



SOUTHWESTERN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

BAPTISTS AND UNITY

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Baptists on Unity and Cooperation

The challenge of ecumenism has confronted Baptists ever since their emergence as a distinct group of free churches who base their theology definitively upon the New Testament. In Acts 15 the Apostles demonstrated the path to local church autonomy, coupled with respectful inter-church cooperation, as they discerned together proper Christian doctrine and practice. The congregational sensitivity of the Apostles during the great Jerusalem church conference and elsewhere (cf. Acts 13:2–3, 15:22; 1 Cor 5:2–5; 2 Cor 2:6, 10; 1 Tim 5:19–20) is the standard to which Baptists have historically aspired. Unfortunately, the practice of the Apostles and the commands of the Lord, upon which those practices were based (e.g. Matt 18:15–20; John 20:19–23), have not held the same authority for all Christians. Roman Catholic and Protestant innovations beyond Scripture have provided the historical wedge that requires the free churches to remain separate.

When the Anabaptists recovered New Testament congregationalism and proper Christian baptism in the sixteenth century, they were brutally slaughtered by Catholics and Protestants alike. When the early English and American Baptists clamored for the direct Lordship of Jesus Christ over personal consciences and His rule over His churches, they were often thrown in prison. Others were whipped; some even received the death penalty. And against such “Christian” coercion, voices like that of Isaac Backus cried out for religious liberty. Backus and other early Baptists were not pursuing libertarian freedom. They only wished the freedom to follow Christ according to the commands He gave to His churches in the New Testament. Backus and the early American Baptists separated from their closest co-religionists, the Congregationalists of Jonathan Edwards, because the latter followed “a way beside *Scripture rule*.”¹

¹Isaac Backus, “Government and Liberty Described,” in *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism: Pamphlets, 1754–1789*, ed. William G. McLoughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 352.

Today, due to the unwavering convictions of these earlier dissenters, many Christians live under political regimes that recognize a legal basis for universal religious liberty. But in this new context, Baptist memories are in danger of waning. This is especially the case for those who have not been taught nor personally embraced the Lord's commands. Unfortunately, the story of Francis J. Beckwith, a prominent evangelical and Baylor University professor who recently converted to Roman Catholicism, is not particularly unusual.² The transition from Free Church membership to Reformed soteriology and ecclesiology, or even further into Roman Catholicism, is an attractive narrative for an increasing number. And as Christians worldwide remember the advance for ecumenism that occurred with the 1910 Edinburgh meetings, questions again arise about whether Baptists should join with fellow evangelicals in common evangelistic and church planting endeavors.

Fortunately, there is a substantial body of material available from the last time Baptists were tempted to follow the siren song of evangelical ecumenism. And in that corpus are collected the thoughts of prominent Southern Baptists who led the denomination to forgo unbiblical entanglements. As part of the centennial celebration of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, this issue assembles the contributions of a number of Southwestern's founders to the Baptist doctrine of unity and cooperation. Each of these articles appeared in the first series of *The Southwestern Journal of Theology* (1917–1924) or its related publication, *The Bulletin of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary*. The seminary during this period was primarily concerned to promote orthodox doctrine, Christian fidelity to Christ and evangelistic zeal; therefore, it perceived in ecumenism, which they termed "Unionism," a singular danger.

These foundational figures in the history of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary spoke with one voice in response to ecumenism. They considered it a threat to biblical Christianity, for instance with Unionism's embrace of the social gospel. What most disturbed them, however, was that ecumenists were willing to trample upon the prerogatives of the Lord Jesus Christ over His churches. At the time, Southern Baptists appeared unduly sectarian to their

²Francis J. Beckwith, *Return to Rome: Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009).

northern brethren, who were heavily committed to the ecumenical movement. But, as is well known, the later twentieth century witnessed a precipitous decline among ecumenically oriented northern Baptists while the separatist Southern Baptists demonstrated unparalleled strength. The Southern Baptist rejection of evangelical ecumenism was thereby vindicated as northern evangelicals slipped increasingly into theological Liberalism and numerical decline.

With this historical reality in mind, we here republish for the twenty-first century reader the well-formed responses of the founding fathers of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to calls for evangelical unity and cooperation. First, Lee Rutland Scarborough, the seminary's second president and first holder of the first chair of evangelism, sets his sights upon the problems of ecumenism. As will be seen, Scarborough left no doubt that he wanted to preserve the churches from the poisonous doctrines of ecumenism. On the other hand, Scarborough was no isolationist, for he possessed "an intense spirit of co-operation in denominational work."³ Indeed, it has been surmised correctly that Scarborough's advocacy for an additional article to the New Hampshire Confession resulted in the inclusion of an article entitled "Co-operation," which still graces the *Baptist Faith and Message*.⁴ Scarborough's writings herein are the standard theological basis for explaining the goal and limits of Southern Baptist cooperation.

President Scarborough was not alone, for his faculty stood squarely with him in opposing false organizational union even as they argued for the biblical doctrine of unity. Southwestern's premier systematic theologian was Walter Thomas Conner, who argued that unity must be spiritual, doctrinal and symbolic: "The only kind of union that we can have, in agreement with the principles here enunciated, is the co-operation of free churches for the purpose of extending the kingdom of God." Charles Bray Williams and Harvey Eugene Dana, both highly respected Greek exegetical scholars who launched their ministries through Southwestern, explicated the New Testament ideal of unity and concluded that it must be first and foremost spiritual if it wishes to be biblical.

³Franklin M. Segler, "Scarborough, Lee Rutland," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, ed. Norman Wade Cox, 2 vols. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 2:1187.

⁴See below, pp. 17–20. Cf. James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 446n141.

James Bruton Gambrell, a Southwestern professor elected for four terms as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, understood the local churches' sentiments well because he possessed the quintessential heart of a Baptist. The effete evangelical may want to bypass reading Gambrell for the Texas firebrand brooked no deviancy from New Testament essentials. He proclaimed that Christ's will alone is the basis for Christian unity. "Are the fundamentals of the Baptist faith worth contending for and living for? . . . [If] Baptist fundamentals are, in fact, fundamentals of the Christian faith; if they are, in essence and form, the truth, as taught by Jesus and His apostles, then they must take a large place in the future of Christianity and must be guarded with ceaseless and zealous care." With the other Southwesterners, Gambrell left no room for disloyalty to Jesus Christ through the downplaying of Baptist identity: converted church membership and immersion were classified with the deity of Christ and personal faith as "the Baptist fundamentals."

After Gambrell, H.E. Dana, a capable academic with a deep love for the churches and his students, expounds upon the insurmountable differences between Baptists on the one side and Roman Catholics and Protestants on the other. The last individual theologian in the lineup is Franz Marshall McConnell, a staff evangelist at Southwestern, whose local church emphasis was so profound that he was entrusted with the leadership of three state conventions in the southwest. McConnell likens the attempt to combine unbiblical church polities with Baptist polity to the mixing of early German imperialism with American democracy. He concludes that if Baptists try to combine with other evangelicals, "you would have an explosion." There were other contributors, such as the president of the Foreign Mission Board, who similarly addressed the challenge of ecumenism in the first series of this journal, but space sadly limits further inclusions.

Concluding this issue are the corporate proclamations of both Texas Baptists and Southern Baptists in 1913 and 1914, taken here from Southwestern's *Bulletin*. These demonstrate that Southwestern Seminary represented the center of Baptist life in a dark day when evangelical ecumenism lurked at the denominational door. The Southern Baptist Convention as a whole expressed its sincere and fervent desire for unity with other evangelical Christians. However,

“the interests of Christian unity cannot be best promoted by a policy of compromise.” Specifically, Southern Baptists affirmed the spiritual responsibility of every person before God apart from priest or sacrament, the necessity of regeneration associated with faith and repentance, the maintenance of believers’ baptism by immersion alone, and congregational polity according to the New Testament. With humility towards other evangelicals, Southern Baptists concluded that until repentance occurs, union should not happen. In the meantime, they were willing to cooperate on moral, social and civic issues, as long as Christ’s will for His churches was not abrogated. Southern Baptists in the twenty-first century would be wise to listen to our forefathers.

Lee Rutland Scarborough
(1870–1945)

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.

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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

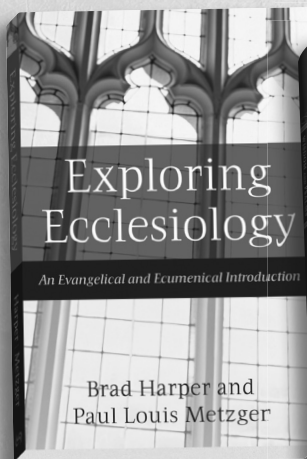
This doctrine of co-operation is scarcely, if at all, hinted at in any expression of Baptist faith this side the New Testament. I have read twenty-nine different expressions of faith given to the world by Anabaptists, Mennonites, English Baptists, American Baptists, German, French and Swedish Baptists. 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)

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY



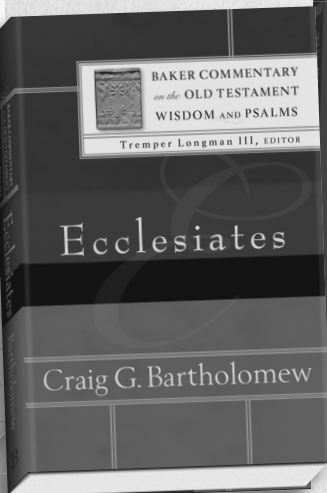
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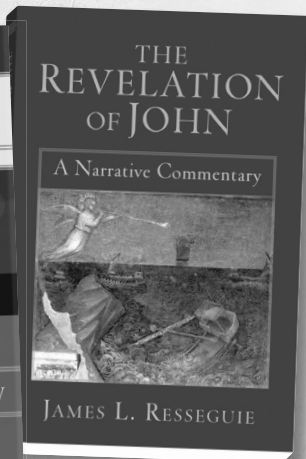


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Walter Thomas Conner
(1877–1952)

The Essentials of Christian Union

I believe in Christian union. In the seventeenth chapter of John we have recorded the prayer of Jesus in which He prayed that His people might be one. This doctrine was also taught by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians. He believed in one God, one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Any Christian man is grieved at hurtful divisions among God's people and, therefore, desires with Paul and Jesus the unity of Christian people in the world.

There are, however, some essential conditions of Christian union. That is, there are some conditions without which there can be no union of God's people in the world. I wish to emphasize these conditions. As I see it there are three of them.

Spiritual Unity

First, spiritual unity. I mean by this the unity that grows out of a common relations to Christ as Savior and Lord. The thing that constitutes a man a Christian is his acceptance of Jesus Christ as his Savior and submission to Him as Lord. Without this no man can be a Christian. Christian unity then is a unity that grows out of the fact that men and women are drawn together around Jesus Christ as a common Savior and Lord. Men can never get together in spiritual unity until they get together in Christ. From a spiritual point of view sin is essentially divisive and the only thing that can overcome the dividing power of sin is the saving grace of God as manifested in Jesus Christ. But as men come to know Christ as Savior and are drawn to Him as the great spiritual magnet they are drawn to each other in a bond of spiritual unity.

In other words this is a unity that grows out of an experience of salvation. Salvation is something that is to be experienced in a man's soul. Not only is salvation an inner experience but it is an experience that carries within itself its own conscious confirmation; that is, Christ not only saves a man but lets him know that he is saved. Our fathers emphasized experimental salvation and we need to return to an emphasis upon this great fact of the Christian life. A man is a Christian by virtue of the fact that he is

united to Jesus Christ in saving faith by the power of the Holy Spirit. This inner experience is an experience that makes a common brotherhood of all who have the experience. It is thus that men become the sons of God and brothers in Christ.

Baptists believe in this brotherhood of Christian believers. They believe that every man who has faith in Jesus Christ is the spiritual brother of every other man who has such a faith. I think it was this spiritual unity that Jesus was praying for in the seventeenth chapter of John. A little later down He prayed that His disciples might be "in us;" that is, in the Father and in the Son. This spiritual unity then was a spiritual unity that was to grow out of the fact that a man was to be in Christ and in the Father. He was not thinking then so much about external organization as he was the inner unity of spirit, and I doubt if on this occasion he was thinking of external organization at all.

If what I am saying is true, it means then that there can be no Christian union until we get together on the basis of a converted church membership. The curse of Christianity was the admission into the churches of men who had no spiritual experience of salvation in Christ. It was this that brought on the Dark Ages. If we are to have Christian union it must be a union of Christians, and men can only be Christians by faith in Jesus Christ.

Doctrinal Unity

The second essential of Christian union is doctrinal unity. If we have spiritual unity, then it is not so difficult to have also doctrinal unity. The enlightenment of the understanding and consciences of men by the Holy Spirit of God is the chief condition of understanding Christian truth. Therefore, if men have this experience of salvation in Christ it is possible to have agreement with reference to the fundamentals of Christian "doctrine. But outside of this spiritual experience there is no hope of doctrinal agreement.

I do not mean to say that in order to have Christian union we must have agreement upon all points of Christian doctrine. As long as men's minds are free they will disagree on some questions. But there are some points upon which we can afford to disagree and yet have Christian and church fellowship. But on the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity there must be agreement before there can be Christian union. I do not expect every brother in the church to agree with me, for instance, on the question of the Millennium. As a matter of fact, there are some questions about which we do not know any more than we sometimes think we know and probably this is one of them. We can afford to disagree and yet work

together for the up-building of the kingdom of God and have fellowship in the same church.

I believe it was Mr. Herbert Spencer who said something like this: There are three stages in human inquiry—the unanimity of the ignorant, the disagreement of the inquiring, and the unanimity of the wise. I would a good deal rather have the disagreement of the inquiring than to have the unanimity of the ignorant. The unanimity that the Roman Catholic Church boasts so much of is of the nature of the unanimity of the ignorant. It is a unanimity that comes by keeping the minds of men enslaved and by enforcing submission to the church and stifling the consciences of men. Protestantism today seems to be in the second stage: viz. the disagreement of the inquiring. It may be that some good day, under the leadership of the Spirit of God we shall come to the third stage, the unanimity of the wise. But we will certainly not come to this unanimity by repressing thought and refusing to think and express ourselves on points of Christian doctrine.

We hear much said today about a creedless church. What kind of a church would a creedless church be? Of all the absurdities that I ever heard of I think the idea of a creedless church is the greatest. The creed of a church is what the church believes. A creedless church, therefore, would be a church that believed nothing. I think I know of one place where such an organization would be appropriate; viz., in the insane asylum. A creedless church would be the finest kind of a church for people without minds. But as long as men and women have minds they will necessarily believe something. The church is an organization for the purpose of propagating Christianity. But to propagate Christianity the church must hold certain teachings about Christianity. Otherwise, there could be no work of propagation. Whenever the church ceases to have a message for the world it is always a dead church, and in order to have a message it must hold to certain fundamental truths with a conviction that is as deep as life. There are certain fundamental doctrines upon which the very existence of the church depends. I mean such doctrines as the inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, His vicarious atonement, the lost condition of men, the fact that salvation comes by faith in Jesus Christ and that there is no salvation outside of Him. These doctrines are essential to the very life of Christianity.

Some time ago I read where three organizations were united—a Baptist Church, a Congregational Church and a Unitarian Church. Now think of that combination! Passing over for the present such questions as the disagreement of the Baptist and the Congregationalist on the question of infant baptism, think about the difference between the Baptist and the Unitarian. A Unitarian says that Jesus Christ is not the eternal Son of God; that he did not make a vicarious atonement by his blood for the salvation of sinners; in fact, that man is not a sinner, utterly lost and ruined

in sin, but that naturally man is a child of God and all that he needs is for the spark of divinity within him to be cultured and developed. Now the Baptist says, if he be a true Baptist, just the opposite on all these points. He says that man is lost in sin and that his only hope of salvation is in the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. I am not arguing now that the Baptist is right and the Unitarian wrong. I am simply saying that there can be no Christian fellowship on the part of people who so fundamentally disagree.

On these questions which involve the very deepest things of life and destiny there must be doctrinal unity before there can be Christian union. As a matter of fact, these great doctrines concerning man, God, Christ, the Bible and destiny have always been held as fundamental in Christianity and any man who does not hold them is not entitled to Christian fellowship, for the simple reason that he is not a Christian.

Unity in Form and Ordinances

I name as a third essential of Christian union what might be called symbolic unity, or to put it in another way, agreement with reference to the forms which are necessary to express the fundamental doctrines and inner life of Christianity. I will take as representative here the form of the organization of the church and the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

In general on this question there have been two extreme positions, neither of which is correct. One position is that of identifying the essence and life of Christianity with the form. This is the error of Roman Catholicism and some other perverted forms of Christianity. Romanism identifies salvation with the priesthood and with the church. It makes the church a great world-wide imperialistic organization with the pope of Rome at its head. The New Testament knows nothing about such an organization and certainly nothing about the pope of Rome. Romanism also makes the church a storehouse of merit, where salvation is kept to be doled out by the priesthood. The sinner gets to Christ only by coming to the church. Salvation is in the church. This is fundamentally opposed to the idea that salvation is a spiritual experience which comes by faith in Jesus Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament idea with reference to salvation is that every man comes to Christ for himself. There is no proxy religion, according to the New Testament. The New Testament emphasizes the priesthood of all believers, and the priesthood of all believers means that the church must be a democratic organization. Since every man comes to Christ for himself, no man or set of men, priest, pope, or anybody else, has a right to come between the individual conscience and Christ as Savior and Lord.

Therefore, in the church every man stands on a level with every other man. Democracy in church affairs then is not an incidental matter. It belongs to the very genius of Christianity and any organization that is not democratic is not a church of Christ.

Some people tell us today that the form of the church is a thing that can be left to convenience or circumstances. This is not true. The question of the form of the church is not a question that depends on the exegesis of certain passages in the New Testament. The New Testament certainly favors the democratic idea of the church, if one take it as a matter of the exegesis of particular passages. But it is more than that. It is something that is embodied in the very fundamentals of Christianity. Christianity is a religion of vital fellowship with God. It is a religion in which man has direct access to God in Jesus Christ and this makes it essentially democratic.

As a further example of this error of identifying the life of Christianity with the form, we might take the Roman Catholic position with reference to baptism and the Lord's Supper. Romanism teaches the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. She says that in the act of baptism sins are remitted and the soul is regenerated. One's sins are literally washed away in baptism. We get into Christ by baptism. On the other hand Christ gets into us by means of the eucharist. Romanism teaches that the bread and wine when blessed by the priest are converted into the literal flesh and blood of Christ, so that when we partake of that which was bread and wine we are literally eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man.

The other extreme repudiates this error of identifying the essence of Christianity with its forms. It says that since the essence is not identical with the form, therefore the form is a matter of indifference. It says that it is useless, therefore, for Christian people to be divided over the forms of Christianity. For instance, with reference to baptism, it says what difference does it make whether you have a little water or much. One's salvation does not depend upon it. The essential thing is the spiritual experience. We readily grant; nay, more, we affirm, that the spiritual life in the soul does not depend upon the form of baptism nor upon any other ceremony or outward process of any kind. It depends only upon faith in Jesus Christ as a personal Savior, but it does not follow as a consequence that the form of baptism or other religious forms are therefore of small consequence.

Let us see if we can look this matter squarely in the face for a minute. Jesus Christ gave to his people two ceremonial ordinances. These ordinances were intended to do at least two things. They were intended to commemorate the fundamental facts of Christianity and to symbolize the Christian's inner experience of salvation. The fundamental facts of Christianity are the death of Jesus Christ for our sins and His resurrection for our

justification. On these two facts Christianity as a power in human history depends. These two ordinances were intended constantly to remind us and to remind the world of these fundamental facts. Every time a penitent sinner goes down into the water to be baptized he is preaching the gospel of salvation through a crucified and risen Redeemer. He thereby confesses himself a sinner and Christ as his Savior. Therefore, the form of baptism is important. Somebody says it is only a form, so why stickle for a form. It is a form, but we must remember that it is a form with a meaning, and the meaning lies in the form. Therefore, if the form be changed the meaning is destroyed. There is no Christian baptism then apart from immersion, which pictures a burial and a resurrection. The same great lesson is contained in the Lord's Supper.

The history of Christianity will bear out the statement that apart from the observance of these two ordinances as taught in the New Testament the gospel has never been preached in its purity in the world, and I believe that it never will be. It is not, therefore, an incidental or unimportant matter that we should observe these two ordinances as given in the New Testament. As referred to above, the heresy of Christian history is infant baptism. Whenever infants are sprinkled and taken into the church the church in its purity cannot exist. I mean then, that before there can be organic union of Christians there must be unity with reference to the meaning and observance of these two ordinances as well as with reference to the form of the church.

What Kind of Unity?

Now, supposing that we have these three conditions (spiritual unity, doctrinal unity, and symbolic unity) fulfilled as the basis of Christian union, what kind of union can we have on this basis?

Certainly we cannot have any kind of territorial or national or world-wide organization called a church. The New Testament knows nothing about any such organization, nor can we have any such organization which governs the local church and thus destroys its autonomy. The Roman Catholic idea is that the supreme authority on earth in civil as well as in spiritual affairs is a world-wide organization called the church, with the Pope of Rome at its head. The state, according to this idea, is simply one function of the church. On the other hand is the idea of Martin Luther and of the Anglican church that the supreme authority is civil and that the church is simply one function of the state. Either of these ideas destroys the church as a spiritual body and makes impossible the church as a fellowship of Christian believers.

Nor can we have any kind of organic union under a set of self-appointed supervisors of the kingdom of God who seem to think that it is

their function to parcel out the world and tell every man where and when and what he shall preach.

The only kind of union that we can have, in agreement with the principles here enunciated, is the co-operation of free churches for the purpose of extending the kingdom of God. Any other kind of union or federation is foreign to the very spirit and genius of Christianity. Such cooperation on the part of democratic spiritual brotherhoods is greatly to be desired, but it can only come when men have experienced the salvation that comes by faith in Jesus Christ and think alike with reference to what is involved in that salvation and agree with reference to the forms that are necessary to express the truth of that salvation.

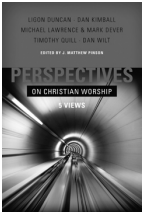
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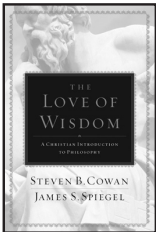
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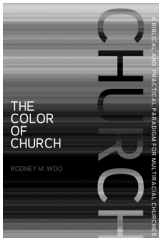


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Charles Bray Williams (1869–1952)

The Christian Unity Set Forth in the New Testament

Our purpose in this article is not to set forth our particular views on this subject or the views of any modern sect of Christians but to study impartially the teachings of Jesus, Paul, John, and other New Testament writers and then state clearly the conclusions which seem logically to follow the facts ascertained.

Jesus and Christian Unity

In the first place it is patent that Jesus did not have much to say concerning the church. Only on two occasions, these recorded in only one Gospel, did He address Himself to the subject of organized Christianity. In Matthew 16:18 He says to Peter immediately after his confession of Christ as the Divine Messiah: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." In Matthew 18:17 He says to the aggrieved party in a personal grievance, after all private agencies have been exhausted for settlement, "tell it to the church."

