

Three Overseas Contributors.

BARON STOW has been dead fifty-six years. His chief work was done in Boston, Massachusetts, as pastor for thirty-five years. He was a member of the executive of the Missionary Union, and played a leading part in the matters which led to the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention. The nature of his action may be judged from the letter printed here. This is made accessible by H. F. Cross, Croydon, England; Baron Stow hailed from Croydon, New Hampshire.

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DR. DARGAN belongs to the Southern Baptist Convention of America, of which he has been president. He has filled important pastorates, notably at Macon in Georgia: he has been professor of homiletic at Louisville, and has published a large history of preaching: he is now editorial secretary of the Sunday School Board at Nashville.

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JOSEF NOVOTNY is son of Henry Novotny, who founded the first Baptist church in Bohemia, 1885. Joseph was born next year, was educated at Prague, at the Hamburg Baptist seminary, at the Midland College in Nottingham, at the universities of Vienna and Geneva. He succeeded to his father's leadership in 1912, and five years later opened a fine church in Prague.

The Southern Baptist Convention.

ADDRESS BY ITS OFFICIAL DELEGATE, TO THE BAPTIST
UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, AT THE ANNUAL
MEETINGS, APRIL 30TH, 1925.

MR. PRESIDENT AND BRETHREN,—I am deeply sensible of the honour and privilege of bringing to you on this occasion the fraternal greetings of American Baptists, and especially of the Southern Baptist Convention. I recall with pleasure that many years ago, namely May, 1889, at Memphis, Tennessee, the Southern Baptist Convention received with great enthusiasm messengers bringing greetings from British Baptists. These were the Reverend Dr. Edward Parker, then President of Manchester Baptist College, and Mr. William Dale Shaw, who was also officially connected with the same institution. After all these years it gratifies me, as a Southern Baptist, to be the bearer of congratulations and good will to our brethren of the United Kingdom. We cherish a strong and hearty appreciation of your history and works through the modern centuries. We hold in sincere fraternal affection your great personalities, past and present. We have a joyful sense of our common message to the world to-day. We rejoice that a recent president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. E. Y. Mullins, is now President of the Baptist World Alliance, and well known to many of you. We are grateful for the achievements of your former distinguished and official secretary, Dr. Shakespeare, and we rejoice in the statesmanlike and efficient work of your esteemed Dr. Rushbrooke. Many of us enjoy greater or less acquaintance with others of the notable and distinguished members of your body. On account of all these things, and many others, I rejoice to bring you to-day a message of fellowship in the great work of our denomination around the world, while to me personally it is a privilege beyond words to share in that fellowship at this meeting.

A hasty glance at the history and present life of the Southern Baptist Convention may not be devoid of interest to you. We do not know who were the first Baptists to come from England to the colonies of North America, but early in the colonial history a few appeared in New England, later in Virginia, and then in the other colonies. You know that some of these men were persecuted in both of the oldest colonies. The attempt was made

to silence them by whipping and imprisonment, but Baptists have never been put down by persecution. You have heard the story of the Welshman, Roger Williams, and his brief but fruitful contact with the Baptists of New England. Through him and others a foothold was gained, and slowly the little band of Baptists founded churches in all of the original thirteen colonies. They had some correspondence with each other and with Baptists in England, but they were a weak and slowly-developing sect. The Great Awakening under the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, in the middle and latter part of the eighteenth century, contributed much to the growth of the Baptists. The Philadelphia Association came into being in 1707, and the Charleston Association in 1751. From the organisation of these historic bodies the general Baptist Movement spread. The beginning of American Foreign Missionary organisations about 1810 interested the Baptists, and when two of the missionaries sent out by the American Board of Commissioners became Baptists, the call of Providence was recognized. In order to care for these two men, Adoniram Judson, of Burma, and Luther Rice, and others who might follow, a general organisation of Baptists came into being. This was due largely to the labours of Luther Rice, who returned to America to stir the Baptists to united effort in behalf of Missions and education. Among the leaders who were profoundly moved by Rice were two South Carolinians, Richard Furman and Wm. B. Johnson. Thus was formed in 1814 the first General Convention of Baptists in the United States. It met every three years, and hence became known as the Triennial Convention. Its work was conducted by an executive committee in the interim of its sessions. This continued to the year 1845, when the split between Northern and Southern Baptists came over negro slavery. This is no time or place to discuss that great issue. Suffice it to say that the people of the South were involuntary, and many of them reluctant heirs to an institution fraught with much evil, but which the vast majority of slave-owners endeavoured to mitigate and to employ as far as possible for the benefit of the unfortunate slaves themselves. It is only necessary to explain briefly why the Southern Baptists withdrew and set up a work of their own. The sections were becoming embittered in the quarrel over slavery, and this ill-feeling affected their relations at every point, including religion. All Southerners of means were slave owners. This class constituted the leadership and wealth of the country. Question arose whether a Southern Baptist could be appointed as a missionary to foreign countries, especially Africa. After a controversy, the Committee declared its policy that no Southerner could be appointed. Let us heartily recognize the elements of

