



# SOUTHWESTERN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

BAPTISTS AND UNITY

LEE RUTLAND SCARBOROUGH

(1870–1945)

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**What We Have to Expect from Our Seminaries**  
(Editorial in *Watchman-Examiner*)

When we say “our,” we mean our Baptist seminaries. They were founded by our Baptist people, endowed with Baptist money, and are supplied with students for our Baptist ministry by our Baptist churches.

The relation between the denomination and its schools is reciprocal. There is obligation on both sides. In recent years the rights of the seminaries have been much emphasized. The right of “academic freedom” has been much exploited, and sometimes with rather vague notions as to what is involved in the phrase. But the mutuality of the relationship and obligation is easily seen when we ask a few pointed questions. Has the denomination a right to establish and maintain theological schools? Has it a right to expect that the schools that it supports shall be exponents of the life and ideals of the denomination? Surely no one will answer these questions in the negative. We return to our question, “What has the denomination a right to expect of our theological seminaries?” There are several things to be said in reply.

First of all, our seminaries should rank with the very best in scholarship and teaching ability. The members of their faculties should be alert men, keeping in vital touch with the needs of the ongoing kingdom. They should speak with authority in the realm of scholarship. In the true sense they should be open-minded men. But openness of mind is merely a condition to something higher. An open mind achieves little or nothing as long as it is merely open. The mental state must become static before it can become efficient. Scholarship as a mere quest for truth must become conviction before it can achieve power. The denomination should enable its seminaries to rank with the best. No Baptist student should have any vital excuse for attending a non-Baptist seminary.

Again, we have a right to expect that our seminaries will produce the practical results required for denominational and Christian efficiency. The churches want and need preachers, men who can feed the flock of God. They want and need pastors who can tend the flock. They want and need men who will be evangelists, soul-winners, personal workers, men who

know how to bring truth home to the individual heart. The churches need and want executives, men who are not lost in the rather complex task of organizing and directing church and Sunday school. The denomination also needs leaders, men of vision, of courage, forward-looking men, who see the latent forces around them and who know how to call them forth, and who are willing to give time and thought to great denominational enterprises outside their own local churches.

These are some of the practical results called for by the denomination. It is for these ends seminaries were founded. It is for them they are maintained. Some seminaries seem to forget them. They pursue other aims, academic and remote from the realities and urgent tasks of the churches. A keen observer remarked a while ago that "some seminaries are the fittest place to unfit men for the ministry, and the unfittest place to fit men for the ministry that can be imagined."

This leads to the next requirement. Our seminaries should turn out men with positive convictions. The denomination has a right to expect this. Here we mention a fundamental principle that is often overlooked. Education, and especially theological education, is as significant for what it trains a man from as it is for what it trains him to. Few theological teachers perhaps will attack directly the deity of Christ, the atonement, the resurrection, the second coming of Christ, and related facts of the gospel. But some so ignore them or so stress other things that these drop out of the student's consciousness. Apparently they are regarded as minor matters. The redemptive element of Christianity thus passes away. It becomes a form of ethical culture, one of the many human attempts to find God, but with no finality or unique authority. A Christianity without an atonement, without redemption from the guilt and power of sin, without the supernatural whatever else it may be, is not the Christianity of the New Testament.

We believe this point needs to be greatly emphasized today. Negation rather than affirmation has been the rule in many learned circles during the last few decades. The result has been that theological thinking has often lost the positive note. There are some writers who produce lengthy books without indicating clearly at any point their own views. They are obsessed with the ideal of "disinterested" methods of study. Intellectual neutrality is their guiding star. Not only is there no jangling and blatant theological asseveration, but no faintest pianissimo of doctrinal emphasis. The fog bank is preferred to the granite rock. In their reaction from extreme forms of dogmatism many have lapsed into indifferentism. Genius is employed in the herculean task of avoiding giving offense. Ponderous and learned treatises are put forth to show that nothing is worth contending

for. Many seem to think that protest against the ancient and accepted is a suitable nourishment for man's spiritual life.

This is modern scholasticism in the realm of theology. It is so negative and fruitless that it is a wonder it has so long survived. It is a survival in theology in the midst of great forward movements towards constructive thought in every other branch of science. Dogma, in its proper and true sense, prevails in chemistry, and botany, and astronomy, and biology, and all other departments of science. Results, formulated in definite statements, laws and principles, are declared in all the sciences. Yet with some theology is still

An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry.