Broadus thinks the word *ecclesia* is never used in the New Testament in a general sense. "But the word is not used in the New Testament to denote a congregation, actual or imaginary, visible or invisible, of all professed Christians, unless in Acts 9:31 and in 1 Timothy 3:15," both of which he thinks refer "to the local church."¹ Professor Bruce thinks Jesus meant to teach three things in Matthew 16:18: "(1) The *ecclesia* is to consist of men believing Jesus to be the Christ. (2) The new society is to be the kingdom realized on earth. (3) In the new society righteousness of the kingdom will find approximate embodiment."² On the passage in Matthew 18:17 he says "The chief interest of historic exegesis is to divest it of an ecclesiastical aspect as much as possible." We observe that Professor Bruce merely calls the church a "new society" without limiting it to either the local or general sense; that is, it is the "brotherhood of believers in Christ," which seems to imply that he intended to give the word the general sense. Allen thinks

¹Comm. on Matt., p. 359.

²Expos. Grk. Test., I, 224f.

the author of Matthew had in mind “the Christian society as used in Acts, Paul, John’s epistles, etc.,” and that “Christ used some Aramaic word or phrase” equivalent to it.³ Other New Testament experts express views quite similar to one or the other of these three representative views of Jesus’ teachings as to the church. But none would assert that in the Gospel of Matthew is given a statement from Jesus that would commit him to any form of ecclesiastical organization.

Jesus, in His use of the Aramaic term equivalent to the Greek word for church, cannot be quoted as direct authority either for or against any particular form of ecclesiastical organization. According to our interpretation of these two passages, we would say that Jesus merely states the fact that He would create an institution on earth called the church which finds its perfect expression in the local assembly, which is to be composed of properly qualified believers in Him as the Divine Messiah, and which has authority from Him to execute His will in the proclamation and establishment of His kingdom. The whole question of the association or unification of these local bodies into larger bodies is left to the wisdom of His followers, as led by the Spirit. Hence, we may positively assert that Jesus taught not a line, or even a word, on the subject of ecclesiastical union, the union of the various societies of Christians as conceived and advocated today in some quarters.

But Jesus does emphatically exhort His followers to maintain spiritual unity. Not only does He exhort them to it, but He even prays to the Father that “they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:11). Not only does He pray for them to be “one,” but He prays “that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send them, and lovest them, even as Thou lovest me” (John 17:25). Not only for those who listen to His words did He pray but for succeeding generations of believers in the gospel. He and they preached and prayed and toiled “that they all may be one” (John 17:21).

These are wonderful words which comprehend a Christian society composed of all believers, not only in all nations and races, but in all the generations of the future, and a society so united as to be “one,” even as the Father and Son are one; a society with a unity which is desirable for the accomplishment of two grand purposes: the moral perfection of the believers themselves—“perfected into one”—and the missionary goal, “that the *world* may believe.” What is the nature of the oneness prayed for by Jesus for His followers? Marcus Dods approvingly quotes Tholuck: “This unity is infinitely more than mere unanimity, since it rests upon unity of spirit

³Internat. Crit. Comm. St. Matt., p. 176.

and life.”⁴ Westcott says: “The unity is not only of love and will, but of nature, perfectly realized in absolute harmony in Christ.” Hovey quotes and endorses this; if by “nature” he means “disposition or character,” which was what Westcott had in mind.⁵

But what light does this prayer of Jesus for unity throw upon the modern question of church union? None whatever except to rebuke us for making church union rather than spiritual unity our principal goal. There can be no doubt that Jesus is praying for a spiritual unity, because (1) He makes the fellowship between Himself and the Father, which could be nothing but spiritual oneness, the ideal of Christian oneness; (2) He usually emphasized the spiritual versus the formal; the internal versus the external (cf. Matt 23, concerning the Pharisees; Mark 2:18–22, concerning fasting). Jesus was no ritualist nor ecclesiastic, but was preeminently an ethico-spiritual teacher, who regarded moral and spiritual perfection as the ultimate goal of individuals and society (cf. Matt 5:48 and other passages in the Sermon on the Mount). His emphasis on the heart, the seat of soul, as the source of thoughts and desires, of motives and actions; on love as the bond that binds men together as brothers in the family of the Heavenly Father; on sacrificial service as the unmistakable mark of greatness that is real and abiding (cf. parable of the good Samaritan and Mark 10:35–45), commits Jesus to spiritual unity and Christian brotherhood, but not any organic union. His rebuke of James and John in Mark 9:38–40, where He refuses to stop the work of others not organically connected with His apostolic group, and His assertion that they who work “in His name” must be “for us and not against us,” commits Jesus to a broad spiritual brotherhood rather than a narrow organic group union.

To Jesus His church, which He builds upon the rock of spiritual confession of Himself as the divine Messiah, is not an end but a means, a divinely appointed instrument for heralding His gospel in order to establish His kingdom, which on the subjective side is a society of believers in Him, from Jews and “all the nations,” who are “one” in spiritual unity and Christian brotherhood. To Jesus the supreme question is spiritual unity and Christian brotherhood for the different classes and races of men. As President King of Oberlin has aptly said, the emphasis should be put upon “the significance of unity of spirit”; that unity “should be indeed organic,” but mere “mechanism” is not equivalent to such unity.

The Apostle Paul and Spiritual Unity

In the first place we must notice the special emphasis which Paul puts upon the fundamental truths of the gospel and his refusal to fraternize

⁴Expos. Grk. Test., I, p. 845.

⁵Com. on the Gospel of John (Am. Com.), p. 342.

with those rejecting these truths. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema” (Gal 1 :8–9). To Judaizers he “gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue” with the Galatians (2:5): And when Peter came to Antioch and seemed to be compromising the basic principle of spiritual freedom in Christ by his refusing to eat with Gentiles because the Judaizing Christians from Jerusalem were watching him, Paul publicly reprimanded the early Apostle, “because he stood condemned,” and that because “he walked not uprightly according to the truth” (2:11–14). Lightfoot says of Paul’s position here, especially on Galatians 1:10: “The expressed allusion to the Judaizers also explains the particle *gar*: ‘I speak thus strongly, for my language shall not be misunderstood, shall wear no semblance of compromise.’”⁶ Observe, Paul says his supreme purpose in thus refusing to compromise with Judaizers is that the truth of the gospel might continue. He had practically carried the Jerusalem Conference with him for the gospel of divine grace and human freedom (Acts 15:22–29). Now this gospel must not be compromised by the foolish act of an Apostle who is not strong enough to stand for his convictions as expressed in the Conference.

But we hasten to say that Paul does stand positively for a comprehensive spiritual unity. He uses the figure of the human body in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, to illustrate his conception of spiritual unity. “So we who are many, are one body in Christ and severally members one of another.” “Now we are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof.” Sanday says, on the former passage, that Paul is speaking of “the character of Christian unity.” “The use here is based upon that in 1 Corinthians 12:12–30. In the Epistles of the Captivity it is another side of the idea that is expounded, the “unity of the church in Christ as its head.”⁷ That is, Paul is emphasizing, under the figure of the human body, the spiritual unity of Christians, in Romans and Corinthians, and not their ecclesiastical union. The terms used—prophecy, miracles, gifts of healing, help, governments, kinds of tongues—make it clear that he is emphasizing the harmonious and sympathetic use of the spiritual gifts.

In the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul’s great theme is unification. Of whom? Of what? First, of God and men and the whole cosmos—“to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth” (1:10); then the unification of men, Jews and Gentiles, of all classes

⁶Com. on Gal., p. 22.

⁷Com. on Rom., p. 355.

and races—"that He might reconcile both in one body unto God through the cross" (2:16). In 1:22-23 He refers to the "church," which is His body, and in 3:21 He sings his doxology to God "in the church and in Christ Jesus." So, as Sanday suggested above, the ecclesiastical question is involved in the Christian unity which Paul urges in Ephesus, and in the seven unities asserted by the Apostle in 4:3-6 he mentions "one body" and "one baptism." Is the one body one vast ecclesiastical organization comprehending all nations, all races and all varieties of belief? Sheldon thinks not. "Under the Pauline regime officialism seems not to be prominent—of a monarchical constitution in the church no hint is given."⁸ On the same passage Salmond says: "The soma is the whole fellowship of believers, the mystical body of Christ."⁹ So holds Meyer,¹⁰ Abbott,¹¹ and many other exegetes.

But what is the mystical body of Christ? Is it the visible organizations called the churches, or the churches combined into one vast piece of ecclesiastical machinery? The non-ecclesiastical spirit and democratic teaching of Paul would forbid us to assert that the latter is his idea of the "one body" of Christ. Perhaps he meant, as Sheldon seems to mean, the whole body of real believers in Christ, which body is tangibly represented by the church in its institutional sense, which is the meaning of the word church in Ephesians and Colossians. In proportion as the church approaches the spiritual ideals of Christ, it approximates identity with the mystical, spiritual body of Christ, the sum total of all real believers in Him. But nowhere does the Apostle assert the absolute identity of the church as an institution with the spiritual, mystical body of Christ.

But what is the one baptism? Salmond again says: "The rite, one and the same for all, by which believers in Christ are admitted into the fellowship of His church."¹² Others like Meyer¹³ think it is "baptism into Christ," that mentioned in Romans 6:3. Others, the "baptism of the Spirit." But the weight of exegetical evidence is in favor of the rite initiating the believer into his public Christian career.

But what weight do these conclusions have as to the ecclesiastical union of all the sects of Christendom? Very little, if any, since the question of vast united ecclesiastical machinery was not present in the Apostle's mind. The absorbing theme of the Ephesian epistle is spiritual unity—the bringing of men into oneness with God and the bringing of men of various nations and races into spiritual fellowship and Christian brotherhood

⁸New Testament Theology, p. 255.

⁹Expos Grk. Test. III, p. 321.

¹⁰Com., p. 439.

¹¹Internat. Crit. Com. Eph. and Col. in loco.

¹²Expos. Grk. Test, III, p. 322.

¹³Com., p. 440.

with one another. (cf. 1:10; 2:14, 16, 18, 19; 4:3, 13, etc.). Of the seven unities in Ephesians 4—one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God—only two refer to the church, the one body and one baptism, while five refer to the fundamental spiritual realities of Christianity.

The genitive in the phrase “the unity of Spirit” (4:3) is either descriptive or subjective, and so means the spiritual unity, or the unity which the Spirit gives. The one Spirit meant by Paul is the Holy Spirit, the source of spiritual life of the individuals and of the spiritual unity of the Christian society. The one hope is the common spiritual expectancy which the believer’s calling by grace imparts to him. The one Lord is Christ Jesus. The one faith is not the things believed, the doctrines of faith, but the common faith of personal committal to Christ by which each Christian is saved. The one God is the common spiritual Father of the believers. Of the five spiritual realities, three set forth the basal theological teachings of Christianity; the unity of the Spirit, the unity and Lordship of Christ, the unity, Fatherhood and sovereignty of God—all to set forth the common spiritual possessions of all believers, faith and hope. No one can experience the transformations of the one Spirit, the fellowship with the one Lord Jesus, the spiritual Sonship with the one sovereign Father, and enjoy the blissful hope of oneness with God, except by the one common process—faith.

So it strikes us, as one seeking to interpret Paul as impartially as possible, that he is aiming at a magnificent realization by all believers of a final ethical and spiritual unity. This conclusion is borne out by the assertion of the Apostle that the purpose of the various spiritual gifts and functions to men was “the perfecting of the saints, into the work of ministering, into building up the body of Christ; until we attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man; unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:12–13). The final goal of all God’s grace and gifts to men is the attainment by believers of the moral character of Christ and the spiritual unity of all as brothers of the common Father. “The unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” means one common personal faith and experimental knowledge of Christ as the Son of God and personal Lord, and this oneness of experience (the Greek word *epignosis*, experimental knowledge) makes us one in Christ and brothers in the family of God. It is the oneness of spiritual experience, the grace of one Spirit, of one Lord and one Father, coupled with the one hope as to eternal destiny, which inspires the Apostle to exhort the Christians to love and forgive, to live and act as brothers. The seven unities set forth by the Apostle suggest the perfection of spiritual fellowship desired by him.

Observe these four conclusions from the Apostle's discussion in Ephesians: (1) It is spiritual rather than ecclesiastical unity aimed at by him. (2) It is universal spiritual unity—the fellowship of all nations and races as one spiritual family of God. (3) A common spiritual experience of Christ as the Son of God and as personal Lord is emphasized as the one indispensable prerequisite of spiritual fellowship. Only kindred spirits can be united in real fellowship and only those who have had like experiences of trust and hope in Christ as the Son of God and as their personal Lord can be kindred spirits. (4) False teachings will take care of themselves—i.e., they will not trouble us if we cherish and live and proclaim experimental Christianity, for Paul exhorts in 4:14, “that we may be no longer children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” Paul's program for spiritual unity calls for, not the binding together of different sects or the signing of the same creed, but the one common spiritual experience in Christ. To the great Apostle Christian experience is the unifying force of Christendom.

So it follows that Paul makes much of love and of brotherhood. Witness his panegyric on love in 1 Corinthians 13, the greatest love poem ever written. “Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” But it believes only those things that are in accord with spiritual truth, for he has just said “love rejoiceth with the truth” (v. 6). There is no clash between love and truth. Love does not believe a falsehood to be true but it makes us tolerant with others who may honestly differ from us as to what is true—“beareth all things.” Love is more—it is “the bond of perfectness” (Col 3:14). Like a Jewish girdle holding all the pieces of clothing into a perfect fit, so is love the tie that binds all Christian graces and virtues into a perfect moral fit. More than this, Paul stood for a universal spiritual brotherhood of man—a brotherhood of Jews and Gentiles, masters and slaves, bond and free, wise and foolish, through Christ the personal bond of unity (Rom 1:14; Eph 4:14; Col 3:11; Phlm 15, 16).

John and Christian Unity

Three conclusions are evident from the Johannine writing: (1) The Apostle urges the beautiful spirit of love and Christian brotherhood. He does not emphasize, as does Paul, the universal extent of this brotherhood, although it is there (1 John 1:9–11; 3:11, 13, 17; 4:7–11, 14, 16–21, etc.) (2) He emphasizes the harmony of love with truth. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God; and whosoever loveth Him that begetteth loveth him also that is begotten” (1 John 5:1). “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus is come in the flesh is of God” (1 John 4:2). “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is begotten of God” (1 John 4:7).

Love and the acceptance of the elemental truths of Christianity must go together. Love without truth, or truth without love, is a bird with a broken pinion, and cannot reach the heights of spiritual experience and achievement. He who loves God and his brother as he should will also love the revealed truths of the Father and Lord Jesus and he who really believes and experiences the basal truths of Christianity will love his fellowmen as brothers. (3) John puts no emphasis upon ecclesiastical organization. The word church never occurs in his writings, except in the third epistle and in Revelation—and there always in the local sense. The words baptize and baptism occur not in his writings, except in the early chapters of the Gospel, where he refers to the fact of John and Jesus' baptizing their disciples. The supper is never mentioned by him—not even its origin, which he witnessed (Mark 14:17, 22–24).

Notice also in his third epistle his denunciation of Diotrephes, whom Harnack regards as possibly the first monarchical bishop, and his ambitious movement in the church as the first tendency toward the complex ecclesiastical government of succeeding generations. If Harnack's supposition is correct, John stands for the democratic administration of church affairs.

Other New Testament Writers on Christian Unity

The author of Hebrews has no message on ecclesiastical union but exhorts to spiritual unity in the terms of a loving brotherhood, which is broad enough to include "strangers" (13:1). He also exhorts them, "Be not carried away by divers and strange teachings; for it is good that the heart be established by grace" (13:17). In other words, he urges love and truth to lock hands and unite in spiritual unity. Moreover, he regards one's spiritual experience in "grace" as the only safeguard against false teachings. So we find Jesus, John and the author of Hebrews in perfect harmony in making spiritual experience of Christian truths the one and only process of unifying all believers in Christ.

James has no message on church union and very little on Christian unity, except that all Christians, rich and poor, should have faith in Christ, the Lord of glory, "without respect of persons," and should show their faith by their works of philanthropy (2:1, 18).

Peter exhorts, "Love the brethren." "Finally, be ye all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted." (1 Pet 2:17; 3:8), but he has no message on church union and only once mentions baptism in its symbolic significance (1 Pet 3:2) and never the supper.

Jude has no specific note on this subject but refers to "our common salvation" and exhorts his readers to "contend earnestly for the faith once

delivered unto the saints" (23).¹⁴ Mayor explains "the faith" as the "truth of the gospel."

From this survey of the facts on the subject of Christian unity in the New Testament we deduce the following summary:

(1) *Spiritual unity and Christian brotherhood* are emphasized throughout the New Testament—by Jesus, Paul, Hebrews, John, James and Peter.

(2) *Democracy* is the emphatic note of Christ, Paul and John as to the method of administration in church affairs.

(3) *Co-operation* and sympathy of all believers in their functioning as members of the mystical body of Christ are urged by Paul (cf. Rom 12, 1 Cor 12).

(4) *Spiritual experience* of the great elemental truths of Christianity is the one New Testament method of unification of all Christians.

(5) *Love, experience and truth* are in *perfect harmony* in their operation. True love to Christ and our brothers cannot compromise significant truths. A genuine Christian experience of great truths will show what is truth (cf. John 7:17) and the oneness of our experiences will unify us all in a loving brotherhood.

(6) Individual *freedom of conscience* rings out as the message of the first century. Every Christian is both a king and a priest. He alone for himself can come to God to offer his love and his life. His conscience, enlightened by revealed truth, is his guide in matters of faith and conduct. No man can be Lord over another's conscience and none can stand before God for another (Gal 6:5; 2 Cor 1:24).

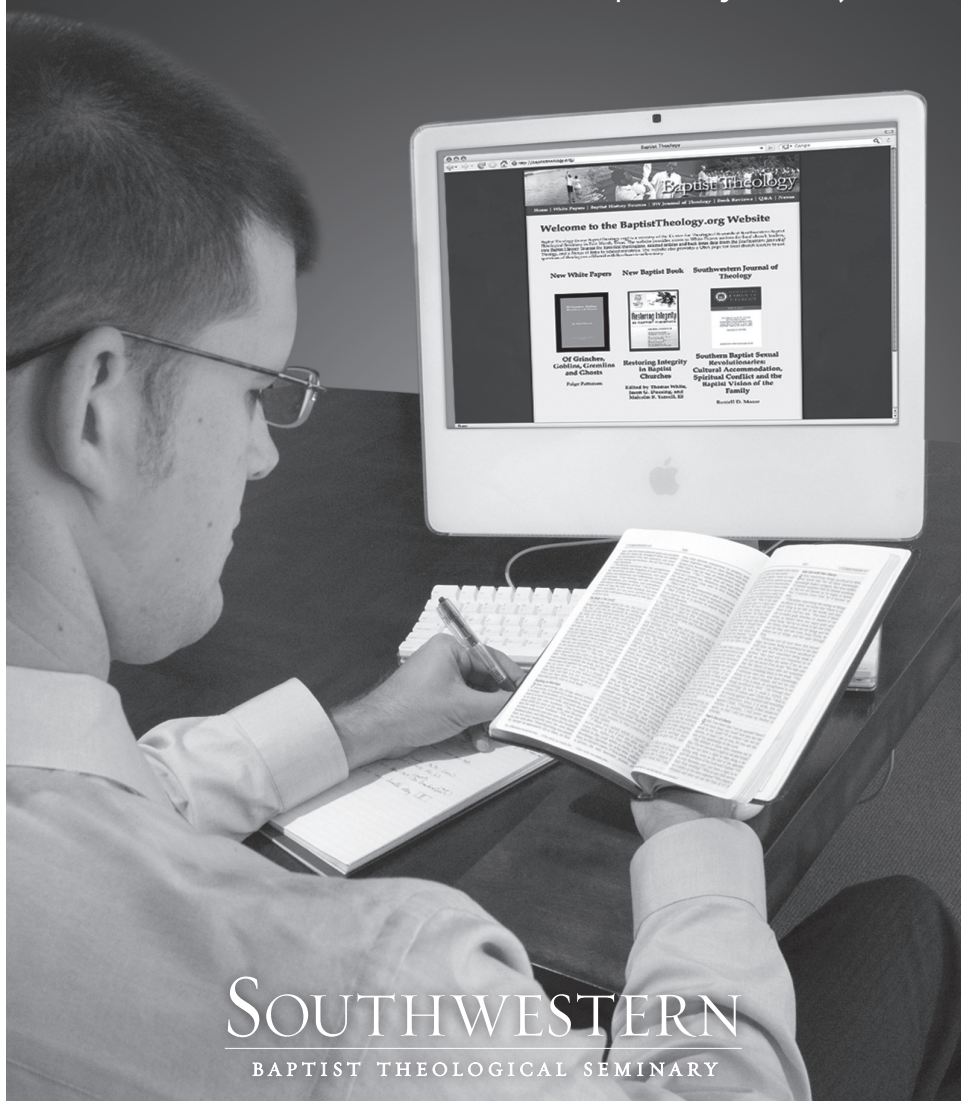
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¹⁴Expos. Grk. Test., V, 255.

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James Bruton Gambrell (1841–1921)

The Nature and Function of New Testament Churches

This is an outline article, not a full discussion.

In the consideration of this question we must take account of the meaning of the word “church.” It is a translation from a Greek word which means congregation or assembly. The Greek word, like all words of its class, must be carefully studied in order to understand its use. The Greek *ecclesia* was applied to assemblies of different sorts, and the word itself does not carry in it the idea of any particular kind of assembly. It was applied to the children of Israel in the wilderness. It was applied to a mob that gathered at Ephesus; but it never loses its root meaning, assembly or congregation.

The word church has now a wide and varied use. Any sort of religious assembly or organization is now called a church, as the Christian Science church, the Mormon church, the Presbyterian church, Methodist church and on and on. Our word church has slipped away from its original meaning, as it is now applied in many cases. It is applied not to assemblies or congregations, but to great ecclesiastical organizations.

This wide, loose, varied and indiscriminate use of the word church calls for discrimination and limitations. We must always limit our meaning, if we wish to discuss any particular organization called a church. The use of the word now, to embrace all professors of religion and all organizations, is the limit. The Scriptures know nothing of such use.

The discussion proposed by the headline of this article is limited to a particular kind of churches, the kind revealed to us in the New Testament Scriptures, the kind to which some of the Apostolic letters were directed and about which the Savior spoke. These churches were of divine origin. They were gathered under the direction of the Holy Spirit. They did not arise out of the social instincts of humanity. New Testament churches have a divine constitution and are under divine law. This is abundantly displayed in the Scriptures.

John the Baptist, under the commission given directly from heaven, began the work of preparing people for membership in New Testament churches. The method of preparation has never been essentially changed. John preached the gospel. He required repentance and faith as a condition

for baptism. He then baptized the people and made ready a people for the Lord. When Christ came, John disappeared. Jesus took the material prepared by John, and prepared other material which went into the First Church at Jerusalem. It was to this church that the three thousand baptized on the day of Pentecost were added.

As to the kind of people eligible to membership in a New Testament church, the case is clearly made out. They must be penitent believers who have been baptized. So teaches the Word of God.

