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THE
BAPTISTS AND SLAVERY

1840-1845

BY
MARY BURNHAM PUTNAM, PH. M.

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GEORGE WAHR, PUBLISHER
ANN ARBOR, MICH.
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A large part of the work for this paper was done under the helpful direction of Professor W. E. Dodd at the University of Chicago. Through the courtesy of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville access was given to its minutes of southern conventions and associations, and its files of newspapers. The reason for publication is that some valuable material has been collected, not that any merit is claimed for its treatment.

MARY BURNHAM PUTNAM.

Ypsilanti, Michigan.

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I.

SLAVERY AND THE CHURCHES.

In the Slavery Controversy, beginning about 1829, both anti-slavery and pro-slavery men early sought the aid of the churches. The former, when they failed to secure the active support they thought their due, were especially bitter toward clergymen and church members. Pamphlets like Birney's *American Churches the Bulwarks of Slavery* or Foster's *Brotherhood of Thieves; or a True Picture of the American Church and Clergy*, show the rather general opinion that the attitude of the churches was the greatest obstacle to anti-slavery success.¹

Beginning with the New England Society in 1832, anti-slavery societies grew very rapidly for a few years and they soon demanded a decided attitude on the part of the churches toward their measures. The Rhode Island Anti-Slavery Convention at Providence in February 1836, claimed "that the people have a right to expect of the ministers of Christ that they will cheerfully engage in the work of abolition, and to call upon them to proclaim the truth on this subject, as those who are bound to declare the counsel of God." They held that "so far as moral means are concerned the system of American slavery is now sustained *chiefly through the influence of the pulpit.*"²

Tracts and resolutions began to demand the non-fel-

¹ On Lundy's visit to Boston in 1828, he talked with several clergymen finding them heartily opposed to slavery, but fearful that it would alarm and enrage the South to know that an anti-slavery society was formed in Boston, thus doing harm rather than good by agitating the subject. Only one or two were ready for any bold action. Garrison's: *Garrison*, I, 93-94.

² *Proceedings of Rhode Island Anti-Slavery Society*, 1836.

lowship of Southern churchmembers by Northern.³ A letter from J. A. Collins in the *Liberator* for January 21, 1842, speaks of Birney's *American Churches the Bulwarks of Slavery*: "If this is true, "and I think no one can read his work with a desire to know the truth, and dispute it, I would suggest, whether abolitionists ought not as friends to God, to the slaves, to themselves, to bring their forces to bear upon the Bulwarks of that system which they seek to overthrow, that without any intervening obstacle, they may make a fresh assault on slavery."

In the New England anti-slavery Convention of 1836, a resolution was proposed, that only those churches that employed "their associated influence for reform" should be considered "the true and real church of God." It was feared that this, if passed, would divide the church so they decided to try a little longer to purify the Church. However, in 1837 a resolution was adopted "urging necessity of excommunication of the slaveholders, and a solemn consideration of the question whether the churches remaining obdurate, it be not the duty of the advocates of truth and righteousness to come out from among them and be separate."⁴

At the National Anti-Slavery Convention at Albany, opening July 31, 1839, the church members decided "to push the slave question in the churches, to abolitionize them if possible, and if not to secede from them."⁵ The Massachusetts Society in 1840, held that a man who apologizes for slavery, or neglects to use his influence against it, has no claim to be regarded as Christ's minister, and churches that do not take a stand against slavery should

³One asserted that "Baptist sells his brother Baptist on the auction block, and the Methodist communes with a woman on one day and on the next sells her," etc. *Anti-Slavery Tract No. 7, Revolution the Only Remedy for Slavery*. p. 12

⁴Chapman: *Right and Wrong*, p. 15.

⁵Goodell: *Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, p. 488.

not be supported.⁶ The World's Convention urged that American churches excommunicate holders of slaves.⁷

In a letter of June 26, 1838, Roger Sherman wrote, "The American Anti-Slavery Society is endangering the peace and union of the Churches in the United States by making a participation in their excess, practically, if not in form, a term of communion. Indeed there seems no interest of primary importance in our country, political or religious, which is not put in jeopardy by the honest men who are embarked in this benevolent but unwise and disastrous enterprise, as it is now conducted."⁸ The society seemed to justify his opinion at its meeting in New York, May 9, 1843, when they resolved that it was the duty of abolitionists to withdraw from any church that refused to treat slavery as they treated other crimes. They pledged themselves to belong to no church that has not dissolved its connection with the slave system.⁹

As early as August, 1835, the Congregational Church in Winthrop, Maine, adopted a resolution refusing to receive "a slave holder as a minister of the gospel," or as a "communicant at the table of the Lord." The Church could not reform the wickedness of the world if it countenanced it and the Gospel forbids fellowship with the works of darkness.¹⁰ A steadily growing movement went on, especially in the smaller towns, among anti-slavery church members to reform the churches if possible, if not, to separate themselves from a church that would not separate itself from slave-holders.

While the anti-slavery men were so vigorously de-

⁶ *Garrisons: Garrison*, II, p. 337.

⁷ *Ibid.*, II: p. 280.

⁸ *56 Niles*, 410.

⁹ Wendell Phillips offered a resolution "That anti-slavery is only to be advanced by trampling under foot the political and ecclesiastical links which bind slavery to the institutions of this country." *The Liberator*, May 26, 1843.

¹⁰ Willey: *History of Anti-Slavery*, p. 55.

manding, and to a certain extent securing, the aid of the churches in their cause, the Southern pro-slavery men were becoming aware that the agitation was no longer confined to "a few persons of obscure character" but that even influential preachers of the gospel were to be found among the abolitionists.¹¹ A warning was given by the grand jury of Cass County, Georgia, in 1835. In referring to intermeddling with slaves, they say: "As yet, these operations, as far as the jury are informed, have been distinct from all religious denominations of the country. Yet this jury would express their unaffected apprehensions from the number, character, talents and respectability of the agitators, that the church is destined to be ere long the medium through which the premeditated mischief is to be accomplished. This remark is made with the profoundest deference to the religious sentiments of the country, and it is sincerely hoped that no such will be offended with the suggestion that all will lend their aid and influence in checking the evil. The jury would respectfully recommend to their fellow citizens throughout the state the propriety of watchfulness over the missionaries and the conduct of all the missionary agents that are passing through the country for the purpose of establishing tract, temperance, Bible and all societies of that kind."¹²

The Southern clergy were aroused to the defense of slavery both in argumentation and in prevention of unfavorable action by the National religious bodies.¹³ A small number of northern clergymen joined them in the defense of slavery from the Bible, holding it not a sin since the New Testament recognized its existence and did not forbid it to Christians.¹⁴

¹¹ 55 *Niles*, 340.

¹² 49 *Niles*, 194.

¹³ Jay: *Writings on Slavery*, p. 412.

¹⁴ Examples are, Nehemiah Adams (South-Side Adams),

The great problem presented to the conservative men in the churches was, how to prevent discussion or action on a subject concerning which two great parties had come into existence. In 1837, a Pastoral Letter by the Massachusetts Association of Congregational Ministers held that the "perplexed and agitating subjects which are now common amongst us. . . . should not be forced upon any church as matters for debate at the hazard of alienation and division."¹⁵ The Congregational General Association of Connecticut had the previous year, opposed the practice of itinerant agents enlightening the members of churches without the advice and consent of the pastors and the regular ecclesiastical bodies.¹⁶

The Presbyterian General Assembly several times decided it was not best to take any action on the subject.¹⁷ A sermon by the Rev. Samuel J. May could be published by the American Unitarian Association only after reference to slavery had been removed.¹⁸ The leaders in the churches discouraged anti-slavery newspapers and speeches and tried to keep their members, especially the clergy, from joining anti-slavery societies, or in any way openly espousing the cause. The New York Methodist Conference in 1836, would not condemn men merely for their opinions regarding abolitionism but thought no one should be elected deacon or elder unless he promised to refrain from agitating the church with discussion of slavery.¹⁹ Methodist bishops vainly attempted to prevent agitation of the subject and annual conferences expressed themselves for and against agitation.²⁰

President Lord of Dartmouth College, Professor Moses Stuart of Andover, Bishop Hopkins of Vermont.

¹⁵ Hart: *Slavery and Abolition*, p. 198.

¹⁶ Garrisons: *Garrison* II, p. 130.

¹⁷ 50 *Niles*, 250.

¹⁸ Garrisons: *Garrison* I, 216.

¹⁹ Matlack: *Anti-Slavery Struggle*, p. 112.

²⁰ 49 *Niles* 7; Matlack, *Anti-Slavery Struggle*, p. 82.

II.

THE BAPTISTS AND SLAVERY BEFORE 1840.

Because of the absence of any central governing authority in the Baptist denomination the individual churches naturally took their stand on slavery as on other questions. It was, however, usual for the associations, and conventions through which the churches accomplished certain common objects, to express opinions on matters of general interest.

During the first period of anti-slavery agitation in the United States, there was of course, no sectional line. The Virginia General Committee of the Baptists, in 1789, resolved: "That slavery is a violent deprivation of the rights of nature, and inconsistent with a republican government, and therefore, recommend to our brethren to make use of every legal measure to extirpate this horrible evil from the land; and to pray to Almighty God that our honorable legislature may have it in their power to proclaim that great jubilee, consistent with the principles of good policy."¹ In the same year the Philadelphia Baptist Association, agreeably to a letter from the Church at Baltimore, declared their high approbation of the societies to secure the gradual abolition of slavery, and recommend to the churches represented, to form similar societies and exert themselves to obtain the important object.² In Kentucky leading ministers declared for the abolition of slavery, a "sinful and abominable system." Elder Carman preached immediate abolition and no Christian fel-

¹ Newman: *Baptist Churches*, p. 305.

² Fuller and Wayland: *Domestic Slavery*, p. 18.

lowship with slaveholders; and was active in spreading these ideas in Ohio.³

In the second anti-slavery period, the sectional line was slowly drawn among Baptists as in the country at large. It was estimated from the census and church statistics, that in 1837, the Baptists held 115,000 slaves.⁴ It was natural that Southern Baptists should have come to regard slavery as an institution of the land that they were powerless to abolish and should express opinions favorable to slavery, and condemn anti-slavery agitation. Richard Fuller, one of the conservative Southern Baptists, said, "I am unwilling to appear in any controversy which can even by implication place me in a false and odious attitude, representing me as the eulogist and abettor of slavery, and not simply the apologist of an institution transmitted to us by former generations—the existence of which I lament—for the commencement of which I am not at all responsible—for the extinction of which I am willing to make greater sacrifices than any abolitionist has made or would make, if the cause of true humanity would thus be advanced."⁵

The Charleston, South Carolina, Baptist Association, at the request of several churches, authorized its delegates to the state convention in 1822 to take measures to engage that body and other religious organizations in the State in an application to the Governor for the appointment of a day for "Public Thanksgiving" to God and one for "Prayer and Humiliation before Him" in reference to preservation from an intended insurrection and distress inflicted by a terrible hurricane.⁶ An address to the Governor was prepared by Rev. Dr. Richard Fur-

³ Birney; *James B. Birney*, pp. 18, 19, 164.

⁴ Willey: *History of Anti-Slavery*, p. 111. The only denomination holding more was the Methodist with about 220,000.

⁵ Newman: *Baptist Churches*, p. 306. The date is not given.

⁶ Charleston Baptist Association: Minutes, Nov. 2, 1822.

man, himself a slaveholder. In this he defended the right of holding slaves as "clearly established in the Holy Scriptures both by precept and example." It was necessary to prove this, since arguments for emancipation were being based on the Bible, and many were hesitating to give religious instruction to slaves. Such teaching should not be laid under an interdict as proposed by some. The interest and security of the state would be promoted by allowing considerable religious privileges to such as could estimate them aright.⁷ Again in 1835 the Charleston Association took up the subject of slavery in a memorial to the legislature. It was urged that the religious privileges of slaves be not curtailed or restricted by the legislature "except in cases where necessity. . . . shall clearly require interposition." The Association felt responsible for the religious instruction of slaves, but would act, "not as taunted and insulted by fanatics, but as ever remembering also that they have a Master in Heaven." They trust that, if the system of slavery in South Carolina requires modification, the people and the legislature have wisdom and benevolence sufficient "to provide adequate relief at the most proper period." Any outside interference they would resent "come from what quarter and under whatever pretense it may." South Carolina had the exclusive right "to regulate the existence and continuance of slavery within her territorial limits." They believed that the people of the slaveholding states could never be convinced that their institutions were sinful and immoral as long as they had the Bible in their hands. This, they held, did not make slavery a question of morals at all. Christ "found slavery a part of the existing institutions of society, with which, if not sinful, it was not his design to *intermcdde*, but to leave them entirely to the control of

⁷ *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists relative to the Coloured Population in the United States.* Dated, Dec. 24., 1822. Godell, *Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, p. 186.

men. *Adopting it therefore as one of the allowed relations of Society*, he made it the province of his religion only to prescribe *the reciprocal duties of the relation*.⁸

The same year a meeting of clergy of Richmond, Virginia, among whom were several Baptists, unanimously passed resolutions that they earnestly deprecated the unwarrantable and highly improper interference of the people of any other state with the domestic relations of master and slave. "The example of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles in not interfering with the question of slavery, recognizing the relation of master and slave, giving affectionate instructions to both, is worthy of imitation by all ministers of the gospel." They considered it not desirable for outsiders to preach to the colored population for whom they themselves would care.⁹ They pledged themselves to receive no anti-slavery newspapers or pamphlets, and were "unanimous in opposing the pernicious schemes of abolitionists."¹⁰ The same year the Tyger River Association gave a warning against abolitionists under the garb of strange ministers.¹¹ There is shown in these various associations and conventions a determination to resist interference by abolitionists and at the same time to provide for the religious care of the slaves. This leads to a question in some associations whether a church should receive and baptize slaves when their owner objects to their joining the church.¹² Slavery is no longer excused by the churches but justified.

For early abolition meetings in the North, Baptist

⁸ Charleston Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1835. Birney: *American Churches, the Bulwark of Slavery*, p. 26.

⁹ The First Baptist Church of Richmond had at that time about 2000 blacks as members, nearly five times as many as whites. Hatcher: *Life of Jeter*, 190.

¹⁰ 49 *Niles*, 40.

¹¹ Tyger River S. C. Association, *Minutes*, 1835.

¹² Charleston Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1839. The Mount Carmel church asks this question of the committee on queries and requests. The answer is no.

