished the music for the President's address. The president led a panel discussion on the Modern Sunday School and was followed by Rev. S. O. Pouncey, Rev. E. L. Daniels, Rev. B. Kittrell, Mr. Artis, and Mr. Matthew Fields. Miss Luebert Marie Barnes is an honor graduate of North Carolina Central University at Durham as of June 1, 1969. She received her Bachelor's degree in French and was awarded a \$1,000.00 scholarship to attend Graduate School at the University of Atlanta in Georgia the following school year. She is a member of Holly Green Missionary Baptist Church in Dudley, N. C. She was presented by the Vice President who in turn presented Mr. John T. Hawkins, president of the State BTU Convention, a graduate of North Carolina College in Durham with a Bachelor of Science degree. He is a member of White Rock Baptist Church in Durham, also. He spoke on the importance of the Baptist Training Union (BTU) which trains ushers, choir members, deacons, and Sunday School leaders.

### Friday Afternoon

The convention was opened with devotion and Mrs. Julia Pate directed the memorial exercises. Afterwards, Mrs. D. P. Sutton supervised the oratorical contest which consisted of twelve contestants. Subject entertained by each contestant was centered around "Preparing Youths For God's Service." Judges were Mrs. Annie Belle Bethea who teaches in the elementary department in Kinston and who is the Worthy Matron of the Lady Love Chap-



## PASTOR RE-ASSUMES DUTY

By MRS. BLANCHE E. HOLMES

The Board of Deacons, Trustees and members of Ebenezer Baptist Church met Monday night, July 21, 1969 at 8:00 P.M. to discuss and vote upon the rescinding of a motion that was previously voted upon by its membership on June 9, 1969. The members of Ebenezer turned out overwhelmingly to support this meeting, which was called by the Pulpit Committee.

During the time of our pastor's resignation, the members of this great church experienced the loss of a dedicated leader, a counselor to all who were in need, a teacher to those who wanted spiritual knowledge and a preacher of the gospel.

The Pulpit Committee, preceded the strong emphatic feeling of its members toward Dr. J. Ray Butler, set about enthusiastically to make recommendation to the church for the reversal of its motion made June 9, 1969, pertaining to Dr. Butler's assumption as pastor of the Leadenhall Baptist Church of Baltimore, Maryland. The church after hearing these recommendations unanimously and wholeheartedly voted to accept Dr. Butler to succeed himself as pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church of Wilmington, N. C.

It is hoped by the pastor and members that through the divine innovation of God, Ebenezer will continue to move forward as it has done in the past and if each parishioner bear in mind the platform that Dr. Butler has instilled in us we shall succeed.

ter of the Eastern Star No. 6 of Goldsboro, N. C. and Miss Luebert Marie Barnes, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph J. Barnes of the Rosewood Community of Goldsboro, N. C. First place — Miss Patricia Smith; Second place — Miss Linda Canady; Third place — Miss Barbara Jean McCarter.

## ANNUAL ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT, E. M. BUTLER DELIVERED DURING THE 1969 SESSION OF THE STATE BAPTIST CHURCH SCHOOL CONVENTION HELD IN LUMBERTON, NORTH CAROLINA, AUGUST 6, 1969

### SUBJECT "BAPTISTS".

Mr. President and Messengers of the 1969 Session of the State Baptist Church School Convention of North Carolina:

The Baptist Denomination comprises of a great people, a grand people, a noble people. Great in origin, rich in history, grand in purpose, solid in doctrine, steadfast in covenant and noble in spirit. We claim these attributes in humble pride.

The origin of the Baptist church was no ordinary event. Prophecy had reached it finality, had come to an end when Malachi, last of the prophets, had finished his "Promisory Book" four hundred years before Christ was born and his vision spanned the great gulf between the Old Testament and the New Revelations. He stated that on the other side "the Sun of Righteousness would rise with healing in his wings" and looking four hundred years in advance saw John the Baptist forerunning Christ, with John His messenger calling the world to a new order with "Behold the Lamb of God".