In this article I am not giving attention to the many vagaries which have arisen concerning church membership; I am only following the New Testament teaching. It is certain that New Testament churches were voluntary organizations. All religion, under the dispensation of the gospel, goes on the voluntary principle. So that, touching the nature of a church, we may say with confidence that it is a voluntary association of baptized believers, under the headship of Jesus Christ. Its mission is to carry forward the work of Jesus Christ in the world.

As far as appears in the Holy Scriptures, the organization of a New Testament church is very simple. In fact, the New Testament abhors anything that is not simple. The vast ecclesiasticisms of modern times, with their gorgeous ceremonies, their pomps and dignitaries, are all apart from the simplicity that is in Jesus.

But a church is more than an organization. It is an organism. Normally, a New Testament church is a living thing. The members are members one of another. Each several church is a body of Christ and He is the head of it, and His will and law control it. We have thought very meagerly upon this subject, if we think of a church simply as an organization; and we have thought widely of the mark, if we think of a church as a mere human organization. It is an organization composed of human beings grafted into Christ by faith, each subject to His holy will.

It is plain from the Scriptures that each separate church in apostolic times was a complete, self-acting body. This appears from the very nature of the church, having Christ for its head. It appeals, also, from the apostolic letters, giving various instructions to the churches severally, as to their duties, privileges, etc. A New Testament church is a democratic body. The church at Jerusalem elected its deacons, and that Master of men, who is the head of the church, declared the great doctrine of the equality of the brotherhood. Over-head bishops and dignitaries are usurpers.

I have thus given a brief statement as to the nature of New Testament churches. Of course, what is said means that they are apart from the world. They are composed of those who have been called out from the world and separated to the service of Christ. Nothing, from a New Testament

standpoint, is more monstrous than that the churches of Jesus Christ should be tied up to worldly institutions.

What are the functions of New Testament churches? The answer may be given in general terms. The business of New Testament churches is to carry out the will of Christ in the world. As organizations they are to function in the great work laid out by Christ in His commission. The primary work of every church in Christendom is to face out and go to the lost with the gospel. Evangelism is the first great outstanding task of every church in the world. A church that will not go forfeits the divine companionship and help. The Master said, "Go, and I am with you." He never said, stay, and I will stay with you.

It is the business, moreover, of churches to baptize. The true churches of Christ have a mission to baptize, as distinct and certain as to do anything else. The head over each church has put His divine authority into the commission and on every church. It is not for true churches nor for ministers of churches to cheapen baptism. When they do, they cheapen the divine authority of Jesus Christ. This is not the place to argue it, but there is a great evangelistic and evangelizing force in Christian baptism—not in sprinkling and pouring—but in Christian baptism. Each church, in the carrying forward of the work laid out in the commission by apostolic preaching and precedent, is to reproduce itself by making other churches. It might be well enough, in view of current thought, to say that no church can lend itself to the production of so-called churches differing from the New Testament churches. Here, everything is to produce after its kind, and churches being executive, rather than legislative, can make no changes.

What has been said is strongly supported by a view of the churches given in the Scriptures. It is said that the church is "the pillar and the ground of the truth." When churches fail, the truth lacks support. There is not a human organization on earth that can be trusted to care for the truth. The whole superstructure of divine truth depends for its propagation and advancement upon the churches. When the churches become infected with heresies, the truth, not only in the church, but beyond, is weakened also. Christ, Himself, said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." The truth is to make the world free and the churches are to maintain it. And to this sacred task, every New Testament church in Christendom should dedicate itself.

The church, moreover, is charged to maintain discipline and order. This is not only to honor Christ, but to make the church vital and wholesome. There has arisen, in recent times, a seductive idea of religious liberty. True churches of Christ are founded in the great principles of religious liberty. But that liberty belongs to the churches as well as to individuals. When a preacher wishes to preach heresy, the church will not follow the

rule of State churches and persecute, but they will let him do it on his own responsibility. It is an abuse of liberty to suppose that a preacher has a right to stay in a church, and, especially, to be supported by a church, to preach against the truth for which that church is set in the world. There is liberty enough to go around—for the individual and the church, too.

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The Union Movement and Baptist Fundamentals

President Mullins recently said that preliminary to all consideration of the Union Movement, as it relates to Baptists, we should decide whether Baptists have a special mission and message, which the world still needs. That is one way of raising the question: Are the fundamentals of the Baptist faith worth contending for and living for? Is it worth while to maintain a separate denominational existence in order to maintain that form and substance of truth which automatically set Baptists off to themselves? If it is not, the question sounded for discussion by the headline of this article has small importance. If, however, it appears that Baptist fundamentals are, in fact, fundamentals of the Christian faith; if they are, in essence and form, the truth, as taught and practiced by Jesus and His apostles, then they must take a large place in the future of Christianity and must be guarded with ceaseless and zealous care.

It ought to be said with entire frankness, that logically Baptists favor Christian union in every community in the world, for they hold to a single standard of faith, Holy Scriptures, for all the world. They are compelled, however, to condition the union they favor. There might be “union” without “unity.” When a cold, hard, dead nail is driven into a living tree, that is union, but not unity. The divorce courts bear many painful evidences of the fact, that in marriage, there are many unions without unity. If all Christendom were unionized today, with people thinking as they do, the Christian world would be convulsed by internal dissensions, to be followed by a regrouping around distinctive views, wrong or right. Even the present Union Movement is hastening to the formation of a new sect, based on nothing practical. This is the logic of it—a sect without standards of faith or definite form, and hence without force.

The unity and the union Paul prayed for, is the kind every knowing Baptist wishes—“that ye stand fast, in *one* spirit, with *one* mind, striving *together* for the faith of the gospel.” It must be clear to the thinking mind, that mere union, gathering together in one body incoherent elements, would be to promote discord, weakness and waste. The spiritually wise

will not approve union without unity. But it should be said that all Christians should keep a friendly face toward all honest efforts looking toward uniting the scattered groups of Christians. There are reasons why Christians should be one, especially, as they are, in fact, one by a common faith in Christ, the one Savior of all true believers. Baptists do not repel overtures looking to union. I am, by appointment of the Southern Baptist Convention, accredited to a conference called by the Episcopal Church on "Faith and Order." It will give me much pleasure to meet representative men of any number of other denominations and lay on the table the things most certainly believed by Baptists as the true apostolic ground upon which the Christian world may be reunited.

Let us advance a step. In the present state of the Christian world and of the lost world, too, all discussion of union should be as open and clear as the sunshine, and as honest as the Word of God. Anything like secret conclaves, especially to attain overhead management, will be reprobated, and any who seek by methods other than fair and direct to gain control of existing bodies, will be repudiated by the honest sentiment of the Christian world. We are in the supreme day of democracy and open diplomacy. The union worth while will come from the hearts of the common people, and not from any overlords in religion, whether they wear red hats or other hats. Baptists should welcome this new day and the widespread and insistent call for the reconstruction of modern Christianity. The times and the call demand equally widespread, open, honest discussions, going to the fundamentals of Christian faith and order.

It is timely, also, to say, that it ought to be allowed, even more, solemnly affirmed, that the revealed truth of God alone must settle and fix the basis of Christian union. In this better day, when men of many communions are seeking to find a common ground to stand on, it should be insisted, all round, that traditions, ancestral alignments, personal tastes and preferences shall all yield to the voices of divine revelation. If the Christian world, in this big time, can approach the large question of Christian unity and union in a prevailing spirit of loyalty to Jesus and His truth, we may hope for benign results.

But let us come to the specific subject set for this discussion. I take hold of the subject last end first. What are Baptist fundamentals? Here are some of them: The deity and lordship of Jesus Christ; salvation through the atonement made on the cross by Christ's death; a personal faith in Jesus, essential to personal salvation; regeneration by the Spirit of God; a converted church membership; obedience to the command of Jesus in baptism, hence immersion of a believer, and this a condition of church membership; baptism and the Lord's Supper as symbols not sacraments; each local church independent and self-governing, on the principle of a

pure democracy; no orders in the ministry; the inalienable right of every soul to worship God or not to worship God, according to his own volition, or, in brief, the freedom of the soul in religion; separation of church and state, in the Kingdom of Christ; the Scriptures the supreme law.

These fundamentals carry wide and exceedingly important implications. The whole doctrine of individualism in religion, versus proxy religion, is involved. Hence the impossibility of infant baptism. The deity and lordship of Jesus excludes Unitarianism, and disallows all those huge and cumbersome ecclesiastical systems erected on the findings and decrees of Popes, councils, etc. The Scriptures, as the only rule of faith and order, bring us back to the apostolic foundations. Baptism and the Lord's Supper as symbols, not sacraments, destroy the false and delusive hopes of sacramentarians and restore the ordinances to the teaching service of spiritual Christianity. The nature of a New Testament church, as a simple local, self-governing, spiritual democracy, will destroy every hierarchy on earth and reduce all the overlords of Christendom to the common ranks of the universal brotherhood of believers.

Are these fundamentals worth anything to the world today? Many martyrs have died for them. Is it worth our while to live for them? They furnish the only true apostolic and certain platform upon which to unite Christendom, unless we return to the Papal dream of unity and union under the rule of the Popes. The alternatives are the Papacy or the Word of God, as a center of unity. We cannot unite on negations.

What will the Union Movement, if successful, do with these Baptist fundamentals? By the Union Movement is meant the Movement led by Drs. Mott, Speer, and others. What is the program laid out by these leaders? Happily, we may speak with certainty, for they have written, not one book, but many. In a sentence I will say that I am discussing conduct, "findings," programs, not motives. The program is to "scramble" the beliefs of the great non-Catholic bodies and make one church or body, not of any defined form of belief; but in China one sort, in South America another sort, and on. Each church to take on racial and national characteristics. It is called an "indigenous" church. To blend all denominational life, on foreign fields into one body, it is proposed to delimit territory, so that each denomination shall confine its efforts to a limited field. Methodists going into the Baptist territory would become Baptists on their sprinkling, and that by presenting a letter from a Methodist church. Presbyterians, Lutherans, and all on the same plans. Denominationalism will be territorial, not doctrinal, till it ceases to be. An arbitrary line, not Scripture, fixes one's church relations. But independently of all territorial considerations, church letters are to be exchanged between Baptists and all other non-Catholic sects. To facilitate the breakdown of doctrinal differences, there are to be union

schools, especially theological, union literature, union evangelization and such like. This is the foreign program. The home program is in the same spirit, and designed to effect the same results. The Continuation Committee of the Edinburgh Conference is the main operating force abroad. I think I am safe in saying that the Federal Council of the Churches is the chief operating force on the home field, though there are many organizations, with interlocking managements, all working to the same end.

If the efforts of Dr. Mott and his associates succeed there will not be one Baptist fundamental left, and I go further and say that Christianity will be devitalized, and the world turned over to Romanism; for humanity craves something definite and sure in religion, and will follow the lead of those who promise it. Vagueness is weakness, and indefiniteness is sure failure.

The Union Movement has, to a large extent, adopted the reprehensible methods against which our government has been legislating in the commercial world. The leaders have assumed an overhead leadership of the affairs and interests of all the denominations at home and abroad. I advisedly say, assumed; for no responsible bodies have invited them to do what they are doing. They show no courtesy to nor consideration for the great historic bodies, which have done and are doing everything that has been done, or is being done, to Christianize the world. They have set aside the authority of Jesus, and His word, and substituted a human leadership, they themselves being the leaders. They are following in the trail of the great apostasy, which culminated in Romanism, by supplanting the divine authority with human wisdom. Many of the methods are such as right thinking men must condemn for lack of openness and fairness.

This is a limited review, but it is correct as far as it goes. If Baptists believe their fundamentals worth anything; if they have any conscience toward God concerning them, there is only one attitude to take toward the seducing, undoing apostasy fostered by this movement, and that is one of consistent and persistent opposition. It is misusing a noble sentiment in millions of Christian hearts to foster a bastard Christian union without the substance of truth in it. It is misusing and abusing the words of Jesus, even His prayer for the unity of His people, to foist on Christianity a "scrambled" mass of incoherent teachings, under pleasing but misleading names and phrases. The only union worth consideration is union on the authority and teaching of Jesus. The platform is simple, and the way to it is plain. The insistent call of Scripture is "hear ye the word of the Lord." To that we do well to take heed.

Rome and her several branches have contended with Baptists through the centuries to break down the solid scriptural framework of doctrine revealed in the New Testament. Baptists have resisted to blood many times

and their views are now penetrating the world. A new turn is taken by the leaders of this Union Movement. They seek to destroy the Baptists by a process of doctrinal dilution and suffocation. They aim, with great swelling words, to induce the surrender of the truth of God under a pleasing spell of miscalled Christian union. The words of the great Apostle are timely, "Therefore, beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Amen.

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Out of the Old into the New

The meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta last May was the most significant event in the history of Southern Baptists for 50 years. It was the culmination of forces long working among Baptists of different sections and of all classes, hastened and accentuated by issues growing out of the war. From before the Civil War there existed sectional differences among Southern Baptists. These resulted from the leadership of strong men in different parts of the country, holding divergent views on matters of varying degrees of importance. From the Civil War this way, for decades, a strong spirit of controversy prevailed in the middle and southwestern parts of the territory. There was much debate between leaders of different communions, often rancorous, and always uncompromising. The inevitable happened. The general tone of the denomination was deeply affected, not always for the better. The controversial spirit showed itself in contentions, often sharp, sometimes unbrotherly, within Baptist ranks. These controversies were rarely concerning things set out in the articles of faith and often the less important they were, the warmer the discussions grew. Not a few theological crudities were developed which, to a distracting degree, occupied the time and attention of considerable bodies of brethren to the neglect of the weightier matters of the Kingdom. It often happened that disagreeable and hindering personal elements sadly hindered a practical working understanding among brethren at heart sound and anxious to find the path of progress.

I am far from insisting that the debates and tumults of the past were without value. Conditions were generally unstable. In the newer parts of the territory, opinion on nearly all subjects was unformed. The Campbellite crusade had not spent itself. Methodism was aggressive and sometimes crude. The truth had to be cared for and not a few valiant Baptists did it, albeit not always as we of today might think best. But it was done

according to the times, with the result that the country is very decisively of the Baptist faith and order. And, too, the way to purify water in a pot is to boil it, and the only way to boil a pot is from the bottom. A democracy must maintain freedom of speech and the full liberty of the press, and pay for it in the excesses sure to result. The price is small compared with the immense value.

On the principle of action and reaction, there was developed two general groups of Southern Baptists, represented by such stalwart and commanding leaders as the dignified, courteous and very judicious Dr. J.B. Jeter, of Virginia, and the very powerful and aggressive Dr. J.R. Graves, of Tennessee. Lines were not clearly and sharply drawn and could not be, for their views were less distinct than their tendencies and methods. There was, also, a middle group composed of men who did not agree with either of the two main groups throughout. These were such men as Drs. Boyce and Broadus of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. A good many disagreed with one set on methods, which seemed ill-suited to the settlement of religious differences, but largely agreed on principles. I enter myself as one of that persuasion. There is a time limit running against all superficial and merely human agitations among Baptists. Superficialities exhaust. The scum goes over the top when the pot boils awhile. The water clarifies and the better things appear.

For more than a decade the streams of Southern Baptist life have been converging. Certain powerful forces have been steadily, silently at work to bring us into better working relations. I would name first the inef-faceable common sense of the noble, Christian brotherhood. The words common sense are used in their deepest meaning, not so much the thinking faculties of the mind as that heaven-born spiritual sense, which Paul declared necessary for the discernment of spiritual things. As divisive agitation has died down, the better feelings have asserted themselves.

One of the most unifying agencies among Southern Baptists has been the Home Board. It has woven our missionary life into one web. The Foreign Board has greatly helped and so has the Louisville Seminary; and for decades the Sunday School Board has been a unifying agency of great force.

To one acquainted with the inner life of our Southern Convention it has been manifest that for several years back there have been aspirations and struggles in the body for a larger life. The travail was hopeful to the discerning eye, though quite trying sometimes. Growing pains are not comfortable, but they are inevitable, if we grow.

The Great War forced on Southern Baptists grave issues. They were precipitated on us in such a way that each man had to decide on his own course without any wide council. Unusual efforts were made by

outside forces to capture and take over the leadership of the Southern Convention in the interest of plans destructive of the faith of the gospel. The convention in its Atlanta meeting was at the parting of ways. There was much heart-searching, and much prayer. Personally, I do not doubt that God, the Holy Spirit, dealt with the hearts of His people all over the South and prepared them aforetime for what happened at Atlanta. The convention was the greatest ever assembled on this continent, 4,200 messengers plus. It was widely representative. All the estates of Israel were there. The Spirit of grace and power was on the assembly. The convention rose to its greatest height, and did two vastly significant things. It disposed of all questions of alliances with other orders holding different standards of faith and practice, by passing, with amazing spirit and unanimity, a carefully considered report, which defined the Baptist position so clearly, that all the world may understand. And the convention put on a program so large, so noble and so commanding as to challenge Southern Baptists as they have never been challenged before in their history. Thus the healing tides of Southern Baptist life met and Jordan overflowed its banks. As never before in all their long history, Southern Baptists are together after Paul's ideal of efficiency—"in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel." At Atlanta a new era opened and we are in that new day now. What Isaiah cried out for and some in our day have longed for came to pass. Southern Baptists awoke. They broke forth on the right hand and on the left hand. They are putting on their strength. They are enlarging the place of their habitation, and there is a new high note of courage and joy sounded out from every hilltop in all the Southland.

The tides are rising every day. New streams of influence and power from every direction are flowing into the swelling current. Under the persuasive call to mobilize and move forward, local differences, some of them of long standing and grave, are yielding to fraternal adjustments. Personal preferences and even serious personal interests are being swallowed up in the large spirit of the new day. The swelling current will sweep the debris out of the channels of denominational life, and make all the future larger and better.

Up to this writing, there is every encouragement to believe the great task set before Southern Baptists at Atlanta will be accomplished, not easily, but by a new heroism and a new consecration. People love to be called to great enterprises. The proposition to raise 75 millions to set all our work forward at once arrested the attention of all classes of Baptists and its unifying effect has been almost magical. We will likely raise it and more, and never again will we be content with little things.

Let us take another look at the hopeful situation. It has been said that the unifying effect of the campaign we are in is great. There is another

good word to say. The unity is without friction or the compromise of any principle. It is on Christ's program for world conquest. It is solid from the ground up and out.

The day we carry through our present plans the efficiency of Southern Baptists will be far more than doubled. On some lines it will be quadrupled. All our schools will be on enduring foundations. Our mission work at home will be far more than doubled, and everything else set forward. But the biggest thing of all will be the discovery to the denomination of its strength and power to get together for large things.

We are in a new era, facing world-wide opportunities in a new spirit of conquest. Having put our hands to the plow, let not one of us look back.

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Individualism and Co-Operation

Christianity is individualistic. Judaism nationalized a family. Christianity individualized the human race. Everyone must give account of himself to God. Each responsible soul must repent for itself, believe for itself, be baptized for itself, give for itself, live for itself, die for itself, give account of itself at the judgment. Personal responsibility carries with it the competency and freedom of the soul. This means the right to read the Scriptures, to hear preaching, etc., and at last to decide. The New Testament magnifies the individual as the unit in Christ's Kingdom.

The very nature of Christianity necessitates the acceptance of the voluntary principle in Christian living. And this compels the acceptance of the principle of appeal to the individual judgment and conscience. Preaching and teaching precede intelligent action. This is the scheme of the New Testament. Christ was and is the world's greatest leader of men. He did not employ physical force in the realm of mind and spirit. He led by putting His spirit and truth into the hearts and minds of the people, so that His people were and are a willing people in the day of His power. No one is ever saved till he wants to be. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to so change the heart of a sinner as to make him willing to be saved Christ's way. Grace in the heart is the source of all acceptable service to God, as all service is the response of the believing heart to God's call to service.

The voluntary principle is the only possible principle in Christian service. It rules throughout all the affairs of the Kingdom. Love is the motive power. The believer with the love of God shed abroad in his heart confesses Jesus because he wants to. He is baptized because he wants to

obey Christ. He unites with a church purely on the voluntary principle. The love of Christ constrains him. The grace of God in his heart has a holy affinity for those of like precious faith with himself. He comes under the rule of Jesus, because he believes in him and loves him. The obedience of faith and the constraints of love make up the sum of all right Christian living. There is no where the least place for human authority to intervene between a redeemed soul and its Redeemer.

A church is an assembly of redeemed, obedient people, who voluntarily associate themselves together under the law of Christ to do His will. In church relations all are equal. A church never ceases to be a voluntary, self-determining body, limited only by the law of Christ, its head. No body of people is a New Testament church if it has a human head to exercise authority over it.

Each church is competent to carry out the whole program of Christ for world conquest. No church can create for itself nor allow others to create for it an overhead authority. The action of any New Testament church on any matter within the realm of its prescribed activities as a church is final. There are no courts of appeal to confirm or reverse church actions. Associations and conventions do not function in the realm of the churches, and they have no ecclesiastical functions whatsoever.

As a free, voluntary democratic body, each church decides, by vote, what course it will take on any matter coming before it. It can co-operate with other churches or not, as it deems best. There can be no outward compulsion from any source whatever. A church can be appealed to, reasoned with, entreated, but the decision is with the church at last. This structural principle has forever made it impossible to create out of Christ's churches an overhead ecclesiasticism, such as has cursed the world for long centuries. It is the palladium of soul liberty. Rome was not possible until this principle was broken down. The future of a pure, spiritual religion is wrapped up in the organizing principles of New Testament churches. God has never made any man or set of men good enough to exercise lordship over His free churches.

With every church a complete unit in itself, free and self determining, how can they be brought to co-operate on a scale large enough to accomplish great tasks? It has been often argued that they cannot. Large enterprises, it is affirmed by hierarchs, require definite, tangible authority for their accomplishment. Theories all go down before demonstrations. The Baptists of the South, with 25,000 free churches, have recently given a practical demonstration of the working value of the voluntary principle in religion, applied full length to individuals, churches, associations, and on. By the voluntary co-operation of these utterly free bodies, a thing was done, as a brother of another order says, unparalleled in the history of

Christianity. In a time so short and with an organization so simple that it seemed an impossibility, the 75 million mark set was not only reached but passed by many millions, and at a cost so small that it seems almost unthinkable—less than three-fourths of one per cent.

What is the explanation? It is in the nature of Christianity applied to humanity. There is a saying like this: One volunteer is worth two drafted men. In war men fight with their souls. In all life men work with their souls. The conquering forces in the world are not mechanical. They are not tangible. They are mind and spirit. That system of work, or government or religion, which appeals most directly and powerfully to the individual is the most efficient, provided the appeal is intelligent and persuasive. The entrance of the American soldiers into the arena of battle, overseas, marked the beginning of the end of the great war, because they fought with another spirit.

The inner spirit of converted people given free play will insure the most perfect and efficient co-operation. It is the unifying force in churches and on out. Like attracts like throughout the universe. Churches of like faith and order having like objects will normally have little trouble to find ways of co-operating. Love lifts. Love conquers in all the big undertakings of life. Moreover, moral obligations arise out of relations.