Churches were often opened, Thompson, the English reformer, speaking in a Baptist Church in Providence.¹³ There grew up during the early thirties a small but very vigorous body of anti-slavery Baptists, who gained control of some churches and associations. The Hancock, Maine, Baptist Association adopted a report in 1836 declaring that in their opinion "of all the systems of iniquity that ever cursed the world, the slave system is the most abominable," and that the only remedy is immediate emancipation.¹⁴ The next year the association resolved, "That, we as the professed followers of Jesus Christ, have no fellowship or communion with those who under the character of Christians continue to hold their fellowmen in bondage." The Washington, Maine, Association voted, "That as Christians we can have no fellowship with those who after being duly enlightened on the subject, still advocate and practice its abomination and thus defile the church of God."¹⁵

Between Northern men holding such views and the radical Southerners the moderate Baptist leaders strove to keep peace. As in other denominations, they attempted to prevent discussion of slavery at the North and in national meetings. Lundy's first public meeting in Boston was held in the Federal Street Baptist Church. At the conclusion of his remarks, the pastor of the Church, Rev. Howard Malcolm, rose and "passionately denounced the agitation of the question of slavery in New England, declaring that it was too delicate to be meddled with by the people of the Northern States, that they had nothing whatever to do with it." He dismissed the meeting without allowing further remarks.¹⁶ Rev. Daniel Sharp of Boston, in an

¹³ Garrisons: *Garrison* II, p. 2.

¹⁴ *American Anti-Slavery Almanac*, 1838.

¹⁵ Willey: *History of Anti-Slavery*, p. 109.

¹⁶ Garrisons: *Garrison*, I, p. 97.

address before the Conference of Baptist ministers in 1835, cautioned them to be prudent in matters not within the appropriate sphere of their action. Christ gave no instructions to political organizations of the State. They should avoid controversies.¹⁷ Among the most noted of the Baptists who opposed both slavery and agitation about slavery, was Francis Wayland. In a letter to Garrison, in 1831, he explained why he did not desire to have *The Liberator* sent to him. He believed slavery to be wicked and destructive of the best interests of both master and slave; but immediate emancipation was neither wise nor just. The slaves were unprepared for liberty. If immediate emancipation were desirable, it would not be secured by inciting slaves to rebellion, but by enlightening and convincing the masters. He thought the tendency of the *Liberator* was toward the former."¹⁸

Wayland's view is rather fully given in a chapter of his work on "The Limitations of Human Responsibility," published in 1838. He discusses the limits within which our efforts for the removal of slavery are to be restricted—first, as *citizens* of the United States, second, as *human beings* under the law of God. First, as citizens, there is no power whatever either to abolish slavery in the Southern States or to do anything of which the direct intention is to abolish it, hence, as citizens, we have no responsibility. The guilt, if guilt exists, will not rest on us as citizens of the United States. As citizens we have solemnly promised to *let it alone*. We have left to the "States respectively and to the people of the States, whatever powers they have not conceded to us." "I hold that a *compact* is binding in its *spirit* as well as its *letter*. The *spirit* of the compact, I suppose, imposes on me the obligation not to do anything for the purpose of changing

¹⁷ *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XV, p. 421.

¹⁸ Garrisons: *Garrison*, I, p. 242.

the relation of master and slave, except with the consent of the master. I have no right to declare the abolition of slavery in another state; I have conceded that this is to be left to the free choice of the citizens of that State; I have no right to do anything to *interfere* with that *free choice*. I have, therefore, no right to excite such a state of feeling among the slaves, that the master shall be *obliged* from physical necessity to liberate his slaves, whether he believes it to be right and wise or whether he believes the contrary." The compact leaves it to the *free will* of the States. I must not oblige them to act according to my *will*.

As to the District of Columbia, Congress had power but could not honorably use it. He would not own a slave, "for all the gold that sinews bought and sold, have ever earned."

He feels the stain of slavery in the District, but would not wipe it off dishonorably. He believes that if the right of the South is conceded and the question put on the true ground "of concession to the honest, although they may think it the misguided moral feeling of the North," they would follow the dictates of an enlarged and disinterested patriotism. He will respect the right of the South but asks that they respect his feelings. The North has discussed slavery "in a manner decidedly at variance with constitutional liberty of speech and of the press. On the other hand, the South has held that discussion of this subject in all manners and in any spirit was to be forbidden.

Second, as human beings, we have a right to attempt to change Southern opinion under the right to make known to our fellow men truth which we believe conducive to their happiness and that of men in general. It is of no use for abolition societies to excite and agitate people at the North. They become tools of third-rate politi-

cians. They have prevented any open and calm discussion of the subject at the South. We have no right to force our instructions on others, "either by conversation or by lectures or by the mail. If we have spoken truth, we should leave it to God. We may talk with Southerners in a spirit of love."¹⁹

Such were the diverse views on slavery held by members of the Baptist Church in the thirties. While there was no ecclesiastical organization with control over local churches and ministers, the Baptists of the United States worked together in several national organizations for particular purposes, the oldest and most prominent being the "General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions," organized in 1814. The Convention held triennial meetings at which it chose a General Board of Managers who met annually. By a resolution of the Convention in 1841, the Board of Managers were instructed to choose fifteen of their number, residents of Boston and vicinity, to be their Acting Board, any seven of whom should be a quorum. To this Acting Board, at all times responsible, should be referred missionary business arising between the meetings of the Board of Managers to whom they should make annual reports of all their doings. The headquarters of the Society were thus at Boston, but the South had always been well represented among the officers of the Convention.²⁰ The members of the convention were individuals, or delegates from missionary societies, state conventions, associations or churches, contributing funds. The number of dele-

¹⁹ Wayland, *Limitations of Human Responsibility*, pp. 163 *et seq.*

²⁰ The presidents had been Richard Furman of South Carolina (1814-1820); Robert Semple of Virginia (1820-1832); Spencer H. Cone of New York (1832-1841); *Bapt. Miss. Magazine*, XXIV, p. 144.

gates was in proportion to the funds paid since the last triennial meeting, one for every three hundred dollars.²¹

In 1832, there was formed the American Baptist Home Mission Society, to which missionary societies became auxiliary by paying into its treasury their surplus funds. Its meetings were held at the same time and place as those of the General Convention.²²

²¹ *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XXIV, p. 144.

²² *Ibid.*, XII, p. 185.

III.

THE CONTROVERSY, 1840-1843.

The "outward and visible" controversy over slavery in the Baptist Church began in 1840. In April of that year there met in New York the American Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention, which was the outgrowth of the more radical anti-slavery feeling among American Baptists and a few of their missionaries in Burmah. This convention formed a Foreign Provisional Missionary Committee, which later sought two things in the missionary work of the church:—a severance from all slavery influence, and more strict recognition of church representation. Committees at the meeting reported upon the influence of slavery on literary and theological institutions; the connection of slavery with the churches; the reciprocal influence between slavery and the religious press; an address to the Baptist churches of the North in relation to their duties on the subject of slavery as it exists in their sister churches of the South; the condition of free people of color; an address to our brethren at the South on the subject of slavery. This address to Southern Baptists was sent out signed by Elon Galusha, President and O. S. Murray, Secretary.¹ It proved to be somewhat of a firebrand.

November 2, 1840, the Board of Managers of the

¹The convention elected as delegates to the World's Convention, Rev. C. P. Grosvenor of Worcester, Rev. Nathaniel Colver of Boston, and Rev. Elon Galusha of Perry, New York, all of whom were prominent in the anti-slavery controversy among Baptists for the next five years. Garrison: *Garrison*, II, 356. Willey: *History of Anti-Slavery*, 136. Foss and Matthews: *Facts for Baptist Churches*, 45. This contains full account of Convention, and Address to Southern Baptists in full.

Baptist General Convention adopted an address stating that they had observed "with painful interest, indications of a tendency on the part of some of their beloved brethren and co-adjutors, to withdraw from the missionary connection in which they have been happily associated for many years." The Board recalled the design of the association and the conditions of membership, and could see no reason for withdrawal of support of any "in view of facts or considerations wholly extrinsic and irrelevant." The Board had been held accountable "for things done and not done, *in relation to all of which alike the Board has done nothing, because it had nothing to do.* With respect to such things the Board has, so-to-speak, neither a name nor existence." The province of the Board is to carry into effect the will of the Convention, and they have nothing to do with qualification for membership in Convention or Board. "There is still another subject to which the attention of the Board has been called by some of their respected contributors—lying yet more widely aside from the sphere of their appropriate operations; and if in alluding to it they break the *silence* of their neutrality, it is only that by defining their position, they may relieve the embarrassing uncertainty of brethren, Northern and Southern, and secure to themselves, through the divine blessing, their wanted freedom from extraneous anxieties in the furtherance of their own peculiar work. We refer to the continuance of Christian fellowship between Northern and Southern Churches." This does not come under their cognizance or under the scope of the General Convention with the present constitution. "There is, in fact, no body ecclesiastical or civil, empowered to act in this particular, on behalf of the churches interested." The churches as independent communities have delegated no power to individuals or associations to act

for them. The Board can do or say nothing. Members, as individuals in their respective churches, may act in reference to this and other matters pertaining to the church relations. The Board appeals to all for the mission cause. They look forward to the approaching Convention "with mingled solicitude and hope." With hope that they have not lost the affections and confidence of brethren and friends from North, South and West; with solicitude lest by the "unseasonable diversion of our thoughts to irrelevant subjects the unity of the design of our confederation be infringed and the harmony of our counsels disturbed."²

This satisfied neither abolitionists nor slave-holders. The Georgia Convention having expressed their dissatisfaction, the Board sent their treasurer, Mr. Heman Lincoln to explain verbally. The chairman of the Georgia Executive Committee remarked, "If the object of the Board in sending their delegate to us, is to try to steer between us and the abolitionists, they might have spared themselves the expense and trouble."³

The Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention in Maine, on January 19, 1841, adopted an address to the Baptists of that State and another to the Southern Churches. It affirmed that of the two hundred fourteen Baptist ministers in Maine more than one hundred eighty were decided abolitionists; and declared the sinfulness of slavery and the duty of immediate emancipation.⁴

A circular of the Executive Committee of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, February 16, 1841, alluded to the action of the anti-slavery societies and said, "Our brethren at the South with great unanimity deprecate the discussion as unwarranted, the measures

² *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XXI, p. 200.

³ Goodell: *Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, p. 497.

⁴ Willey: *History of Anti-Slavery*, p. 155.

pursued as fatal to their safety and complain of the language occasionally employed as cruel and slanderous."⁵

About a week later Elon Galusha presided at a convention assembled at Warsaw, New York, "in compliance with a call addressed to Christians of every denomination in western New York." This body favored immediate emancipation and considered slave-holding a sin "so utterly at variance with the gospel of Jesus Christ" that Christians should withdraw all ecclesiastical connection with those slaveholders and slave-holding churches who after having been faithfully and affectionately admonished, according to gospel rules, refuse to abandon the sin." Apologists for slavery, which many northern churches are, are as guilty as the slaveholders. Churches should not allow slaveholding ministers in their pulpits.⁶

As the time for the Triennial Convention of 1841, approached, both sides seemed to prepare for battle, and one wonders that the neutrals were able to postpone the separation for another three years. The Savannah River Baptist Association considered the conduct of the abolitionists "censurable and meddlesome," and requested their State Convention to instruct their delegates to the Triennial Convention to demand of the Northern brethren whether "they can acknowledge these fanatics as their co-workers," and to inform them of the impossibility of further co-operation by the Georgia Baptists unless the abolitionists are dismissed. Those who refuse fellowship with slaveholders because of their "peculiar institutions" add a "new term of salvation unauthorized by the rule" of Baptist faith and practice, and to which the members of this Association "acknowledge no obligation to yield obedience." The funds sent by

⁵ Foss and Mathews: *Facts for Baptist Churches*, p. 67.

Goodell: *Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, p. 497.

⁶ 60 *Niles*, 40.

this association to the State Convention must be retained until the General Convention shall publish their repudiation of "the whole spirit and conduct of Baptist abolitionists."⁷

Several South Carolina associations passed resolutions because of the address of the American Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention signed by Elon Galusha, President of that body and one of the Vice-Presidents of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. Delegates to the Triennial Convention were to be instructed to obtain expression of its approbation or disapprobation of such views and sentiments, so that if it approved these views and threats, Southern Baptists might take measures for forming a separate missionary body.⁸

The Camden, South Carolina church expressly asked that Elon Galusha be expelled from the office of Vice-President of the Board of Foreign Missions, making this a condition of their future connection with the Board. They viewed with contempt the advice, opinions, menaces and declarations of Elon Galusha and his co-adjutors, contained in their addresses to Southern Baptists. They ordered this address returned to Elon Galusha with the request that he would never again insult them with an address of any kind. They expressed fraternal regard for Northern Baptists who were opposed to the abolitionists.⁹

The Charleston Association called on associations and churches to consider the necessity of the formation of a Southern Board of Foreign Missions since their earlier appeals had been disregarded and abolitionists seemed by no means disposed to change their course. Until this

⁷ *Savannah River Association, Minutes*, 1840.

⁸ *Ready River Baptist Association, Minutes*, 1840.

Edisto Baptist Association, Minutes, 1840.

⁹ Goodell: *Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, p. 496.

Pillsbury: *Acts of the Anti-Slavery Apostles*, p. 406.

new Board is formed, Southern Baptists should continue contributions through the Boston Board "unless, indeed, circumstances more unforeseen warrant a different course." There was decided opposition to the appointment of delegates to the Triennial Convention, the vote standing nine to seven.¹⁰

Still another association expressed confidence in the Foreign Mission Board "notwithstanding the mischievous course recently pursued by one of their Vice-Presidents on the exciting subject of abolition." They awaited some expression from the Triennial Convention before making a declaration of their position.¹¹

The South Carolina State Convention which followed the meetings of the associations quoted, was assured by the agents of the American and Foreign Bible Society and the American Baptist Home Mission Society that the numbers and influence of abolitionists among Baptists are small and feeble. The great body in the North have no sympathy with them, and no desire to interfere in the smallest degree with the institutions of the South; and will be ready to express disapprobation with abolitionists at Baltimore. The Convention expressed gratification at these statements, and full confidence in the "integrity, Christian temper and true-heartedness of these brethren, but because of general disquietude among Southern churches caused by the proceedings of Baptist abolitionists, advised that the delegates to the Triennial Convention meet beforehand and decide on course of action on this subject in the Triennial Convention and afterwards report to their constituents.¹²

Among the publications at this time is a *Reply to Dr. Richard Fuller of South Carolina* by Elon Galusha in

¹⁰ *Charleston Baptist Association, Minutes*, 1840.

¹¹ *Welsh Neck Baptist Association, Minutes*, 1840.

¹² *South Carolina Baptist State Convention, Minutes*, December, 1840.

which an attempt is made to prove from the Bible the sinfulness of slavery. Then Thornton Stringfellow published an essay on the other side with some remarks on Galusha's letter.¹³

When the General Convention assembled in Baltimore in 1841, conditions looked most unfavorable for a peaceful convention or for the continued union of Baptists, North and South. Two days before the meeting of the Convention the Southern delegates had met and decided that, in order to allay excitement at the South, some of the ultra and obnoxious anti-slavery members of the old Board should be left off the new Board.¹⁴ This was done, Elon Galusha for example being replaced by Richard Fuller.