Now the denomination has a right to expect that our theological seminaries will sound the positive note. The great facts and truths of religion must be interpreted. We must have some positive and definite views. Otherwise we might as well call home our missionaries and abandon our great enterprises. We cannot define or defend or propagate an invertebrate gospel. We are not obliged to assume that our dogmatic formulations are infallible. But we certainly cannot safely assume that they are unnecessary. The glory and power of the pulpit have been its positive ministry to man's spiritual life. The denomination surely has a right to demand that its seminaries "do their bit" in the endeavor to preserve the glory of that positive message and ministry.

Again, Baptists have a right to expect that Baptist seminaries will preserve the Baptist message. We have no disposition to underestimate the value of certain forms of co-operative effort among the denominations. Unquestionably there are some tasks that may well be performed by the combined effort of the various denominations. But these are of a kind which do not affect denominational integrity. Our Baptist mission to the world is not ended. So long as sacramentalism and sacerdotalism and infant baptism prevail in a great part of the Christian world, and so long as centralized ecclesiasticisms rule over the spiritual lives of men the Baptists will have a mission. And when these evils are removed Baptists will still have a mission to preserve the supreme values to which they have been committed from the beginning.

At the core of our message is the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is this which gives meaning to every one of our distinctive teachings. Baptism, in its form and spiritual significance, finds its true interpretation in the light of this great truth. The spirituality of the church is central in our doctrine

of the church, and this carries a whole group of other vital truths along with it.

We must face the facts as they are. Any theological school which attempts to play a non-denominational role and retain the Baptist name and claim Baptist patronage has broken away from its true connections. Not until Baptists abandon their own distinctive mission can their theological seminaries do so. If the latter are to be the true exponents of the life of the people they represent they are bound to recognize the moral obligations imposed upon them by the relationship. The fact is that the denominations are doing the bulk of the work of the kingdom today. Non-denominational agencies have nothing like the momentum and spiritual effectiveness of the great denominations. This simply means that Christianity must be conceived clearly and definitely if it is to be propagated effectively.

We may return then to our question: "What have Baptists a right to expect of their theological seminaries?" and say that the answer to it turns upon the answer to another question, viz., Shall the Baptists abandon their mission as a distinct people and ignore in the future all the particular truths which have made them significant as a factor in the Kingdom of God? And this may be resolved into yet another question: Can Christendom safely dispense with the Baptists as a separate people? And this again implies the question: Are churches practicing infant baptism and hierarchical in polity sufficient exponents of the spiritual life of mankind? We might go on piling up questions. Was the fundamental principle of the Reformation a mistake? Are "the soul's autonomy and man's direct access to God" outgrown errors or are they eternal truths?

Baptists stand at a parting of the ways. We may go on to a greater career than ever as a people, or we may evaporate in indifferentism and doctrinal negations. Our seminaries are the most potent factors we have for deciding which road we shall take. And we should add also that in the foreign missionary fields in China, India and elsewhere the conditions and problems of the early Christian centuries reappear in a new form. Shall the old perils of infant baptism and sacramentalism be allowed to honeycomb the work of foreign missions without any corrective influence from the Baptists? The repetition of the early disaster to New Testament Christianity is a possibility. Shall Baptists seek to prevent it by insisting upon their spiritual message in the foreign as well as the home field? Our seminaries must in large measure answer the question, and the denomination expects an answer in harmony with our time-honored faith and practice.

### Some Editorial Notes on the Union Question

From all accounts English Baptists have been greatly hurt by their joining up with the Union forces. They have emasculated their message. They have gained nothing and lost much.

It is confidently believed by many people, both North and South, that Northern Baptists are losing by their combination with the Unionists. Where Baptists fail on a distinctive message and an unshaken loyalty to Jesus Christ and where they smother their convictions and join up with other religionists at the cost of the truth, they injure their mission and cripple their power. It is greatly feared that many of the strong pulpits of the North will be led away into the Union Movement, but it is believed that thousands of faithful Baptists in the North will remain true to the old standards and be loyal to Jesus Christ.

