

# BIBLICAL RECORDER

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## A QUESTION FOR THE CONVENTION.

People that go to Conventions do not read "Convention Editions"—they do not have time. Besides, "Convention Editions" are mainly picture galleries of familiar faces; and the patent medicine people and society belles have made newspaper photography vulgar and offensive. So when we come to write on "A Question for the Convention," we are well aware that the Convention will not know that we have raised a question for it until it has scattered; and we are, therefore, not fostering the hope of springing a sensation upon the brethren at Charlotte. Instead, we are writing for the people that stayed at home.

And "The Question for the Convention" is, "Why did you stay?"

When we read that the Splitters over in Arkansas had more than two hundred churches represented in their General Association, we resolved to find out how many churches were represented in our Convention. The number is two hundred and twenty. We had forty-four Associations represented out of fifty-nine; and in all, there were three hundred and seventy-six messengers. Now, good reader, that is not enough. It does not indicate healthy conditions. All the Associations ought to be represented and at least half of the churches. That would give us an annual enrollment of about one thousand. And that would be worth while. It would greatly magnify the power of our Convention; and it would be more commensurate with our real proportions.

As it is, we have enough churches left over to form a terribly big Splitters' Convention. We foresee no danger; but the microbe is abroad in the land, and so is the demagogue. It does become us to enlist as many as possible of these churches.

Here again is "A Question for the Convention."

Now the Convention has but one means of communicating with these unrepresented churches. That means is in the Biblical Recorder. It is taken by many a brother whose church has no messenger at Charlotte this week. Here, good reader, is an invitation to you to see that this shall not again be said of your church. The cause needs you. The Kingdom and the King call for you. Come!

Again, of the three hundred seventy-six messengers present, one hundred and seventy were pastors—leaving two hundred and six regular church members. We are glad to have the pastors. We could not have a meeting without them. But surely we need a larger representation of laymen—larger than one in a thousand, do we not? Besides there are 600 pastors in the State and at least half of them should attend Conventions.

Again, of the churches represented there were only 113 country churches. And since we have at least 1,000 able-bodied country churches (the census gives us 1,700 visible and invisible, local and floating, and at least 1,400 are in the country) we surely ought to have representatives in our great annual meeting from more than 113—one in eight! Of course one pastor some times represents seven churches; but that is not fair to pastor or church. Every church ought to have one man in the Convention if she has to pay his way. It may be, good reader, that as you read you reflect that your church is not represented at Charlotte. Resolve that next year shall tell another story.

But how shall we draw men to the Convention—practical, strong, everyday, business men? Here is "A Question for the Convention" again. We agree that the Convention should be interesting—

should be worth while, should present men when they come with somewhat that will tie them to it.

This it does do with some. If a man is really interested in the work of uplifting the human race, he will find a place for himself in the Convention. If the program of Jesus of Nazareth for the world appeals to him, he will find himself at home there. But there is more to be said.

Missions and Education are the two chief means by which Jesus is bringing the world to God. It is no wonder, therefore that the Convention as well as all general religious bodies, has for half-a-century centred about these subjects. This is well. It now appears that they will be dominant until the end of the age. And yet we have wondered if the people are not outgrowing our habit, our annual habit, of having speeches on these subjects to the exclusion of nearly everything else. Do we not go over the same ground every year—precisely the same ground? Do we not have delivered to us the same messages? To be sure there was a time when the missionary obligation must needs be preached over and over; but is that true now? Rather will there not be 100 ministers and forty laymen at Charlotte who can make as good an address on missions in all essential respects as shall be made to them? If this is true, interest cannot always be maintained. For of this condition comes ennui—the deadly.

A Convention should give its members somewhat to do. They do not come to be pulled at for pledges; nor do they come to be exhorted in behalf of missions and education. They come rather because they are interested in missions and education. In order that they may have somewhat to do, we should not crowd real and interesting questions out with a fixed and time-worn order. You may stay in the ruts if you wish to; but the people will not—i. e., the people worth having. Men like to think, discuss, break down and build up. It is presumptuous to expect everybody to be in a receptive mood save yourself—you talk and all the rest listen.