Each church of Christ, while organically distinct from every other church and self-governing, nevertheless is one of a sisterhood of churches. As each man is free and self-determining, yet lives not to himself, but has moral and spiritual relations to all other men, equally free as he is, so each free church has obligations to all other free churches, which it ought to fulfill under the law of love, love for other churches and for Jesus, their common head. More, all the churches have identical tasks imposed by Christ. That spiritual sense given to saved souls enables them to discern the wisest and best ways to do things as love constrains.

So there is such a thing as inter-church obligations. There is also such a thing in the economy of the Kingdom as church inter-dependence. This is not true as respects the internal affairs of a church, for each church is not only competent to deal with its own internal affairs, but must do it. Still it is true as respects the things of the Kingdom, taken in the large. It is here that Christ's words "Ye ought" come into play to guide his free churches in the discharge of their co-operative work. Where co-operation is needed co-operation must prevail under the law of oughtness, and love has a good eye for the need of things.

The free play of these simple principles under proper teaching makes Baptist churches the most powerful forces for good in the world. They conquered heathenism in a marvelous way in the first century. The destruction of these principles brought on the dark ages. The supreme duty of all

Christians today is to revert to the New Testament type of church life, and so live under the law of Christ.

The need of Baptists is to put the principles set out above into constant use. The education of a spiritual democracy in the things of Christ is essential to its highest efficiency. To that task, along with evangelism, Baptists must give ceaseless care.

SWJT Vol. 4 No. 2 (April 1920)

Harvey Eugene Dana *(1888–1945)*

The Influence of Baptists upon the Modern Conceptions of the Church

The unfolding of the development of Baptist principles carries the student along the course of some marvelous and thrilling events. The records of Baptist history constitute a romance as intensely fascinating as any produced by the weird imagination of a Victor Hugo, a Bulwer-Lytton, or a Daniel DeFoe. They are records of struggle, stained in many places with martyr's blood, but adorned withal by an intense loyalty to truth and triumphant faith in God; and finally crowned by a most splendid victory for the principles which inspired the conflict. This marvelous history is in fact a rehearsal of the triumphant march of great principles. The unrivaled success of Baptist propaganda in recent centuries is indisputably due to the character of the doctrines which they have advocated. Their progress most certainly cannot be accredited to any traditional prestige or historical advantage, and hardly to any especially favorable developments in the course of their own history. Everywhere history records their progress it has been opposed, and even their right to existence oftentimes disputed; yet their principles have made an advance which finds no parallel in Christian history. This success is not due to the type or multitude of the people, nor to any conspicuously competent leadership, but to the character of those principles which the people have represented.

To trace the progress of Baptist principles in historic detail would be far too large an undertaking for the scope of our present purposes. We shall treat only those particulars which are related to the general discussion. The method pursued will be to consider first the positions of Christendom in general, and then to note the extent to which Baptists have altered or affected these positions. Furthermore, we will limit ourselves to those bodies of Christian people which have been outstanding in their influence upon theology. With these limitations the task becomes feasible.

It may be said at the outset that, while contention has often been sharp between Baptists and Protestants, the wide difference has appeared in comparison with the ecclesiastical dogmas and practices of the Roman

Catholic hierarchy. Baptists and Romanists have stood at the two extremes, and the other denominations have occupied intermediate positions.

The matter of primary interest to us here is the progress of the Baptist conception of the church. But this by no means limits the discussion to a treatment of ecclesiastical organization. It will be seen as we proceed that the church idea is interwoven with nearly every fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. There are two vital points at which the church is related to the great body of Christian doctrine; namely, the matter of salvation, and the matter of authority. From these two cardinal points our discussion may proceed.

1. The Church and Salvation

Baptists and Roman Catholics stand at opposite poles on this question. The former hold that regeneration is the indispensable qualification for church membership, while the latter regard church membership as the essential condition, and even the chief means of regeneration.

(1) The Baptist Position

Baptists consider that the essential characteristic of a church is its spiritual constituency. The primary point of distinction is that it is composed of individuals who have experienced a spiritual transformation through the agency of the Holy Spirit. By virtue of this change each and every believer is joined to Christ by a common and equal relationship. Every individual believer, as a result of this common and equal relationship, has direct, personal access to Christ: consequently, the *universal priesthood of believers*. In view of this common and equal relationship, no believer shall be subject to any authority save that of Christ; hence, a democratic church polity! When the Christian world has been brought to accept and apply *in toto* the Baptist premise of a regenerated church membership, they will inevitably recognize and practice these two conclusions, which logically result therefrom.

While Baptists have earnestly denied that the church was the chief agency in regeneration, they are far from claiming that it has no part in the process of the world's redemption. On the contrary, they believe the church to be the agency of the Spirit for the spread of the gospel, and that the preaching of that gospel is God's only method for bringing the world to Christ.

This statement is made from the standpoint which prevails in the denomination at the present time. There has been, however, much variation and modification just at this point. From the middle of the seventeenth century until late in the nineteenth a large number of Baptist churches advocated a hyper-Calvinistic interpretation of the atonement. That is to say, it was believed that the entire process of salvation was effected by the Holy

Spirit wholly independent of any intermediate agency. In consequence all evangelistic endeavor was discarded and repudiated. Dr. W.W. Barnes is eminently correct in his conclusion that this view of the atonement was detrimental to the progress of the denomination, tending to paralyze its evangelistic activities, and hence curtail its growth. Fortunately, during the nineteenth century this position has been much modified and toned down. There have been suggested two probable causes contributing to this change. (1) There was a blending of two wings of the denomination holding diverse views of the atonement, known in England as General and Particular Baptists. (2) It is altogether reasonable to believe that the greatly enlarged missionary activities of the denomination during the nineteenth century have had much to do with modifying their extreme Calvinistic views. The final product has been an evangelistic type of Calvinism which Dr. A.H. Newman has well declared to be the most virile and aggressive type of Christianity known to history. This change of view has wrought mightily in the advance of Baptist principles toward world conquest. But while advocating and practicing this missionary view of the saving work of Christ they still believe implicitly in the absolute sovereignty of God in his eternal plan of redemption.

(2) The Roman Catholic Position

Only those who have been confirmed by proper ecclesiastical authority in the membership of the Roman Catholic Church have any hope of salvation. The Church is more than an instrumental agency in the propagation of the gospel; it is an efficient and necessary medium in the process of regeneration. This grows out of the theory of sacramental grace. The Holy Spirit can only act in the rites of the Church when officiated by its recognized functionaries. This doctrine constitutes the root evil of the two greatest errors which have ever affected the Christian world: sacerdotalism and pedobaptism. The efficacious administration of the sacraments necessitated an order of Church functionaries, and thus arose the priests; the ultimate application of the doctrine made necessary the baptism of infants. The Roman Church has, for several centuries, included in its ritual seven sacraments, one at every important crisis of human life. Through these sacraments, administered by the Church, is the soul's avenue of approach to God. This doctrine of sacramental grace, or salvation through the Church, has had more to do with the "loyalty" of Roman Catholics to their religion than any other cause.

(3) The Protestant¹ Position

Protestant denominations have rejected the majority of the Romanist

¹By Protestant we mean those denominations which came into being as an outgrowth of the Reformation. Baptists, under the name of Anabaptists, antedated the Reformation, and hence could not have resulted from it.

sacraments, most of them retaining only two, baptism and the Lord's Supper, while some add a third, the sacrament of confirmation. Immediately after the Reformation most Protestants still held to the idea of sacramental grace though in a modified form. They rejected the theory of sacramental regeneration, but still considered that a ministration of grace attended participation in the sacred rites. The grace was not thought of as directly wrought by the sacrament itself, but as a work of the Spirit in response to the faith exerted by the recipient in receiving the sacrament. This theory survived longest in the case of baptism, and still finds expression in the practice of infant baptism.

(4) Effects of Baptist Propaganda

In direct opposition to the theory of salvation through the Church and its sacraments Baptists have vigorously proclaimed the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers. While Baptists must be careful not to claim all the credit at this point, yet it is true that in the progress of this doctrine they have exerted a positive and potent influence. They have stormed the very central citadel of all hierarchy by standing aggressively against the whole doctrine of sacramental grace. And their efforts have by no means been ineffective. During the past two centuries important concessions have been made by other denominations at three important points.

(a) Nearly all Protestantism today is a unit in its agreement with Baptists that there are but two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and that these are mainly symbolic in their significance. Baptists have contended for this view of the sacred rites since long before Martin Luther from the dark recesses of his Augustinian monastery hurled across Europe the first fire-brand of the Reformation.

(b) The majority of the Protestant denominations of today concede the necessity of regeneration as a qualification for church membership. This concession grants the contention that the church is primarily spiritual in its nature. But let us beware; the battle at this particular point is not concluded yet. Baptists need to sound out with greater emphasis than ever before the solemn doctrines of sin and blood redemption.

(c) The doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers is now accepted in practically the entire Protestant world. While this idea lay at the root of the Reformation, and its success is largely a result of that great movement, yet, Baptists have suffered more in their contention for it than any other group of Christian people, and theirs is a peculiar share in the victory. This concession grants to every believer direct and immediate access to Christ, and thus demolishes the entire theory of sacerdotalism, or salvation through the Church. It acknowledges the equal relationship of all believers

to Christ, and thus involves in its ultimate analysis democratic church polity, and democratic church polity involves local church autonomy.

2. The Church and Authority

A. Authority in Religion

Whither shall the soul of man look for final authority in the interpretation and ordering of his religious experience? This vital question arises from a native impulse of the human soul, and has voiced itself through various modes of expression. In nearly every case some written standard has become the acknowledged authority. In the Christian world two radically different answers have been proposed. One represents the standard of final authority as the Bible, which is God's special revelation of Himself to man; the other admits that the Bible is authoritative but not an immediate authority, being valid only as interpreted and set forth in formal dogmas by the Church. The latter theory really results in making the Church the final authority, and the Bible merely a secondary or corroborative evidence. We shall shortly see just what have been the origin and progress of these two diverse views.

(1) The Baptist Position

Baptists have always contended for the exclusive authority of the Scriptures in all matters of religion: the ordinances and practices of the church as well as the conduct and beliefs of the individual. This principle is obviously very closely related to the Baptist theory of the church. Baptists declare for the simple New Testament methods or organization in opposition to the basis of traditional authority or of expediency. Just here they differ from nearly every other Christian denomination. And not only does this belief in the supreme authority of the Bible furnish the basis for Baptist church polity, but it is the determining factor in every other doctrine to which they hold. They accept nothing as part of the Christian faith which has not some real foundation in Scripture.

Intimately related to this matter of the authority of the Bible is the question of its interpretation. Baptists have held ardently and tenaciously to the inalienable right of every individual to interpret the Word of God for himself and follow it in the light of his own conscience. Far back in the shadows of the dark ages we catch occasional glimpses of our doctrinal progenitors, coming into the light of history purely by reason of their aggressive and intrepid advocacy of this theory. Their successors in the stressful centuries following proved themselves wonderfully loyal to this heritage of truth. All along down through history Baptist blood has been copiously spilled in defense of this great principle. It has been one of their chief distinguishing characteristics. We are forced to admit, however,

that they have not always been perfectly consistent with this theory in their attitude toward Christian bodies of opposing views. Nevertheless, the principle has always been deep laid in Baptist life, and today the spirit of absolute tolerance is practically unanimous.

(2) The Roman Catholic Position

Catholicism regards the Church as the infallible representative of Christ on earth; the dispensary, through its sacerdotal functionaries, of the grace of salvation and all its attendant blessings, constituting through the Pope as its sovereign head the one absolute authority of all humanity: individually, in all matters pertaining to conscience and conduct; of humanity in the aggregate as organized into political units. In their latest statements of creed they have admitted the Scriptures to be a standard and criterion of doctrine, but they do not accord the Bible a place as the one final and immediate standard. All its teachings must be interpreted by the Church and transmitted through the Church which stands in direct contact with man as the infallible authority not only in religion, but in every other relationship of life.

(3) The Protestant Position

Protestants of the Reformation altered the extreme position of Romanism by two material modifications: first, that the church was not infallible and could possibly err; and second, by removing the church from its place of superiority in civil affairs, and making it a department of the state, subordinate to the central government. This theory of the church obtained in all the state religions of Europe which arose during or grew out of the Reformation. With this conception of the church have been identified at various times, to a greater or less degree, representatives of the Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational and Lutheran denominations. Later Protestants, especially the non-established representatives, have entirely repudiated the Romanist theory. They now accept the Scriptures as the direct and infallible guide in faith and practice. Where Protestants have erred has been in failing consistently to apply this principle. They have retained and advocated practices for which they have no really scriptural grounds.

A further inconsistency of which they have been guilty in times past has been their refusal to allow the free exercise of individual conscience in the interpretation of Scripture. The Anglican (Episcopalian) Church recognized the Bible as the ultimate appeal in all matters of doctrine, but they retained the right to say just how the Bible should be interpreted. Presbyterians and Congregationalists of post-Reformation times admitted the freedom of conscience, but held that this freedom must not be abused. If anyone were so bold as to thus violate the sacred principles of Christianity—as the church interpreted them—they could properly be turned over to the civil authorities for punishment. We are happy to admit that

Protestant bodies have long since revised their views in this particular. But as we are here considering matters which are logically included under the discussion of the question of church and state we will give them no further attention in this connection.

(4) Results of Baptist Influence

Relative to the authority of the scriptures, Baptist influence has not extensively modified Christian thought as to the content of the doctrine, but has been exceedingly active in effecting real consistency in its application. In two important particulars have they inveighed against the inconsistency of pedobaptists in their application of this principle.

(a) As to the mode of baptism. In nearly all of its known history the Baptist denomination has contended earnestly and aggressively for immersion as the only scriptural mode of baptism. Many opponents here and there have arisen and made desperate but vain attempts to refute them. By the close of the nineteenth century the scholarship of the world had conceded us the victory. Every scholar worthy of the title, of every denomination the world over, now admits that immersion was the primitive mode of baptism. Then to accept the absolute authority of the Scriptures is to baptize by immersion.

(b) As to infant baptism. Though in this instance Baptists have not gained such a signal victory as in the preceding case, they have brought a very decided modification. Departing from the old Catholic theory of infant damnation and baptismal regeneration, pedobaptists have now come to teach that this is a harmless and expressive ceremony of dedication, replacing the rite of circumcision. It is only a matter of time until truth shall break through the barriers of tradition and rid the whole Protestant world of this unscriptural relic of Romanistic ritualism.

In the battle for the complete liberty of individual conscience, or the competency of the individual soul in matters of religion, Baptists have won their most decisive victory. For many generations they occupied the battlefield without a single ally. Today the whole Protestant world has joined ranks with them in the defense of this inherent right of man. This concession places every believer upon an equal footing before Christ. Then if every man is equally and directly responsible to Christ for what he believes and does, why any ecclesiastical courts and dogmas to govern the convictions and religious practices of men? The practical effect of the complete liberty of conscience is to remove every vestige of hierarchy from the Christian world.

B. Authority in Civil Affairs

In this realm Baptists have wrought their most splendid achievement; have made their richest contribution to the organization of modern

society. The great Christian principle of democracy, which is the determining factor in their church polity, has been the basis of their attitude toward the interference of civil authority in matters of religion. No true democracy can exist where the individual is deprived of the free exercise of his religious convictions. Pure democracy necessitates the separation of church and state. This noble principle has characterized Baptists wherever they have been known to history, and has actuated their undying resistance to Protestant intolerance.

Upon this battlefield Baptists fought for many centuries practically single-handed, and the laurels are distinctly and unquestionably our own. Romanists claimed the authority of the church over the state and individual conscience; Protestants claimed the authority of the state over the church, and hence individual conscience, or perhaps more accurately, the identification of the church with the state in the exercise of control over individual conscience. Baptists claimed that every man possessed an inherent right to read and interpret the Bible for himself and to follow with absolute freedom the convictions resulting from his interpretation. For the preaching of this doctrine they were ridiculed, maligned and persecuted by Catholics and Protestants alike. Nevertheless, they held tenaciously and defiantly to their position, and fought their way through nearly three centuries to victory.

To give a detailed account of this great struggle would be by far too lengthy an undertaking for this brief discussion. We must let it suffice to introduce the testimony of some outstanding and reliable witnesses as to the part Baptists have played in accomplishing the present happy situation of entire freedom in holding and advocating religious convictions. The questions of church and state and of religious liberty are so closely associated, both in their historic progress and their essential meaning, that we shall not regard the distinction between them, but treat them both as a single issue.

According to the almost unanimous testimony of students of the subject, from all denominations, Baptists have been preeminent in every step of the progress of religious liberty, from the tyranny of the exclusive state church to the unchallenged religious freedom of the twentieth century. Even in the early days of the Reformation their voice of protest has been recognized. Sanford H. Cobb in "The Rise of Religious Liberty in America" says, "Among the few and scattered European voices for religious liberty, heard in the two hundred and fifty years from the day of Luther, the place of honor is undoubtedly to be accorded to the Anabaptists" (63). The same author claims that their voice was heard and their protest sensibly felt at the opening of the Reformation. Wallace St. John, PhD, finds a record, dated 1573, of one John Whitgift, an English churchman, who afterward

became an archbishop, complaining against the Continental Anabaptists, that they taught "that the civil magistrate had no authority in ecclesiastical matters, and that he ought not to meddle in causes of religion and faith!" This same churchman charges the English Anabaptists with maintaining a like position. (What a fearfully damaging charge!)

St. John, in his dissertation on "The Contest of Liberty of Conscience in England," gives the English Anabaptists a large place in the origin of the movement. We receive from him this significant statement, "From all sources we learn that this newly formed Baptist denomination followed closely in the footsteps of their progenitors, the Anabaptists." His view of the origin of Baptists is not the case in point, but his disinterested witness to their efficient participation in the English struggle for religious liberty. According to Sanford H. Cobb, as early as 1611 the English Baptists at Amsterdam published in their articles of faith that, "The magistrate is not to meddle with religion or matters of conscience, nor to compel men to this or that form of religion; because Christ is the King and Lawgiver of the church and conscience" (*Rise of Rel. Lib. in Am.*) David Masson in "Life and times of Milton," says, "Not to the Church of England, however, nor to English Puritanism at large, does the honour of the first perception of the full principles of liberty of conscience and its assertion in England, belong. That honour has to be assigned, I believe, to the Independents generally and the Baptists in particular," (Vol. III, 987.) Phillip Schaff, the great church historian, in "Church and State in the United States," declares that "The Baptists and Quakers have always protested against the union of church and state, and against all kinds of religious intolerance." (53). This same eminent scholar, in his treatise on "The Progress of Religion Freedom," says, "The Baptists and Quakers alone (and Protestant denominations of later date) were consistent advocates of universal toleration, and put it in their creeds," (55)

Concerning the comparative effectiveness of Baptists and Quakers, Stanford H. Cobb declares that, "while the Quakers were immovable in their passive resistance to intolerance, the Baptists added to such virtue the active energy which overcomes," (*Rise of Rel. Freedom in Am.*, (64). He states further in the same connection, that, "When . . . the struggle for religious liberty took place in America, among the various churches, the Baptists were most strenuous and sturdy in its defence." "The Baptists had come to stay, and to share with the Quakers the honor of securing liberty of conscience and of worship in Puritan Massachusetts" (229). He also assigns to the Baptists a leading part in the contest in Virginia. Largely as a result of the efforts of Baptists, the evil of intolerance was finally "expunged from the codified laws of every state," and "the last vestige of any

assertion of its (the state's) authority to control in matters of faith has disappeared forever."

Out of Baptist blood and tears has arisen this princely product, which now radiates the light of its mighty influence into every corner of the globe, and the quiet potency of its example shall eventually lead every nation of earth into the full liberty of the individual soul and the democracy of the world.

Such has been the progress of Baptist principles. Such is the record of their struggle and triumph. What shall we do with the tremendous advantage we have thus gained? Shall we cast it aside as an outworn garment? A demand is gradually being brought to bear upon us that we renounce our victories, that we sacrifice our blood-stained convictions and join a great fraternizing movement for the creedless union of all Christian denominations. What shall be our answer? For Baptists, but one course is open to the future. To bring to bear a new and intensified emphasis upon their distinctive principles, and to launch, for the world-wide propagation of those principles, a mighty program, vaster than Christendom has ever witnessed before.

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Christian Unity as Taught in the New Testament

Denominationalism is not the ideal situation for Christianity. This point we are willing to concede in the beginning. But its exact point of defection from the ideal, and the best method for correcting that defection, are the important matters to decide. That denominational divisions are not in perfect accord with the New Testament ideal of unity is easy to discern; but just wherein lies the lack of harmony? This question is not difficult to answer when we have rightly interpreted the idea of unity as presented in the New Testament, and the bearing of this idea upon practical Christian experience.

The fundamental unity of the Christian religion is spiritual unity. An impartial study of the New Testament Scriptures could lead to no other conclusion. Those who cry down denominational differences place much stress on the petition for the oneness of his people in the prayer of Jesus recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John (vv. 11, 21, 23). They propose this passage as evidence that it was Christ's purpose that there should always be but one great Church, represented in various local assemblies. Such an interpretation is a freak of pure assumption. There is not the least suggestion in this prayer of our Lord by which it may be linked on to a

theory of ecclesiastical organization. In fact, the matter of organization in the work of his kingdom received but small attention from Jesus, there being but two recorded references to the church in all his teachings (Matt 16:18; 18:17). The obvious reason for this seeming indifference of our Lord to this important element of kingdom progress is that organization was not the primary function of his ministry.

The full establishment of the church as the agency of redemption was, in accordance with the divine plan, to be inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit, it being the part of Christ to provide the divine basis for the truth of its message and the character of its constituency. The dominant element in the life of Christ was the kingdom idea. His teachings were the enunciation of its governing principles, and his prayers were for its full and certain realization. Such is clearly the burden of his prayer in John 17. A candid glance at the prayer as a whole will convince one of this fact. He prays the Father to keep his people; to preserve them from the power of the evil one; to sanctify them in the truth. To what end? That they may be gathered with him as a blood-bought possession to receive the fullness of his glory (cf. v. 24). If such is the final object of the other petitions of the prayer, why not regard it as likewise the aim of the petitions for unity? And the end thus described is clearly a great spiritual reality reaching its perfect accomplishment in the future life.

There is perfect harmony between this transcendent spiritual conception and the prayer for unity. He asks that his people "may be one, even as we" (v. 11); "that they may all be one, even as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us" (v. 21); "that they may be perfected into one" (v. 23). It is nothing less than preposterous to conceive of these exalted spiritual ideas as representing a plan of church organization. Christ and the Father are not one by virtue of any organic relation, but in *spiritual identity*. Neither can we regard the "perfection into one" of Christ's followers as being the accomplishment of ecclesiastical union. The point of the whole passage is the vital, spiritual union of all believers with and in Christ as a means to their preservation, whereby the world may be convinced of the divine source and authority of Christ's ministry, and of God's love for his followers. The unmistakable import of this passage is spiritual unity.

Paul clearly presents some idea of unity in his figure of believers as constituting the "body of Christ." This figure is presented twice in his earlier epistles (Rom 12:4 ff.; 1 Cor 12:12ff), and a number of times in the imprisonment epistles (Eph and Col) The significance of the figure in the later epistles where it is connected with the church idea is in a profound discussion of the mystical union of Christ with His saints.