It looks as if Southern Baptists will stand firm on the Union question and that this new and widespread Movement will not make much headway, either among the Baptists or the Methodists of the South. Southern Baptists and Southern Methodists have ever during their history been evangelistic and spiritual in their church life. It seems that where the fires of evangelism burn low conviction of the truth is more and more spineless and the people lose their grip upon the fundamentals. If a great wave of New Testament evangelism should break out in all the centers where the churches and pulpits are devoting themselves to Unionism, the pendulum would swing the other way. A sound grip upon the old doctrines would take the place of maudlin sentiment. It is to be hoped that the South will remain true to its convictions of the truth in spite of the great combine frame-up of the Union Movement.

Mr. John R. Mott is doing his best, through the YMCA, to unionize the churches of the United States, as he is trying to use the mission agencies of the foreign field to unionize the churches there. It is supposed and believed that he has immense wealth back of these unionizing efforts. He has greatly advanced this Movement by the work of the YMCA in the war. He has played, and will play, upon the war sentiment and the patriotism of the people to turn the hearts of men away from the convictions which they hold dear on religion. The YMCA has done a noble service in the past for the young men of the cities, and it rendered a noble and worthy service in parts of its ministry to the soldiers. It is believed by many that it gave too much attention to the social and entertaining features and too little attention to the teaching of the Bible and preaching of the gospel, and the winning of men to Christ. There are noble exceptions to this, because in some camps, by the leadership of the YMCA secretaries, much spiritual work was done among the men and many thousands were led to Christ. It

is a tragedy that the YMCA should have gone into the business of selling cigarettes and other things that tear down the bodies and the souls of men. It is not believed in many quarters that Mr. Mott will be able to put over his unionizing notions in the South, even though the YMCA and other forces are backing him.

Dr. Goodell of New York City, a Methodist minister, with a great evangelistic heart, seems to be the head of the evangelistic side of the Federated Church Union Movement; and it seems, from the circulars and the literature he is sending out, his plan is to honeycomb the whole country with Union evangelists, getting the strongest men possible and going out to hold Union meetings and spreading the propaganda of Unionism. Those among the churches who have convictions and love the truth of God and are loyal to the teachings of Jesus Christ, will find much embarrassment as they join up in this evangelistic Movement. Baptist pastors everywhere should be on their guard against this Union propaganda, which will come in the disguise of Union evangelism. We are not going to meet this Movement by resolutions, denunciations, nor mere talk of any kind. The only way to meet it is with an aggressive program, large enough, spiritual enough, and soul-saving enough, and widespread enough, to meet the situation.

The State boards of missions and the Home Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, and every other organization which is in a position to do it, should put afield a large force of strong evangelists. There ought to be held in our cities simultaneous campaigns for soul-winning in Baptist churches; and the Baptist churches of the cities should combine in a great forward Baptist campaign for soul-winning. Nothing but a forward-looking, strong program will meet the situation. The Texas Convention has set an example for Baptists everywhere. They have employed thirteen strong evangelists and put them at the centers, especially around their denominational institutions. These men are to go out in a great fashion to hold meetings and organize soul-winning campaigns. Unionism, spineless and convictionless, will find hard sailing where these men go.

The Union Movement does not go out with the idea of allegiance to doctrine and loyalty to the teachings of Jesus Christ. It goes on a spiritual camouflage of these doctrines. It asks the people to lay down their convictions of the truth. They propose for Unitarians, Christian Scientists, Jews, Catholics, Methodists, Baptists and all to lay down their former convictions and go into a church of scrambled religion. The church they would organize would sprinkle, pour and immerse. You would not have to claim any experience of grace to become a member. If you were opposed to baptism in any form or mode you could get in. You would neither have to have religious conviction nor moral character to be a member. You would have no distinctive doctrine to bind you. You would have to be led solely



by a desire to get together in some form of worship so that you would save money in church buildings and local expenses, and be more efficient, as they think. All this sort of molly-coddle talk is tomfoolery. It is against the strength of character produced by conviction and allegiance to the truth of God. I am for Unionism as far as men can unite on a conviction and a loyalty to the Word of God and Jesus Christ. I am not for a patched up, convictionless Unionism. Unless there is unity in faith, doctrine and practice there can be no union and successful effort following.