justice and right on both sides. The committee was no doubt conscientious, but was willing to accept the money drawn from the labour of slaves, though not to appoint as a missionary one who was in any way connected with the institution. In other words, Southern Baptists were asked to contribute their full share of the expenses, but were denied personal representation on the foreign field. Southern Baptist leaders decided to withdraw and set up a convention of their own. Accordingly, in the city of Augusta, Georgia, in May, 1845, a number of representative Baptists in the Southern States, gathered and formed the Southern Baptist Convention for fellowship and co-operation in the work of missions at home and abroad.

It is impossible to trace, even briefly, the history of the body. It needs only to be said that it began and carried on its work with fine prosperity for fifteen years, when the great Civil War arose over political issues, and for four years the country was racked by that fearful strife. In 1865; just twenty years from their organisation, and after the terrors of war, the impoverished Baptists of the South once more met in convention to see what could be done to revive and carry forward their crippled missionary work at home and abroad.

From then until now the body has enjoyed steady, though at first very slow, growth. The meetings were made annual, and every year from 1866 until the present the Southern Baptist Convention has met. Long years of poverty and struggle followed the Civil War. Many brethren in both sections of the country desired that there should be a reunion with the Baptists of the North, and various proposals looking to that end were from time to time submitted and considered. But the issue was finally decided at the meeting of the Convention in 1879, at Atlanta, Georgia. A motion to appoint a commission to consider closer fellowship with the Northern Baptist Societies was overwhelmingly voted down, and the Southern Baptist Convention decided, under the help of God, to keep their separate organisation and work. There was little or no ill-feeling. It was simply deemed better for all parties that the independent and self-regulating Southern body should maintain its own existence. Time has justified the wisdom of that decision.

With that question settled, the poverty-stricken Baptist churches of the South set out upon a new and prospering course. The work of Missions at home and abroad, and of encouragement to educational, benevolent, and other Christian enterprises, has gone steadily on. The Women's Missionary Union Auxiliary to the Convention came into being, and a vast and glorious work has been developed among our sisters. The Baptist Young People's Union for the South was formed, and the movement

for local unions in the churches has had a great and beneficent growth. The Sunday School Board was founded in 1891, and has had a phenomenal success in the development of Sunday-school and other publications, and the encouraging of Sunday-school work throughout our territory. More recently Boards have been formed for the aid of aged ministers and for the development of education, so that now the work of the Convention has grown more complicated and powerful with the years. We may say that the period from 1866 to 1919 is the distinctly marked epoch of slow but successful growth into a position of vast power and prospect. With 1919 the Convention entered upon still a new era of its existence, for in that year, at Atlanta, Georgia, again, and just forty years after the decision to remain separate, a new movement was put on which has greatly developed and unified our Baptist work. This was the launching of what we have called the Seventy-five Million Dollar Campaign.

By this time great material prosperity had come to the stricken South. It was no longer proper to speak of the poverty of the Southern States. Baptists shared in this prosperity, and their number had grown astonishingly through evangelism and the growth of churches in the recent years. But gifts to missionary and other religious causes had been woefully behind what they should have been. We had got so accustomed to being poor that we did not realize how rich we had become. But somehow in that meeting there came a divine movement, a breath of power from on high, and a strong committee in consultation determined on a new development. They brought to the Convention a proposal that the Baptist Churches of the South should raise within a five year period the great sum of \$75,000,000.00 for the work of the Convention, especially its Home and Foreign Missionary Boards. It was a momentous occasion. A feeling of joy and happiness ran high. The high prices of products on account of the World War made everybody feel wealthy, and this along with the religious fervour produced too much optimism. Yet, under forceful management, the vast sum was promised in the fervour of a great campaign. Soon prices began to fall, a period of depression ensued, and the shadow even of a financial panic was felt. Many subscriptions had been hastily and perhaps thoughtlessly made, and at the end of the period, instead of \$75,000,000.00, we found we had raised \$58,591,713.69. Though we have fallen short of the goal which we had set for ourselves, and though many feel grieved and ashamed that we did not reach the mark, it is proper to say that except for the financial gap between promise and fulfilment, the movement has been in itself a great and powerful stimulus to our work. The amount itself is a large one. It is many times over what we had ever done in