There are some serious questions before our denomination. Why not discuss them? They may disturb the peace for a while, but are we to forever keep our heads under the cover lest we see ghosts?

There is the question of the Decline of Home Religion—how shall we prevent it? The question of the Improvement of Teaching in Sunday-Schools, how shall he bring it about? The question of National Baptist Union—Is it Desirable? The question of International Lessons or Bible Union Lessons, which is better for the Sunday-schools? The question of the Decline of our Union meetings—shall we let them die? The question of Once a Month Preaching; can we not urge our churches to move out of it? There is the question of the Quest for Pastorates; of Evangelism, etc., etc.

Are such questions out of place in a Baptist Convention? If so, amongst Baptists where is there place for them?

## DEDICATED TO THE WOMAN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.

In one of his bright and telling addresses on Christian work at the meetings of the Baptist Vineyard Association this year, Dr. O. P. Gifford dropped into poetry, which, it may well be believed, had in it more truth than poetry. This was it:

"In the church's field of battle,  
In the bivouac of life,  
You will find the average Christian  
Represented by his wife."

## HELEN H. JACKSON'S LAST POEM.

Father, I scarcely dare to pray,  
So clear I see, now it is done,  
That I have wasted half my day,  
And left my work but just begun.

So clear I see that things I thought  
Were right or harmless are a sin;  
So clear I see that I have sought,  
Unconscious, selfish aims to win.

So clear I see that I have hurt  
The souls I might have helped to save;  
That I have slothful been, inert,  
Deaf to the calls thy leaders gave.

In outskirts of thy kingdom vast,  
Father, the humblest spot give me;  
Set me the lowliest task thou hast;  
Let me, repentant, work for thee.

## HOW JEFFERSON DAVIS TREATED HIS NEGROES.

(Landon Knight in the Pilgrim—"The Real Jefferson Davis.")

From his brother Jefferson Davis purchased "Briarfield," and arrangements were made by which they lived together and jointly managed the plantations. Owning a large number of slaves, they inaugurated a policy for their management which is no less interesting in itself than for the results attained. It was based upon the political maxim of the elder brother that the less people are governed, the better and stronger and more law-abiding they become. All rules that involved unnecessary supervision and espionage of any kind were abolished. The slaves were placed upon honor and were left free to go and come as they pleased. Corporal punishment was only inflicted in cases involving moral turpitude, and only then after the trial and conviction of the accused by a jury of his peers, during the process of which all of the rules governing the production and admission of evidence observed in a court of justice, were scrupulously adhered to. The pardoning power alone was retained by the masters, and that they frequently exercised. Whenever a slave felt his services were more valuable to himself than they were to his master, he was allowed by the payment of a very reasonable price for his time to embark in any enterprise he wished, the brothers counseling and advising him, frequently loaning him money and always patronizing him in preference to other tradesmen. A copy of a page from one of the books of a slave, bearing the date of September 24, 1842, is before me, and upon it J. E. and J. Davis are credited with \$1,893.50. Another slave usually purchased the entire fruit crop of the two plantations, and there were still others who conducted independent and successful business operations. Some of these slaves in after years became respected and substantial citizens, one of them purchasing the plantations for something less than \$300,000, which had been offered by a white competitor.

## BEWARE THE SHADOW!

It is said of Michael Angelo that he always worked with a little lamp fastened to his hat, lest his shadow should fall upon the canvas.

There is a suggestive thought in this incident. It is this, that we should not let the shadow of self fall upon our Christian work. It is not how much work we do, but the purpose or spirit which prompts us to do it that the Master considers. How essential, then, that we watch the heart and keep a close censorship of the motive; for if we do right things in wrong ways, we may do wrong things. We should be zealous and aggressive, and ready for every task that comes to hand, but we should be all these for Jesus Christ. Selfish ambition must be held in contempt if we hope to reach the sphere of real usefulness and devoted service. We should not forget that there is no joy like the joy of self-forgetting effort; and there is no influence like the influence of the Christian worker who keeps his own shadow off his own work.

In Westminster Abbey is a marble tablet with medallion portraits of the two Wesleys combined, and underneath the inscription "God buries the workers, but carries on the work."—Selected.