Christ laid down a program for uniting all people. It was that they should all repent of their sins, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and by open and public confession of their faith in Him, by a baptism which was an immersion in water, and by a union with His regularly constituted church, followed by a life of loyalty to Him and His truth as laid down in the New Testament, and of heartfelt and spiritual service for the winning of the world to the Savior and the building up of His glorious Kingdom. Any union of religion based on any other program is contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ, and cannot hold and will not hold together. If men cannot agree on the doctrines of the Word of God they should not unite in a church through which they propose to worship and serve God. But they can and should co-operate as far as their convictions of the truth will allow them, for the general good and uplift of humanity.

Dr. J.F. Love, Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, has written a great book on the Union Movement. It unfolds, somewhat, the history, method, motive, program and personnel of this Movement. I wish every Christian in the world could read this great book. The principles it enunciates are true and the program it outlines, by which Baptists should meet this Movement is a sane and a safe one. The foreign end of this Movement is one of the most difficult phases of it. Our missionaries have been embarrassed, on every mission field, by the advocates of Unionism. It is good that our Foreign Mission leader has in such a statesman-like and broad-spirited way set out the Baptist position at this critical time. The Southern Baptist Convention and many of the State conventions have taken high ground and expressed themselves very clearly upon this important matter.

Every missionary of the Southern Board should remain true to the position expressed by Southern Baptists. All the Baptist papers of the South are in accord with this view and the whole Southern Baptist Convention, practically to a man, stands firm. Dr. Love has written an epochal book. It will tremendously aid in cementing Baptist forces; and it presents an unanswerable argument to the people who stand for Unionism. It seems that Dr. F.C. McConnell's prophecy of years ago is fast coming true, that in the future there will be three denominations—the Catholics,



the Federalists, and the Baptists. Dr. Love has greatly clarified the whole Union Movement and has shown Baptists where they ought to stand. The Journal of Theology and the Southwestern Seminary back of it stand unmistakably and full length for Dr. Love's pronouncement and program.

*SWJT* Vol. 3 No. 1 (January 1919)

### **Rallying Around the Fundamentals**

Modern, current literature is filled today with a lot of pussy-foot talk by irresponsibles in religion. A number of men are seeking to be smart by trying to work out a plan for a new religion, which they say the soldiers will demand when they come back from the war-torn battle fields. These men say that our soldiers will not stand for the old methods and doctrines and the ideals set by the churches. They are saying that these soldiers having the sweep with the people will run out into corners and to isolation all the doctrinaires and sectarians who would try to put over on modern life the old things. They say they will demand new things. These men say there must be a reorganization of Christianity. The lines of demarcation, sectionalizing men in religion, must all be wiped out and a doctrineless Christianity must be put in its place. Men must have, they say, not great time-worn beliefs. All things must be constructed with a view to efficiency, economy, unity, brotherhood, etc. All this sort of talk pleases some; and, at least, satisfies the consciences of these voluminous writers, who have never known, doubtless, anything more than the form and letter of Christianity and have been ignorant of its power. My prediction is that a solid, stable civilization cannot be built on milk-sop and religious soup and spiritual unities, without convictions.

There are certain fundamental doctrines which are essential and imperative and absolutely necessary to the growth and development of a great Christian civilization. I mention some of these:

1. *The inspiration of the Scriptures. God's Word from lid to lid is inspired.* Men must believe this, if there is to be any reverence or a recognition of authority in religion. The Bible has made its unquestioned victories through the centuries. Those who have believed in its inspiration have been the founders and the promoters of movements which have molded and made the civilization of this day. The man who drifts from a confident trust in the inspiration of the Bible will sooner or later go to the scrap-heap, as an efficient worker in religion. His foundation is gone. There is no hope for him to permanent efficiency in the growing of souls and in the

establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. It is my deliberate belief that this fundamental will rally the world to its standards.

2. *The deity of Christ.* I do not mean His divinity. This is an essential fundamental to conquering character. Men must believe that Jesus was and is God's Christ, Himself both God and man, absolutely divine and perfectly human, sinless, born of the virgin, the very God of very God. Civilization cannot, it will not, be built to endure, with unbelief in this fundamental. Faith in the deity of Christ is essential for any people to attain the highest ideals. Any philosophy of life or theory of religion or program for world betterment which does not gather its forces around the great doctrine of the deity of Christ is born to die, and will go to speedy doom. There was nothing in the recent war, there is nothing in the reconstructive period, which is detrimental to, nor will demand that we do away with this fundamental.