any previous five years of our history. It made possible the enlargement of our work in every branch. It helped to quicken the sense of fellowship and of solidarity in our vast host of church members. It brought weak churches into line and strengthened those that were strong. Incidentally, there was much religious zeal and fervour, and the spirit of evangelism was awakened. More souls were converted, and more members added to the churches annually than ever before in our history. One cannot doubt that when the depression which we are now suffering from, and reaction passes by, that great movement will have left a permanent and inestimable influence for good upon every phase of our work.

The territory of the Southern Baptist Convention includes seventeen States of the Union and the District of Columbia. In three or four of these the alignment is divided. Some of the churches in Southern Illinois co-operate with us. Some of those in the District of Columbia belong to the Northern Convention, and some also in the State of Missouri. The line is not sharply drawn. Churches are free to co-operate as they may desire. The number of churches co-operating with the Southern Baptist Convention in 1923 was 26,843, members 3,175,409, Sunday schools 20,412. Besides these, the negro Baptists in the South had 23,035 churches, with a membership of 2,971,268. Besides these, there are some 140,000 churches which do not co-operate with either of these bodies, and there are various smaller groups that carry the name of Baptists. The total Baptist strength in the South, therefore, probably amounts to 60,000 churches, with a membership of 6,500,000. This means one Baptist to every 5.7 persons in the South. About half of the entire Baptist membership in the South is, therefore, represented in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Of this great multitude it must be frankly admitted that a large majority is in some respects a liability rather than an asset. This will appear from the statement in the report of a Committee of the Convention last year that 88.5 per cent. of all our churches are situated in the open country, or in villages of less than one thousand inhabitants. Besides that, many of the churches in our larger towns and cities are weak and struggling suburban or mission churches. The great problem among Southern Baptists to-day is how to enlist into active denominational life this vast host of retarded, backward, uninformed, and in some cases even illiterate church members. We are persuaded that a condition like this does not exist anywhere else in the world. Our leaders are bravely facing this problem, and the best thought of the denomination for years to come will be directed to the development and enlightenment of our backward churches and people.

But we must not fail to consider the other side. Our institutions of learning are numerous, and for the most part efficient. We have two theological seminaries of high standing for the training of ministers, and an institute for the training of ministers and other workers. Many of the colleges have departments or chairs of Biblical and theological instruction. Not a few of our leading men have attained distinction in the fields of religious scholarship and of world leadership. Among our laymen are many strong and influential men. As already pointed out, our women, through their organised societies, and in other ways, are doing a colossal work for the Master at home and abroad. Thus on a survey of our actual condition, we have much to be thankful for, nothing to boast of, something to depress and occasion thought, but a vast deal to encourage, as we press on in the midst of many projects, difficulties, and problems to do our work for our Lord and for the world in a manner worthy of our principles and our goal.

The Baptists of the South are for the most part true to the great traditions that have come down to us. We hold the evangelical Christian faith without fear and without apology. We believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God, and our regulative authority for doctrine and practice. We accept with reverence and gratitude the revelation of God in the holy threeness of His being, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We hold to the deity and vicarious atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the fact of His resurrection, the reality of His lordship, and the promise of His coming. We recognise that upon us rests a great burden of responsibility and duty to make known these essential Christian truths to the world of mankind. We cherish with pride the hard-won but glorious doctrine of religious liberty for ourselves and for the world. We stand unabashed and unafraid before criticism, as our fathers did before persecution. We join with our Baptist brethren in every land and clime in defence of those principles which are irrevocably attached to the Baptist name. And we pray that our brethren here in Great Britain and Ireland may be led and strengthened of God, that we English-speaking Baptists may stand together and contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. Holding fervently and joyously to this great Baptist slogan, **LOYALTY TO CHRIST AND LIBERTY IN CHRIST**, let us solemnly lift our hearts to God in the words our divine Master has taught us, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

E. C. DARGAN.