In a secret caucus of Northern conservatives and Southerners, a compromise article, discouraging innovation and "new tests," and disclaiming participation in the doings of the abolition Baptists was signed by seventy-four persons. The understanding was, that slavery was a subject with which the Convention had no right to interfere.¹⁵ The storm seemed to have passed by. Spencer H. Cone of New York was of great service in the Convention through his tact and his eloquence.¹⁶ When the Bible cause was before the convention he made a plea for union, which, when delivered with his great dramatic power, might well have moved his audience. I quote a portion, "To the successful prosecution of this enterprise union is indispensable. Do soldiers and politicians and men of the world, appreciate duly the importance of this principle, in their various spheres of action?"

¹³ Stringfellow: *Brief Examination*.

¹⁴ *Religious Herald*, March 13, 1845.

¹⁵ Birney, *American Churches*; Goodell, *Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, p. 498; *Religious Herald*, Apr. 24, 1845.

¹⁶ Cone: *Cone*, p. 276.

God forbid that they should continue to be wiser in their generation *than the children of light are in theirs.*" He recalled the devotion of the soldiers in the battle of North Point, September 12, 1814, in which he himself had taken part and continued, "My brethren, shall men thus devote themselves to their country and follow their leader, whether to live or die, and shall we not manifest equal devotion to the cause of the great Captain of our Salvation? Do we talk of Union? Baltimoreans! participators in the scenes of September, eighteen hundred and fourteen, preach to American Baptists, I beseech you, *on the nature and necessity of union.* Remember the bombardment of Fort Mifflin, as from the opposite hill-top we watched the range of each successive shell, and as it exploded groaned inwardly as though it were the death knell of some brother in arms; remember, that full ten thousand men were at the same moment pressing with hostile feet our native soil, and already within a few miles of this devoted city, remember that as we prepared to meet them how every avenue for miles around was crowded with women and children, flying for safety; then when we saw the troops from Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania coming to our aid, 'did we ask from what States do they come?' Did we pause to discuss domestic institutions or local prejudices? No! the stars and stripes upon their floating banner bespoke a common country and a common cause, and to preserve the bold American Eagle from the British Lion's paws, was the ardent, the common purpose of every patriotic heart. We heard the immortal Washington, the father of his country, though dead, yet speaking,—*united we stand, divided we fall*; and shoulder to shoulder, we breasted the storm of war. And shall we not much rather be united in wielding the sword of the spirit, which is the word of

God; in obeying the commandment of Him, who *came not to destroy men's lives but save them.*"¹⁷

The Southern delegates before leaving Baltimore addressed a letter to their constituents. They said, "The election of the Board of Managers resulted agreeably to our wishes." A member of the Convention wrote in a Southern paper, "Our meeting was truly delightful. The spirit of the Gospel prevailed and gave a tremendous shock to the abolitionists. Let us be thankful to God, and give Him glory. And now if we of the South and they of the North, whose sympathies are with us, shall be mild, I am satisfied that abolitionism will go down among Baptists. All our principal men are sound to the core on this vexed question." He praises highly the self-possession, calmness and Christian spirit which predominated throughout the discussions of this exciting subject.¹⁸

Not all were so well satisfied with the Convention. Dr. Wayland who was not present, wrote, February, 1842, "I *fear* that there was not in *all* respects, and in *all parties*, the godly sincerity becoming men and Christians. In the first place a man's being an abolitionist or a slave holder *per se* in my mind would work no disability. If a slaveholder manifested in that relation a spirit inconsistent with Christianity or if an abolitionist showed such tempers as rendered him an unfit member of such a board, I would leave either off, just as I would for anything which was a disqualification. The paper in question, however, seems to have worked badly, and a great dissatisfaction has been produced without any good result. The manifesto, or by what name so ever it be called, I always thought unwise. I never could see any

¹⁷ 60 *Niles*, 226.

¹⁸ Pillsbury, *Forlorn Hope*, p. 40; *Acts*, p. 408.

Southern associations in 1841 express satisfaction, Edisto S. C.; Savannah River, *Minutes*.

reason for which such a paper should be demanded, and so far as I see I never would have signed it and so I have always said. It was on the part of most persons kindly meant but unwisely done. What you say about the election looks not well. It looks like a sort of political intrigue, a thing which from my heart I do eschew. Selah!" After some discussion of the organization and work of the Board, he says, "They intend to keep its operation clear from every thing else whatever, and be implicated neither with slavery nor abolitionism. I never would sit with them for a moment after they involved themselves with or against anything for which they were not appointed."¹⁹

Severe criticisms of the Baltimore Compromise were common in the North. In reply to Nathaniel Colver's *Charges Refuted* in the *Christian Reflector*, a communication appeared in *The Watchman* of February 11, 1842, signed by Daniel Sharp, Barnas Sears, Wm. Hague, Ebenezer Thresher, Joel S. Bacon, and Solomon Peck. They sought to vindicate their *private* character from charges made regarding the Compromise Meeting.

Abolitionism did not "go down among Baptists" after the Convention at Baltimore, and anti-slavery sentiment grew. Most of the Eastern Baptist papers became anti-slavery although not all abolitionist.²⁰ Eighteen hundred and forty-three was the year of the Hundred Conventions in New England. The common people, among whom were many Baptists, were being converted in large numbers.²¹ The anti-slavery movement was becoming decidedly religious. Especially was this true in Maine, where about this time the Baptist church in Augusta split on the question of receiving slaveholders into

¹⁹ Letter to Rev. E. B. Smith, New Hampton, N. H.

²⁰ *Religious Herald*, Mch. 31, 1842.

²¹ Austin: *Wendell Phillips*, p. 112.

Church, communion or pulpit.²² In western states like Illinois most of the adherents of the cause between 1836 and 1845 were men who believed slavery forbidden by the Bible, hence a sin.²³

The Foreign Provisional Missionary Committee formed in New York in 1840, had not secured either of the changes it sought:—a pronounced severance from all slavery influence and more strict recognition of church representation and control in the work of missions.²⁴ They felt that the Baltimore Agreement would exclude abolitionists from office in the national bodies. To many, the union with slaveholders in the cause of missions implied fellowship with slavery; and there was a growing aversion to “tainted money.”

In the *Christian Reflector*, for May 10, 1843, appeared an address “To the Friends of Missions in the Baptist Denomination of the United States who believe that missions ought not to be supported by the gain of, or any connivance with, oppression.” The formation of the American and Foreign Free Baptist Missionary Society is announced and those in sympathy with its fundamental principles are invited to attend a meeting to adopt a suitable constitution. In a résumé of the circumstances leading to the formation of the society, the growing feeling of the iniquity of working with slaveholders and using money from slavery for converting the heathen is shown. Efforts for a better plan had been made the preceding year through the Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention. Only temporary arrangements were then entered into since there was hope of a reform of the old organization. These temporary plans, however, were defeated by the ruling of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions

²² Willey: *History of Anti-Slavery*, p. 243.

²³ Harris: *Negro Servitude in Ill.*, p. 142.

²⁴ *Baptist Ency.*, p. 415.

that no funds should go to any of their missionaries except through the accustomed channel. The Provisional Committee, needing advice under these circumstances, called a meeting of Baptist anti-slavery friends in Boston on May 3rd, with reference to this objectionable action of the Board of Foreign Missions. Many went to the Convention expecting the formation of a permanent missionary organization, but "it was found that the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions had after the publication of the call," re-issued their old circular of "neutrality" in which they refuse to take sides against slavery or abolition. This so far satisfied some members of the convention who thought it a real though not avowed expression of favor to the abolitionists, that they preferred to wait another year, hoping that the slaveholders because of the avowed neutrality of the Board, would voluntarily withdraw from the General Convention and the Board. Some others wished to defer action in order to discuss the question at the General Convention in Philadelphia in 1844, and endeavor to reform that body. Another and large portion, not favoring delay, concluded not to make it the action of the Convention but separately to form the American and Foreign Missionary Society. The only objection of many to this course, was the hope of total separation between slaveholders and the Convention at the next Convention. If this did not take place, they would join the new society. The paper continues, "We expect them soon, for we have not the slightest expectation that the general convention or its Board will in any reasonable time throw off their partnership with slaveholders." A meeting of all willing to sign their pledge was called for May 31, at Tremont Temple, Boston. The pledge bound the signers to support a Baptist Missionary Society separated from all connection with the known avails of slavery, in the support of any of its be-

nevolent purposes; and to separate themselves "from all connection with religious societies that are supported in common with slaveholders." Among the signers of this address were S. Adlam of Maine, and C. P. Grosvenor and W. H. Brisbane of Massachusetts.²⁵

²⁵ *The Liberator*, May 26, 1843. The secretary of the society thus formed was Wareham Walker, a pastor in Utica, New York, who in 1845 edited an anti-slavery paper in Elgin, Ill., and became later editor of the *American Baptist* in New York. *Ill. Baptist Pastorial Union*.

IV.

THE PHILADELPHIA MEETINGS OF 1844.

I think the Board of Managers must have again looked forward to an approaching Convention "with mingled solicitude and hope." While there were still many in the church who desired to avoid any discussion of slavery in the national gatherings, there were others, both North and South, who hoped the question would now be taken up and settled.¹

A letter from New England signed S. C. C., in the *Religious Herald* for April 4, 1844, considered the possibility of division, but thought very few at South or North desired it. The large body of Baptists at the North were as much opposed to the abolitionists as were those at the South. The number of Baptists in the Liberty Party could not be large since the entire membership was not over 57,000. The slavery question, however, should be brought up and settled, not left to disturb the peace and social intercourse of brethren at their Triennial Assembly. "If a subject worthy of consideration, why not consider it now?" If the North does not bring it up, the South should. The subject should be freely handled, and disposed of in one way or another, "in a manly, dignified and Christian-like manner." In the same paper, a week later, D. B. writes somewhat differently of the approaching Convention. "With a portion of our northern brethren all efforts at compromise and conciliation, all trimming of ways to please, will be of no avail; the decree has gone forth and until the bill of divorcement has passed the house, all with them will go

¹ *Religious Herald*, April 4, 1844.

wrong." He wishes "a final settlement of the line of demarcation between the two sections of country."

The attendance at the Convention was unusually large, and was distributed among the States as follows:²

Maine	11
New Hampshire	7
Vermont	11
Massachusetts	103
Rhode Island	35
Connecticut	33
New York	92
New Jersey	11
Pennsylvania	46
Delaware	2
District of Columbia.....	5
Maryland	7
Virginia	43
North Carolina	3
South Carolina	10
Georgia	6
Alabama	2
Kentucky	14
Ohio	8
Indiana	1
Illinois	4
Michigan	2

The membership in other societies holding their anniversaries at the same time brought the number in attendance up to six or seven hundred.

The total number of Baptists in the United States at this time was something over seven hundred thousand.³ It is difficult to get the exact numbers in particular states.

² *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XXIV, p. 145.

³ 69 *Niles*, 139.

I give the membership in some of the most important states, as found in *The Almanac and Baptist Register* for 1845:

Maine	23,860
New Hampshire	10,825
Vermont	10,404
Massachusetts	31,842
New York	99,331
Pennsylvania	28,044
Ohio	32,415
Virginia	82,732
North Carolina	38,180
South Carolina	38,027
Georgia	32,143
Alabama	33,665
Mississippi	17,305
Kentucky	67,179

The *Religious Herald* estimated the white Baptists at the South at two hundred eighty thousand and at the North about three hundred eighteen thousand.

Dr. Johnson declined re-election as president, because the state of his health did not permit him to perform the arduous duties, and because for twenty-one out of thirty years the Convention had had a Southern president. It was generally understood that the abolitionists had come prepared to contest Dr. Johnson's election. Dr. Francis Wayland of Rhode Island was chosen president and Dr. J. B. Taylor of Virginia, Secretary.

At the meeting of the Convention, Thursday evening, April 25, the discussion of the slavery question took place on a resolution which not only did not mention slavery, but was intended to prevent agitation of the subject. Dr. Fuller of South Carolina offered a preamble and res-

olutions. The Convention is for a specific purpose. "Co-operation in this does not involve nor imply any concert or sympathy as to any matters foreign from the subject designated." He expressed the hope that the members would act as Christians and gentlemen. The motion was seconded by Dr. Cone of New York, who hoped the Convention would attend only to the business for which it came together, and for which its constitution provided. Mr. Colver of Massachusetts opposed the resolution. It made nothing definite, and if it did, he was opposed to its adoption. He did not wish to be fettered in respect to any subject. Mr. Hague explained that this resolution disclaimed any connection or approval of any institution at the South. Dr. Fuller wished it understood that the South generally did not regard the documents signed at Baltimore in any sense of approval or connivance at slavery. Personally he was not convinced it was a sin but regarded it as a great evil. His brethren at the South did not. He hoped and prayed that the time would come when it would be done away. Dr. Cone reminded them of the understanding when the constitution was adopted that attention would be confined to foreign missions. Dr. Jeter saw no discrepancy between the Constitution and the resolution and hoped it would be passed. In answer to a question, President Wayland said the *Charter* did not limit the Convention to foreign missions, but the constitution did expressly limit its action to foreign missions exclusively. After further discussion, the resolution was withdrawn for the following by G. B. Ide of Philadelphia:—

"WHEREAS, There exists in various sections of our country, an impression that our present organization involves the fellowship of the institution of slavery, or of certain associations, which are designed to oppose this institution,

Resolved, That in co-operating together as members of this Convention in the work of Foreign Missions, we disclaim all sanction either expressed or implied, whether of slavery or of anti-slavery, but as individuals, we are perfectly free both to express and to promote our own views on these subjects in a Christian manner and spirit." This was received with many expressions of satisfaction, and without discussion passed unanimously. The members of the Convention then sang a hymn and had prayer, "in view of the happy termination of this exciting question."⁴

The editor of *Niles Register* in speaking of the Convention, remarked that the Baptist Church was agitated over slavery and "got rid of it for the time by laying the whole subject on the table."⁵

The American Baptist Home Mission Society met in Philadelphia at the same time as the General Convention, sessions being so arranged as not to conflict. It was in its meetings that the slavery discussion began earliest and was carried on most vigorously. Tuesday afternoon, April 23, Mr. Adlam of Maine offered the following:—"Whereas, the question has been proposed whether the board will or will not employ slaveholders as missionaries of this society, and whereas, it is important that this question should receive a full and unequivocal answer, therefore:— Resolved that, as the sense of this society a minister being a slaveholder should present no barrier to his being employed as a missionary of this society." Discussion was laid over till Friday morning, when Dr. Fuller offered as an amendment to Mr. Adlam's resolution: "Resolved that, as the constitution of the Home Mission Society clearly and distinctly defines its object

⁴ *Religious Herald*, May 9, 1844. *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, 24:157. Newman: *Baptist Churches*, pp. 44-5.

⁵ 66 *Niles*, 192.

to be the promotion of the gospel in North America, and as it is provided by such constitution that any auxiliary society may designate the object to which the funds contributed by it shall be applied, and may also claim a missionary or missionaries according to such funds, and select the field where the missionary or missionaries shall operate, that to introduce the subject of slavery or anti-slavery into this body is direct contravention of the whole letter and purport of the said constitution; and is moreover a most unnecessary agitation of topics over which it has no control, and as to which subjects, individuals are left as free and uncommitted as if there were no such co-operation."