3. *The third fundamental around which man's convictions must rally and in which their souls must believe is the doctrine of the depravity of man.* Any spiritual camouflage that mystifies or deceives or covers up the sin, deep-eyed, soul inwrought sin, of man is destructive to the fundamentals of civilization. The teaching of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, in its history, prophecy, in song and psalm, in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, everywhere, makes it plain that men are sinners, born in sin, conceived in iniquity, aliens from God, by nature the children of wrath, dead, lost, hopeless, Godless, Christless, depraved in the bent of their souls. Human experience and history verify this doctrine. The bloody, sinful train of man, in every place high and low, confirms this great doctrine. The soldiers will not believe that men are not sinners. They are coming back to America, not to pussy-foot on this doctrine. They know they are sinners; and they will have nothing to do with a religion that does not provide for deep sin. A gospel to suit sinning men must be a gospel that eradicates the roots and germs of moral depravity. Here, around this doctrine, the new religion must rally.

4. *Another standard of doctrine to which the world must come is the doctrine of the efficacy of Christ's blood to heal every moral disease, to cure every sick soul.* Ceremony will not do it; formalism, creeds, unities, federations and brotherhoods, and all that, will not suffice to take care of the souls of men. Calvary is the remedy for the world's malady. A stainless, sinless Christ died for the cruel skepticism and sin of depraved men. This was not a martyrdom, but a substitution, a sacrifice, an atonement, filling a broken place in God's law. The divine element in Christ took hold of the Father whose law had been broken and the human element of Christ taking hold of man, by His shed blood, brings God and man together in pardon and forgiveness. Man cannot be saved by patriotism, even that that died in

the trenches. Men cannot be saved by ceremony, nor ordinance, nor moral merit. They are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. The preaching needed in this new world and demanded by this new religion must rally around Christ's cross, confident of His deity, trustful of His sinless humanity, believing in the depths of soul in the saving efficacy of His shed blood.

5. *The fifth and last fundamental which I would mention, around which we must reconstruct this new and modern world, is salvation by grace, and by grace alone.* It must be pure grace, not works and grace, not grace and obedience, not part grace and part human merit, but grace alone, God-given grace, heaven-inspired grace, Holy Spirit applied grace, grace whose garment in every warp and woof is woven in heaven and by divine hands. Consistency in this preaching and conviction must be maintained. It will not do to preach salvation by grace and then spoil it by church government or church ordinances. We must remember that God's ultimatum to a lost world is Christ on Calvary and that He has hung on the two arms of the cross for the world's redemption. Men do not merit the mercy of God. Their salvation is God's pure gift.

Now, around these five fundamentals the forces of reconstruction should gather. Any unity proposed by any group of men, any church organization, that leaves out these five fundamentals will not unify a distracted world. Any federalization of religious organizations which does not take into account these fundamentals and base its hope of unifying and correlating the agencies of the Kingdom of God cannot and will not, I believe, receive either the benedictions of God's Word, or the blessing of the Triune God. Any organization which seeks to emasculate these doctrines cannot win. It was evidently these fundamentals, with others, which Paul spoke of when he said if even an angel from heaven preached any other Gospel "than that which I have given you, let him be accursed." These doctrines, confidently believed, spiritually preached, and loyally adhered to, will make over this old world and will bring in the unity demanded by the prayer of our Savior in John 17. The philosophy of materialistic Germany has failed. It failed, for one reason, because it left out these fundamentals.

A new philosophy and plan of life must be worked out by the thinkers of this new day. If it does not take into account, at least, these five fundamentals it, too, will go to the scrap-heap, when it is tried out in the crucible of experience. We should be done in this country with the whole of the German *Kultur*, and substitute in its place in educational and religious and political life in this country the *Kultur* of the New Testament and measure the garment of every modern movement, religious, by this standard. The Son of God dying an atoning death for a depraved humanity, bringing to them the grace of the Father's heart, coming through an inspired message in the Word of God, given out by a Spirit-filled Gospel

ministry, will bring the world back to God. Any other methods leaving out this will fail.

