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RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

by Herschel H. Hobbs

In retrospect, how shall we regard the recent sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention? The convention faced vital issues. It positioned itself as to its continuing faith in the Bible. It cited no institutions nor individuals. It refused to act as a censor. But it courteously requested its agencies to continue to operate within the context of its expressed faith, leaving each one free to determine its course of action within that framework. It referred some vital matters to the executive committee for study and recommendation to the 1963 session of the convention. It appointed a committee to study the 1925 statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" and to bring its report to the 1963 session.

And now, what of the prospect? The debating is past. The convention has spoken. It now remains for us to act in that light. And, as we act let us do so together in Christian love as we give ourselves unreservedly to the great task which God has placed in our hands. As we do so let us pray without ceasing. Let us pray for our agencies as they implement the broad policies and programs of our convention. Let us pray for the committee appointed to study the statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message." Let us pray for the committee on theological education as it studies the programs of our theological institutions in preparation of that section of the operations manual dealing with our institutions.

I am grateful beyond words for your trust as expressed in electing me for a second term as your president. I pledge you my best. But my best is not enough. As we face the future one can but exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Only in Christ may any of us be sufficient. Decisions affecting our convention for a generation may well be made during the next eleven months. We must make not our decisions, but His. May our prayer ever be that of our Lord, "...not as I will, but as thou wilt."

For each of us I would paraphrase the words of the apostle Paul. "Brethren, let us not count ourselves to have apprehended: but this one thing let us do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, let us press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."