The emphatic idea in these epistles is certainly not the inter-relation of believers, but the relation of believers to Christ. Hence the idea of unity must be spiritual. In Romans 12:5 believers are said to be one body "in Christ," and not in ecclesiastical organization. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 the bond of unity is said to consist "in one Spirit," hence, spiritual unity. The same is true of Ephesians 4:3, where reference is made to "the unity of the Spirit." This verse is a favorite proof text with the advocates of the "one Church" idea. But whether we interpret the phrase, "of the Spirit," as describing the character of the unity as applying to the spirits of believers, or the production of unity by the work of the Holy Spirit, it is in either case manifestly spiritual unity. We feel that the examination of these, the chief passages from the New Testament bearing upon the subject, is sufficient to establish our contention that the idea of universal ecclesiastical unity is positively without exegetical grounds. The only unity contemplated by the New Testament is spiritual unity.

Does this spiritual unity relate itself in any way to the matter of organization? Without question it does. But we must dig to the very foundations of the kingdom in order to interpret their connection. The fact that all believers are one in Christ is not true merely for the reason that God has arbitrarily declared it to be so. It belongs to the essential nature of the kingdom. It is a spiritual result produced by the operation of certain definite factors, which factors may be described as the "structural principles" of the kingdom. The unity of believers in Christ results from the fact that there is but one Christ; but one way of salvation; but one regenerating Spirit; but one creative process by which we become new creatures in Christ Jesus. By these structural processes we are built up into one body in Christ.

This oneness of believers finds its most natural expression in organization. It so expressed itself in the very earliest developments of Christian history. The production of the New Testament church was not a planned and prearranged movement, in so far as the human factor was concerned, but a spontaneous outgrowth of the consciousness of spiritual unity. The structural principles of the kingdom found their embodiment in the church. But this native and spontaneous expression of spiritual unity produced the *local* church, and in the local church found perfectly adequate demonstration. It was only after Christianity had lapsed into a subversion of some of the vital elements of Christian truth that there came the development of ecclesiastical organization.

The local church can give sufficient expression to spiritual unity, and only the local church can give adequate demonstration to the productive causes by which spiritual unity is to be accomplished. For instance, the access of every soul to Christ requires democracy in organization, and cannot be consistently realized in a national or universal Church. Hence church

policy is to be determined, not only by the sense of the oneness of believers, but mainly by the underlying constructive principles of the kingdom. These productive causes relate themselves to church organization at two vital points.

In the first place, they must receive fair and consistent interpretation. The realization of the purpose of Jesus for His whole redemptive program is dependent upon the proper interpretation and application of the basal principles of His kingdom by those who hold the sacred trust of their propagation. Hence no body of people can enter upon the function of a church of Christ until they have rightly interpreted the fundamentals of His kingdom. These fundamentals are comprehended in the New Testament in the oft-recurring word "truth." This term is conceived of by the New Testament writers as including every known element of divine revelation. To Paul it signified the very essence of all that may be known about God; and the mystical John went even a step farther than Paul, and having summed up in the term the totality of divine revelation, objectified it, and set it in motion as an active agency, operating in the experiences of men for the defense and realization of the whole program of redemption.

The New Testament regards nothing in all this body of truth as incidental or non-essential. It conceived of its every element as bearing the inviolable sanctity of the divine nature from which it originated. It was all Christ's truth, every doctrine of it, and nothing which he taught, or inspired others to teach, was regarded as an indifferent matter. No self-constituted human authority—be it in the form of dogmas or traditions; courts, councils or committees—could change the vital nature of that truth. To the apostolic mind this body of truth was the fruition of Calvary, so that the authority of Christ was the last appeal. Hence, there can be no organic developments in the kingdom of Christ which are not based upon a *doctrinal agreement which will retain inviolate the authority of Jesus Christ.*

In the second place we would say that the structural processes of the kingdom must find adequate and effective articulation in the forms and methods of ecclesiastical administration. Types of church polity are not matters to be arbitrarily decided, nor yet left to haphazard development. No proposition has ever been submitted to the Christian mind which was more inimical to the revealed will of Christ than the Unionist theory of the indigenous church. Nothing could more certainly make ship-wreck of gospel propagation than to leave the vital matter of church organization to the caprice of those who are but newly converted from heathenism. There is no fact of history more certainly demonstrable than that the interpretation placed upon the truth of Christianity determines the organization of Christianity. The theory of the mediation of the grace of Christ through functions of the clergy leads to sacerdotalism and hierarchy. The theory

of the competency of the individual soul for fellowship and communion with God results in democracy. Belief in salvation as based upon the merits of human life leads to the development of sacramentalism. Belief in the doctrine of justification by faith renders the rites of the church symbolical ordinances. Acceptance of the absolute and final authority of the Bible as a supernatural revelation from God destroys the validity of councils and episcopates. Thus it may be seen that the matter of church organization must be determined by the nature of the body of truth which the church is commissioned to proclaim. It is also true that "the form of visible or organic Christianity will force right or wrong views of spiritual truth" (Gambrell). The two elements of doctrine and organization interact, the one upon the other.

If the realization of Christian unity does mean organic union, then we admit that the New Testament sanctions the idea of a universal church. But if we accept this view, immediately we find the wisdom of the New Testament impeachable by the undeniable testimony of history. The saddest day that Christian history ever saw was the day when there was but one great church. Roman Catholicism, with all its unscrupulous tyranny, baptizing the dark ages with the blood of helpless martyrs and staining its own records with the ineffacable crime of the Inquisition, this monster of ecclesiastical despotism, was the natural and inevitable outgrowth of the idea of a Universal Church. Every tenet of its dogmas and every crime of its persecution were logical sequences of this idea. The only unity which is safe for Christianity and true to the New Testament is the unity of a common faith. Such is the only unity which is essential, or ever was essential, to the progress of the kingdom of Christ.

The advocates of more elaborate church organization seek to defend their position by contending that the course of events and the development of the new conditions demanded a departure from the single apostolic pattern of church organization. They claim that as Christianity advanced in its ever expanding program of world conquest the very complications of the civilization which it was the largest factor in producing required more ecclesiastical machinery. If this were true it is certain that the apostolic mode of church life could not at all survive in modern times, for there was never a more complex age in all the history of civilization than exists in the world of today. Yet the vastness and efficiency of the present Baptist denomination is demonstrating in a most impressive way the adaptability of apostolic church polity to twentieth century conditions. Baptists have had the honor of proving to the world the wisdom and efficiency of simple New Testament principles.

The world does not need one great Church. It needs a multitude of independent, God honoring, Christ loving churches, built upon the simple

principles of the New Testament, and in loving cooperation committed to the whole program of Jesus. The blood stained cross of Christ sends forth this hour its silent but irresistible appeal to the Baptist hosts of the world to fling themselves with glorious abandon and sacrifice into the holy task of bringing into complete realization this ideal of New Testament teaching. It cannot be done by compromise and amalgamation; it can be accomplished only by unflinching loyalty to our convictions, the giving of our money in millions, and the unflinching surrender of our lives to march ahead with set faces and fearless hearts under the crimson banner of the cross.

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**How Far Shall Baptists Co-operate
with other Evangelical Denominations?**

The question of Union is in the air and it is going to be advocated with great vigor and ingenuity for a long time. Baptists cannot ignore it and we ought not try to do so. The fact is that many religious denominations have no excuse for their separate existence other than pure sectarianism. The different Presbyterian churches ought to unite. The only reason they do not is sectarian narrowness. This is equally true of the different Methodist churches. If those pedobaptists who are so urgently pleading for a general Union would manage to induce their churches that are located within the limits of a few blocks in our cities, to get together, they would render the world a service and show the grace of consistency. It is hard for us Baptists to patiently hear what they say, while what they do thunders so loudly in our ears. As for the YMCA, it has done much to promote unionism but it will probably have enough to do for the next few years explaining away the testimony of the soldiers returning from France, if what Judge Ben B. Lindsay says in the *March Cosmopolitan* is true.

Still the day of greater co-operation surely has come, never to pass, and our people must do some earnest, just, and straight forward thinking on the subject, if we are to avoid the evils of narrowness on the one hand and of disintegration on the other.

In answering this question there are some fundamental considerations which should govern us. One of them is this: The teaching of the Old and New Testaments makes one body of doctrine, all of which is essential to the well being of humanity, both individually and socially, in this life and in the life to come.

It will never be possible for the prayer of our Savior, that His people may be one, to be answered, as long as the teaching of the Bible is looked upon as being composite and justifying one sect emphasizing one part and another sect another part. It is one body of truth, and Paul could sincerely write: "I beseech you brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye all be perfected together in the same mind and in the same

judgment" (1 Cor 1:10). This is the true basis of co-operation. The governments of the world are not going to be perfected in ruling the people so as to insure universal peace and promote universal prosperity, happiness and liberty, so long as they eye each other as antagonists. There must be co-operation. It is not possible to have one world-wide nation but it is possible to have a world-wide co-operation of those nations which have similar political ideals and the same beneficent purpose for mankind. There cannot be one worldwide church which will not be oppressive. There can be world-wide co-operation between churches which agree on the essential doctrines of Christianity and have the same form of organization. Others may co-operate to an extent, but their co-operation must be limited always and everywhere to the narrow sphere of social endeavor.

There can be no permanent or efficient federation of incompatibles. A league between Australia and Turkey would not get anywhere. If you should try to mix German imperialism with U.S. democracy you would have an explosion. To undertake such leagues or federations would be madness. It is the same way with churches. Spiritual regeneration will not mix with formalism; the doctrine of ordinance-salvation will not mix with salvation by grace; Episcopal absolutism will not mix with Baptist democracy.

What ought to be done? All earnest statesmen ought to diligently search for those natural laws of society upon which all governments should be founded and conform their theories of statesmanship and the forms of their governments to those laws, until they go far enough towards that which is fundamentally just and right to clasp each other's hands. This holds good in religion and the dictum is the word of God. It ought to be easy for religious bodies to discover the truth therein and conform to it. Any other sort of union must necessarily be either neutralizing to spiritual forces or explosive.

All the truth must be emphasized instead of ignoring part of it. Just as soon as a religious denomination ignores important truth somebody will rise up, call attention to it and gather a people who will make it an essential part of their creed. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim 3:16, 17).

From this it follows that Baptists should not only refuse to unite with those who ignore part of the Word of God but we should not co-operate in any movement which tends to cause people to ignore it. We should stand for all of it, all the time, everywhere. The King of Judah began by cutting out parts with a pen-knife; but after that he burned the whole book (Jer 36:23-25). Baptists must not help in a similar crime.

This is a day when social service is being preached as never before. Never have the by-products of the gospel been appreciated as they are now. The second great commandment (Matt 22:39) has come in for consideration. Some are emphasizing it out of all proportion and making it eclipse the first commandment of all (Matt 22:37). Judge Ben B. Lindsay, in the article above referred to, does this to an extent which makes us wonder if he ever had any adequate conception of, much less personal experience with, divine grace. Baptists cannot afford to co-operate with any movement by anybody which does not acknowledge and make paramount personal regeneration as the basis of all Christian activity. The moment any group of associates with us insists on minifying personal regeneration, we must feel conscience bound to withdraw, for without such regeneration social order will never be permanently established nor will individuals escape going to hell.

Let it never be forgotten by Baptists that he who preaches either of the two great commandments without the other is fatally wrong. Especially is he wrong who magnifies the second and ignores the first. Baptists must not become expert socialists and cease to preach individual repentance and pardon, regeneration and sanctification. Baptists can not co-operate in any movement which ignores personal regeneration for any other consideration whatever, no matter how important. Without the new birth, and the love of the Father being shed abroad in the heart, there is no religion worth our consideration for a moment.

Second, churches should exist for the purpose of impressing upon people's minds the teaching of the Bible and bringing them in character, thinking and conduct into harmony with the revealed will of God.

Jesus Christ was not a mere reformer. The churches of New Testament times did not engage in political campaigns or try to reconstruct society by human means or socialistic propaganda. They went far deeper to get social results. They taught proper personal relation to God and relied on the aggregate conduct of regenerated units to reform society.

Baptists should not co-operate in meetings or movements where the people are led, in the name of Christ, to rely on other powers apart from the grace of God to reform either the individual or the masses. The success of such movements is pitiful failure in the end. As citizens, or educators, or reformers we may avail ourselves of every social and educational force to uplift the world, but let it always be remembered that the church is religious in its purpose and exists to bring men into harmony with the will of God. Baptist churches should stay close to their main purpose and not co-operate in any movement which, if successful, would destroy themselves by blotting out of people's minds a clear understanding of the great mission of churches of Christ. We Baptists are under no obligation either to mislead

the world concerning our mission or to destroy our churches. In the field of entertainment we have learned, long ago, that other things can beat the church, and the same will be found true when we go into other side-lines.

Third, since there is power in co-operation for the accomplishment of any human endeavor to the degree that it approaches unanimity and complete efficiency, there should be the utmost co-operation among Christian people in those things which are in harmony with the Word of God.

Baptists should be good citizens of every nation in which they may reside. None should go beyond us in upholding our government in all its efforts which are in harmony with our understanding of our duty to God.

The Bible teaches sobriety and we may, therefore, join with others in endeavors to prohibit the sale and use of intoxicants. The Bible commands personal purity, hence we should assist in every effort at the suppression of vice. These duties devolve upon us as individuals. We do them not merely as church members but as lovers of righteousness. We should stand ready every hour to join with anybody to promote them.

However, our churches should be careful not to enter into embarrassing agreements. We should look carefully into the leadership where we go in with others. It should be understood by everybody that Baptists are free and that no agreements entered into by Pastors' Associations can bind Baptist churches. When a Baptist pastor enters into such an agreement with others, he binds only one man—himself. He may induce others to join him but his power is only that of moral suasion. Both pastors and churches should not forget the fact that Baptist churches as such are not to be bound, or held responsible, by such agreements among a group of pastors of several denominations. The same is true of agreements by deacons of our churches. No body of men have a right to bind us and we have a right to withdraw from co-operation at any time our judgments or consciences dictate.

Our co-operation is based on these principles. Our churches should abide by them. We must be true to God first. We should seek His approval always in everything we do. He surely cannot approve that which is contrary to His revealed word. Regardless of any human consideration of friendship or hatred, approval or persecution, assistance or opposition, we must be loyal and true to our Master. As far as is consistent with such loyalty we ought to give the utmost co-operation to every person or group of persons who works in any way for the betterment of the world.

Texas Baptists

Christian Union A Deliverance by the Baptist Convention of Texas

The Baptist General Convention of Texas, assembled in the city of Dallas, November, 1913, taking notice of the wide-spread interest in Christian Union, and representing the views and sentiments commonly held among the six hundred thousand Baptists of Texas, goes to record as follows:

(1) We look with deep and sympathetic interest on the efforts now making throughout the Christian world to reunite the scattered and oft-time antagonistic forces of Christendom. We deplore the divisions that obtain among the lovers of Jesus, and many evils resulting therefrom. We long for Christian Union. We pray for it and will labor for it, on a scriptural basis; but we insist that it cannot and should not be secured on any other basis.

(2) We hold the immemorial position of Baptists, that all true believers in Christ as their personal Savior, are saved, having been born again; and this, without the intervention of preacher, priest, ordinance, sacrament or church. Therefore, we profoundly rejoice in our spiritual union with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. We hold them as brothers, in the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and heirs with us of life and immortality. We love their fellowship, and maintain that the spiritual union does not depend on organization, or forms, or rituals. It is deeper, higher, broader and more stable than any and all organizations. We hold that all people who believe in Christ as their personal Savior are our brothers in the common salvation, whether they be in the Catholic communion, or in a Protestant communion, or in any other communion, or in no communion. We steadfastly believe and hold that until one is born again, by the Spirit of God, into the Kingdom of Christ, he is not a Scriptural subject of baptism, and cannot of right become a member of Christ's church.

(3) We here declare our unalterable belief in the universal, unchangeable, and undelegated sovereignty of Jesus Christ. We believe that He is the rightful and only head and sovereign of His churches; that His Word and will, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, is the unchangeable and only law of His reign, that whatever is not found in the Scriptures cannot be bound on the consciences of men; and that the supreme test of true, Christian discipleship is obedience to the will of Christ, as revealed in the Bible. This

is fundamental. Therefore, neither tradition, nor customs, nor councils, nor experiences can be allowed to modify or change the Word of God.

(4) We hold that religion is essentially a personal matter between each soul and God. Therefore, we deny all proxyship, sponsorship or deputyship in religion. We hold that each consciously responsible soul must repent, believe and be baptized for himself; and every soul must give account of himself to God. In this view, infant baptism and infant church membership are scripturally impossible, and constitute an impassable barrier to organic, Christian union. In like manner, also, do the changes made by some in the two Christian rites, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, perpetuate divisions made originally by gradual departures from the simple teachings of the New Testament. To change these two sacred symbols of Christianity is to empty them of their scriptural and meaningful content and teaching; and to pervert them so as to make them carriers of the most deadly heresies. We deeply deplore these hurtful and divisive changes, and stoutly declare that there does not exist today or ever did exist any authority or reason to change what was fixed by the authority of the great Head of the church. We stand with the scholarship of the world in declaring that baptism is immersion. To change it is to destroy it. Baptism stands in the wisdom and authority of Christ. All the changes for convenience or sentiment or for any cause whatsoever stand in the unwisdom and usurpation of men. By our loyalty to Christ, which we hold to be the supreme test of discipleship, we are bound to hold fast that which He established.

(5) Concerning the church, it seems to us that this is a divine institution; that it was not evolved from the changing conditions of society, but came from the mind of the Master; that it is an enduring institution, adapted as well to one time and one climate as another; that it is the custodian of the truth, to hold and teach it to the end of time and to all the peoples of the earth. A scriptural church we believe to be a body of believers who have been scripturally baptized and are covenanted together to teach and to do all things commanded by its divine Head. It is a scriptural body, with a divine constitution and mission, both of which are revealed in the New Testament. We believe that a church of Jesus Christ is a pure democracy, and cannot subject itself to any outside control, nor bend to a superior clergy. We also hold with unshaken confidence, to the age-long contention of Baptists, that there must be absolute separation between church and state; and that the right of civil and religious liberty is, in the sight of God, the inalienable and indefeasible right of every human being. We maintain that the divine constitution of a church of Christ cannot be changed in order to effect organic, Christian union. We maintain, further, that Christ's ideal of a church, with its democracy, and the high value that it puts on the individual, is of priceless value not only to preserve religious

liberty but to promote civil liberty as well. We are unalterably committed to the divine model of a church. On this point our convictions are settled.

(6) We believe that intelligent, personal conviction in religion is essential to strength in Christian character and to success in any form of Christian work. It must be the working force in any Christian union. Our souls abhor the thought of any union inspired by convenience, or by desire to save money. There is one thing worse than commercialized vice, and that is commercialized religion, for if religion becomes an economic question, it ceases to be Christian. We must therefore protest against the many cheap and cheapening methods employed to break down convictions, and to establish a mechanical union out of the *disjuncta membra* of the several denominations. To us it appears far more consistent and Christian, to appeal to the individual conscience to study the Word of God with openheartedness, and to follow the light that may therein be found. Any union founded on compromise and spurious appeal is a sham union, and will debilitate and retard the progress of Christianity the world over. Any such union must inevitably end in a wide apostasy, followed by inertia, indefiniteness, confusion and waste of spiritual force.

(7) Our message to our brethren of other communions is, that since the present divided condition of Christendom is unquestionably the result of departures from the simple teaching of the Scriptures, the only possible road to organic union is back to the Scriptures, fairly interpreted. If it be said that this is, in our present state, impracticable and impossible, we reply, that if that be so, then organic union is impossible with Baptists, for we are unalterably bound to the Scriptures as our law and guide. We speak on this point with absolute frankness and with great plainness, because we crave to be understood by our fellow Christians. We neither ask nor wish anyone to come to us, except upon a personal conviction, but would have all to study the Holy Scriptures to find the path of duty; and our confidence is unfailing that there is light sufficient in the Scriptures to guide us all to the Union the Master wishes.

We are not unmindful of the difficulties of the case. Rearing and traditions and pride of opinion are strong forces among all people. We do not claim perfection for ourselves. It seems to us that until we come to have one mind and one spirit concerning the things necessary to organic union, it would be Christian and becoming in all to frankly and freely urge all to study the Scriptures and follow their teaching, putting renewed emphasis on the unescapable duty of individual investigation and obedience. We would hope for much if that were universally done now, in the fairer and more fraternal atmosphere in which we live a condition for which we are profoundly thankful to Almighty God.

(8) Pending the working out of the problem of union, we are glad to say that we stand ready at all times to co-operate with all our fellow Christians and our fellow citizens, whether Protestant or Catholic whether Jew or Gentile, in every worthy effort for the moral and social uplift of all men in all lands. We would freely co-operate in all good works, limited only as follows:

Our most cherished beliefs, our deep sense of duty will not permit us to enter into any Federation, Council, or what not, that would in any way obscure the positions set out above, or hinder us in the full and free preaching of the whole counsel of God to all the peoples of the world. By our very principles we are automatically separated, ecclesiastically, from all other people, and we cannot help it, unless we stultify our consciences or renounce the truth, as we are given to see the truth, a course no Christian would wish us to take. We would look with great favor on the union of those bodies whose ecclesiastical polity and principles will enable them, conscientiously, to symbolize together. This would simplify the problems and constitute an important step toward organic, Christian union.

We beg to say this other word to our brethren of other communions. We cherish in our hearts a deep and abiding Christian love for all our fellow believers in Christ, whether in or out of other bodies, and gratefully rejoice in all that they are doing for the salvation of the lost of earth.

(9) We believe that in the present state of the question of Christian union, a frank and fraternal communication of views and sentiments, through the public press and otherwise, would be helpful. While we would maintain the usefulness and the right of discussion, covering the whole ground of differences, we would deplore any unfraternal and uncharitable discussion, tending to create strife and to inflame mere partisan zeal.

(10) We summon ourselves, our six hundred thousand fellow Baptists of Texas, our brother Baptists throughout the South, nearly five million strong, our fellow Baptists throughout the Nation, in England, and in all lands throughout the whole world, to renewed zeal in the propagation of those principles we all believe to be divinely given, to the end that humanity in all parts of the earth may come into its full heritage of truth, and through the truth, into that perfect liberty wherewith Christ makes us free.

This is an auspicious day for Baptists. It is a day when the whole world is turning toward democracy, both in religion and in government. Individualism is everywhere the battle cry of progress.

There has never been such a time for the free preaching of the simple messages of Jesus and His Apostles. Cumbrous ecclesiasticisms are falling away; only the simple truth as it is in Jesus can either interpret or satisfy the heart hunger of the multitudes of earth who have long been enthralled

by over government in church and state. The day for which our Baptist fathers waited and suffered and died has dawned. What they died for let us live for in a worthy fashion. The marvelous blessings of God are on us. The times we live in, the boundless opportunities before us, the insistent calls from every part of the world for light ought to move us mightily to redouble our energies and multiply our activities in the world-wide spread of the full gospel of peace and liberty. We would ourselves lay to heart and would commend to our fellow Baptists everywhere, the assuring and moving words of the Apostle to the Gentiles: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Amen.