Mr. Allen, the corresponding secretary, explained that funds were generally designated for particular states, usually those from which the money came. This accounted for the fact that there were more missionaries appointed to labor in the South than North or East as they pay more money into the Treasury.

Mr. Jones asked if the Board ever inquired as to qualifications and character of missionaries, to which Mr. Allen answered, "Yes."

Dr. Fuller did not desire to urge the question, nor would he flinch from it. If the brethren thought best to separate, he would not object to that step, but he hoped they would reflect. It would be a dangerous experiment. A rupture in the Baptist denomination would be disastrous not only to the Church, but to the nation. He spoke severely of the motives of those who presented and advocated the resolutions; and created considerable excitement. Dr. Fuller considered slavery a great evil and a deplorable calamity, not a sin. To prove it one, a new Bible must be produced. In some cases an evil must be remedied by degrees. The introduction of such a resolution was a contravention of the spirit of the

constitution. The proper step would be to move an amendment of the constitution. Dr. Jeter, who after some dispute, obtained the floor, agreed with Dr. Fuller that slavery was not a sin. The Bible sanctioned it. The condition of individuals and of the nation might be made worse by trying to make it better. The proposed step would do this.

At this time, the society adjourned until afternoon when Dr. Jeter continued his remarks. He did not fear his opponents but feared the results as they would affect the church. He understood his anti-slavery brethren thought slavery incompatible with Christian character. To this, Dr. Colver nodded assent. Dr. Jeter appealed to common sense, to the Convention, to God.

Mr. Welch of Albany, believed slavery a moral evil, opposed to every article of the decalogue. The time was fast coming when this evil would be done away. To Dr. Fuller's question how this was to be done, Mr. Welch answered, "By bringing the matter more fully before the public and securing their approbation." Dr. Fuller asked what he would do if he had the co-operation of the public. The audience expressed approbation of the answer that he would proclaim universal liberty. Mr. Welch offered as an amendment to Dr. Fuller's amendment, the following:— "Whereas, exciting sentiments on the subject of slavery evidently obtain in this body, seriously threatening its peace and efficiency, infusing confusion into its counsels, and impairing the confidence and affection of its members in and for each other, therefore,

Resolved, That under existing circumstances it is inexpedient to employ as missionaries in the service of the Board any brother known to claim the right of property in his fellow man." This was seconded. Mr. Jeter thought this opposed to the first amendment and to the spirit of the constitution.

Mr. Colver favored the original motion since it would secure what both parties wanted, an unequivocal decision. After some further discussion the society adjourned, but on its re-assembling, the subject was resumed. Mr. Adlam explained his putting his motion in affirmative rather than negative, form, while he was an avowed abolitionist. Dr. Cone made remarks calculated to secure calm and unprejudiced decision on the subject, reading parts of the report of the executive board made some years previous.

Mr. Brown of the District of Columbia, thought the question political and outside the province of the society, while Dr. Colver believed it a practical, not a political question. It should be decided, and if it caused division of the society that would do less harm now than later. Let it be a peaceful and brotherly separation. Slaveholders were incompetent to hold the position of missionaries of the society. He respected the sincerity of his southern brethren and felt for them. He proposed that the resolution be made negative. Mr. Dodge of Pennsylvania, favored indefinite postponement. He could prove that slavery was not a moral evil. The resolution, if adopted, would bring about the division of the church, and that was not the time to divide. He disliked the distinction between Northern and Southern brethren.

After a motion to indefinitely postpone, etc., the society adjourned until Monday morning. At the Monday morning meeting, after brief discussion, the society rejected Mr. Welch's amendment to the amendment, and adopted Dr. Fuller's amendment by a vote of 123 to 61. Mr. Ide offered the resolution, "That the American Baptist Home Mission Society be now dissolved and that the subject for which it was formed be referred back to the state conventions," which was laid on the table. Mr. Tucker of New York made appropriate closing remarks

while much feeling was manifested. Mr. Church of New York offered a resolution, "That three from the North, three from the South and three from the West, with the President of the Society as Chairman, "be appointed to take into consideration the subject of an amicable dissolution of this society or to report such alterations in the constitution as will admit of the co-operation of brethren who cherish conflicting views on the subject of slave-holding." This was seconded, and after discussion by Messrs. Peck of Illinois, Peck of New York, Dagg of Georgia, and Kennard of Pennsylvania, passed unanimously. The committee consisted of Messrs. Jackson of Massachusetts, Church of New York, Gilpatrick of Maine, Dagg of Georgia, Johnson of South Carolina, Taylor of Virginia, Going of Ohio, Malcolm of Kentucky, and Sherwood of Illinois. On motion, Mr. Colver of Boston was added to the committee. After remarks by the President the society adjourned.⁶

The two great national missionary societies thus practically refused to take action on the slavery question, and left the burdens of decisions, if any had to be made, to their respective Boards. During the Summer various opinions were expressed regarding the action or lack of action at Philadelphia. The *Religious Herald* (Richmond, Virginia) rejoiced that by the passage of the resolution disclaiming all sanction express or implied with slavery or anti-slavery, the matter had been settled and the convention was on its original ground, a missionary organization solely, in which brethren from East and West, from North and South could co-operate.⁷ In a later number of the *Herald*, a correspondent censured the "zeal uncontrolled by a sound judgment and the coarse language of the abolitionists." The responsibility for slav-

⁶ *Religious Herald*, May 1st, 1844.

⁷ *Religious Herald*, May 1st, 1844.

ery lay with the slave-holder and God would not hold the Northern brethren accountable for the misconduct of masters, if there was any. He commended the "dignified, the noble, the Christian demeanor of the Southern delegates." If there was a division in the Convention or the Home Mission Society, the North would have the responsibility. The writer seems to have been in a fault-finding frame, for he objected to the young men who were "hopping up" to speak in the Convention more often than was suitable.⁸

The *Christian Reflector* (Boston, Mass.), remarked that the action made it unnecessary longer to fellowship slavery or slave holders as such, in the work of missions.⁹ The *Reflector* for August 22nd, asserted that, with the rapid extension of anti-slavery influence, the entire disconnection of the Board with slavery was an event near at hand. This, the *Herald* believed, meant that the Northern abolitionists had patched up a truce to collect means of making war more effectually, and hoped soon to obtain a majority and exclude the slave-holders.¹⁰

The Baptist Anti-Slavery convention at Albany, on September 4th, held that the Triennial Convention and its Board had manifested an incurable pro-slavery spirit, and were essentially committed to the fellowship of slavery and the employment of slave-holders as missionaries. The time had come for a permanent free missionary organization. Committees were appointed to prepare an address on the present relation of the Triennial Convention to slavery, and an address to Southern churches and ministers. The *Religious Herald* approved of the consistent action of the Albany Convention and expressed its belief that the Triennial Convention was as much

⁸ *Religious Herald*, May 16, 1844.

⁹ Pillsbury: *Forlorn Hope*, p. 42.

¹⁰ *Religious Herald*, Sept. 5, 1844.

connected with slavery, as ever it had been. "Many others, professing to be abolitionists, cling to the convention, impede its operations, excite strife for no purpose, since nothing can be done before the next meeting." They certainly gained nothing at the last meeting.¹¹ The *Michigan Christian Herald*, speaking of the same convention at Albany, regretted the split in the North, but, "so far as the South is concerned, we have no tears to shed over the separation." A southern paper commenting on this, says, "So the excision of three hundred seventy-five thousand members in the south is nothing to shed tears over." Probably we can get on without the aid of the eight thousand Baptists in Michigan. "We can separate and go on peaceably. But in the North, our withdrawal will not assuage the angry elements."¹²

The Boston Association in the summer adopted a resolution offered by Baron Stow, expressing their disapproval of the wrong of slavery, and urging all professors of religion connected with this system to separate themselves from it as speedily as possible. The Salem Association in Massachusetts disapproved of the free missionary movement since they had confidence in the ability of the Board of Managers to care wisely for the business committed to them.¹³ But the Vermont Baptist Anti-Slavery Society in October resolved that it could not patronize any missionary society employing slaveholders or advocates of slavery to preach the gospel under its direction. They rejoiced that at all the great conventions of the people recently held, whether for religious or civil purposes, the question of slavery had formed a prominent topic of discussion. They considered this, "a clear indication that God is arranging his providences to

¹¹ *Religious Herald*, Sept. 26, 1844.

¹² *Religious Herald*, Oct. 3, 1844.

¹³ *Religious Herald*, Nov. 14, 1844.

bring about a darling object of the divine mind, viz, the abolition of slavery in our country."¹⁴

Dr. Fuller wrote, July 16, 1844, "The abolition question is harrassing church and state. Mr. W. is miserable because he thought I pronounced slavery a sin, and the fanatics on the other side quarrel with me for defending it out of the Bible. Well, well, in such a world, a man who is in his senses must lay his account to be considered crazy."¹⁵

A letter from a Southerner in New England in October gives an opinion of conditions. Many churches have declared non-communion and non-fellowship with all slave-holders. Some even advocate non-fellowship with all who fellowship slave-holders. "A separation of the churches of the North from the churches of the South must act as the entering wedge to a dissolution of our political bonds.

It is to be feared that the Methodist Church will be divided into two great parties, with mutual jealousies and antagonistic measures. The Presbyterians are in danger of the same evil. And if the Baptists unmindful of their duty to Christ and their country, shall bite and devour one another, and array themselves into two great parties, the Northern and the Southern, what conservative principles, what salt of the earth will be left to restrain and moderate the madness of political strife and ambition and save from ruin our Republic."¹⁶

¹⁴ *Religious Herald*, Jan. 2, 1845.

¹⁵ Cuthbert: *Fuller*, p. 227.

¹⁶ *Religious Herald*, Oct. 24, 1844.

THE SLAVERY QUESTION BEFORE THE HOME MISSION BOARD.

Very soon after the meetings in Philadelphia, the Executive Board of the Home Mission Society was called upon to make a decision on the slavery question. The Georgia Convention at its session in April, instructed its executive committee to recommend to the Board of the Home Mission Society, Mr. James E. Reeves of Georgia for appointment as a missionary, informing that Board that he was a slave-holder.¹ The letter of application said, "We wish his appointment so much the more as it will stop the mouths of gainsayers, — There are good brethren among us, who notwithstanding the transactions of your society at Philadelphia, are hard to believe that you will appoint a slave-holder a missionary, even when the funds are supplied by those who wish this appointment." While this application was under consideration by the Board, associations and churches in North and South were expressing opinions. The Home Mission Committee of the New Hampshire Convention on June 25th, recommended the designation of their money so that, in no case, it should go for missionaries that held slaves. They deemed it morally wrong to sanction or support a slaveholder, and remonstrated against any such being appointed by the Board. They wished their delegates to the next meeting of the Home Mission Society to use their influence so to alter the constitution as to prohibit the employment of a slaveholder as a missionary.²

¹ Cone, *Cone*, p. 277.

² The Maine Convention took the same ground. The Vermont Convention and some associations in New York requested

The *Michigan Christian Herald* reminded its reader that at the late meeting of the American Baptist Home Mission Society in Philadelphia, the question whether slaveholders should be appointed missionaries, and the Constitution so altered as to make slaveholding a disqualification, was referred to a committee of ten, four from the North, three from the South and three from the West, who were to obtain the views of their several sections and report at the next annual meeting at Providence. --- The religious sentiment of the North and West is fast setting against the vile system of American Slavery. However much may be allowed for the embarrassing circumstances in which many slaveholders are placed, still the system they uphold must be regarded as a great evil; yea, more, as a flagrant sin, for which a speedy and thorough repentance is demanded."³ On October third, the Michigan Convention unanimously disapproved of the appointment of slaveholders as missionaries of the Home Mission Society.⁴

The Baptist Association of Wisconsin June 26-27, passed resolutions "That the *union* of religious Societies in the free and slave states, to raise funds for the spread of the gospel and the circulation of the Bible, while it denies both Bible and Gospel to the slaves, is a system which virtually sells to slaveholding ministers and churches the right to *make heathen* and *perpetuate heathenism at home*, so long as they pay a *tithe* of the profits into the Lord's Treasury to christianize the heathen abroad." "That the great ecclesiastical bodies and church organizations which are in communion with slavery, 'sanction and sanctify' 'the *sum of all villainies*' and present the greatest obstacle in the way of emancipation, identifying them- the Board not to appoint a slaveholder. *Religious Herald*, July 11, 1844.

³ *Northwestern Baptist*, Aug. 15, 1844.

⁴ *Religious Herald*, Oct. 31, 1844.

selves with "Babylon" by sustaining the traffic in slaves and the souls of men" and rendering themselves obnoxious to the charge in God's word 'when thou sawest a thief then thou consentedst with him and hast made thyself partaker with adulterers.'" All christians should use "every means consistent with law, humanity and religion to abolish American Slavery."

When the Home Mission Society asked the question "Do you approve the appointment of any man as a missionary of the society, who is a slaveholder, i. e., one who holds his fellow men as property?" the First Church of Boston, of which Dr. R. N. Neale was pastor, voted, "We give a negative answer, because we believe that though good and pious men have held slaves, slavery is nevertheless a great moral evil, and we wish it entirely disconnected from our missionary operations and from the Church of Christ."⁶ It is possible that the circular in which this question is asked was sent out unofficially, by a member of the committee appointed to "take into consideration the subject of an amicable dissolution of the Society, etc."

Southern men announced that they should expect the Board to appoint a slaveholder should the South recommend one. The Virginia Board had requested the appointment of a Virginia man without any special reference to slaveholding. The Home Mission Board were considering the candidate, but were waiting for further information on a point quite apart from slavery. The South was satisfied with the constitution as it was, and would resist any change.⁷ It was suggested to the New Hampshire and Maine Brethren that the decent way to settle the matter would be for them to withdraw. A small

⁵ *Northwestern Baptist*, Aug. 15, 1844.

⁶ Wood, *History of First Baptist Church of Boston*, p. 333.

⁷ *Religious Herald*, July 11, 1844.

minority, possibly forty three thousand in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, and seven thousand in Western New York were requesting the expulsion of more than half of the denomination.⁸

The Goshen Association in Virginia in September, advised the withholding of money from the Home Mission Society until all questions as to the use of its funds for the support of missionaries hostile to Southern interests be settled.⁹ It objected to the Society's sending agents into the State. Mr. Roper, himself a Virginian, the representative of the Home Mission Board in that State, considered this at least premature until further evidence of unfairness. He believed the Board would as soon appoint a Southern as a Northern man. He was not "satisfied that the acceptance of an agency under the Home Mission Society is a crime of such magnitude as to disfranchise" him.

In October a decision was reached by the Board after five meetings of three hours each, the vote being seven to five against appointing Mr. Reeves. The vote was taken by yeas and nays.¹⁰ Mr. Hill the corresponding secretary writes: "We disclaim attributing to our Georgia brethren a design to disturb the deliberations of the Board by introducing the subject of slavery through the medium of their application, but such evidently is its tendency." In direct contravention of the whole letter and purpose of the constitution, "it introduces the subject of slavery. A consideration of the application would introduce a discussion forbidden by the constitution, the circular of the Board in 1811, and the resolution of the Society in 1811. When an application is made for the appointment of a slaveholder, or

⁸ *Religious Herald*, Sept. 29, 1844.