*SWJT* Vol. 3 No. 2 (April 1919)

### **Poisoning the Fountains of Truth**

Christ's churches are the most important institutions in the world. He gave them a definite form of government, a specific character of membership, set up in them the two ordinances, gave to them the great body of the truth found in the New Testament, set for them their officers, and committed to them the great task of winning the world to Him and building His great Kingdom. He says through His inspired apostles in 1 Timothy 3:15 that this organization which He set up and called His church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." He says this church was purchased by His blood; and in His spiritual economy He calls this institution His Bride. All this and many other things in the New Testament indicate that these spiritual organizations set up by Christ and established in many places by the apostles and which have for their successors these New Testament churches of today are the most important institutions in all the world. These churches are to keep, guard, and promote the ordinances. They are to propagate the gospel. They are to win souls. They are both the preservers and the heralds of the gospel truth. They are to establish Christ's Kingdom and to make Christ King in all the world. From any angle you look at these churches their importance is magnified.

All the institutions established by the co-operation of these New Testament churches—such as mission boards, benevolent institutions, orphanages, hospitals, schools, and so on—are of great importance; but of far greater importance are the churches back of these institutions. It is exceedingly bad when in any of these institutions promoted by Christ's churches there is false teaching; but far worse is it for false teachings to be carried on in the churches which are "the pillar and ground of the truth."

These churches are the very fountains of the life of the Kingdom of Christ. In Elisha's day, as recorded in 2 Kings 2:19–22, there is an incident described where the spring of waters which furnished the water to the city for its inhabitants to drink and for the irrigation of its gardens, orchards and farms was poisoned; and these waters had to be healed by the miraculous power of God through Elisha's word. The life of the people was endangered and the trees of the orchard cast their fruit because of the poison in the waters. Just as poisoned waters will destroy the life of a city, so will the poison in the fountains of truth in our churches cause spiritual death

and dearth and drouth to the life of the people. If we poison the spiritual waters that flow from our churches into the lives of the people, we cause death to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Since the churches through their teaching service are commissioned to teach the “all things” commanded by Jesus Christ, and since this instruction goes Sunday by Sunday and week by week into the lives of the young, how very important it is that these fountains of life be kept pure from the poison of erroneous and false doctrine. It is far easier for us to correct false teaching in our schools, because the schools are under the control of our conventions, than it is to correct false teachings in our churches, because the churches are independent and sovereign and you cannot reach the false teachers, even though they be the pastors of the churches, except through the members of the churches themselves. This gives great emphasis to the importance of the right training for our young preachers who are to be pastors of our churches.

### **Ways to Poison These Fountains**

There are a number of ways by which we can cast the poison of erroneous teaching into the very fountains of truth and life among our people. I mention some of them:

1. *By allowing the pastor of the church to assume the control and the management of the functions of a church;* for instance, when he licenses young preachers or when he appoints unordained men as deacons of the church and allows them to serve without the church ever having elected them or ordained them, or when he or a committee of the church issues letters to members desiring to remove their relations, or when he himself or through a committee dismisses them from the church fellowship, or commits other acts of maladministration contrary to the Word of God. This is an assumption of authority and partakes of the nature of a self-appointed ecclesiasticism and this conduct greatly poisons the life of the church.

2. *Another way by which the fountains of truth and life of our churches can be poisoned is by doing violence to the ordinances of Jesus Christ, in depreciating their value and emasculating their testimony.* This is done when a Baptist church receives baptism administered at the hands of some other organization than a Baptist church. If a Baptist preacher admits into the fellowship of his church Christians who have received baptism at the hands of pedobaptists, without requiring them to be baptized by a Baptist church, he violates the truth of God and is guilty of a heresy in ecclesiology which will eventually ruin the testimony of the ordinances and vitiate the witness of Christ’s churches. Such practice eats at the very heart of the life of Christ’s churches. Such a practice will not only injure the life of the

church practicing it, but will eventually poison the fountains of truth in all of our churches.

A pastor of one of the leading churches of Texas told me recently of a member from another Baptist church in Texas seeking admittance on a letter from this church, but when questioned as to her baptism she reported that she came to this other church on the baptism from a certain Campbellite church and had not been required to be baptized by this Baptist church. This pastor tells me that he promptly refused to admit this woman into the fellowship of his church. I think he did right.

There lies at this point a great danger and we should guard the fountains of truth from the poison that will come by the emasculation of the ordinances of Jesus Christ.