He saw the Master Christ born in lowly estate and further described through Faith, the Master (Christ) and the Messenger (John), — the Messenger confirming the Master to humanity by baptism in the river Jordan thus establishing the first Baptist doctrine — Baptism. What Malachi saw in the vision, Matthew saw in living flesh and blood, and recording the admonition of John, "Make straight the Pathway." That was the first sentence spoken in Baptist history.

Dark was the "moral night" when the prophet saw the coming "Day Star". Only remnants of the Old Jewish Faith were left and the national life of the Hebrews was fast going forever, while free thought and outspoken manliness had already perished. During this four hundred years of moral and spiritual "blight", the Roman Empire had risen from an obscure city on seven hills to the mastery of the world including Jewish Palestine. The democratic spirit had passed away and the imperial power of Augustus Caesar made the stoutest heart tremble.

It was during this dark and dismal period of world history, with freedom destroyed, property confiscated, legal redress denied, man's only appeal being to a cruel and heathen emperor, and with all the world being vassal to the imperial might of the Roman Empire, that two unknown and unassuming men, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ came upon the scene. The time had come for a new emphatic manhood; a new revelation in Truth and Holiness was needed fresh in righteousness and firm in application.

A new age in morality was dawning to work a new character in man; with groans and strife, blood and tears tracking the horrid length of four hundred sad years consigned to the past, suddenly and without fanfare, the voice of John the Baptist was heard calling man to "prepare his way" closely followed by Jesus Christ bringing a "New Way of Life" mankind felt the old hearts revived, a new spirit came round, about and over him, a new boldness motivated him and the first chapter in Baptist History was begun.

This chapter continues through the baptism of Christ in the River Jordan, His temptation, His teaching, His miracles, His betrayal, His trial, His crucifixion, His death, His resurrection, His ascension and His promise to His followers of a guide and a comforter in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Before His death our Lord has established His church by selecting twelve, then seventy and many other disciples by teaching them His doctrines, authorizing them to preach His gospel, baptizing believers in His name, finally establishing His supper, the second great doctrine of the Baptist Church.

This church was endowed with special and plenary powers to increase its membership, extend its services and influence, govern itself without ecclesiastical authority and to establish new churches; but it was strictly forbidden by Christ to enter into any of these privileges until the advent of the Holy Spirit to be its guide, by which we Baptists unreservedly claim that our churches are guided and directed.

This Holy Spirit administers the earthly affairs of our churches, vindicating its mission which Christ had finished, sustaining its claims against all opposition and in every way taking the place of His absence. The first church in Jerusalem was not a sudden and spontaneous venture, not a complexity of rituals, and litanies and creeds; not a super government personified in the exaltation of one man or set or group of men who gives orders to a lesser official who passes them down to still lesser officials until they finally reach the body of the membership.

Other church movements may have come about by reactions to imposed social conditions, rebellion against ecclesiastical pronouncements, divorce cases, or dreams or visions, or someone just wanted to start something. Not so with the Baptist Church, this church came about as a developing process over hundreds of years, the plans for which were made in the infinite and deliberate will of almighty God, conceived and nurtured in His infinite wisdom, brought into shape and form by Jesus Christ and

in this present time guided by His Holy Spirit. Thus the unity of the Godhead was manifest in the conception, and continued operation of the Baptist Church; no, this was no ordinary movement, but a divinely planned institution, the continuation and extension of the first church in Jerusalem, and so we Baptists contend that of all organizations claiming as their missions pointing sinners to salvation, reclaiming lost souls from pitfalls of sin, and for spreading the good news and glad tidings of the gospel, the Baptist denomination presents that model which approaches nearest to the pattern set by the first church in Jerusalem.

This church as before stated organized by the apostles after which Baptists has patterned and to which they adhere with religious tenacity, may be described as the greatest religious achievement in organization and purpose that has been made since the dawn of civilization. Its influence upon religions, laws, customs, and usages of liberty loving people of the earth has been immense and is destined to penetrate every nation under the sun.