⁹ *Religious Herald*, Sept. 19, 1844.

¹⁰ *Cone, Cone*, p. 77.

an abolitionist or an anti-slavery man *as such*, the Board is under no obligation to act on the appointment. They are not at liberty to entertain the application for the appointment of the Rev. James E. Reeves."¹¹

Some in the South still thought there was no reason for complaint about the decision of the Board on the grounds stated, since the South could ask for the appointment of competent men without mentioning the fact that they were slaveholders.¹² This was not, however, a general feeling. Dr. Cone of New York, believed the Board would have voted for Reeves "if nothing had been said" about his being a slaveholder, but they construed the information into an ungenerous and offensive *test*. He felt separation inevitable since on one side many were unwilling that a slaveholder should be commissioned as a missionary and on the other, it was held that such persons as the South recommended must be appointed or the Society dissolved. He hoped for a kindly separation, and feared division of the Foreign Mission and the Bible Societies as disastrous.

A notice appeared in Baptist newspapers in the early part of April 1845, calling a meeting of the committee appointed by the Home Mission Society in 1844, to consider "the amicable dissolution of the society, or to report such alterations in the constitution as will admit of the co-operation of brethren who cherish conflicting views on the subject of slavery." The Committee were requested to meet in the First Baptist Church in Providence on Monday, April 28th.¹³ At this meeting the committee adopted the following, "Whereas, The American Baptist Home Mission Society is composed of contributors residing in slaveholding states, and Whereas the Constitu-

¹¹ *Religious Herald*, Oct. 24, 1844.

¹² *Religious Herald*, Oct. 24, 1844.

¹³ *Religious Herald*, April 3, 1845.

tion recognizes no distinction among the members of the Society as to the eligibility of all to the offices and appointments in the gift both of the Society and the Board;" and Whereas it has been found that the basis on which the Society was organized is one upon which (not) all the members and friends of the Society are now willing to act; therefore,

Resolved, that it is expedient that the members now forming the Society should hereafter act in separate organizations at the North and at the South in promoting the objects which were originally contemplated by the Society.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to report a plan by which the object contemplated in the preceding resolution may be accomplished in the best way and at the earliest period of time consistently with the preservation of the constitutional rights of all the members and with the least possible interruption of the mission work of the Society." This report was fully discussed at the meeting of the Society following, at the same place. Prominent on the conservative side was Dr. Wayland, who hoped to prevent precipitate action in the matter of dissolution. But "extreme abolition sentiments on the part of the Northern members and exacting demands on the part of members from the South proved more than a match even for Francis Wayland."¹⁴ The report was adopted. A resolution of Dr. Maginnis providing for a peaceful dissolution of the Society passed and a committee to report a plan of separation was chosen, consisting of Rev. Drs. Maginnis, Wayland, Sears, Rev. Messrs. Tucker, Webb and Taylor, and Hon. J. H. Duncan. Their report was adopted, leaving the charter at the North and securing a just proportion of the funds of the Society to the South. Although the Board was

¹⁴ Riley: *The Baptists*, p. 206.

not restricted, it was understood that no more slaveholding missionaries would be appointed.¹⁵

Some northern conventions expressed approval of the decision of the Society, and southern conventions or associations severed their connections with it since it had adopted "resolutions designed to effect a division of Southern Baptists from the Society."¹⁶ On June 21st, the Baptist Board of Managers for Domestic Missions which had been formed in the South, appointed Messrs. Hartwell, DeVotie and Jewett, a committee to confer with the Executive Committee of the Home Mission Society "respecting matters of common interest to the two orders."¹⁷

In 1846 the Home Mission Society adopted a new constitution which cut off the auxiliaries. One reason given for this was that in certain quarters, attempts had been made "to control the parent society about matters of local policy concerning which there were different opinions."¹⁸

Since the issue arose first in the Home Mission Society, I have traced to its conclusion the separation in that body. Certain events best treated in connection with the Foreign Mission Society will make the reasons for what took place in the Home Mission Society more evident.

¹⁵ 68 *Niles*, 165.

¹⁶ *Religious Herald*, June 12, 1845.

¹⁷ *Religious Herald*, July 10, 1845.

¹⁸ Goodell: *Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, p. 506.

VI.

THE PROBLEM OF THE FOREIGN MISSION BOARD.

To the Foreign Mission Board was presented, not a specific case, but a hypothetical question. It was claimed by certain Southern men that just subsequent to the Philadelphia Convention in 1844, the Board caused the retirement from its service of Rev. John Bushyhead, a highly respected Indian preacher because he owned slaves. This created an impression in the South that the Board would not in the future appoint slaveholders. Dr. R. E. Pattison, Home Secretary of the Boston Board, was thought to have intimated that the Board would no longer tolerate slavery.

At the meeting of the Alabama Convention, in the fall of 1844, the matter was brought to its attention by a query from the Tuscaloosa Church, the authorship of which is attributed to Dr. Basil Manly, Sr.:—Is it proper for us in the South to send any more money to our brethren at the North for missionary and other benevolent purposes before the subject of slavery be rightly understood by both parties? This query together with a communication from the Georgia Convention was referred to a committee of which Dr. Manly was chairman. The Committee prepared resolutions which were sent to the Acting Board in Boston on November 25, 1844. "Letter of the Baptist State Convention of Alabama to the Board of Managers of the Baptist General Convention. Whereas the holding of property in African negro slaves has for some time excited discussion as a question of morals between different portions of the Baptist denomi-

nation united in benevolent enterprise; and by a large portion of our brethren is now imputed to the slaveholders in these Southern and Southwestern States, as a sin, at once grievous, palpable, and disqualifying:—

1. *Resolved*, by the Convention "that when one party to a voluntary compact between Christian brethren, is not willing to acknowledge the entire social equality with the other as to all the privileges and benefits of the Union, or even to refrain from impeachments or annoyances, united efforts between such parties, even in the sacred cause of Christian benevolence cease to be agreeable, useful or proper."

2. We must demand from the authorities of bodies to whose funds we contribute, "the distinct, explicit avowal that slaveholders are eligible and entitled equally with non-slaveholders to all the privileges and immunities of their several unions, and especially to receive any agency, mission or other appointment, which may fall within the scope of their operations or duties."

3. To prevent assumption by Societies, Boards, etc., of the rights of the churches, when any question arises as to fitness of an individual to receive appointments the question of morals should be left to his own particular church.

4. Copies of the resolutions are to be sent to the bodies for which any funds may be designated, calling attention to the second resolution. If an answer is received, a special meeting of the convention will be called. Copies are to be sent to the conventions in other slaveholding states. No money is to be paid out until answer is received.¹

The answer of the Acting Board was looked for with great interest, by others than the Alabama Baptists. It was announced that the Baptists as a body would be as

¹ *Baptist Mission Magazine*, 25:220.

prompt to protect their rights and to act independently as any other portion of the South.²

The reply of the Acting Board is dated December 17th. They regret that the resolutions were sent since it was unnecessary. They say, "We have never as a Board either done or omitted to do anything which requires the explanations and avowals that your Resolutions demand." They must either answer hypothetical questions and discuss principles or seem to be evasive and timid, afraid to give the information asked. They agree with the first point of the letter. They have never questioned the social equality as to all privileges and benefits of the Foreign Mission Union. They add, we have never, "officially impeached or annoyed you."

As to the second point, the Board admits that slaveholders and non-slaveholders are unquestionably entitled to all privileges and immunities of members of the Baptist General Convention, but no one, however large his subscription, is *entitled* to appointment. This power is confided to the Acting Board. In thirty years, no slaveholder has applied to be a missionary. The Board does not send out servants, so could not send slaves. "If however, any one should offer himself as a missionary, having slaves, and should insist on retaining them as his property, we could not appoint him. One thing is certain, we can never be a party to any arrangement which would imply approbation of slavery."

The Board agrees to the independence of churches, it would not interfere with the discipline of any church. The Board must decide on the prudential, moral, religious and theological fitness of candidates. Churches decide as to fitness to belong to their body. The Board is sorry not to receive funds since engagements have been entered into. They close, "We have.

² *Religious Herald*, Dec. 26, 1844.

with all frankness, but with entire kindness and respect, defined our position. If our brethren in Alabama, with this exposition of our principles and feelings can co-operate with us, we shall be happy to receive their aid. If they can not, painful to us as will be their withdrawal, yet we shall submit to it, as neither sought nor caused by us. There are sentiments avowed in this communication, which although held temperately and kindly, and with all due esteem and Christian regard for brethren addressed, are nevertheless, dearer to us than any pecuniary aid whatever."³

In their report the Acting Board state that in their reply they have established, "no new principle of action." They have simply stated in answer to the question, "what they would not be able to do in a particular case." The ground of this inability they have not stated. They adhere to the *neutrality* they had heretofore avowed. This was their meaning in the succeeding sentence:— One thing is certain we can never be a party to any arrangement which would imply approbation of slavery." That is, "as it was never the design of the Acting Board to become an anti-slavery body, no more was it that it should be a pro-slavery one."⁴

The members of the Acting Board, 1844-1847 were Daniel Sharp, President; Richard Fletcher, Vice-President; Solomon Peck and Robert E. Patterson, corresponding secretaries; Baron Stowe, recording secretary; Heman Lincoln, Treasurer; Managers:—Barnes Sears, Wm. Leverett, Irah Chase, Wm. Hague, Ebenezer Thresher, Rollin H. Neale, Robert W. Cushman, Robert Turnbull, Gardner Colby.⁵

Various statements were made as to the attitude of

³ *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, 25:221.

⁴ *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, 25:223.

⁵ *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, 25:152.

particular members of the Board on the decision.⁶ Baron Stowe wrote that on the principle of excluding slaveholders, a majority were agreed on the ground of *conscience* and the remainder on the ground of *expediency*. The whole were agreed on two points, "First, that whatever the reasons which might be assigned for their inability, *they* could not appoint as a missionary to the heathen such a slaveholder as they described. Second, that they could not be a party to any arrangement which would imply approbation of slavery. . . . In relation to some parts of the circular there was a difference of views, but as they pertained to questions of expediency rather than of conscience we were able by mutual forbearance and concession to come to a unanimous conclusion."⁷

The Northern Baptist papers generally, except the *Christian Watchman*, approved the action of the Board.⁸ The *Cross and Journal* (Ohio) and the *Michigan Christian Herald* expressed decided approval, as did *Zion's Herald* (Maine) the *Observer* (Vermont) the *Christian Reflector* (Boston) and the *Christian Secretary* (Connecticut). The *Morning Star*, the organ of the Free-will Baptists, approved the action, but thought consistency required that the Board refuse to receive money from slaveholders. The *Free Missionary*, the organ of the American and Foreign Baptist Missionary society took the same ground. Dr. W. H. Brisbane, editor of the *Christian Politician* at Cincinnati thought the Board should not receive further contributions from slaveholders. Dr. Brisbane, who was born near Charleston, South Carolina, had himself brought his slaves to Ohio, and started them for themselves. The *New York Advocate*, "regrets that the Union should be disturbed, but presumes the

⁶ *Religious Herald*, April 10, May 1, 1845.

⁷ *Ibid.*, June 19, 1845.

⁸ *Ibid.*, April 10, 1845.

Board acted from pure and upright motives, and expresses no opinion in reference to the act itself." The *New York Baptist Register* expressed its fears of the separation, but gave no opinion on the action of the Board. The *Christian Watchman* hitherto the organ of the Board, disapproved. The Board might have refused to answer an abstract question and if the union between the North and South is dissolved, it will be sundered by a mere abstraction. Later, it says, "while we can not admit, therefore, that the late action of the Acting Board, is unconstitutional in the sense of having taken away any one's rights, for in practice it effects nobody, yet we must admit that it extends beyond the constitutional powers and duties of the Board, by undertaking to settle what the Convention has left unsettled."

The Maine convention approved the action of the Board on the Alabama resolutions as indicating the advancement of sound anti-slavery views in the Northern Baptist Churches. It tabled a resolution against communion with slaveholders and another expressing disapproval "of any new test of Christian fellowship, and consequently of the indiscriminate rejection of professed Christians who are cursed with the system of slavery."¹⁹

Many at the North were sorry the break had come, but would still stand by the Board. The men who had held the churches back for some years had lost their power.

Some resolutions of ministers of Philadelphia and vicinity passed March 18, 1845, come in well between Northern and Southern views:—"Resolved, unanimously, that we deeply deprecate the division in Foreign Missionary labors which has arisen between the brethren of the South and the North, from the agitation of the ques-

¹⁹ *Religious Herald*, April 3, 1845.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, August 14, 1845.

tion of domestic slavery: we would particularly and earnestly recommend to both parties the exercise of christian forbearance and brotherly kindness.

Resolved further, That we cordially approve and will faithfully adhere to the resolution respecting neutrality on the subject of slavery and anti-slavery which was passed so harmoniously at the last General Convention."

The *Baptist Record* of Philadelphia deprecated separation and thought both parties in fault.¹¹

A meeting of ministers in the District of Columbia in April, 1845, expressed disapproval of the decision of the Acting Board as unconstitutional and in contravention of the "perfect social equality" which must subsist between North and South if they are to work together. They urged the brethren to stand by the general Convention and besought the Board at Providence to adopt such measures as would maintain the integrity of the Convention and the spirit of the resolution of 1844. If the General Board did not do this, it should call a special meeting of the Convention, not North of Philadelphia or South of Richmond. They urged the brethren at the Augusta meeting, not to adopt any measures tending to a dissolution of the Union in the General Convention. Division would have an unhappy bearing not only upon the cause of Christ but upon our National Union. The subject under discussion is the only one that can cause disunion. If religious bodies must divide on it, how can we expect political parties to bear the excitement?¹²

Early in 1845, a southern paper expressed its fear that the co-operation hitherto existing in the cause of missions could no longer continue. It would be seen whether the fanatical spirit now prevalent in the North would obtain such ascendancy as to render union no long-

¹¹ *Religious Herald*, April 3, 1845; *Baptist Record*, Mch. 19, 1845.

¹² *Religious Herald*, May 8, 1845.

er practicable. The South would throw the responsibility on the erring brethren. It would strive to prevent their bringing their measures into the general societies but if it failed it would withdraw, knowing that the division was not of its seeking nor caused by its officious zeal. The editor adds, "But we must meet in the societies and in their Boards as brethren having equal rights and equal privileges or else not at all."¹³

An editorial in the *Religious Herald* of March 6th announced the decision of the Acting Board, "It is with feelings of pain, mortification and deep regret that we communicate to our readers, the fact that the Board of the General Convention, after mature deliberation, in answer to the inquiries of the Alabama Convention have announced that they can not give their countenance to slavery, by appointing a slaveholder as a missionary. The members of the Board, by this act, have assumed a fearful responsibility. It will effectually break up all harmonious co-operation and action betwixt the North and South and probably lead to the formation of a separate organization." . . . "The Board of the Virginia Baptist Foreign Missionary Society will probably meet and decide on the course suitable to the emergency created by this unexpected decision of the Board of the Convention." The next week, a communication from the Virginia Board appeared. It would not have forced the issue. The decision of the Acting Board is an outrage on Southern rights; it is unconstitutional and a violation of the compromise resolution of the last Convention. It is unjust to Southern supporters of the Convention. Even if it were not intended to produce division, it is as *unwise* as it is unjust. There is no meeting of the Convention for two years, and even then redress can not be expected. The Virginia Board, therefore decided that further connection with the

¹³ *Religious Herald*, Jan. 8, 1845.