(Signed)

GEO. W. TRUETT
J.L. GROSS
S.J. PORTER
J.B. GAMBRELL
F.C. McCONNELL
W.F. FRY
GEO. W. McCALL
FORREST SMITH

Southern Baptists

Pronouncement on Christian Union By the Southern Baptist Convention in Its Session, Nashville, Tennessee, May, 1914

In view of the widespread discussion of Christian Union and the interest of Christian people generally in this great theme and in order to make clear to the world at large our position on the subject of Christian Union, and to promote the efficiency of our denominational work, the Southern Baptist Convention, assembled in Nashville, Tennessee, on May 13, 1914, adopt the following paper as an expression of the views of Southern Baptists on the subject of Christian Union and Denominational Efficiency:

This Convention rejoices in the many evidences of increasing interest in the subject of Christian union among Christian people everywhere. Many evils arise from the divided state of modern Christendom. The prayer of Jesus in the seventeenth of John and the many exhortations to unity in the epistles of the New Testament should keep us constantly reminded that this matter lay very near the heart of the Master and of His apostles.

We have deep and abiding joy in the spiritual unity and brotherhood which bind together all believers in Jesus Christ, of every name and in every clime. We are intensely grateful for that form of personal religious experience which is the priceless possession of every soul who has known the redeeming grace of God in Christ. All other distinctions among men, whether social, national or racial, are superficial in comparison with this common bond of spiritual unity through grace. We are also in hearty accord with every movement and cause in which Christians of every name may take part without doing violence to the sacred mandates of conscience and without impairing their sense of loyalty to Christ.

In setting forth this declaration of our views on Christian union, there are four things which we take for granted:

1. That all true disciples agree in accepting the Lordship of Jesus Christ as supreme and final in all matters of faith and practice.

2. That none of us desire to seek Christian union by compromise of honest convictions as to duty to Christ.
3. That in the New Testament alone do we find the sufficient, certain and authoritative revelation of His will.
4. That all alike desire to know and obey the revealed will of Christ.

In order to define our attitude to the question of Christian union, we deem it necessary to state our understanding of the gospel on the following points:

1. The relations of the individual to God.
2. The nature of the change which takes place in the individual when right relations are established with God.
3. The initial ordinance whose observance is enjoined by Christ at the outset of the renewed life.
4. The nature of the spiritual fellowship and life of the church into which the renewed man enters.
5. The relation of the church to the state and to the world at large.

It will be found that all these are vitally related to each other, and that if clearly understood they convey the message which Baptists believe to be entrusted to them for the blessing of the world.

1. The relation of the individual to God. We believe that all men are entitled equally to the direct access to God; and that responsibility and freedom are bound up together. This will be recognized by all as a moral and spiritual principle of profound and far-reaching significance. Yet it is in the closest manner connected, for good or ill, with ceremonies and ordinances which are regarded by some as mere matter of expediency or convenience. The spiritual principle, as we believe, expresses the essential nature of Christianity. Hence, it is impossible for us to accept or approve infant baptism, since it takes away from the child the privilege of conscious personal obedience to Christ. We must also refuse to accept or approve any form of proxy religion which puts priest or sacrament between the soul and God. In like manner, we are bound to disapprove of all ecclesiastical systems which set up human authorities over the consciences of those whom Christ has made free. In a word, our view of ordinances, sacraments, priesthoods, ecclesiastical system, is not due to considerations of expediency or convenience, but to the spiritual nature of Christianity itself as revealed in the New Testament.

2. The nature of the change in the individual when right relations with God are established. This is described in the New Testament as a birth from above, a renewing of the Holy Spirit, a regeneration, a partaking of the divine nature, and in other ways. It is a radical renewal of the spiritual nature of man, due to the direct action of the Holy Spirit, and always in connection with conscious acceptance of Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior. Repentance and faith are always associated with it. It is not dependent upon the use of sacraments or priestly mediation. It is a spiritual transformation which results from the direct and immediate contact of the soul with the Spirit of God. Holding as they do that this spiritual birth through the operation of God's Spirit is of the very essence of Christianity, it would be a glaring contradiction if Baptists should place their approval upon infant baptism or any other form of proxy obedience.

3. The initial ordinance of the Christian life. The reason why Baptists hold that the immersion of the believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the only true baptism may be briefly summed up. First, and chiefly, it is the express command of Christ, and the uniform practice of the Apostles. Secondly, its symbolism is due, in a very large part, to its form as immersion. Death, burial and resurrection could not be set forth symbolically by the act if the form of the ordinance were changed. The beauty, fitness and spiritual impressiveness of the ordinance as thus administered have been abundantly demonstrated by its history. Thirdly, the world's best scholars of all names and country are practically a unit in their opinion that immersion was the New Testament practice.

Our view of baptism also emphasizes in another way our intense desire to preserve the spirituality of the gospel. Baptism is, in no measure or degree, a saving ordinance. It has not the slightest efficacy in regenerating the soul. It is purely and exclusively a symbol of a spiritual renewal wrought by the Spirit of God through faith in Christ. Our chief concern, therefore, in holding our view as to baptism, is not to preserve "a mere form," or contend merely for an empty ceremony. It is rather to express symbolically through the ordinance the meaning of the spiritual life, and to practice in its observance that obedience to the command of Christ which, in principle, is the glory of discipleship.

The reason for our insistence upon the form of baptism as related to its meaning may easily be made clear to Protestant Christians. All feel a sense of the incongruity and unfitness of the Catholic practice of withholding the cup from the laity. Half the form and half the meaning are thus taken from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. So, also, in our view of the form of baptism as a symbol of spiritual truths and facts.

In thus holding that baptism is a symbol we protect the spiritual realities symbolized from being identified with the form, and at the same

time we secure the symbol itself against the very human tendency to convert outward ceremonies into spiritual causes.

Holding as we do these Scriptural views of the ordinance of baptism and believing that Christian baptism is a necessary condition of access to the Lord's Supper, we cannot in good conscience do otherwise than uphold the divine order in our practice.

4. The church is the outward organization which conserves and propagates the spiritual principles we have outlined. Its polity and ordinances are the formal expression of the spiritual life in Christ. The equality of believers in the church is the necessary consequence of the equality of the status of men before God. That each local church is, and in the nature of the case should be, self-governing and independent is a truth inseparable from the other truth that all men are directly responsible to God. The priesthood of all believers carries at its heart the necessity for self-government in church life. The freedom of the sons of God is a freedom which requires democracy for its adequate expression.

In all that we are saying about the church, it will be seen that our emphasis is upon the spiritual nature of Christianity and upon the outward forms only as they first belong to such a religion. Our chief concern is not with ordinances and polity. Our concern is not with them at all for their own sake. We find that the New Testament prescribes two ordinances, and hence we maintain them. We find in the New Testament a form of church life adapted to the universality, simplicity and spirituality of the Christian faith. Our supreme desire is to make known to men this universal and supremely spiritual religion. When confronted with the suggestion that we abandon our position as to ordinances and polity, we have been unable to find sufficient grounds for so doing. Our unqualified acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ holds us to that position. The close connection between right views as to ceremonies and the duty of conserving the spirituality and universality of the gospel reinforces our sense of loyalty to Christ. The service which we may render to civilization through the propagation of these views powerfully influences us. That they are practicably workable as well as self-consistent within themselves is shown by the marvelous growth of our people and the spread of our principles.

The complete separation of church and state is clearly the only proper relation between ecclesiastical and civil organizations. Soul freedom and civil liberty are twin blossoms on the stalk of Christian faith. A free church in a free state has become an American axiom. We rejoice in the witness our Baptist people have ever borne to this great truth, and pledge ourselves to its perpetuation through all the future.

It follows from all that has been said that as we regard the matter, the interests of Christian unity cannot be best promoted by a policy of com-

promise. Much good will come of fraternal conference and interchange of view. There will no doubt gradually arise far greater unity of conviction than exists now. But this cannot be artificially produced or made to order. A deepening and enriching of the life in Christ among Christians of all names are a prime condition. Groups of Christian bodies which stand nearest each other can first come to an understanding. The desire and prayer for the coming of Christ's Kingdom on earth will more and more intensify the spiritual unity of His people.

We have declared ourselves on those matters which enter into the question of outward or organic Christian union. We have not dwelt upon the truths and doctrines in which there is substantial agreement among evangelical Christians. We rejoice that the measure of agreement is already so great. We regret that it is not great enough to remove our separateness from brethren in Christ who bear other names.

We wish to add that pending the realization of Christian union in the ideal sense, we may resort to the principle of Christian co-operation. Many moral, social, civic and other movements invite the united effort of every lover of his fellowmen and friend of righteousness. Our modern civilization is undergoing many changes and making rapid progress in material things. Moral issues are multiplying on all hands. The moral forces of the nation are challenged as never before. We hereby avow in the most emphatic manner our desire and willingness to co-operate in all practicable ways in every cause of righteousness. We join hands with Christians of all names in seeking these common ends. We ask no one to compromise his convictions in joining us in such movements, and we ask only that our own be respected. We firmly believe that there are ways by which all men who stand together for righteousness may make their power felt without invading the cherished convictions of any fellow-worker. Mutual consideration and respect lie at the basis of all co-operative work. We firmly believe that a way may be found through the maze of divided Christendom out into the open spaces of Christian union only as the people of Christ follow the golden thread of an earnest desire to know and do His will. But, meantime, we may have the rare joy of fellowship and co-operation in many forms of endeavor wherein angels might well desire to have a part.

Review Essays

A Short History of Christianity. By Stephen Tomkins. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. 256 pages. Softcover, \$15.00

Church History 101: A Concise Overview. By Christopher M. Bellitto. Liguori, MO: Liguori Press, 2008. 141 pages. Softcover, \$14.95.

A Short World History of Christianity. By Robert Bruce Mullin. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008. 312 + ix pages. Softcover, \$29.95

New Histories of Christianity

There is no end to the writing of Christian history textbooks. While Gonzalez's two volume *The Story of Christianity* (now available in a one volume version that retains the numbering of the originals) remains the standard in most seminary classes, it suffers from two deficiencies. First, it is nearly twenty-five years old and its scholarship is dated. Second, it sacrifices nuance for readability at many points. New additions to the market are stronger than Gonzalez in some regards. For instance, although not without its shortcomings, *The History of the World Christian Movement*, Volume 1 (Irvin and Sunquist, eds.; Orbis, 2001) provides a more comprehensive global picture of Christianity than the standard Westocentric approach. However, its embrace of Christian pluralism (e.g. they consistently refer to Gnosticism as "Gnostic Christianity") will trouble many evangelicals, who do not share the larger scholarly community's suspicion of "orthodoxy" as a legitimate historical category. For those so discomfited, Everett Ferguson's *Church History, Volume One: From Christ to the Pre-Reformation* (Zondervan, 2005) is a good alternative. Although not quite as readable, it is a remarkable text, integrating social, institutional, and theological history and utilizing visuals (maps, charts, photographs) exceptionally well. Ferguson embraces a rather conventional narrative, but not without engaging recent trends in scholarship, making it a strong option for those who generally endorse a more traditional narrative. In addition, professors will find it valuable for developing lectures. Two problems confront these newer entries. Both suffer from the publishing lag time that is all too common: the second volume has appeared for neither. Second, although most seminaries and divinity schools still require the standard two course church his-

tory sequence, more and more colleges and universities offer the history of Christianity as a single semester course for which two volume histories are ill suited. Thankfully, some recent market entries address this need.

In recent years, a spate of books recounting the history of Christianity in a single volume has been published. With words like “brief,” “short,” or “concise” in their titles, these volumes are a welcome addition to the field. In *A Short World History of Christianity* Robert Bruce Mullin, the Society for the Promotion of Religion and Learning Professor of History and World Mission and Professor of Modern Anglican Studies at the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church (New York City), does a good job with a difficult task: writing a world-wide history of Christianity in less than 300 hundred pages. Mullin’s narrative is quite good and despite space limitations, he weaves some interesting and unfamiliar tidbits into the story, helping hold the reader’s interest. The murder of Melchite Bishop Proterius by a monophysite mob is one such gruesomely fascinating account (80); his reminder that Armenia is the oldest Christian nation is another (54).

Like Irvin & Sunquist, Mullin’s approach in *A Short World History* is generous to groups generally considered heretical by the standard treatments of the past. In chapter 3, Mullin notes that in “defending and defining” the faith during the second century, “the paths rejected, some now claim, were lost opportunities” (26). Later he is sharper, referring to the Nicene struggle as “defining and *dividing*” Christianity and, in a play on Catherine Albanese’s phrase, subsequent conciliar decisions bring many Christianities out of what had been one. All of this fits the contours of Mullin’s overall narrative that moves from globalization to globalization. Having passed through various monolithic periods, Christianity is returning to being what it was in its earliest years: a multiplicity of sometimes competitive regional manifestations (xii). For Mullin, the early broad consensus of regional Christianities began to break apart during early definitional struggles and became fully fractured during the conciliar period (87). During the medieval period, as the Eastern Empire succumbed to the Ottomans, the Latin Church emerged as the “dominant community” (105). Soon, although some form of Christianity continued in each European state, the Reformation “shattered” that hegemony (131). Subsequently, the mission efforts of the “great century” (213–28), the independency of post-colonial regional Christianities and decline of Christianity in the West brings the story full circle (261–77). In his words, a new “era of competing regional Christianities has returned (277).” Mullin’s assessment is plausible, and, like Philips Jenkins’ *The Next Christendom* (2003), ought to spur evangelicals to thoughtful consideration of such matters.

Mullin writes well. Concise without being terse, *A Short World History* summarizes difficult thinkers, such as Kant and Schleiermacher (184–186), in remarkably brief paragraphs. Although careful, Mullin does not shy away from interpretation and, even when I found myself in disagreement—such as his equating of pietism, Methodism and evangelicalism as the same “religion of the heart” in different geographical contexts (168)—his interpretations are most often plausible. A few exceptions emerge such as when he interprets the *via media* as Elizabeth’s policy of “inclusivity” (144), an anachronism that would have puzzled both Elizabethan Roman Catholics and Puritans. Along those lines, most evangelicals will be unhappy with his implicit approval of Darwinism and nineteenth-century approaches to the Bible (200–12). At the same time, unlike many contemporaries, he refuses to entirely equate missions with colonialism (214), giving it fair treatment. Likewise, he discusses conflict raised by the global South’s opposition to liberalizing trends, such as the ordination of homosexuals in some fellowships. Although a few factual mistakes are scattered throughout—e.g. the monothelite controversy was not really a compromise aimed at settling the monophysite controversy (81) and Wollstonecraft’s famous book is *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, not *Women* (181)—overall, Mullin’s text is solid historically. Finally, Mullin and Westminster John Knox would have improved this product’s utility by expanding the too-short “suggesting readings” list and by adding maps and charts, which are critical to any introductory text. Despite these small issues, it is a good choice as the main text for those pesky one-semester college courses that cover the entire history of Christianity. For evangelicals, the areas of disagreement can become “talking points” around which to orient class discussions.

Christopher M. Bellitto, Assistant Professor of History at Kean University (Union, NJ), contributes *Church History 101: A Concise Overview* to this collection. Physically small (5”x7”) with a mere 141 pages, this volume is the shortest of the short. Bellitto’s work is splendid. The former Paulist Press academic editor targets the Roman Catholic laity, specifically “general readers, parish study groups, RCIA [Right of Christian Initiation for Adults] candidates, catechists and students” (9). Superbly organized, Bellitto offers chapters from each of the standard periods of church history—early, medieval, reformation, and modern—prefaced by an introduction and followed by an epilogue. Across each of the four periods, his subsections are the same: “The Big Picture,” “The Church’s Hierarchy,” “The Church in the Pews,” and “What Makes this Period Unique?” It is hard to imagine a better approach to providing a concise overview. Helpful maps preface each chapter, as does a timeline with important dates from the period. Although they are grayscale, both are visually appealing and readable. At the end of each chapter are questions to answer and suggestions

for further reading. While the questions are broad and overly simple, the reading lists are solid.

Overall an excellent product, readers should be reminded that Bellitto is a committed Roman Catholic and, for the most part, takes a Roman Catholic perspective on contested developments in church history. For instance, the medieval popes “can’t be faulted for taking steps to protect their own interests; the Church needed peace, prosperity, protection, and freedom to keep her theology clear and her officials independent” (59–60). Protestants might demur that the very developments that protected the freedom of the popes vis-à-vis secular rulers allowed the papacy to squelch the freedom of some reform-minded groups like the Waldensians, who Bellitto labels heretics (68). In addition, Bellitto perceives that the Crusades emerged from an effort to protect Christian pilgrims who “were being harassed—meaning robbed and at times killed—by Muslims” (69–70). Yet Bellitto does not ignore church failures. He laments both the medieval pogroms (72–73) against the Jews and raises the question of the Roman Catholic Church’s complicity in the Holocaust (136). Neither does he shy away from difficult topics like papal infallibility or Marian piety (122, 126) nor hesitate to point out the troubling aspects of Protestantism, e.g. how it splintered into a multiplicity of variations “over the next decades and centuries” (82), an issue few Protestants engage in depth. Bellitto’s Catholicism also means that he is fairly orthodox in his understanding of the Trinity and the person of Jesus Christ and, à la Newman, that he perceives continuity in the development of doctrine, e.g. Vatican II completes Trent (132–33).

Although Bellitto embraces an overt Catholic perspective on historical events, they are usually within the bounds of legitimate historical interpretation. Only in a few instances does this translate to inaccuracy. For instance, his characterization of medieval piety movements that emphasized Jesus’ humanity as “evangelical” (62, 66, 94) and his characterization of Zwingli (a *very* magisterial reformer) as part of the Radical Reformation (83) is perplexing. Besides this, *Church History 101* remains a good book and would be an easy good place to start for Protestants who want to understand how Catholics view Church History.

If Bellitto contributes the briefest short history, Stephen Tomkins provides the funniest in *A Short History of Christianity*. Although he holds a Ph.D. in Church History from the London School of Theology, classroom history bored Tomkins as a boy, and thus, “despite whatever the cover may have led you to believe, this is not a history book. This is a storybook. It is a true story.” Intended to be a fast-moving, humorous account aimed at lay readers who don’t know “their John Paul from their George and Ringo,” Tomkins’ book is very funny indeed. For instance, in describing

the fraudulent “Donation of Constantine,” he notes that it “is called the most successful fraud in history, but one can’t help wondering how we can be so sure” (80). In a later section, he notes that although the appellation “fundamentalist” had “originally meant ‘conservative Protestant’” it “now, if anything, means ‘someone more religious than I approve of’” (224). This type of humor begins on the cover, which is graced with a photo of the “Nativity Kitchen Timer,” continuing through the preface and each of the four major sections: “As It Was in the Beginning,” “The Rise of Rome,” “The Reformation,” and “Globalisation.” Each section contains its own chapter numbering, so that “Trent” is chapter 3 of “Part 3: The Reformation.” This attractive book also contains a brief glossary of technical terms (e.g. “asceticism,” “*homoousios*”) that, although simple, will be helpful to uninitiated readers.

Tomkins is a good writer and his flair for humor makes reading *A Short History* joyful. Aside from the humor, the strength of Tomkins’ recounting is the ease with which he weaves ethnographic and political developments in throughout his brief church history. In addition, other than Hegel (whose absence is curious considering his overarching influence on the late nineteenth century), all the usual suspects appear. The description of many events is ideal. For instance, he succinctly summarizes the events surrounding the council of Chalcedon (65–67) and the crusades (104–16). His ultra-brief description of the development of the European feudal system will find its way into my lecture on the medieval church (85–86).

Evangelicals, not to mention Catholics and Orthodox, will not be entirely satisfied with Tomkins’ assessment of Docetism, Gnosticism, or Marcionism as “rival versions of Christianity” (28) nor his indicative question: “Has the age of councils degraded Christianity into a pseudo-science where knowing precisely who Christ supposedly was is more important than doing what he said?” (71). In addition, Tomkins errs at several points. Three examples should suffice. First, in an attempt to connect to economically-minded contemporary readers, he points to “tax disputes” as the cause of war between the Romans and Jews in AD 66 (22). More precisely, the Roman governor’s attempt to levy taxes *on the temple treasury*, a religious issue that violated the Roman’s own previous policy, was the culprit. Second, although some patristic scholars have viewed the Trinitarian conflict in terms of competing interpretations of Origen’s doctrine of God, describing it as “middle way” between Arius and Athanasius is perplexing (49). Third, Tomkins wrongly asserts that for the continental pietists, “Christianity was not about right doctrine but about spiritual rebirth and godly living” (186). In reality, the pietists wanted right doctrine *and* a vibrant spiritual life. They did not want to substitute the former with latter. After all, in the event described by Tompkins on pages 190–91, it was pietist *par excel-*

lence A.H. Franke that recommended and achieved the removal of Christian Wolffe for deviating from orthodoxy. Such errors occur enough that this volume misses its intended audience. Because of them, neophytes will come away with an erroneous perspective on certain aspects of the history of Christianity. At the same time, experienced church historians should be able to identify these types of errors while enjoying Tomkins' humor.

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***Letter to a Christian Nation.* By Sam Harris. New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 2006. 96 pages. Hardcover, \$16.95.**

“Reading Harris’s *Letter to a Christian Nation* was like sitting ring-side, cheering the champion, yelling ‘Yes!’ at every jab. For those of us who feel depressed by this country’s ever increasing unification of church and state, this little book is a welcome hit of adrenaline.” Such are the words of praise for Sam Harris’s book by Harvard University professor Marc Hauser. *Letter to a Christian Nation* is a condensation of many of the arguments presented in Harris’ New York Times best seller, *The End of Faith*. Harris, one of the so-called Four Horsemen (along with Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Daniel Dennett) of the New Atheism, sets forth his agenda for *Letter* early on: “to arm secularists in our society” (viii) and “to demolish the intellectual and moral pretensions of Christianity in its most committed forms” (ix).

Later, Harris reveals his true motivation for his rants against theism—he believes it to be dangerous. Commenting on the findings of a Gallup poll which suggests that 53% of Americans identify themselves as creationists, Harris claims that America is the only developed nation with such a high rate of religious conviction among its citizens, and sees this as a concern: “Our country now appears . . . like a lumbering, bellicose, dim-witted giant. Anyone who cares about the fate of civilization would do well to recognize that the combination of great power and great stupidity is simply terrifying” (xi).

Harris’ attack on belief in God generally and Christianity specifically includes nothing new and is juvenile in its level of sophistication, moving from topic to topic with little or no transition. It involves criticism of Christians, defense of atheism and evaluation of belief in God. At various points in the book, Harris chastises Christians for their supposed lack of compassion and intellectual acumen as well as their pride. Amazingly, he claims that Christians lack compassion for human suffering because of their opposition to abortion and stem cell research. Opponents of abortion

expect those suffering from debilitating illnesses (such as Alzheimer's) to wait until alternatives to stem-cell treatment are developed and they expect women with unwanted pregnancies to "suffer" through the delivery process, putting their own health at risk. This, Harris claims, demonstrates a fundamental lack of pathos.