The study of the principles underlying our peculiar system of church government should attract every cultivated Baptist as he reflects and meditates upon this system which should not be treated with coldness and indifference. We Baptists are people who love old paths, yet, paradoxically paths which never grow old; we pride ourselves afore stated as belonging to a succession and diffusion of churches which had their beginning in the establishment of the first church in Jerusalem. Other ecclesiastical church movements boast of the succession of men, while Baptists believe in the sovereignty of its churches, with the high privileges of petitioning the Holy Spirit to guide them in the selection of their spiritual leadership. We believe in the succession and penance of our doctrines, without change, without modification, without amendment. What then are some of the distinguishing principles of Baptists and upon which we stand? Those which set us apart as a "Peculiar People?" One — That the inspired Word of God as given in the scriptures contains the full and supreme authority of Christ in all that relates to Christian Faith and Practice, whether in doctrine, ordinance, the ordering of a Holy life or administering church government. **These alone must be followed.** Any legislation, canon, creed, or decree springing from tradition, ecclesiastical authority or usage of antiquity not enjoyed in the scriptures, must be resisted and rejected from whatever source it may spring, either inside the local church or outside as intolerable to our faith and practice.

Baptists must look with grave concern to the extent of vehemently resisting and rejecting anyone or any movement which attempts to abuse our practices, corrupt our principles or adulterate our doctrines; for when these ungodly practices are tolerated and become common or widespread in our

churches, then the foundation stone of the Baptist denomination is gone . . . What then are some doctrines which are followed by Baptist churches as against those of the Catholic nature? (1) That the Bible, not the man nor the church, is our infallible rule of authority in religion. (2) The individual, not the priestly interpretation of the Scriptures. (3) Soul liberty in religion, not subjugation. (4) Direct approach to God by and for himself, of the individual, not through a priest. (5) Immersion for Baptism, not sprinkling nor pouring. (6) Personal religion, not religion through the acts or testimony of another. (7) Regeneration by the Holy Spirit through Faith not Baptismal remission of sins. (8) Symbolic view of the ordinances, not the sacramental view. (9) Salvation by Grace, not by Works. (10) Independence of the local church, not subjugation of the local church. (11) Equality of the ministers, not a graded ministry. (12) Congregational control, not hierarchal control. (13) Separation of church and state, not union of church and state. (14) Democracy in Religion, not Autocracy in Religion. All theological doctrines are either Baptist or Catholic. The difference in the sum total of these two great system of theology is that Baptist base their doctrines of Salvation by Grace while Catholics base theirs on Salvation by Works. The difference in the organic structure of these two movements is that Catholics are built on one "Universal Church, spawned and governed by one "Mother Church", while Baptists build upon the idea of "Churches Universal" spreading over the world, each sovereign and independent, governed by their congregations.

Baptists must defend with all their might, and cling with greatest tenacity, to the sacred principles of our denomination. That is why Baptists should be very careful as to entering into or taking part in other religious movements; for when we connect with other church movements, somewhere in the process of time, we will have to give up or ease up, or maybe surrender some of the sacred principles upon which we stand. We must believe in "unity" but not in "Union". We as Baptists must bear our fair share in promotion of human welfare, promote the common good, support social welfare, educational advancement as to its need in our communities, and other efforts toward community progress that are worthy, that is Unity; but we must not Unite, let us stay out of union, which brings us to the second great factor that distinguishes us as a "Peculiar People".

The factor that makes Baptists a "Peculiar People" is that, to them have been committed keeping the unwritten law of the churches. The most distinctive difference between Baptists and others, and the most far reaching in its effects, is the manner of establishing the laws of the church. At no time in the history of the Christian Church has there been a written code of laws, approved of God, except the Holy Bible, for use in the churches. For it is

written, "Ye shall put nothing in the word which I command you, neither shall ye take aught therefrom that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord Thy God, which I command you". When man makes laws, they become impractical, obsolete, unworkable, or useless according to changes of time, conditions, necessities of the will of the people to keep them for whom they were enacted, therefore, amendments, revisions, recording and even repealing become necessary.