Acting Board on the part of the South was inexpedient. The treasurer was to hold any money, to be disposed of as the Society directed at its annual meeting. They recommended a Convention of those aggrieved by the recent decision of the Boston Board "to confer on the best means of promoting the Foreign Mission cause and the other interests of the Baptist denomination in the South. Augusta, Georgia was suggested as a suitable place, and the "Thursday before the second Lord's day in May next" as a convenient time. Churches and Associations were recommended to appoint delegates.

On April 10th, appeared "An address to the Baptist Churches in Virginia and the Baptist denomination of the United States generally," signed by James B. Taylor, President and C. Walthall, Secretary. It announced the holding of the Southern Convention, and expressed views on this important movement:—

1. We wish not to have a merely sectional convention. We separate from the Boston Board "not because we reside at the South but because they have adopted an unconstitutional and unscriptural principle to govern their future course. The principle is this: that holding slaves is under all circumstances incompatible with the office of the Christian ministry. On this point we take issue with them; and verily believe that when the mists of prejudice shall have been scattered, we shall stand justified in the eyes of the world. For ourselves we cordially invite all our brethren, North and South, East and West, who are aggrieved by the recent decision of the Board in Boston, and believe that their usefulness may be increased by co-operating with us, to attend the proposed meeting."

2. As there is no principle of representation established, churches, associations, etc., are urged to send as many delegates as possible.

3. Several important subjects besides that of organizing a Foreign Missionary Society will probably come before the Convention, such as the possible necessity of organizing a separate Bible Society and Publication Society, or a Southern Theological Institution. The address closes, "The Convention, "will stand in pressing need of divine guidance. For this let us all devoutly and constantly pray."¹⁴

Opinions of the decision of the Boston Board and of the call for a Southern Convention are expressed in conjunction in Southern papers. While disapproval of the Acting Board in general, there are those who do not believe separation necessary since there may be a chance of reversal by the Board of Managers or by the General Convention.

The *Biblical Recorder*, Raleigh, North Carolina, thinks the decision no valid reason for withdrawal. The Board admitted that slaveholders are entitled to *all* privileges which the constitution of the General Convention grants its members, and did not call in question social equality, etc. The editor agrees with the Board that the Alabama Resolutions were uncalled for, and the Board might have been in better business than in answering them. The Board would be as well employed "by going on with their appropriate duties as a Board, and leaving the issuing of manifestos about what they *would or would not do* to some one better acquainted with such operations." He believes the Board meant to do right, and if left alone *will* do right, and will merit the undivided confidence of the South. Later the same paper criticizes the action of both the Acting Board and the Virginia Society as most unnecessary.¹⁵

The *Index* (Georgia) thinks "the Virginia brethren

¹⁴ *Religious Herald*, April 10, 1845.

¹⁵ *Religious Herald*, April 3, 1845.

have responded to the Northern Board promptly, wisely and discreetly," and believes there will be no division in the ranks in Georgia, Florida, Alabama or Mississippi.

The *Baptist Banner* hopes for a reorganization of the Triennial Convention with the seat of the Society removed from Boston, the hot-bed of fanaticism, to some more central location. The Boston Board "has neither the right nor the power to dictate to the churches the terms and conditions upon which the mission is to be conducted or the union of the denomination preserved."¹⁶

In the *Religious Herald* for March 13, the editor reviews the history of the slavery question in the last two Triennial Conventions. The last Convention decided it had no control over slavery or anti-slavery. Both slaveholders and non-slaveholders were placed on the Board. This principle has always held. Since the Convention has done this the Board, which is the agent of the Convention, should do the same. Their opinions on slavery have nothing to do with the matter. They should be guided by the rule of the Convention. On so momentous an occasion the Board should have called in the other members of the General Board of whom seventeen reside in slaveholding states. The editor thinks a portion of the New England Baptists did not join the Free Baptist Missionary Society, hoping to influence the Board to some act that would cause a rupture with the South. Under present circumstances further co-operation on the part of the South is neither expedient nor desirable. To be consistent, the Board must reject slaveholding agents and slaveholding members of the Board. . . . "The Convention must rid itself of all alliance with slavery or slaveholders, and self-respect points out that it would be more honorable to withdraw than to be driven off."

One more newspaper opinion will be sufficient, but

¹⁶ *Id.*, April 10, 1845.

this gives a rather interesting summary of the progress of the anti-slavery movement. The *Biblical Recorder* which has been mentioned as disapproving the action of both the Acting Board and the Virginia Foreign Missionary Society, held that the storm of fanaticism was subsiding. A separation in the denomination is what the abolitionists had worked for, for ten years. If now the South separates, without asking the Board of the Convention, and if necessary the Convention itself, for an explanation the blame will justly rest on the South. The editor of the *Herald*, answers this, claiming that anti-slavery sentiment is increasing not decreasing. Five years ago there was one Baptist anti-slavery paper, now every journal in New England with those of Michigan, Ohio and one in Illinois are anti-slavery. Three take the ground of non-fellowship with slaveholders, and two are against taking their money. Before the Convention, four were neutral. The Wisconsin Convention has declared non-fellowship with slavery. The attitude of the Free Missionary Society is of importance. Five years ago our missionaries had given no intimation that slavery or anti-slavery occupied their attention. When the Provisional Committee was organized it addressed a circular to all missionaries, asking if they were willing longer to receive part of their salary from slaveholders; if not, the Committee would support them. Mr. and Mrs. Wade agreed to receive their support from the Provisional Committee. Later Mrs. Wade gave a donation for the support of runaway slaves in Canada and Mr. Mason gave Mr. Tappan of New York an order on the Boston Board for ten dollars to aid in the escape of runaway slaves. In the *Christian Reflector* is an address of the Provisional Committee expressing approbation of the decision of the Acting Board, and saying "the missionaries in Burmah once had it under consideration to request the Board

to deduct from their scanty salaries the probable amount secured from slave labor. In 1840, the Methodist General Conference refused to act on documents and petitions on the subject of slavery. In 1844, the question was discussed and resolutions passed which has resulted in the division of North and South. There is no abatement of zeal in this cause. The letters of Dr. Fuller may have convinced some thinking men that the institution is not so unscriptural or sinful as they had believed, but the mass are unaffected by his arguments. There is little probability that the General Board or the Convention would reverse the action. The *Baptist Advocate* thinks separation will follow and gives no intimation of any wish or intention to make any effort to reverse the decision. The *New York Baptist Register*, heretofore conservative, says, "The hostility of the North to the system of slavery at the South, can not be extinguished or modified. Comparatively few, to be sure, are engaged in organized action against it; . . . yet, with very few exceptions, take the entire North, and they are in heart and soul opposed to slavery. . . . Would it not seemingly be far better that if there be a division it take place between the North and the South? Few of us seriously considering the matter even with strong sympathy for the South, can come to any other decision." The editor of the *Register* classes New York with the North. If it with its 100,000 Baptists adheres to the Board it decides the question. Ohio and Michigan have taken sides, and Indiana and Illinois will probably follow. There are in these states and in New England, friends who consider the action of the Board unconstitutional or inexpedient, but a large majority will sustain the Board. If the Board at Providence should reverse the decision, the Acting Board would resign and with it New England, Ohio, Michigan, portions of New York and Western Pennsylvania would also with-

draw from the Triennial Convention. The *Register* says "Patience and forbearance will be pleaded for no doubt, by many who have long enjoyed Christian intercourse on both sides of the line. But many again have in their estimation passed this point. What then, but an increased division at the North can be looked for by further efforts to perpetuate the Union. A serious rupture at the North is seemingly inevitable, if it be longer insisted on, and compromises and accommodations are arranged to effect it. Compromises have been made, but what stability is to be expected from them, in circumstances of such strong and interminable excitement." . . . "Is there any prospect of making our annual meetings any other than places of excitement and debate, if the Union should be longer maintained? We certainly can not see a gleam of hope, nor do we believe that any one else can. If so, why is it not best that our Southern Brethren take their position on one side of the line and we take ours on the other." The editor of the *Herald* believes the South can work harmoniously together, but questions whether the North can.¹⁷

Various Southern churches and associations passed resolutions approving the action of the Virginia Society, and disapproving of the action of the Acting Board.¹⁸ The Wentworth Street Church of Charleston, South Carolina, made an appeal to the Board of Managers of the Convention, stating their objection to the action of the Acting Board. They requested the Board of Managers to revise the reply of the Acting Board, and intreated them to withdraw it.¹⁹ The Valley Association of Virginia thought the Acting Board had virtually declared

¹⁷ *Religious Herald*, April 17, 1845.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, April 3, 1845.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, April 24, 1845.

“that slaveholders are not worthy to be partakers with them in preaching the gospel to the heathen.”²⁰

The Board of the China Mission in Kentucky called the action of the Board at Boston “an arrogant assumption of the ecclesiastical power.”²¹

The Executive Committee of the Georgia Convention and invited brethren, unanimously agreed with the Virginia brethren and joined with the Augusta Church in inviting Baptists of Southern and Southwestern states to meet in Augusta.²²

Mississippi, North Carolina and Tennessee expressed disapproval of the Acting Board and of the Home Mission Society, although Tennessee did not act until August, having hoped to avoid separation.

The Kentucky Convention approved the Southern Convention but expressed its feeling of obligation as a border state to “labor incessantly to promote that harmony among good men of every section of the United States which the exciting questions growing out of slavery are calculated to interrupt.” It expressed continued confidence in the American and Foreign Bible Society which forms a “noble exception to the alarming disposition manifested by several of our Northern missionary organizations to violate the great principles on which we have hitherto co-operated.”²³

I will close opinions from religious bodies with that of the Alabama Board:—“*Resolved*, That with much reluctance and grief we are compelled to consider the communication from the Acting Board of the Baptist General Convention to be a full and candid avowal that they are not willing to acknowledge our entire social equality as to all the privileges and benefits of the Union and

²⁰ *Religious Herald*, May 29, 1845.

²¹ *Ibid.*, May 1, 1845.

²² *Ibid.*, April 10, 1845.

²³ *Religious Herald*, June 26, 1845.

therefore, in the opinion of both parties our united efforts cease to be agreeable, useful or proper."²⁴

Interesting letters from leading men appeared in the papers during the spring of 1845. A letter from Dr. Jeter to Dr. Sears is sent to the *Religious Herald* for publication since the author wishes it to be seen by Northern friends. He lamented the measures of the Alabama Convention as he desired to go straight forward "in the field of labor encountering real but not creating imaginary difficulties." Speaking of the Board's decision, "Had they decided that it would generally or even universally be inexpedient to appoint slaveholders as missionaries, I should have hesitated to break my connection with them. I readily concede that it would be inexpedient to appoint a slaveholding missionary to any station where prejudice against slavery prevails. But the decision of the Board is based on the principle that slaveholding is necessarily, or under all circumstances sinful—so sinful as to disqualify the transgressor, however worthy in other respects for the Christian ministry." They place their refusal on the ground "that they can not sanction or even seem to sanction slavery." The practical bearing is that if a man sells his slaves he is all right. They could not appoint me to take a collection in my own church. They could not vote for slaveholders for any office in the Convention. The members of the Acting Board and those who concur with them in their decision might possibly be guilty of this inconsistency for a while, but the taunts of Ultra Abolitionists and a regard to their own character would soon compel them to abandon the untenable ground. The Board have adopted a principle that must "soon or late carry them the whole length of the most uncompromising abolitionists." I

²⁴ *Ibid.*, April 17, 1845.

suppose the Board adopted what they thought the most politic course, most likely to promote the interests of Foreign Missions. They thought it wiser to secure the undivided co-operation of Northern Churches even at the risk of forfeiting the favor of the South. But agreeing with the view in the circular of the Virginia Foreign Missionary Society, "I think the Acting Board did not pay attention to right, to equity, to precedents, and to the relation which they sustain to the Convention." The North under the same circumstances would not be expected to longer co-operate. The thought of separation is most painful. When I think of the "disastrous influence of division on our denominational prosperity, the mission enterprise and (may God avert the evil) the perpetuity of our happy political union, my heart sinks within me." There is no question of what the South should do under the circumstances. There is no ground for hope that the Acting Board would change their decision, or that the General Board would overrule it. With the weight of the Board against us, we could not anticipate redress from the Convention in regular or extraordinary session. Discussion, strife and alienation would go on. Contributions for mission cause would cease. "If we must part, let us do it in love. Separation may tend to allay exasperation."²⁵

A letter from Eli Ball admits the necessity of separation but thinks it should not be on geographical lines. There are many in all states who prefer to co-operate in missions regardless of slavery or anti-slavery; many who do not wish to submit to the dictation of some ultra-abolitionists who are pleased with the late decision. Such a society would prevent local prejudices, and have a favorable bearing on the political interests of our country.

²⁵ *Religious Herald*, April 3, 1845.

Should religious bodies be divided by the line that separates slave from free states, who can tell what might be the tendency of such a split to sever the United States. He trusts that in forming a new Convention, in locating its Board, and arranging its anniversary meetings, special care will be taken not to interfere with the Triennial Convention and the Acting Board now located at Boston. "For the self-denial, fervent labors, sacrifices and devout piety of the Acting Board of the Triennial Convention and their qualifications to conduct the mission under their care, I entertain the highest respect. If we must separate from such men, as Paul and Barabas separated, let us, as they did, prosecute each in his own way, the same great work, with the same great object before us."²⁶

Daniel J. Garnett, president of Shiloh Baptist Domestic Missionary Society, Culpepper County, Virginia, could not take the ground held by most of his friends. He writes, "The Foreign Mission Board were pressed to a decision by the Alabama Baptist State Convention. They were put to the test. And in the eyes of the world and presence of God they had to decide. I am inclined to think they could not have decided differently without doing violence to the authority of conscience... Men intended for the Foreign Mission Field ought to possess a grade of piety beyond that of an ordinary pastor. It is important work. God and the world demand much of them. Though many of the primitive Christians were slaveholders, there is no authority to say that the Savior or any of the apostles were. A majority of Southern Baptists allow that slavery is in some sense an evil. If an evil in any sense, we should not be instrumental in sending it abroad. Even if you form a Southern Baptist Convention, would you not prefer a non-slaveholder as

²⁶ *Religious Herald*, April 10, 1845.

a missionary? And if so, would not the Board of the Triennial Convention readily appoint a Southern man?"²⁷

Dr. Wm. F. Broaddus writing from Versailles, Kentucky, on April 9th, opposes separation. The Board did transcend its authority in presuming to settle what the Convention had agreed not even to agitate. The South, however, should not withdraw until they see whether the Convention sanctions the ground taken by the Board. It would be discourteous to assume that the Northern brethren who have assured the South that they were willing to leave the question of slavery to every one's conscience, would en masse sanction the course of the Board.