Christians, Harris contends, are either dimwitted or simply dishonest, as evinced by the fact that so many question the established fact of Darwinian evolution. Christian belief in the Bible as God's Word is also seen as a severe intellectual handicap. For example, he attacks the suggestion that the Bible serves as a good moral guide, citing several immoral teachings—those which prescribe capital punishment for heresy, adultery, wayward children, idolatry, sorcery, and the like. He then makes the spurious claim that Jainism is morally superior to Christianity: "Christians have abused, oppressed, enslaved, insulted, tormented, tortured, and killed people in the name of god for centuries, on the basis of a theologically defensible reading of the Bible. It is impossible to behave this way by adhering to the principles of Jainism" (23). Of course the key words here are "theologically defensible," which is questionable at best. Last, he faults Christians for believing that God loves them and wants to know them, claiming this as evidence of "a level of arrogance simply unimaginable in scientific discourse" (74–75).

Harris defends atheism against charges that it leads to immorality. Unfortunately, he does not do so by addressing the philosophical question of the atheistic basis for morality, but instead by attacking the morality of actions by religious fanatics. He points to the Muslim riots which swept through Europe as a result of unflattering cartoons of Mohammed in a Danish newspaper as example of the general principle that religion leads to violence. Atheism is thereby deemed more moral than religion. After all, he points out, atheists have never rioted because their views were attacked! This sidestepping of a philosophical critique of the atheist worldview is characteristic of the work. Lumping all religious belief together, he asserts that religion leads to terrorism (citing Islamist terror acts as evidence). Not only does belief in God lead to violence, but it is unable to explain why evil exists. Appeals to creaturely freedom, Harris contends, are inadequate explanations.

According to Harris, then, it is religion that is the basis of social ills—abortion, teen pregnancy, homicide, etc. He makes his case by a statistical comparison of secular European countries with the United States. Since crime rates and belief in God, for instance, are higher in the U.S., there must be a correlation between the two. He bolsters this claim by noting the higher crime rates in characteristically religious "Red" states over those of more enlightened "Blue" states, even claiming that the cities with

the highest crime rates are in “Red” states: “Of the twenty-five most dangerous cities, 76 percent are in red states, 24 percent in blue states. In fact, three of the five most dangerous cities in the United States are in the pious state of Texas” (45). Unfortunately for the reader, Harris does not divulge where he gets his facts. It seems that this is clearly a case of manipulation of statistical data. For example, it very well could be the case that the high crime cities found in “Red” states are where the majority of the “Blue” votes in that state come from. There is also good reason to doubt that the crime rate in, for example, New York or Massachusetts is lower than, say, Nebraska.

While Harris’ book is full of polemic, half-truths, and in some cases, what can only be described as deliberate falsehoods, it is not without its moments of clarity. Perhaps the most important of these comes in his criticisms of secular religionists for their continued optimism regarding humanity and religion in spite of the events of September 11th. It is worth quoting him at length:

And yet, while the religious divisions in our world are self-evident, many people still imagine that religious conflict is always caused by a lack of education, by poverty, or by politics. Most nonbelievers, liberals, and moderates apparently think that no one really sacrifices his life, or the lives of others, on account of his religious beliefs. Such people simply do not know what it is like to be certain of Paradise. . . . It is worth remembering that the September 11 hijackers were college-educated, middle-class people who had no discernible experience of political oppression. . . . The truth, astonishingly enough, is this: in the year 2006, a person can have sufficient intellectual and material resources to build a nuclear bomb and still believe that he will get seventy-two virgins in Paradise. Western secularists, liberals, and moderates have been very slow to understand this. The cause of their confusion is simple: they don’t know what it is to really believe in God (82–83).

Harris’ conclusion is perhaps the most astonishing—while much of the book is meant to proclaim the evils of religion, Harris seems to suggest that we invent an alternative to Judaism, Islam and Christianity that can only be described as a secular religion. He writes, “Clearly, it is time we learned to meet our emotional needs without embracing the preposterous. We must find ways to invoke the power of ritual and to mark those transitions in every human life that demand profundity—birth, marriage, death—without lying to ourselves about the nature of reality. Only then

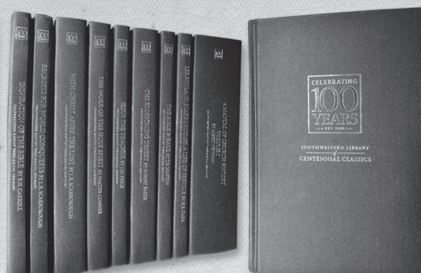
will the practice of raising our children to believe that they are Christian, Muslim, or Jewish be widely recognized as the ludicrous obscenity that it is. And only then will we stand a chance of healing the deepest and most dangerous fractures in our world” (88). This suggestion is fraught with problems.

First, it is self defeating. By offering secular humanism as a religion, Harris undercuts his previous claim that religion is the root of much evil. Second, it admits the need for transcendence, which has no good explanation in a naturalistic worldview. Third, it is too optimistic, something of which Harris chastises liberals, moderates and even fellow atheists. Fourth, it is historically naïve, ignoring the fact that atheistic regimes have not brought peace, but in many cases, more suffering. Harris’ answer is that it is dogmatism and fanaticism which led to the horrors of Nazism and Communism. This contention is inconsistent since he blames religion when it is present. Fifth, his own suggestion smacks of dogmatism insofar as the language he uses is inflammatory (e.g., “obscenity” language indicates that his beliefs are born not out of disinterested rational reflection). It is worth noting that Harris, Dennett, Dawkins and Hitchens have questioned why their works have elicited visceral reactions by religious people, seemingly oblivious to the offensive nature of their words, something Harris accuses Christians of on more than one occasion.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of *Letter to a Christian Nation* is its brevity. A short 96 pages (with reasonable font), the whole of Harris’ argument can be consumed in a single sitting. Pastors, students and laypersons who want to know what the New Atheism is about, but do not have time to read the more lengthy treatises by Dawkins (*The God Delusion*), Hitchens (*God is Not Great*), Dennett (*Breaking the Spell*) or even Harris himself will be well-served by this little book. Of course, what it gains in brevity, it loses in depth, and the thoughtful critic may be left with more questions than answers at the end of the day.

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Book Reviews

Centennial Reviews

***With Christ After the Lost.* By L.R. Scarborough. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1952; reprint, Southwestern Library of Centennial Classics, Fort Worth, 2008. 291 pages. Hardcover, \$100.00 for set.**

From 1914 until 1942, for eighteen years, Lee Rutland Scarborough, the “Cowboy President,” served as the decisive leader of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also presided over the program of evangelism and taught that discipline in an innovative move virtually unheard of anywhere else in seminary education. Occupying the newly inaugurated “Chair of Fire,” Scarborough’s assignment included not only the teaching of evangelism but the infusing of the evangelistic imperative into every class, every professor, and every student in the seminary. In 1952, he penned his own evangelism textbook entitled, *With Christ After the Lost*, acknowledging the influence of both B.H. Carroll and George W. Truett. On his own love for the field of evangelism, he also identified R.A. Torrey’s book, *How to Work for Christ* as a volume that substantively influenced his own thinking and writing. Because of the increasingly large number of students coming to Southwestern Seminary during the days of Carroll’s presidency and also because of the rapid expansion of churches in the west, the book’s influence spread to Southern Baptist ministers and churches all across the convention, becoming as widely known and useful among Southern Baptists as was Torrey’s volume among northern evangelicals.

Naturally, this volume is dated in some ways. Chapters on evangelistic music, church-wide revivals, and youth revivals, containing valuable insight, do not take into account the present era. On the other hand, other portions of the book have a certain enduring value and mark out territory that will be significant until Jesus comes. The book is divided into five lengthy sections and thirty-nine shorter chapters. Scarborough begins at the appropriate place, discussing spiritual prerequisites such as the soul-winner’s prayer life, his faith, his compassion, and his heavenly unction. Part two examines the superlative soul-winners—Jesus, Peter, Paul, and John the Baptist.

Part three examines various methodologies, focusing on the evangelistic church, the pastor himself, and the role of visitation, music, the home, and evangelism. Also, Seasonal Evangelism—the section on various kinds

of revivals—appears in part three. Part four focuses particularly on the doing of what Scarborough refers to as “personal work,” which describes dealing with children, skeptics and doubters, moralists, pleasure-loving people, and so forth. The final section has to do particularly with the appropriate Scripture passages to be used for the soul-winner and as well as for the lost. Each chapter begins with a listing of appropriate passages that apply to the chapters to follow and provides the arsenal that each reader was expected to master through memorization of these verses of Scripture.

To be fair, the book does not abound with profound intellectual insights, nor is it the epitome of color and pathos. By the same token, Scarborough never intended it to be as such. He was writing a straightforward manual on evangelism, for the purpose of encouraging every reader to recognize the Christian imperative of taking the gospel to the lost in every conceivable, honorable, and scriptural way.

On the other hand, the flavor of the book can be caught in a statement or two:

A compassionless Christianity drifts into ceremonialism and formalism. Our greatest need now is for a compassionate leadership in the Christian movements of the world. Every niche of this lost world needs the ministry of a fired soul, burning and shining with the zeal and conviction of a conquering gospel. Spiritual dry rot is worse for the churches of Jesus Christ than the plagues were for Egypt and the simooms are for the Sahara. Many a minister is on a treadmill, marking time, drying up, not earning his salt, because he has no passion for souls and no power for effective service. May our God kindle holy fires of evangelism in all churches and pulpits where such is needed (31).

Or again, the imperative of taking the gospel beyond the doors of the church was a familiar refrain for those who knew Scarborough. He remarks,

Christ's churches were not meant to be indoor institutions only, but outdoor agencies as well. His kingdom was inaugurated in its earthly expression on the hills of Judea and the banks of the Jordan, John the Baptist, the first gospel evangelist, never preached in a church house. Most of Christ's preaching and teaching was done out in the open. Pentecost was a big street meeting. Paul's evangelism was carried on, in the main, on the streets and in the open places. The idea in most churches today

seems to be ‘if you will come to our meeting house, we will offer you the gospel.’ In New Testament times, Christians worked on the theory of carrying the gospel to the people (141).

With Christ After the Lost may have lacked the breadth of R.A. Torrey’s *How to Work for Christ* and the wide-scale denominational support of Charles F. Matthews’ *The Southern Baptist Program of Evangelism*. It may have missed the theological depth of J.I. Packer’s *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, the near universal awareness of D. James Kennedy’s *Evangelism Explosion*, the color of Mark McClosky’s *Tell It Often, Tell It Well* and of Paul Little’s *How to Give Away Your Faith*. However, Scarborough’s volume nevertheless exercised an influence that few other famous texts ever generated.

Typical of the impact of the book is its influence in my own life. Scarborough died in 1942, the same year in which I was born. I never knew him or heard him, but by the time I was 15 years old, I felt I knew him well. My preacher-father spoke of him often and was a student at Southwestern at the time of Scarborough’s passing. He himself had studied evangelism with Scarborough and had, of course, read the book. When I began preaching at age 15, my dad placed *With Christ After the Lost* in my hand and simply said, “Son, this is one of the most important books you will ever receive. Read it carefully.” I did read it at that time and have read it with great profit on several occasions since. Just as Scarborough’s book made its way to almost every church house in the state of Texas and was read by hundreds, so the book impressed upon me the simple truth that no matter what your assignment in the ministry might be, above all else you are to be a soul-winner, a personal witness for Christ.

There are, of course, many factors that account for the rapidity of the growth of Baptist work in the state of Texas—reaching a point of more than five thousand local congregations and maintaining some of the largest churches in the land. But the ministry of Scarborough at Southwestern, particularly the influence of this book *With Christ After the Lost*, surely constitutes one inescapable reason for such growth. Scarborough wrote other books, such as *How Jesus Won Men*, but *With Christ After the Lost* became the most widely disseminated and influential of his books.

Two factors in my own life resulted in a profound commitment on my part to a lifelong effort in personal evangelism—the example of my father, together with the time he spent personally training me to share my faith and even to extend the offer of salvation to lost people, and the reading of Scarborough’s book. But in the end, even the first influence toward evangelism was also directly related to this volume *With Christ After the Lost*.

As a consequence, I am delighted this volume is a part of the Library of Centennial Classics of Southwestern Seminary where we have been able to reprint this splendid volume one more time. If it seems pedestrian to some readers, let it be remembered that the apostle Paul himself was criticized by some for being unimpressive. Yet, his work has endured for twenty centuries. By the same token, this work on personal evangelism by Lee Scarborough continues to have a monumental influence even if little read today.

Every time I have the privilege of introducing a person to faith in Jesus Christ, I remember my own indebtedness to L.R. Scarborough. Our prayer to God is that many will secure a copy of the Library of Centennial Classics and read *With Christ After the Lost* and be blessed by it.

Paige Patterson
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Lee Rutland Scarborough: A Life of Service.* By H.E. Dana. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1930; reprint, Southwestern Library of Centennial Classics, Fort Worth, 2008. 145 pages. Hardcover, \$100.00 for set.**

How does one summarize the life of a legend? Either one is prone to overly glamorize or, if an adverse figure, perhaps overly criticize. The former was perhaps the case for Harvey Eugene Dana's representation of the life and legacy of L.R. Scarborough (1870–1945), second president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Yet, while that may certainly be a valid criticism of the biography, it is certainly understandable as the long cast of Scarborough's shadow is one that highly influenced both Southern Baptists, and American Christianity at large, in such positive and astounding ways.

This book is one in a series of selected pieces formerly published by Southwestern faculty members during the last one hundred years. It is part of the centennial celebration of the Seminary's existence. In looking back, current constituencies of the Seminary can gain even greater appreciation for the school's heritage and look on into the future. H.E. Dana penned this piece three years before Scarborough's death, and apparently intended to honor his mentor in his sunset years. Dana was on the faculty at Southwestern from 1919 to 1938, when he became president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary, an American Baptist affiliated school in Missouri. Dana's own academic prowess was in the area of New Testament and Greek grammar studies.

Scarborough presided over Southwestern during its most formative and challenging years (1914–1945). These decades challenged the school through the effects of two World Wars, a great economic depression, modernist–fundamentalist debates, and theological controversies within Southern Baptist life. Yet his leadership proved strong and orbbed around personal zeal for holy living, personal evangelism, and an infectious call to young men to surrender to ministry and sense the call of God from a pure heart. Two of his life defining themes that Dana recounts are that he was appointed to the “Chair of Fire”, the first academic program in Evangelism on record (86). His life so embodied all that phrase implies that he was also given to “calling out the called” (144). In and through Scarborough’s evangelistic campaigns, revivals, and writings he would focus the appeal on drawing in lost souls and inviting saved ones to embrace God’s calling on their lives.

While today Scarborough’s values would be scoffed at by many with post-modern minds, there is something genuine, transparent, simple, and real about the life he lived. Perhaps he has left a more relevant word for the Seminary’s future than even its past. Down through the corridors of history his voice still touches the hearts of many who hunger for salvation in Christ and live their lives to invite others to heed the Master’s appeal. This biography was a natural one to select for this centennial series as it depicts the core values that have built a seminary and held her through a century of development. May they also hold her through until Christ comes!

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***Recruits for World Conquests.* By Lee Rutland Scarborough. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1914; reprint, Southwestern Library of Centennial Classics, Fort Worth, 2008. 145 pages. Hardcover, \$100.00 for set.**

In my few years on this earth, I have read thousands of books but *Recruits for World Conquests* surpasses them all as the most inspiring, evangelistic book I have ever read. This book is one of ten chosen as part of the Library of Centennial Classics of Southwestern Seminary. While the entire set comes at a great value, this one book is worth the price of the entire purchase.

Although the work is somewhat dated, this author has no critique to offer of the book but will provide a summary written with quotes from Scarborough provide a taste of the book. This author’s sincerely desires that everyone would read this book.

L.R. Scarborough aptly titled this book which he wrote in order to gather more recruits to win the world for Jesus Christ. He deterred wimps with a book appealing to the bravest of the brave. The sole purpose of which was to further the kingdom of God throughout the world.

Scarborough began his work by pointing out the shortage of preachers for churches—a word we need for today as well. He blamed three institutions for this lack: the Christian home, the Christian school, and the churches. Concerning the home, Scarborough chided parents who lived as though their children belonged to them and not God. In some instances, parents find themselves opposing God by not encouraging a child to pursue the Lord's work. His ultimate thrust for all three institutions was to emphasize the Gospel and encourage people to further the Kingdom. To that end, the second chapter offered advice on how to "call out the called." Operating with the premise that while God calls people to Christian ministry, often earthly influences reinforce that call, Scarborough encouraged those who could, to call out those whom God had already called.

In chapter three Scarborough encouraged every person to consider God's call by stating, "in almost every church where the fires of evangelism burn at all and where God's gospel truths have been faithfully preached, God is calling some young man to preach or some young woman to be a missionary" (32). He continued mentioning such things as the necessity of a call, the evidences of a call, and the excuses given to avoid a call. Scarborough challenged the called to respond and prepare for Gospel ministry.

In a chapter worthy for all preachers to read, Scarborough petitioned that those called by God live like it. He wrote, "If they are not consecrated they are not worth their salt. If they are pesky and pessimistic, if they are unspiritual and worldly in their habits they are not worth the rent of the parsonage in which they live" (56).

In addition to consecration, a preacher must master the main thing. Scarborough stated, "this leads me to say that the main thing in the Kingdom of God is the evangelistic spirit, the martial note and conquest tread. The winner must be an evangelistic builder and the builder must build evangelistically" (58).

As president of Southwestern Seminary, he encouraged evangelistic scholarship. "Paul is a living rebuke to the dry, spiritless intellectualism of much of our scholarship today. Paul was a scholar of the right sort. He had a *compassionate* scholarship. He knew Greek, Hebrew, philosophy, literature, history, and the profound things of all the schools of his day. . . . He preached the deepest doctrines with the hottest enthusiasm and in all of his sermon, whether teaching or evangelistic, ran the rich crimson fluid of the grace of God" (62).

In the next chapter, Scarborough addressed the importance of “The Preacher’s Compassion for the Lost” providing some ideas for obtaining evangelistic passion. As part of this compassion, he called “Stand in the Breach for the Lost” to which subject he moves next. He challenged the readers to have “Commanding Faith,” which is:

The kind of faith that takes an Abraham up out of a prosperous home-land and sends him adrift, looking for a promised land and makes him raise the sword of sacrifice over the dearest child of his heart in offering to God. It is the sort of faith that makes a Moses leave the royal courts of Egypt, and find more pleasure in the “afflictions of God’s people and the reproaches of Christ,” than in the pleasures of sin. It is the faith that makes dry land of the raging Red Sea and swollen Jordan, and topples down the granite walls of the Jerichoes (85–86).

In the final three chapters, Scarborough addressed what it takes to conquer the world for Christ. He encouraged the called to “Practice the presence of God;” addressed “The Preacher and His Prayers;” and “The Preacher’s Power.” Scarborough stated of the pastor, “He needs power—power not his own, power from above. His power, like his salvation must come from God. He is to live in this world on the power from another world. It is impossible for him to do the work committed to him in his own wisdom and strength as it is for him to make a Heaven or construct a hell” (105–06).

The concluding chapter, written by Charles T. Ball about Scarborough’s call to ministry will bring a tear to the eye of sincere believers and challenge our spoiled, consumer driven culture to place our money where our faith is (or where it is supposed to be). Scarborough’s ailing mother, Martha, prayed for her son’s call early and often:

When the boy was three weeks old, he lay one day in his little crib, which had been moved out into the middle of the room away from the mother’s bed-side, because she would try to rock the cradle when she was too weak to do so . . . not being able to walk she crawled from her bed out to where the cradle had been placed, and steadying herself on her knees by the cradle with one hand, and holding both hands of her three-weeks-old boy in her other hand, poured out her soul to God that He would call this, her son, to preach the everlasting Gospel (113–14).

Martha continued to give sacrificing money saved to build her a new house to send young Lee Scarborough to get an education. After hearing Lee’s first sermon Martha asked her husband if he was happy they had used the money for the “house that was never built” to educate young Scarborough. He responded, “My dear, I did so much want to build you a home, but if the amount of money had been a hundred times what it was I would be satisfied and happy today if every dollar of it had gone into the

preparation of our boy to preach the Gospel . . . How thankful I am today that we made the sacrifice to equip our dear boy for the exalted work to which God has called him" (123).

I am confident that if L.R. Scarborough were to speak to us from heaven, he would urge us to a renewed emphasis on conquering the world for Jesus Christ and being good stewards of our time, talents, and possessions to further advance the Kingdom of God. It is my prayer that you will read this book and that God will send us more men like L.R. Scarborough.

Thomas White
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Work of the Holy Spirit: A Treatment of the Biblical Doctrine of the Divine Spirit.* By Walter Thomas Conner. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1940; reprint, Southwestern Library of Centennial Classics, Fort Worth, 2008. 196 pages. Hardcover, \$100 for set.**

In celebrating the centennial of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, a set of notable works published by its faculty throughout the years were collected and reprinted. Included in this list are not only the seminary's first and second presidents, B.H. Carroll and L.R. Scarborough, but also its first theologian. Walter Thomas Conner came to Southwestern as it was relocated to its present location in Fort Worth, Texas in 1910 and remained there until 1949. He received degrees from Baylor University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Rochester Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the University of Chicago, where he came under the tutelage of A.H. Strong and E.Y. Mullins. During his career at Southwestern he penned sixteen books and became known as "the theologian of the Southwest." One of those books is concerned with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The title of the book, *The Work of the Holy Spirit: A Treatment of the Biblical Doctrine of the Divine Spirit*, is telling as to the method Conner utilizes to discuss the Holy Spirit's work. He is attempting to treat the "biblical" doctrine and thus limits his method to biblical theology. In brief, he sets out to introduce the work of the Spirit, present the biblical witness to it, and finally, address two further considerations: the relationship of the Spirit to man's power and the personality of the Spirit.

In the introduction, Conner presents the Holy Spirit as "God making himself known in experience" (2). This implies two aspects of the Spirit: the historical and the experiential. The historical aspect of the Spirit is based upon Jesus Christ since he is central to Christianity, however Christianity

would not exist apart from the work of the Spirit who comprises the experiential part. Conner then lists reasons for treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit: a lack of spiritual experience, a perversion of the doctrine, and a substitution of feelings and emotions for the Spirit.

Chapters two through nine concern the specific biblical material on the Holy Spirit. The divisions Conner utilizes in this discussion are categorized by authorship rather than canonical order. For instance, the Synoptics, John, and especially Paul are discussed in units rather than individual books. Whereas one might fault him for using such a methodology Conner does little more than discuss the themes of the Spirit within the subsets of the biblical text. This is beneficial in highlighting the personalities of the biblical authors, allowing readers to recognize the different emphases each author supplies to the doctrine of the Spirit. Nowhere does Conner give precedence to one author over another, thus allowing the Bible, as canon, to remain the authority and not the personalities within it.

In these chapters one might find it unfortunate that sections of the Bible receive little or no emphasis. Conner explains the omission of these texts, specifically in relation to James, 2 Peter, Jude, and 2 & 3 John: these texts have “little or no material on the subject.” So, whereas an explicit treatment of “the Cross and the Spirit,” or “the Resurrection and the Spirit,” is absent, it is not because Conner wishes to exclude these texts or subjects. Rather, Conner is silent on them only because the Bible is as well.