Man made laws are therefore temporary, and so it is further written, "I will make a covenant with you in those days and in your minds will write it". This was not a book of discipline but, "Upon the tablets of your hearts" would these laws be written, "Under a new dispensation". Therefore Baptists do not follow laws made by man, but all resources for guidance are found in the New Testament scriptures, and so it is further written, "Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made you free, and be not again entangled in the yoke of bondage." Baptists have no creed except the Holy Bible. When a body of people accepts a creed and declare to its observance, then if God has any more new light to give, or truths to reveal to this world, he cannot do so through the body of people because they cannot go beyond the limits of their creed. Having no creed except the Holy Word, the Baptist Denomination thus becomes the only agency through which God can reveal His truths and purposes. We then are guided by the Holy Scriptures, inspired by Christ Himself, which are full, fixed, fundamental and final, they never change. The word of God is our only rule of Faith and practice. Baptists are motivated by principles, practices, ordinances, usages, customs, and traditions.

Another factor which distinguishes Baptists from others is the type of its government. The government of Baptist churches is vested in the hands of the membership — sovereign power. Matters pertaining to the operation of the church are given by authority of the membership in business meetings. Every member should attend these meetings to express himself as he may desire in consideration of the business at hand, and the vote of the majority present determines the outcome whether accepted or rejected, but however the vote goes, there should be no ill-feelings, those in the minority should fall in line with the majority thus forming unanimity of purpose. That is the Christian way and must be the Baptist way. The Baptist denomination is further distinguished from others by the privilege of members in matter relating to the spiritual and business procedures of the church. As long as a member is listed on the church roll, he cannot be denied participation in the spiritual affairs of the church; he can partake of the communion of the Lord's Supper, he can sing and pray and testify, that is his "spiritual right". But when

it comes to the business affairs of the church, if that member does not fully support the business and financial requirements of the church, if he does not contribute his "fair share" toward its financial needs then he can be silenced and denied taking any part in the business of the meeting. Members should be made to understand that there are two duties and obligations of church membership, spiritual and business and every good Baptist should and ought to be willing to cheerfully support both. That while the church enjoys self sovereignty, the individual member does not, but is subject to such rules and regulations and actions, as the church establishes for its operation. There is no such thing as a member of a Baptist Church claiming the right to do as he pleases except as he pleases to do right. The church while it may mercifully indulgent can also be a firm disciplinarian, and under some circumstances ought to be.

In the matter of church operation, the pastor is its spiritual head, the overseer the "shepherd of the flock." The religious cultivation of his church and congregation therefore, constitutes his peculiar work. Not that he is indifferent to its temporal needs and interests but their spiritual welfare is his special charge. He studies needs of the church, the attitude of the individual member, is a consoling influence in time of stress and anxiety and generally renders service of various nature which no one else can render and which members do not know about. Pastors are not furnished Baptist churches by an official of higher order for Baptists hold that they are directed by the Holy Spirit as to their pastoral locations. They therefore, should not be circumscribed in the performance of their spiritual duties by any board, or set of members or even the entire membership, otherwise spiritual guidance is nullified. For he is called to the gospel ministry to preach the gospel in all the world to every creature, therefore, he is subject to the order and will of the Holy Spirit only.

Deacons are not called by the Holy Spirit, were not instituted by Christ, but are elected to serve detailed spiritual and temporal interests of that particular church; they have no mandate outside of its realm, this they are limited in the scope of their work. However, because of their official status, and their relation to both pastor and congregation, they may find it necessary and convenient to make recommendations according to their judgment of needs for the church. Their relations to the church are as servants to the pastor as advisors and counsellors when such may be of help to the pastor, when keeping in mind that they were elected to serve and not to rule. I suggest that deacons read the first chapter of the General Epistle of James for better knowledge of their behavior. Baptist churches in the course of their historical development have had a