"The peculiar character of our Church government (independent), makes it especially desirable that we should continue a union with our brethren throughout the United States in the Mission cause. Indeed, I have long looked to our denomination to exert a powerful influence in preserving the political union of this highly favored nation. Some other denominations seem likely by their division, to hinder, rather than aid the cause of national union. Governed as they are by national ecclesiastical organizations, when such a question as that of slavery gets among them, all within certain geographical limits, must in the nature of the case be ruled into acquiescence with the sentiments of the majority, or forfeit their church privileges. Not so with us." He much prefers to wait for the Triennial Convention.²⁸

²⁷ *Religious Herald*, April 17, 1845.

²⁸ *Religious Herald*, May 1, 1845.

VII.

SEPARATION.

Appeals based on the good of the denomination, on consideration for Northern friends, on desire to thwart the abolitionists, on danger to the political union, availed not. Steps towards separation based on sectional lines went on. The men in the North who believed slavery a sin, but a sin that the South alone must answer for, could no longer control the men, who, considering slavery a sin, would have nothing to do with slaveholders or with societies that accepted the profits of slavery. The South was unwilling to work longer in societies where slaveholders were called sinners above their neighbors and "reviled as pirates and thieves." Neither North nor South had convinced the other by denunciation or argument. During 1844 had occurred the famous controversy between Wayland and Fuller carried on in the most courteous and Christian spirit. This discussion began by a letter of Dr. Fuller to the *Christian Reflector* in reply to certain anti-slavery utterances which had appeared in that paper. Fuller sought to justify his position by statements in Wayland's *Elements of Moral Science*.¹ The resulting correspondence was published in both northern and southern papers. The South was not convinced that Dr. Wayland had proved that slavery was prohibited in Old or New Testament. If this was the best the North could do, then it could not make out a case for declaring non-fellowship with slaveholders. Wayland had not decreased the growing sensitiveness of the South; nor had Fuller lessened the increasing excitement at the North.

¹Newman: *Baptist Churches*, p. 443; Cuthbert: *Life of Richard Fuller*, Chap. 18.

The result of the discussion was to make each side more strongly of "the same opinion still" rather than to produce any change in their views. The South was more unanimous in accepting Dr. Fuller as their champion than the North in accepting Dr. Wayland. This was but natural, since Dr. Wayland, while commending the "courtesy, Christian urbanity and calmness under provocation" which in a remarkable degree characterized the conduct of the southern members of the Philadelphia convention, had called the tone of the abolitionists "fierce, bitter and abusive." He held that their press had "too commonly indulged in exaggerated statements, violent denunciations, coarse and lacerating invective."²

The men in the non-slaveholding states who had preferred to fellowship the slaveholders of the South rather than the abolitionists at the North could after 1844 no longer have their choice. They must work with the latter.

The Augusta Correspondent of the *Charleston Mercury* of May 7th, in writing of the approaching convention, has the following, "If there is one hope left of preserving the *union* of the Baptist churches, which we hope there is, no doubt they will avail themselves of it. They can not be rash or fanatical. They love the church too much; they love the political union too much; the state, the government with all its glorious associations. They know too well how deep an impression these religious divisions make. They know how little is to be expected from any other *union*, if the union of Christians fail. The odium of a ruptured church and state will not be with them. All the fearful responsibility will be thrown upon

²In 1845, Rev. C. P. Grosvenor prepared a review of the correspondence of Messrs. Fuller and Wayland which was later published at the request of the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. This was a defence of the abolitionists from the criticisms of both Wayland and Fuller.

the North, and the future historian as he contemplates the ruin, will marvel at the infatuation which could tear down so fair a fabric."³

On May 8, 1845, an enthusiastic body of delegates from Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Kentucky, numbering three hundred seventy-seven, met in Augusta, Georgia. Dr. W. B. Johnson of South Carolina became president and Hon. W. Lumpkin of Georgia, and Dr. J. B. Taylor of Virginia, vice-presidents.⁴

Messrs. Jeter and Taylor of Virginia, and Campbell of Georgia, having just returned from the meeting of the General Board of the Triennial Convention in Providence, expressed their belief that the decision of the Acting Board would be sustained, was already virtually sustained by the General Board. A committee was appointed to draw up a preamble and resolutions in relation to the purpose of the Convention. Dr. Richard Fuller was made chairman, and the other members were M. T. Mendenhall, South Carolina; J. A. McKean and W. Crane, Maryland; T. W. Snyder, District of Columbia; J. B. Jeter and T. Hume, Virginia; R. McNabb, North Carolina; B. M. Sanders and C. D. Mallary, Georgia; A. Tavis and Gen. E. D. King, Alabama; Isaac T. Hinton and R. Holman, Louisiana; Isaac McCoy, Kentucky.

On May 9, the following report of the committee was unanimously adopted:—"The committee to whom it has been referred to report a preamble and resolutions can not but express their profound sense of the responsibility resting upon your body at the present eventful crisis, as the integrity of the nation, the interests of truth, the sacred enterprise of converting the heathen, are all involved in your deliberations. That this convention was

³ 68 *Niles*, 187.

⁴ Riley: *The Baptists*, p. 210; *Baptist Miss. Magazine*, 25 :246.

imperiously demanded must be apparent to all. The Boston Board have in their reply to the Alabama resolutions most clearly and unnecessarily exceeded their powers and violated their trust. It is a question admitting no debate that the Triennial Convention was formed on the principle of perfect equality of members from the south and north. And, what is all-important, the very qualifications of missionaries are prescribed by the original constitution of that Convention—the fifth article providing that such persons as are in full communion with some regular church of our denomination, and who furnish satisfactory evidence of genuine piety, good talents, and fervent zeal for the Redeemer's cause, are to be employed as missionaries.

Besides this, too, the declaration of the Board that 'if any one should offer himself as a missionary, having slaves and should insist on retaining them as his property, we could not appoint him,' is an innovation and departure from the course hitherto pursued by the Triennial Convention, such persons having been appointed; and lastly, the decision of the Board is an infraction of the resolution passed the last spring in Philadelphia, and the general board at their late meeting in Providence has failed to reverse the decision.

Amid such circumstances, your committee esteem it absolutely necessary that the friends of the constitution of the Triennial Convention, and the lovers of the Bible, shall at once take their stand, and assert the great catholic principles of their constitution and of the word of God. Your committee, therefore, submit the following resolution as embodying all that they are now prepared to suggest to your body."

Resolved, That for peace and harmony and in order to accomplish the greatest amount of good, and for the

maintenance of those scriptural principles on which the general missionary convention of the Baptist denomination of the United States, was originally formed, it is proper that this convention at once proceed to organize a society for the propagation of the gospel."

An animated debate followed. Dr. Jeter said he had been a conservative, so much so, indeed, as to be considered by some of his friends as leaning to the North. He was now in favor of a separate organization, and the more he reflected on the subject the difficulties which at first presented themselves to his mind vanished, and he believed the cause of God would be promoted thereby. In the course of his remarks he read an abstract from a letter of Dr. Wayland to himself. "You will separate, of course, I could not ask otherwise. Your rights have been infringed. I will take the liberty of offering one or two suggestions. We have shown how Christians *ought not* to act, and it remains for you to show us how they *ought* to act. Put away all violence, act with dignity, and firmness, and the world will approve your course."

Mr. Fuller explained the effect of the division. "It did not divide the Baptist Church; that could not be separated; it was independent and republican, having no general head, and only associated for a general purpose. It was this association which was proposed to be severed."

There was some question whether the claim that refusal to appoint a slaveholder was an innovation and departure from the course hitherto pursued by the Triennial Convention, such persons having been appointed, could be sustained. In the case of Jesse Bushyhead, the fact that he was a slaveholder at the time of his appointment, was probably not known to the Board. In the case of Brother Rennoldson, Brother Cone's statement at the

annual meeting of the Board that he was a slaveholder at the time of appointment and known to be by the Board, was confirmed by Elder H. Posey (Georgia) and Elder Hinton (New Orleans).

On May 10th a constitution was presented. The title of the new organization was the Southern Baptist Convention: the object, to promote Foreign and Domestic Missions. . . "and to combine for this purpose such portions of the Baptist denomination in the United States as may desire a general organization for Christian benevolence that shall fully respect the independence and equal rights of the churches." . . .

The management by Boards "shall be in strict accordance with the constitutional provisions adopted by the Convention, and such other instructions as may be given from time to time." The constitution was copied after the constitution of the General Convention but with greater concentration. The boards established were simply committees annually chosen, and the one convention united the work previously done by the General Convention and the Home Mission Society. Richmond, Virginia, was selected for the location of the Foreign Board, and Marion, Alabama, for the Domestic Board. A resolution for separation from the Publication Society was tabled. Dr. Curtis, Dr. W. B. Johnson, Dr. Fuller and Elder Mallery were made a committee to prepare an address to the Baptist denomination in justification of the stand taken.

On Monday, May 12, all other important questions were unanimously decided. It was held that separation was necessary, politic and just, since the South had been treated with injustice and its rights infringed. The editor of the *Religious Herald* says, only kindly feelings were expressed towards Northern brethren. We hope "henceforth the only strife between North and South

will be which shall do most toward promoting the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom and the salvation of their fellowmen."

The Board of Domestic Missions was instructed to take all prudent measures for the religious instruction of the colored population.

It was voted that "the Foreign Mission Board of this Convention be instructed to communicate with the acting board of the Baptist Triennial Convention in reference to any claim we may have upon the Convention, or any claim which that body may have or think they have upon us, and that the said Board report fully to this Convention at its next meeting." The Foreign Mission Board was authorized "to enter into any equitable and prudent arrangement with the acting Board of the Triennial Convention, to take a portion of its missions under the patronage of the Southern Convention."⁶

At the close of the Convention appeared the address—"To their brethren in the United States, to the Congregations connected with the respective Churches, and to all Candid Men," which would explain "the origin, principles and objects of the division," in the missionary operations of the American Baptists. This disunion involves only the Foreign and Domestic Missions. Northern and Southern Baptists are still brethren, they differ as to no articles of faith.

I. The history of the General Convention is reviewed and the constitutional provision as to qualifications of missionaries given. "An evil hour arrived. Slavery and anti-slavery men began to draw off on different sides in the last two Triennial Conventions." The nobler spirits on both sides endeavored to meet this. The resolution of 1844 is quoted. Within a few months the Acting Board adopted a rule making a new qualification for appoint-

⁶ *Religious Herald*, May 22, 1845.

ment. It placed itself in direct opposition to the Convention. Several of the churches hoped that by the last annual meeting at Providence, the Acting Board would be brought to see the grievous wrong they had inflicted. "The Managing Board was affectionately and respectfully addressed on the subject and was entreated to revise and reverse the obnoxious interdict. Alas! the results were contemptuous silence as to the applications made, and a deliberate resolve, expressing sympathy with the Acting Board and a determination to aid them."

II. The principles of the Southern Baptist Convention are conservative, also equitable and liberal. We propose "to do the Lord's work in the ways our father did it." The constitution is precisely that of the original union. "We use the very terms as we uphold the true spirit and great object of the late 'General Convention of the Baptist Denomination of the United States.' It is they who wrong us who have receded."

III. "Our objects then are the extension of the Messiah's kingdom and the glory of our God. Not disunion with any of His people, nor the upholding of any form of human policy or civil rights." "With the sons of Ethiopia among us stretching forth their hands of supplication for the Gospel, to God and all His people, "we have 'shaken ourselves from the nightmare of a six years' strife about words to no profit' for the profit of these poor perishing and precious souls." . . . In parting with beloved brethren and old co-adjutors in this cause, we could weep, and have wept for ourselves and for them; but the season as well of weeping as of vain jangling, is, we are constrained to believe, just now past. For years, the pressure of men's hands had been upon us far too heavily. Our brethren have pressed upon every inch of our privileges and our sacred rights, but this shall only urge our gushing souls to yield proportionate-

ly in their renewed efforts to the Lord, to the Church Universal, and to the dying world; even as water pressed from without rises but the more within." Even the 'passing calamity of division' may work to the glory of God and the good of the world."⁷

On May first at Providence was held the meeting of the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. They adopted the following report from a committee on the Alabama inquiries and the reply of the Acting Board:— "The committee to whom was referred the correspondence between the Alabama State Convention and the Acting Board report their views.

I. The spirit of the constitution of the General Convention, as well as the history of its proceedings from the beginning, render it apparent that all the members of the Baptist Denomination in good standing, whether at the North or the South are constitutionally eligible to all appointments emanating from either the Convention or the Board.

II. While this is the case, it is possible that contingencies may arise in which the carrying out of this principle might create the necessity of making appointments by which the brethren of the North would, either in fact or in the opinion of the Christian community, become responsible for institutions which they could not, with a good conscience sanction.

III. Were such a case to occur, we could not desire one brethren to violate their convictions of duty, by making such appointments, but should consider it incumbent on them to refer the case to the Convention for its decision. All which is respectfully submitted in behalf of the committee.

F. WAYLAND, Chairman.

⁷*Religious Herald*, May 29, 1845; *Liberator*, May 30, 1845; Newman: *Baptist Churches*, 450-3; *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, 25:150; *Religious Herald*, May 8, 1845.

Resolved, That we sincerely and deeply sympathize with our brethren of the Acting Board charged with the interests of the Missions during the recess of the Convention, in the responsibilities they sustain and the difficulties with which they are surrounded, and we now pledge to them our cordial co-operation and liberal support."

On Friday, the acting Board was instructed "if in their judgment the circumstances should require, to call a special meeting of the General Board at such time and place as they would judge expedient."⁸

A special meeting of the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions was held in Philadelphia on September 24, on the call of the Acting Board. There were two questions before them: First—Whether certain missions now under the patronage of the General Convention shall be transferred to the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention agreeably to the request of said Board, and if so, on what conditions.

Second—What reply shall be made to the inquiry of said Board touching any claim which the Southern Baptist Convention may have or suppose they have on the General Convention, or which the General Convention may have or suppose they have on the Southern Baptist Convention.

There was amicable discussion on this first question, it being agreed that each party—the missionaries and the two Boards—must concur in any transfer. The matter was referred to a committee consisting of Messrs. Wayland, J. M. Peck, Somers, Jeter and S. Peck.

The committee on claims on funds and property of the Triennial Convention was Messrs. A. Bennett, G. S. Webb, A. Day, G. Colby and B. Sears.

⁸ *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, 25:150-156; *Religious Herald*, May 8, 1845.

A committee on a special session of the Convention consisted of Messrs. Stow, Chase, Ide, Welch, W. R. Williams, Cone and Wayland.