3. *Another way by which the fountains of truth can be poisoned is by a certain form of inter-denominationalism and unionism.* Here lies the great error in much of the inter-denominationalism and unionism that is broadcast in the world today. This was the crux of the matter in the heart of Southern Baptists when they refused to enter into the Inter-Church World Movement, because they believed that it involved a compromise of the truth that would eventually take the heart out of the fountains of our life in our churches. When a Baptist preacher seeks to carry his church into the Inter-Church World Movement, and when he brings into his church an inter-denominationalism and unionism which violates the ordinances and the authority of the church, he poisons the fountains of life. This has appeared to me to be one of the weaknesses of some of our brethren in the North, who are very strong on some of the fundamentals, especially those in theology, but by their practice of inter-denominationalism commit an egregious heresy in ecclesiology. A compromise on one phase of the truth of Jesus Christ will work death in the life of our churches. A spread of this form of heresy among the churches of our Southern Baptist Convention would soon bring the same destruction to the witness and power and life of these churches that it has done in other sections of the world.

Dr. Gambrell said before he died that one of the greatest perils to the life of the churches of Jesus Christ in recent years and at this time was the heresy in ecclesiology along the lines of inter-denominationalism and unionism, and along the lines of alien immersion. And this is the sort of thing that I have in mind in this article. We must guard the fountains of life everywhere. I do not believe that any preacher practicing these things will get very far in the fellowship of Southern Baptists; and the Baptist church which practices these things will sooner or later cease to be a Baptist church and lose its witness to the truth set forth by Jesus Christ in His Holy Word.

I urge the brethren everywhere to co-operate in guarding these fountains of truth. For, if our churches go wrong then we will have no remedy for the correction of error in our schools, mission boards, and other institutions. But so long as the fountains of truth are kept pure and loyal and true to the Word of God and the authority of Jesus Christ we will be able to correct false teachings anywhere else.

*SWJT* Vol. 6 No. 1 (January 1922)

### **Is Co-operation a New Testament Doctrine?**

The word “co-operation” means “working together.” In the scriptural sense it means working together in carrying out Christ’s world-will. It is a triangular doctrine. It has three sides, each *supporting* the other.

#### **God’s Side**

God’s side of this triangular doctrine has two sides inside and outside. The three persons in the Godhead work together with one another in proposing, proffering and promoting God’s world-program of redemption. The Father *gave* His Son to *die*, and His Spirit to *administer* and apply salvation and put over His Kingdom. The Son “emptied Himself,” gave His soul an offering for sin. The Holy Spirit, obeying the Father’s will, took the task at Pentecost and carries it on today, and will until the marriage supper of the Lamb and His holy *ecclesia*—the Bride. These three are one in plan, purpose, and work—a holy symphony of glorious co-operation. Not only do the *Three* in *One* work with one another in unbroken harmony and fellowship but they work with saved humanity in carrying out and forward their will in our task committed to us in the gospel’s trusteeship. “I am with you,” “in you,” “before you,” “behind you,” “for you,” “through you,” “by your side,” “holding your hand,” “even to the end,” are words ringing their triumphant and meaningful message of cheer, comfort and victory throughout every page of God’s Word. God does not want to go alone without us nor does He want us to go alone without Him in this the biggest task of the centuries. His co-operation with us is the stimulating hope of every hour of the way and the guarantee of success in all of our difficulties and tasks. This divine side constitutes the *base* of our triangular doctrine of co-operation.

#### **The Church Member’s Side**

The individual church member in the New Testament is a big somebody. He is God’s spiritual *unit* in His conquering army. He lays much stress on him, his character, his obedience, his pliability, his spirit, his



obligations, his duties. He is not a separate isolated unit. He is a social unit. He is the *basal factor* for God's multiplication table. He has vital means of connection and association. He has two spiritual hands, one to reach up for God and one to reach out for his brother church member and thus by divine and human reinforcement to carry forward the tasks of Christ's Kingdom. This unity of labor in a mutual love and common fellowship, facing Godward and manward is *essential, fundamental* and *obligatory* upon each church member. This church member has some liberties and large freedom, but all of his freedom is bounded and limited by the world-will of Christ. He has no option when he faces Christ's command. He has no option in baptism. Christ does not request us to follow Him in baptism after we trust His grace for salvation. He commands us.