rugged road to travel. In the early days of their history they have been severely tried through persecutions even here in America. They are never the less, a glorious body of baptized believers with a brilliant past, a prosperous present and a promising future. Built upon Salvation by Grace as its superstructure, the Baptist denomination is based upon four positions which are basic, indispensable and non-negotiating. They are (1) The authority of the Bible, (2) The Baptism of Believers, (3) The separation of church and state, (4) The priesthood of the Believers and fellowship of the churches. Earlier in this little talk, reference has been made to our belief in the authority of the Bible, no further reference to that position will be made except to reemphasize that we go to the Bible and not to any council nor earthly head of the church for our directions and authority. We immerse believers because the New Testament teaches Baptism by immersion, that the candidates for baptism should be regenerated persons, upon their profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and that personal belief in Christ is prerequisite to baptism. We believe that the true and acceptable form of baptism is that performed by John the Baptist, Christ requested it for, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness". Baptism imparts no special grace, but is an act of obedience to a reasonable command of our Lord. It does not "Wash away sins", but is a symbol of the believers death unto sin and resurrection into the newness of life.

We believe in the separation of Church and state, that the civil authority should have our respect and loyalty, but that the state has no right to dictate laws for the church. Likewise we believe that no church nor heads of any church should direct nor control or attempt thereto, the affairs of state. One of the most precious heritages of all Americans and of free people everywhere is the right to choose for themselves and not be forced to accept any form of religion chosen for them or established by the state. There is also the important doctrine of the Priesthood of all believers. Baptists firmly believe and have taught through all their generations that only Christ is head of the church. He is the only mediator between God and man. We recognize that prayers of a righteous man availeth much; that we pray for one other as there is much power in prayer; that the individual must come to God in prayer "for himself", since he is invited by God to come boldly to a throne of Grace where he may receive mercy and pardon and help in times of need that the church is the family of God and that each member is His concern; that His children strive to be worthy members of the Household of Faith. Now while Baptists recognize the independence of the individual church, self sovereignty not withstanding that fact, the churches have close fellowship with one another, they are not without the "Tie that

binds". They meet and hold fellowship in local associations, conventions, local, state and national, where they are represented by "Messengers". In these gatherings, by mutual agreement, they plan for the support of their objectives, Missions Evangelism, Christian Education, Stewardship, etc., (they make no laws), and pass on matters for the advancement of the Christian cause. A most important document among Baptists is the Covenant. It states the object, purpose and direction of church members as to their relation to God and members of the church and Christian behavior toward each other; this covenant should be constantly read, explained and emphasized. Much attention should be given this instrument for the mutual and spiritual health of the church and denomination.

We meet today during one of the most perilous periods of mankind; this is a time of uncertainty, confusion, fear of international suspicion, racial hatred, antagonism and corruption in government. We note the rise of groups preaching the gospel of hate and fear, doctrines alien to our concept of liberty, justice and democracy upon which our state and national government are founded. We see in our local communities the break-down of moral forces and in some homes of church members the family altar for prayer supplanted by the whiskey bar; the Holy Bible supplanted by the deck of cards; weekly prayer meetings so prominent in the past to our racial culture and comfort is passe, pushed aside to make way for card and liquor parties in the name of social popularity and some Christians who once showed evidences of spiritual stamina and devotion being caught in the whirlpool of spiritual laxity and moral carelessness. We find some good and decent communities being invaded by houses of ill repute, dens for gamblers, being aided and abetted in some cases by so-called church members.

It is high time that the church rise up and throw off these barnacles of pretenders, hypocrites who are using the church to cloak their evil acts and designs of evil hearts. The church must set its sainted house in order. It must either demand full spiritual loyalty or find itself accepting these evil conditions. There must be no compromises. The church must rise up in righteous wrath and call a halt to evils so abundantly surrounding it, or find itself unable or greatly obstructed in carrying out its original purpose, the salvation of the souls of mankind. Since there is strength in organization, the church holds the key to arrest the cancerous growth of evil in our communities because of its organized strength. Without well trained and consecrated ministers as our leaders, and with the fellowship of kindred minds banded together in a holy purpose, to make this world a better place in which to live, bringing about the kingdom of this world to be the kingdom of our Lord the Christ, there is every reason why the church membership should seriously concern and array itself against forces of

evil so fast taking control of our communities and our society. In the forefront of this reform I place the Baptist Churches.

