

Ezra C. Gillentine, 1938-1940

E. C. Gillentine was born February 27, 1886 at Dorsey, Mississippi. He was raised in a Christian home and accepted Christ as His Savior on August 3, 1903 at the age of eighteen. He was baptized into the fellowship of the Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church.

By June of 1916 he was married and was living in Oklahoma. He announced his call to preach and preached his first sermon on June 10, 1916 at the Sharon Missionary Baptist Church, Goteba, OK. That fall he enrolled in Jacksonville College, Jacksonville, TX.

After finishing his schooling, he became involved in mission work in Oklahoma. He was a messenger from the First Baptist Church, Alex, OK. In 1923 he was a state missionary, and also editor of the **Oklahoma Baptist**. He was then called to the Judson Association in Mississippi to serve at their missionary, then he served as a missionary for the Yellow Creek Baptist Association in Alabama.

In the summer and fall of 1927 he assisted J. A. Scarboro and others in organizing a state association in Alabama. From 1928 to 1931 he served as Moderator of the Association. He also served as moderator of the Oklahoma and Mississippi state associations, and also the Yellow Creek Association in Alabama.

In 1918 he was Assistant-Moderator and in 1921 he was Assistant Recording Secretary for the General Association, and was a member of the Nominations Committee.

In 1926 he gave the "Report on Sunday Schools" and in 1928 he was elected to the Missionary Committee of the A.B.A. Later he was Vice-President of the American Baptist Association for ten years, and was elected as President in 1938. The meeting, held at Knoxville, has been referred to as the "Battle of Knoxville." It was at this meeting the issue of business management of the Sunday School Committee by C. A. Gilbert was debated. The issue was settled by electing Dr. J. E. Cobb, Secretary-Treasurer of Missions to also be Business Manager, thus removing Bro. Gilbert from the position he had occupied since 1918. Ben M. Bogard wrote of Bro. Gillentine's service as Moderator, "No man on earth could have done better under such difficult surroundings."^[xi]

In 1938 he moved from Laurel, MS to Shawnee, OK where he pastored until becoming Editor-in-Chief in 1941, succeeding Dr. D. N. Jackson, who had served since 1918. He continued in this office until June 30, 1955.

In his letter of resignation, he stated, "Since I came to the office five books have been added as follows: (1) The Adult, BTC, (2) The Help for the Teacher, S.S., (3) The Children's BTC, (4) The Work Book BTC, and (5) Leaflets for Tots, SS." He continued, "I have missed three meetings of the messenger body since its organization,... The fourteen years I have been permitted to serve the churches as their Editor-in-Chief have brought many blessings to me and I thank God for the privilege of serving the churches,..."

In addition to his editorial supervision, Dr. Gillentine wrote at least seven books and

pamphlets still in print.

Bro. Gillentine died on May 4, 1957 at the age of 71. The last few sentences of his book, **Baptist Doctrine**, read, "Just as sure as Jesus died and rose again, just that sure will those who believe in Jesus rise when He comes. That is Paul's conclusion of the matter. It is ours also. Thank God for the hope of the resurrection."ii[xii]

In his almost 38 years in the ministry, E. C. Gillentine served as pastor, evangelist, missionary, teacher, singer, and writer. He delivered about 17,000 sermons, wrote fifteen books and many tracts, edited the **Oklahoma Baptist** for several years, and for fourteen years (1941-1955) was Editor-in-Chief of the Sunday School and B. T. C. literature, and during that time did much of the writing, including the Teacher's Helps.

He was a brother to E. L. Gillentine, from Trilby, FL, who was a Vice-Moderator for the General Association in 1923.

--written by David Gregg and Robert Ashcraft

--copied from Ashcraft, Robert, History of the American Baptist Association, p. 561-562.

i[xi]L. D. Foreman and Alta Payne, *The Life and Works of Benjamin Marcus Bogard*, Vol. 2, p. 289.

ii[xii]E. C. Gillentine, *Baptist Doctrine*, 1949, p. 101.