All of our liberties as Christians are within the circle of Christ's eternal and sovereign Lordship. Is not *co-operation* one of these "commanded obligations"? Can a church member refuse to join with his fellow church members in a plain command of Christ in carrying the gospel to all the world and justly plead an alibi and a justifiable defense and exemption on the ground of his freedom and personal liberties? This is anarchy in Christ's Kingdom. It is willful and inexcusable disobedience. Our duty to co-operate in Christ's churches in carrying out His world commands is not only a glorious privilege, but it is an imperative obligation in which we have no option. The call and credentials of *the Twelve*, the Seventy, the imperative commands of Christ's commission; all the remarkable precepts and examples of the apostolic history bear impressive testimony to the correctness of this position that co-operation under the Lordship of Christ is a New Testament doctrine and that our voluntary response in full length service determines the quality and quantity of obedience to Jesus Christ.

### **The Local Church Side**

Not only is there a divine side, and an individual side, but also a church side, a corporate side of this primal and basal doctrine of co-operation. The individual with all of his freedom in Christ, under Christ's world-will, is the *unit* in Christ's churches, and His local churches are His spiritual, ecclesiastical units in His universal Kingdom. The hope, power and efficiency of the local church depend on the willingness of the individual member to co-operate with the other members in carrying out Christ's commands. Everyone who halts or balks just that far hinders and blocks the power of the churches. A church whose members will not co-operate in the work of the church is worse than dead—he is a spiritual nuisance and a positive menace to the cause, and has no right to "cumber the ground." Now as the progress and power of the local church depend on the doctrine of co-operation on God's and the church member's side, so the

progress and power of the earth-wide Kingdom of Christ depend on the *co-operation* of churches of like faith and order. There is as much necessity for churches to co-operate as there is for church members to co-operate. Here lies the hope of effective success in taking the world for Christ. The so-called “Gospel Mission Plan” has two defects. It is neither *Gospel*, nor *Missionary*, neither sound in principle nor efficient in plan. It is essentially selfish and narrow, and positively weak and ineffective in accomplishment. It does not recognize the doctrine of church co-operation so clearly taught in the New Testament both in the commands of Christ and the example of the apostles as they were led by the Holy Spirit.

Unity in doctrine, in spirit, in faith and practice essentially demand unity in labor and effort. The Commission of Christ, the earthly ministry of Christ, the missionary record of Paul among the churches, the message of the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles and the very heart of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, these all teach with mighty power this great doctrine of co-operation between churches and all the agencies of these churches.

This doctrine does not embarrass nor contravene the freedom of the individual nor the sovereignty or independence of the local churches, if we remember that all of our freedom and sovereignty is to function within the circle of Christ’s Lordship and under the authority of His world-will. Any Baptist who says an individual church member or a local church has a right to do as he or it pleases in the world-program of Christ has Bolshevism in his thinking. All of our rights are subject to the limitations of Christ’s will.

The successful propagation of all the other doctrines of the Scriptures depends on the successful operation of this triangular doctrine of co-operation.

### **A New Article of Faith**

This doctrine of co-operation is scarcely, if at all, hinted at in any expression of Baptist faith this side the New Testament. I have read twenty-nine different expressions of faith given to the world by Anabaptists, Mennonites, English Baptists, American Baptists, German, French and Swedish Baptists. This doctrine as such has no clear pronouncement in any of these. It should have. I propose to the committee to be appointed by Northern and Southern Baptists on a new expression of our articles of faith that it put in Article XIX—on *Co-operation*. It should be so worded as to care for and properly guard our “individual freedom” and our “church sovereignty”—but it should be so set out as to mark a line of separation between our *co-operant*, and *co-operating* individuals and churches and those who oppose, hinder, criticize and block the mighty missionary, educational

and benevolent programs of our people who feel the pressure on their consciences “to carry on,” “go forward” to the uttermost parts of the world. It is presupposed in all I say in the above that the programs and movements in carrying forward Christ’s work shall be determined by representations from the great mass of our co-operating churches on the basis of absolute loyalty to all the other doctrines, principles and policies laid down for Christ’s churches in the New Testament. No individual church member or local church has any right to co-operate in any movement that clearly seeks to dethrone Christ, vitiate His teachings, or emasculate His churches. God Himself will not co-operate with the devil nor should we co-operate to put over anything the devil wants done. But we have no option in carrying out Christ’s will. His “must” binds us at this point.

The 75 Million Campaign and all of our campaigns stake their all on the successful operation of this doctrine among the churches and people called Baptists. Let’s go Christ’s way, *on, up, out.*

*SWJT* Vol. 6 No. 2 (April 1922)