Despite the apparent breakdown of our moral and social fabric, we live in the highest intellectual period ever recorded in history. Great social and political as well as scientific discoveries have swept the world and wrought sudden and unsuspecting changes in mankind, challenging the intelligence of the Gods. Man has conquered every condition, problem and circumstance which has confronted him, except himself. Air, earth and sea have bowed to his will. Great ocean and airships bring the wealth of this world to his doorsteps; broadcasting stations and world wide communications have made this world one large neighborhood; man radios messages to the lost pilot in the jungle wilderness; sends ships across the seas without pilots, harnesses the sun's rays and splits the atom. He puts observatories atop the highest mountains and forecasts weather conditions years ahead; he treads upon the hidden carpet of the ocean floor raping the entrails of the sea of its wondrous secrets, revealing treasures hidden for centuries. He walks upon the moon and sets his sights on other planets to conquer. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" and man is making this fulness by God's Grace practical and useful to his needs and comforts and pleasure. We believe that God has willed it that way, and so, man must make them fit into the Christian purpose because in them we see the fulfillment of prophecy and truths as stated in the Holy Book, which means that we should and must more faithfully and in consecration, study and abide in His word, live in closer allegiance to Him, obey His word and pray, that we measure up to the high calling of the Christian way.

This brings us to the purpose and objective of our meeting here in convention today; this convention must encourage the development of leadership among Baptists which will win the kind of respect, bring about the kind of admiration and provide the kind of thought as will lead all mankind to an acceptance of the truth in the strength of our principles, the firmness of our doctrine, steadfastness of our Faith and simplicity of our worship. The General Baptist Convention of North Carolina, Incorporated, has become very much concerned because of the gross ignorance of so many members of the profound history, sublime principles and great achievements of our denomination. Fortunately, the General Convention, having become aware of this situation, has for the past years supported institutes for ministers, missionary church school and Baptist Training Union workers. Dr. O. L. Sherrill and Reverend C. C. Craig, Jr. has prosecuted a most aggressive campaign in setting up, directing and teaching in these institutes. This world must have a clear and unmistakable knowledge of those things

which we stand for and do, our principles, our faith, our worship as well as our organic form and accomplishments.

It is needful that we seek diligently more knowledge of our denomination so that we can readily proclaim its truths, defend its Faith, more impressively voice its teachings, because we are set apart as a "Peculiar People" commissioned by Christ himself to interpret His teachings and doctrines.

We remind you that the program of North Carolina Baptists is first — Evangelism, bringing man to God, pointing sinful humanity to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, saving the lost, placing major interest on the salvation of souls of mankind. Second — Missions, taking God to man, sending the good news and glad tidings of the gospel to places of spiritual blackout through the noble and self sacrificing work of our missionaries and expanding the work of the General Convention more aggressively throughout North Carolina. Third — Christian Education, teaching the road of God to every one through the Church School, Baptist Training Union, daily Vacation Bible Schools, home study classes and city wide, county, district and state institutes. Fourth — Training so that we build men and women into spiritual greatness, practical and useful to Christian purposes.

We must become more serious in our thinking as we move up the pathway of life; life is real and earnest and our aim in life is not what can be extracted from it but what good we put into it. One of the tragedies of religion life has its roots in the refusal of men to conform to the will of God and learn lessons He was sent His church to teach. It is only the ignorant who believes that freedom is found in self assertion, that happiness lies in one having his own way in the face of law and custom and reason and that the individual will can prevail against the will of the infinite. Any one who has learned the true lessons of life, has discovered that it is sheer madness to run wild through the many and divinely ordered laws with which life is encompassed and by which it is protected our ways must conform to the divine will and purpose of God. The church must project itself in certain realms of society in order that the spirit can have the chance to exercise itself in the affairs of men. And so, we must address ourselves to an improved knowledge of our denomination, a higher appreciation of its principles and doctrines, a closer walk with God and more intense desire to do right.

The Christian life is one of service, sacrifice, cooperation and spiritual industry. Do these and we glorify God. We stand on firm and holy ground because our principles are righteous, our doctrine is pure, our cause is just, our grip is on the Cross of Christ, our feet are planted upon the Rock of Ages, from which, we shall not be moved.