At the evening session the committee on Transfer of Missions reported that no change could be made without the full consent of the missionaries, hence authoritative action on the part of the Board was impossible. The missionaries should have the choice of associations with which they should be connected. If any prefer to change relations to the Southern Baptist Board, "they should in the spirit of fraternal regard be allowed every facility of so doing."

The Committee on Claims held it "inexpedient either for the General Convention or for those who may have retired from it, to make any claims the one upon the other, respecting the property of the General Association on the one hand or the payment of its present debt upon the other." It was desired to avoid new questions possibly leading to new misunderstanding. Dr. Jeter knew of no reason why this mode of adjustment should not be satisfactory to the Southern Convention. The report was unanimously adopted.

On the next day, there was discussion of the state of the missions, financial management, and expediency and time of a special session of the Convention. It was agreed that "in view of the recent missionary organization at the South, and the new relations thence arising; also in view of the imperfections in the provisions" of the present constitution, a special session of the Convention should be called by the President for the third Wednesday in November.

The evening session was occupied in receiving the resignations of Messrs. Jeter, Ball and Hinton who joined the Southern Convention. This was a most painful occasion to men who had worked together for years.

Some preliminary arrangements were made for the special session of the General Convention, and a committee appointed to report on alterations in constitution and by-laws.⁹

Dr. Jeter wrote after the meeting that he was sure the financial plans would meet the approval of the South.¹⁰ The property and stocks about equaled the debt. There was a permanent fund of \$20,000, some western lands of uncertain value, some printing presses, etc. The debt was about \$40,000. The South sent missionaries to China, and Rev. Louis J. Shuck and Rev. I. J. Roberts at Canton withdrew to the Southern Convention.¹¹

The special meeting of the General Convention assembled in New York on November 19. President Wayland presided, and in the absence of the Secretary, Rev. James B. Taylor of Virginia, the assistant secretary, Rev. R. H. Neal, acted. The Secretary of the Board of Managers, read the resolutions of that Board authorizing the call for a special meeting and setting forth its purposes. The president read the circular which had been sent to the members of the Convention. Delegates were present from all the New England States, from New York, New Jersey and Indiana, with one each from Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and the District of Columbia. Bodies entitled to a certain number of delegates in 1844 were to have the same number at this meeting.

On Thursday, November 20th, the consideration of a new constitution was taken up. A committee of five was appointed to consider and report on the legal questions involved in the proposed change of our Missionary organization." Another committee was to inform the trustees of Columbian College of the contemplated change in the organization of the Triennial Convention, that they

⁹ *Religious Herald*, Oct. 2, 1845; *Baptist Miss. Mag.* 25:295. Cone, *Cone*, 309.

¹⁰ *Religious Herald*, Oct. 2, 1845.

¹¹ Newman: *Century of Baptist Achievement*, p. 184.

might make such other provisions as they might think proper for the future election of the trustees of said college.

The new constitution of the American Baptist Missionary Union was adopted, and all members of the late Baptist General Convention, present at the time of the adoption of this constitution, were to be life members. Others might become such by payment at one time of not less than \$100.

The committee on Legal Questions reported that the General Convention could neither in law nor equity be dissolved until the existing debt of \$40,000 had been cancelled or payment secured. As the members of the Convention had by courtesy voted themselves life members of the union, it was thought only just and proper for them to volunteer to raise \$100 each for the debt. This was done.

The Acting Board was instructed to secure the necessary act from the Pennsylvania legislature, changing the name of the organization and securing the rights, privileges and property belonging to the general convention; also an act from the legislature of Massachusetts, incorporating the American Baptist Missionary Union. When this had been done, the General Convention, at an adjourned meeting in May, 1846, would transfer books, property rights and duties to the American Baptist Missionary Union.

The Convention seems to have devoted itself to the necessary business and resisted all efforts to commit the new organization on slavery or to discuss what had taken place.¹² A motion to add to the qualification of officers "and not slaveholders" was lost. The same qualification for membership was proposed but failed.¹³ Dr. Cone in explaining the constitution said, "They did not want a

¹² *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, 26:1-11.

¹³ Goodell: *Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, p. 504.

missionary convention to be divided either by Mason and Dixon's line or any other line; and under the proposed constitution, no extraneous question of slavery or anti-slavery or temperance or anything else, apart from the one great question for which they were organized," entered. Any member could pursue his private predilections as he listed, but he could not bring them forward in the American Baptist Union for Foreign Missions.¹⁴

Dr. Colver of Boston explained his position on slavery and missions:—"He was an abolitionist and he supposed that he need not inform those who heard him of that fact. But he supposed his position might have been misapprehended. Abolitionist as he was, and deeply as he might sympathize with wronged and heathenized slaves of our country, yet his sympathies were alike called out by the degraded and perishing heathen abroad. He had never seen the time for a moment when the cause of anti-slavery was by him preferred before the cause of missions, nor had he ever desired to see the foreign mission engine diverted from its legitimate object into an anti-slavery engine. But the trouble was that slavery had thrust itself into the missionary engine and impeded its progress, and he had labored *to get it out*—at least this was his view of the subject; if he had been mistaken, it had been his misfortune. But the case was different now. They had got rid of slavery, and now, free from that disturbing element, he saw nothing to hinder them from harmoniously working in the cause of missions."¹⁵

A communication from the American Baptist Free Mission Society, on the subject of slavery was laid on the table. This society had decided a few months earlier to continue to support their organization until the old missionary societies were actually free from pro-slavery members.¹⁶ After this meeting of the convention, the

¹⁴ *Religious Herald*, Nov. 27, 1845.

¹⁵ *Baptist Record*, Dec. 3, 1845.

¹⁶ *Religious Herald*, May 29, 1845.

Free Missionary Society expressed their dissatisfaction with the new constitution, and their determination to adhere to their own organization. They could not countenance a society in which "any person of whatever sentiments, whether he be Unitarian, Universalist, Infidel or Atheist, or whatever be his personal characteristics, slaveholder, drunkard, libertine or if combining all in one, may become and forever continue a member by the payment of one hundred dollars."¹⁷

A resolution in the Convention, in commendation of the Acting Board was opposed as ill-timed by Messrs. J. M. Peck, Turnbull, Cone, Stow and Neal and was withdrawn.

A resolution, "That in the secession of Southern Baptists from the Baptist Triennial Convention, we recognize a division between free and slaveholding missions, which we wish on the grounds of Christian principle to remain perpetual as to the American Baptist Missionary Union," was lost.

The adjourned meeting of the Baptist General Convention was held in Brooklyn, May 10, 1840. The Acting Board reported the necessary enactments made.¹⁸ All right, title and interest in Columbian College was transferred to Columbian College.¹⁹ Officers of the Union and of the Board were elected and the next meeting of the Union and Board was set for May, 1847, at Cincinnati.²⁰

The separation was thus complete as far as Foreign and Domestic Missions were concerned.

The American and Foreign Bible Society had been able to maintain the position stated in its communication to the Alabama Convention, "In the midst of the changes,

¹⁷ *Religious Herald*, Dec. 18, 1845.

¹⁸ *Baptist Magazine*, 26:161.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26:219.

²⁰ *Baptist Record* of Nov. 26 and Dec. 3, 1845 contains accounts of the convention.

which have occurred and are perhaps to be anticipated in other organizations for religious and evangelical benevolence, it is the determined purpose of the Managers of the American and Foreign Bible Society to keep their original platform,—to welcome all, who approve the fundamental principle of our organization as our co-adjutors on terms of perfect equality.”²¹

There was some discussion of the need of a separate publication society because many Southerners had lost confidence in all Northern Boards.²² The idea of encouraging Southern enterprise and issuing Southern books and tracts to be used from the Delaware to the Rio Del Norte was presented. There was a natural fear of the difficulty of meeting peacefully the same men who had declared them “unfit to carry the gospel to the heathen.” If money and counsels could not be mingled in the two societies could they in the third and fourth? If the anti-slavery men did not press the slavery question in the Bible and Publication Societies they would be inconsistent, if they did, there would be further division.

The Publication Society was not divided, but it discontinued its organ, the *Baptist Record*. It was determined to maintain its neutral position regarding slavery. If it was connected with a weekly newspaper which must chronicle among other passing events the movements on this subject, it would, in spite of all efforts to be impartial, be liable to incur the charge of leaning to the one side or the other, and thus harm the society.²³

The Baptist Anti-Slavery Society and its organ, the Provincial Committee, were dissolved, since the object for which they were organized had been secured by the action of the Boston Board and the formation of other societies.²⁴

²¹ *Religious Herald* August 7, 1845.

²² *Ibid.*, September 11, 1845.

²³ *Religious Herald*, Sept. 4, 1845. *Baptist Record*, Nov. 26, 1845.

²⁴ *Religious Herald*, May 29, 1845.

VIII.

CONCLUSION.

An interesting notice of the division in the Methodist and Baptist Churches is found in the *Charleston Mercury* in May, 1845. "The two greatest religious sects in the United States sever a union that was thought to be secured by indissoluble ties—protected alike by whatever is most intimate in the social charities of life, most deep-rooted in the prejudices and most sacred in the aspirations of the human heart—and that separation too, marking the precise line between the slaveholding and the free states and growing out of the acknowledged impossibility of the two people acting peaceably together—and this startling event, pregnant with momentous consequences is allude to with as much indifference as a change of the wind or of the deputy postmaster of a country town. . . . In this contest of religion we have an entire and remediless severance of the Union—a division that henceforth creates in the two most numerous denominations of the country a Northern and a Southern religion and this separation brought about by no accident, no heat of the moment, but after much deliberation and unwearied efforts to reconcile the dissention—efforts that yielded only to a settled conviction that reconciliation was impossible."¹

It would be natural in closing this study of the division of this great religious denomination, to consider the effect on the church itself, on the movement for the emancipation of the slaves or against further extension of slavery, and on the political union of the states composing the North and South.

As far as the benevolent work of the Church was con-

¹ 68 *Niles* 188.

cerned, increased efforts seem to have been put forth by both North and South, and contributions for missionary purposes were greater than before.² The men who had devoted so much time and thought to preventing strife, or to fomenting it during the previous ten years, should have had more energy for other work in the denomination. The pleasure of abusing abolitionists on one side and slaveholders on the other, must have decreased when shooting must be at such long range. Friendly intercourse did not cease although at times carried on under difficulties.³ That the division was attended with so little bitterness was doubtless largely due to the fact that the leaders on both sides were Christians and gentlemen.⁴ The absence of any Central governing body in the Baptist Church made division easier than in some denominations.⁵ It was also very fortunate that no financial controversies arose.

² During the first thirteen years of the existence of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Convention, about seven times as much was contributed for this purpose as the same churches had given through the American Baptist Home Mission Society during the preceding thirteen years. Newman: *Baptist Churches*, p. 455; Newman: *Century of Baptist Achievement*, p. 184.

³ In 1846 Dr. Fuller was invited to preach at Madison University, Hamilton, New York, but was later advised not to come because of the abolition excitement and objection in the village of the South Carolina preacher. Fuller replied that they evidently needed the gospel. He went, preached and won all by his great charm. Cuthbert: *Fuller*, p. 134.

⁴ Such were Richard Fuller, Francis Wayland, W. B. Johnson, Spencer H. Cone, Jeremiah B. Jeter, John M. Peck, Wm. Colgate, James B. Taylor, Baron Stow, Barnas Sears, Basil Manly, George B. Ide, John L. Dagg and Daniel Sharp.

⁵ The editor of the *Niles' Register* writing at the time of the separation said: 'If we mistake not the Baptist Church. . . . is so organized as to allow of divisions. . . without any very serious disruption of their general church harmony. As a body of believers there is amongst them, great variety of doctrines and opinions which the members or churches consider themselves free to entertain according to the light and convictions of their own minds.' 69 *Niles* 139.

Lyell in his *Second Visit* considers the effect of the "north and south split" unfortunate in its effects on both masters and slaves. For the sake of "renouncing brotherhood with slave owners, the Northern churches have repudiated all communion with the great body of their negro fellow Christians." Before this, the slave "who joined the Methodist or Baptist Church, could feel that he was one of a powerful association of Christians," numbering brethren in northern as well as southern states.⁶ I am not sure how much the "humblest slave" knew of great associations of Christians. As far as religious care of the slaves was concerned the southern churches seem to have felt added responsibility since they did not desire outside help. The Alabama Convention in 1846 pledged its ministers and members to the use of "all reasonable diligence in their power, to improve the moral and religious condition of the slaves within their congregations and families" and to recommend the same subject to ministers and Christians throughout the entire South.⁷ The following year a report on Religious Instruction of the coloured people recognizes that the responsibility rests with Southern Christians.⁸ The same body in 1849 received a report on this subject. A brief quotation is of interest. "Differences of opinion in relation to them (the coloured people) and their position have rent asunder two of the largest denominations of Christians in the United States, a catastrophe from which other denominations have escaped only by their strength lying mainly either at the South or North, so as to afford an overwhelming majority on one side or the other. For many years past this race has been a source of contentions so momentous as

⁶ Lyell, *Second Visit*, I, p. 270.

⁷ *Alabama Baptist State Convention, Minutes*, 1846.

⁸ *Alabama Baptist State Convention, Minutes*, 1847.

to jar the very pillars of the constitution; and now whether we will or not, the black question mingles itself with every movement of public policy, with all our foreign relations, with our state governments, and our domestic arrangements. It enters our halls of legislatures, our churches, our houses and interlocks itself with all our interests." Christians must ask, Lord on such subject what wilt Thou have me do? The Bible does enjoin duties toward the coloured people. There is no longer any need of arguing with the North, which gives abuse for argument, insult for persuasion, stones for bread. They themselves desire "to think right and act right." A committee was recommended to award a prize for the best treatise on "Duties of Christian Masters to their Servants." Private subscriptions were to raise a premium of two hundred dollars.⁹

It is not probable that the separation tended to convert the southerners to anti-slavery views, but the discussions before the division had not had that effect. Doubtless many people in the North realized the strength of both anti-slavery and pro-slavery sentiment as never before. The breakup of the churches joined with many other causes in making people think about slavery, which was often all that was needed to make them oppose it.

There is a temptation to apply the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* to the relation between the division in the churches and in the nation. The Baptists who discussed separation in the years from 1840 to 1846 were impressed with its importance in national as well as church life. They repeatedly affirmed that one of the strongest bonds of the political union would be broken when there were

⁹Alabama Baptist State Convention, Minutes, Nov. 3, 1849. The importance of such action is realized when one remembers that one-fifteenth of the population of Alabama were Baptists and more than that proportion of wealth and influence. Alabama Baptist State Convention, 1848.

Northern and Southern churches. And yet many of the leaders admitted that an antagonism had grown up which rendered working together in peace no longer possible. Fortunately the Baptists were able to part in comparative peace; and while there were no longer national societies to serve as a bond of union for them and to some extent for the nation, the separation may have decreased occasions of friction and delayed rather than hastened national disunion. However, an attempt to discover the influence of the division of American Baptists upon the history of the United States lies beyond the field of this study.

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