The selective biblical nature of these chapters does not suggest that Conner views the texts in isolation from one another. Often Conner brings into the discussion subjects and texts from other sections (i.e. 132). Thus by highlighting the particular authors and their themes, he builds a fuller theology by relating them to each other.

Finally, in the last two chapters Conner discusses what he calls “special questions” relating to the Spirit (163). The first question seems to deal with the relation of the Spirit and man; however, the discussion is more concerned with the question of divine sovereignty and man’s freedom. His discussion (revealing the influence of Mullins on this theology) is less about pneumatology and more about anthropology, especially the topic of soul competency.

The final chapter of the book discusses the personality of the Spirit. As expected, Conner presents an argument that the Spirit is personal. It is odd that this chapter is placed last, let alone that it is included in this work. This material would have served a greater purpose in the introduction prior to the biblical witness since it dealt with Trinitarian relations rather than the specific work of the Spirit.

As a whole, Conner does two things well. First, he presents a complete work of the biblical witness to the work of the Holy Spirit. He addresses all

major texts pertaining to the Spirit thereby presenting a complete biblical theology of the Holy Spirit all the while not neglecting a broader, systematic analysis.

Second, Conner writes as a pastoral scholar. He is not primarily concerned with presenting a scholarly work on the Spirit. Although it is evident that Conner has read well the scholarship of his time (e.g. his interaction with Barth), he is writing for an audience beyond the academy. The practical pastoral wisdom Conner integrates is helpful not only in illustrating the specific subjects at hand, but also by demonstrating that theology is practical, which is a message all churches need to hear.

As useful as this book is for the study of the work of the Spirit there are a few areas that are lacking. First is Conner's understanding of ecclesiology. His view of the church universal as being "the body of the redeemed living on earth at any particular time" (135) limits his discussion on the role of the Spirit in the local church. This is in part driven by his Enlightenment-enhanced view of individual freedom and soul competency. It is unfortunate because in so doing questions on the relationship of the Spirit in the local church are limited to worship practices rather than spiritual fellowship.

From this arises his view on unity. Conner's view of freedom causes him to minimize any form of uniformity, which he sees as vastly different from unity. Whereas it is true that uniformity might lead to an establishment that is authoritarian and devoid of the Spirit, it is equally true that a view of unity devoid of confession will be rendered spiritually impotent. The work of the Spirit in unity is a work of the Spirit in an organized, confessional church. With Conner's emphasis on freedom this aspect of unity and ecclesiology is neglected.

W. Madison Grace II
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Bible and Race.* By T. B. Maston. Nashville: Broadman, 1959; reprint, Southwestern Library of Centennial Classics, Fort Worth, 2008. 117 + x pages. Hardcover, \$100.00 for set.**

In celebration of its Centennial, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has reprinted T.B Maston's *The Bible and Race* as part of its Library of Centennial Classics. Maston held degrees from Carson-Newman College, Southwestern Seminary, Texas Christian University, and Yale University, and he taught Christian ethics at Southwestern until his retirement in 1963. *The Bible and Race* was written in the aftermath of the landmark Supreme Court school desegregation case *Brown v. Board of Education of*

1954. As the birth pangs of the coming Civil Rights movement were being felt by the predominantly white Southern Baptist Convention, Maston authored this volume to provide a biblical perspective on the “various aspects of the race problem” (vii).

In contrast to many current books on ethical issues, Maston presents a straightforward, biblical approach to the problem of racism by discussing eight biblical passages and their implications for the race issue. In each of these, he takes a biblical truth gleaned from a particular passage, introduces related passages where appropriate, and considers the impact each of these have on the issue of race.

Maston first attempts to reveal the biblical truths about man, and in so doing, dispel some myths that had been propagated regarding minorities. He lays a foundation in the first chapter with a discussion of the image of God from Genesis 1:27. Maston writes, “It is man, representative of all men, who is created in the image of God. The image is not restricted to red or yellow, black or white” (3). By laying the foundation that all men are created in the image of God, he is able to use subsequent chapters to dispel myths about minorities, including that God has limited where they can live (Acts 17:26) and that they are cursed by God (Gen 9:25). Finally, Maston asserts that many of the problems involving race have their foundation in a “we-you” mentality that is evidenced in the interactions between the Jews and Samaritans in Scripture (e.g., John 8:48).

Next, Maston reveals biblical truths about God to address racism. First, he declares from Acts 10:34 that God is not a respecter of persons and “does not look on or judge men by the color of their skin or by their general external conditions; he looks on the heart” (33). Maston’s greatest concern with this principle is that his readers would understand that salvation is open to all men, no matter what race, because God desires that all men should come to him. If Christians believe that God views men differently based upon race, Maston fears that the mission enterprise to other nations will be hindered.

Maston presents another truth about God as he writes about God and government from Romans 13:1–7. Since God has ordained government, men should obey it; however, no government has the God-given authority to prevent a Christian from proclaiming the gospel. The one significant shortcoming of this volume comes in the midst of this chapter, and is likely only painfully obvious in light of five more decades of tension in this area. Maston offers little practical application to the role of government and the response of the people to government as it specifically relates to racial issues. However, one must keep in mind that the work was written prior to the protests, demonstrations, and activities of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960’s.

Finally, Maston presents a biblical response to the race issue by discussing the key passages of Matthew 22:34–40 and 28:19–20. In the two chapters where he considers these passages, Maston urges his readers to treat people of all races with love and to proclaim the gospel and make disciples of all nations. Maston believed that the race problem in America would have a direct impact on the spread of the gospel around the world. He asserts, “If Christians do not attempt honestly to apply the Christian spirit and Christian principles to race relations, how can they expect others to respect their Christian claims or to hear and accept the message they proclaim? The race problem is, in a very real sense, ‘American Christianity’s test case’” (95).

T.B. Maston’s hope was most certainly that in the fifty years after the publication of this volume, the strained racial situation in the United States would have been solved. While great strides have been taken to resolve many issues, racism is still a problem today. For this reason, Maston’s book is a crucial work in the field of Christian ethics. Although some of his terminology and applications are certainly dated, the ideas and concerns expressed in the text are just as relevant today as they ever were. For Southern Baptists, we should heed the words of one of our early pioneers in race relations as he writes, “We can safely imply from this statement by Paul [Col 3:10–11] that to the degree we have progressed in the likeness of our Creator, to that degree we shall be free from class and racial consciousness and discriminations” (10).

Evan Lenow
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Jesus the Teacher.* By J.M. Price. Originally published by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1946; reprint, Southwestern Library of Centennial Classics, Fort Worth, 2008. 139 pages. Hardcover, \$100.00 for set.**

This reprinted volume is one of the ten volumes of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary’s Centennial Classics. John Milburn Price was the founding dean of Southwestern Seminary’s School of Religious Education (currently the School of Christian Education). Price joined the Southwestern faculty as a result of an invitation of the founding president, B.H. Carroll in 1915. He remained integrally connected to Southwestern until his death in 1976. The building on the Fort Worth campus which houses the School of Christian Education bears his name.

In *Jesus the Teacher*, J.M. Price gleans from the greatest “master of the teaching art” (20) in hopes of providing an exhortation to contemporary

Bible teachers. Price engages his readers with his straightforward points peppered with numerous helpful illustrations or examples. Price's keys to the teaching art can be summarized with the following descriptors: Biblically oriented, people focused, holistic and engaging.

Jesus modeled these characteristics above all and becomes an exemplary case study for Price in his encouragement to modern teachers. Jesus fulfilled all the requirements of a good teacher including the necessary life to match the truth of his teaching. Jesus drew from His knowledge of the Scriptures and human nature to develop a group of inept followers into maturing disciples. Jesus' intent was to reveal truth, but at the same time to meet recognized human needs. He was able to integrate truth and illustration in way that engage His listeners and kept them moving toward His teaching aim of maturity.

Price notes that Jesus always kept His listeners' needs and context in mind. Price remarks that modern teachers should also remember that they are not teaching curriculum, but people. Though Price states that Jesus did not have a set method of teaching, the Master Teacher did usually introduce His lesson in a way to gain His audience's attention (often through miracles or drawing on examples from everyday life). He then developed His ideas in ways that were conducive to His audience's understanding. Finally, He concluded His lessons with an appeal to action or response. Jesus drew on a variety of teaching techniques (e.g. dialogue or discourse), figures of speech (e.g. parables or proverbs), dramatic elements and Scriptural examples to produce a lesson that transformed lives.

Price's work challenges contemporary Bible teachers to follow the example of the Master. Just as Jesus was interested in the life change or "regeneration" (126) of His listeners, today's Bible teachers should not be satisfied with simply a clear presentation of facts. They must strive toward the goal of producing true disciples (learners) who themselves will become teachers like Jesus.

Jason K. Lee
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Biblical Studies

***Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John.* By Paul M. Hoskins. Paternoster Biblical Monographs. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006. 265+ xiv pages. Softcover, \$35.00.**

This volume is a revision of a dissertation done by Paul Hoskins at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School under the supervision of D.A. Carson. Carson pens a foreword to the book that points to the feature of this volume that sets it apart from the many others that treat Jesus and the temple in John. That distinctive feature is the fine treatment of typology offered by the author.

Hoskins opens with a chapter that provides a helpful summary of what is happening in Johannine studies and a very important survey of the state of the scholarly discussion on the issue of typology. Anyone interested in typology should begin their research with this excellent, up to date discussion of the issue. Chapter two examines the significance of the temple in the Old Testament and in some extrabiblical Jewish literature. Hoskins argues that the Old Testament establishes key patterns that will be matched and exceeded by Jesus. Chapter three exegetes passages in John that point to Jesus fulfilling and replacing the temple: John 1:14; 1:51; 2:18–22; and 4:20–24. Chapter four takes up the relationship established in the Gospel of John between the temple and the Jewish feasts and the provision Jesus brings in his death, resurrection, and exaltation.

Chapter five moves on to a key issue in the discussion of typology. A typological relationship between the temple and Jesus is established on the three points that in fulfilling the temple, Jesus has (1) fulfilled an Old Testament institution (2) through the significant correspondence between the institution and himself and (3) he has also surpassed the temple in the greater provision he makes. The question Hoskins moves toward in chapter five is whether the Old Testament temple typology is to be understood as “prospective or predictive.” In other words, did the temple point forward to what Jesus would do? Or, alternatively, should the temple typology only be understood retrospectively, since its import was unknown to the Old Testament author? Hoskins identifies the position that the typology was predictive as the traditional view, and he indicates that this view highlights divine intention in the Old Testament patterns. This position is informed by what Hoskins argued in the introduction to the volume: that proponents of the traditional understanding of typology “can appeal to a canonical approach that views one divine author as ultimately responsible for the unity of the whole canon” (25). As indicators that the Old Testament types are understood by John as predictive, Hoskins points to John recounting

statements that Moses wrote about Jesus (John 1:45; 5:46) and to the words of John 19:36, which state that what happened to Jesus occurred in order to fulfill Scripture. Thus, these considerations imply that “John is comfortable with the idea that a type can predict or prefigure its antitype” (188).

Chapter six summarizes the findings of the study and compares them to similar material in Paul and Revelation. Hoskins finds that John provides the basis for Paul’s identification of the church as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and he suggests that the temple blessing of God dwelling with His people finds its consummation in what is described in Revelation.

This book is the perhaps the most important study of typology to have been produced in many years, and the clarification of the typological nature of the relationship between Jesus and the temple in John makes a significant contribution to Johannine studies. The temple has received a good deal of attention lately and Paul Hoskins helps us to see that Jesus is the antitype of the temple. The implications of this volume extend beyond the boundaries of Johannine scholarship, for in some circles there is a good deal of confusion regarding the way that the New Testament authors understand and refer to the Old Testament. A renewal of interest in typology is a development that will bring clarity to much of the confusion. This volume moves that discussion forward and deserves significant attention, worthy as it is of careful reading and frequent citation.

James M. Hamilton Jr.
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Tradition, Scripture, and Interpretation: A Sourcebook of the Ancient Church. Evangelical Ressourcement. Edited by D.H. Williams. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 192 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.

In the second volume to be released in the Evangelical Ressourcement series, D.H. Williams introduces selections of primary texts from the first through the sixth centuries of the church. Williams, professor of religion in patristics and historical theology at Baylor University, is also the editor of the series which aims to promote a rethinking of the belief and practice of the churches in the twenty-first century and beyond by arguing for the relevancy of texts from the period of the early church.

As the title suggests, the book seeks to give the reader insight as to how the early church theologians viewed the relationship between tradition and scripture, and how the interaction of the two influenced apostolic doctrine. The primary source selections in the book are organized under nine headings which make up the nine chapters of the book. Williams’

introduction provides a foundation for the patristic selections and introduces the themes in the chapters to follow. Of the many concerns of the work three are primary: the doctrine of *sola scriptura*, the canon, and an allegorical or spiritual interpretation of scripture.

In the introduction, Williams argues that a study of the patristic authors would conclude that the Reformation doctrine of *sola scriptura* would neither be accepted nor understood during the patristic period (16–17). While in current Protestant thought the ideas of tradition and Scripture are much aligned, the early church saw them as attestations to one truth. The tradition, located in the ancient rule of faith, baptismal confessions, both local and conciliar creeds, even poetry and hymns, served to guard against unorthodox interpretations from groups who professed to use Scripture alone in its interpretations (17).

The second area of interest in the book has to do with the canon. Beginning with the early concepts of the word “canon,” Williams argues that the thought of the canon as an authorized list of books is one that was not on the minds of the early believers (21–28). The process of agreeing on which books are Scripture was established over some time as agreement set in among the Christian community as to which books were thought to be inspired. Williams’ primary concern is that there is a false assumption that the early church was highly concerned with establishing an authorized list of books.

The last emphasis of the book has to do with the patristic use of the Bible, especially in the area of allegorical and spiritual interpretation. While Williams admits that for Protestants the tendency to allegorize Scripture is the most problematic aspect of patristic interpretation, he defends the motivation and grounds behind the approach as being driven by “an entire theological vision (summarized in the Rule or creed)” (126). This vision was based upon different senses, or divisions, of interpretation which were built into the text by God for the purpose of growth and sanctification among the saints (35, 126).

Many Protestants will feel uncomfortable about Williams’ deep appreciation for the role that tradition played in the formation of the canon of Scripture. To value Williams’ opinion, the reader must place himself outside of his own bias toward those traditions in the church that have contradicted Scripture, especially the church traditions so vigorously fought against during the Protestant Reformation. Williams’ conclusion that the early church thinkers would not use tradition to usurp the authority of Scripture is a historical assertion, and may be a valid one. However, a better understanding of the views and motivations of the church fathers should not lead us to minimize the value and necessity of the Reformation doctrine of *sola scriptura* and the completeness of the canon.

Those new to the study of the fathers need be aware that there are problems with much of the allegorical interpretation that was done during the patristic era, as in this work Williams seems to dismiss the mistakes of allegorizing in his appreciation of their work. Also, Williams avoids addressing the danger of a hermeneutic that is dogmatic about seeking multiple levels of interpretations in Scripture. Still, the point is well taken that modern biblical criticism may concentrate too much on the literal/historical reading of Scripture at the expense of seeing Scripture as “unified and interrelated composition, fitting together as a complementary whole” (35).

Williams’ work is recommended for both the student and the church leader. The comments following the selections are especially helpful for the novice and Williams includes a brief bibliography at the end of the work to facilitate further study of the early fathers. The book serves as a good introduction to the primary source texts on the topic and the brevity of the work is refreshing since the beginner can easily become overwhelmed at the amount of primary texts available from the period of the early church.

Steven L. James
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Theological Studies

***The Early English Baptists, 1603–1649.* By Stephen Wright. Woodbridge, Suffolk, United Kingdom: The Boydell Press, 2006. 278 + x pages. Hardcover, \$115.00/£60.00.**

The publication of Stephen Wright’s Ph.D. thesis by Boydell and Brewer signals a revived interest in the turbulent days that played host to the formation of Baptists in England. This field of study was mined deeply at the end of the nineteenth century by Whitsitt, Lofton, Whitley, and Burrage, and then mined again in the third quarter of the twentieth century by Nuttall, White, Tolmie, and Brachlow. And now Wright returns to reveal that there are still plenty of riches to be found and examined by those with an interest in the origins of English Baptist Christians.

While Wright retraces the steps of those who have gone before, especially Whitley, Burrage, and Tolmie, he provides a fresh and compelling presentation of the facts that sheds light on long standing classifications. Wright essentially concludes that due to the complexity of the first five decades of the seventeenth century, Baptists in England rarely were denominated as uniquely “General” or “Particular” until after the *First London Confession* was adopted in 1644.

An introduction and six chapters are presented chronologically leading the reader through the developments of each decade for not only the Baptists, but also the early Separatists, Independents, Puritans, Levellers, and everyone in between. Indeed, one of the strengths of this book is Wright's ability to frame the landscape while simultaneously providing detailed information such as the precise number of Baptists who served in Cromwell's army (186–94). The author or reviser of more than 300 biographical articles for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Wright sets a high standard for meticulous scholarship that advances new and persuasive theories for a foundational time period in Baptist history.

Wright's interaction with the Stinton Repository, the lone source document for Baptist beginnings in England, is long overdue. Since it is common to refer to Whitley's transcription of Stinton in the *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* as the standard (with Burrage's account often used interchangeably), it is helpful to see a new study return to the eighteenth century originals instead of relying on these later transcriptions. In fact, Wright's work in this regard reveals the need for a new publication of the entire Stinton Repository.

Stephen Wright's work is exhaustive, detailed, and persuasive. Just as B.R. White's *The English Separatist Tradition* sparked a generation of interest into the world of Baptists in the seventeenth century, this reviewer hopes Wright's volume will do the same. These Baptists defined and defended their identity in a climate of political upheaval and religious chaos, all against the backdrop of wars and national calamities. A revival of interest in the study of this era should only prove to help modern day Baptists who live in a world not unlike the early English Baptists, 1603–1649.

Jason G. Duesing
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views.* James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006. 208 pages. Softcover, \$20.00.**

When believers think of Christ's work on the cross, should their mental backdrop be a battlefield, a courtroom, an operating room, or perhaps all three? James Beilby and Paul Eddy, as editors of *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, investigate this question as they seek to "foster dialogue between four different interpretations of the atonement" (20). These interpretations are the Christus Victor view, the penal substitution view, the healing view, and the kaleidoscopic view, defended by Gregory Boyd, Thomas Schreiner, Bruce Reichenbach, and Joel Green, respectively. Each scholar provides an essay-length defense of their particular view, followed

by a brief response by the other three participants. In their responses, each scholar is supposed to acknowledge similarities and demonstrate primary differences between their view and the one under consideration.

Noting the “complexities of the Christian view of the atonement” (9), Beilby and Eddy provide an introductory chapter that adumbrates the layout of the book and outlines the varying possible perspectives. In thinking about the atonement, they give three broad categories: the Christus Victor paradigm, the objective paradigm, and the subjective paradigm. Each of these “paradigms” is directed toward satisfying some individual, either Satan (Christus Victor), God (objective), or man (subjective) (12, 14, 18). They argue that most of the perspectives on the atonement can be grouped under these broad categories. Regarding atonement metaphors, the editors assert that “all of the contributors represented in this book acknowledge that the New Testament provides a plethora of images by which to understand Christ’s work” (21). However, each scholar, excepting Green, “will contend that their particular theory has a justifiable priority over the others” (21).

One strength of this study is its multifaceted scope. The book presents four views side by side and allows the reader quickly to see what the primary differences and similarities are between the various positions. By including defenses of positions by those who hold to these divergent views, this volume adds a valuable dimension to the evangelical discussion on the issue of the atonement. The “panel discussion” format of the book also provides a glimpse into the way these views respond and interact with each other. Though a strength, the scope of the work is nevertheless inevitably limited. Thus, all the views of the atonement are not discussed. For example, the moral government theory, the example theory, and variations on the interpretations defended are not addressed. However, the editors do not intend the work to function as a history of interpretations, and they do accomplish their goal of providing an articulation of four views that are currently espoused in evangelical discussion.

Another strength is the way that Beilby and Eddy order the essays. In their introduction, they give a brief overview of the three main categories involved in the atonement debate. The following essays then fall into these categories in sequential order, with Green arguing for the validity of all of them. This structure is helpful in orienting the arguments of the various authors in the range of interpretive options. One drawback of this approach, though, is the nuanced nature of the essays themselves. The contributors do not give an overview of an approach but rather argue for a specific form of that approach. Thus, Boyd argues for the Christus Victor view, but modifies it according to his various theological presuppositions (36–37). Consequently, many proponents of these four views might not

wholly agree with the essay representing their position. Related to this, in Reichenbach's defense of the healing view of the atonement, he does not argue for the supremacy of his approach like the other contributors. In fact, his responses to the other positions share this same deficiency. He insightfully affirms and critiques various aspects of the given position, but does not couple that with a defense or argument for the healing view (54–60, 106–09, 196–201). Therefore, in this work, it is sometimes unclear as to how the “subjective” view of the atonement relates to the other positions.

There is also a tension present within the work regarding the “evangelical view” of the atonement. The book's back cover labels the contributors as “four evangelical scholars” without reservation, but some statements in the book create a level of interpretive tension. For example, Schreiner strongly argues that penal substitution is “the heart and soul of an evangelical view of the atonement” (67). Though he nuances this statement, the impact of what he says remains. This assertion is the substance of Green's primary critique of Schreiner's position. Green denies this statement by saying that “it would be more accurate to claim that the atonement is central to evangelical faith, and that the penal substitutionary model is central to one strand of evangelicalism” (110). Also, some would question Gregory Boyd's status as an “evangelical” due to his wholesale assimilation and strong advocacy of open theism. Indeed, many scholars have concluded that Boyd's open theism is beyond the bounds of evangelical orthodoxy. Some discussion of this apparent tension by the editors would have improved this otherwise clear and helpful resource.

Ched Spellman
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***Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*, 2nd ed. By Robert K. Johnston. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 351 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

Since the 1970s, a veritable explosion of literature regarding the relationship between theology and film has taken place. Because of the enduring popularity of film as an entertainment medium and its undeniable influence on society, many theologians have chosen to engage in a dialogue with it, seeking out its potential theological content and determining if even secular films are capable of transmitting true theology.

Robert K. Johnston, professor of theology and culture at Fuller Theological Seminary, believes that film is indeed capable of conveying the divine. In *Reel Spirituality*, he states that the purpose of his book is “to help Christian moviegoers enter into theological conversation with film” (22). He sees film as naturally demanding dialogue between itself and the

viewer and because of this, the viewer actually engages in such dialogue, whether on a higher level or not. Johnston calls for Christians to enter into a well-informed, intellectual dialogue with film, one which utilizes proper film criticism and personal theological reflection to interact with the central meanings present in films.

Johnston divides his book into eleven chapters. The first five serve as a prolegomena of sorts by detailing what makes film a powerful medium, arguing why theological film criticism is necessary, and defending film as a legitimate art form worthy of academic attention. Chapters six and seven provide the reader with the fundamental elements of film, the foremost of which is narrative.

Chapters eight, nine, and ten are the heart of the book in that Johnston uses them to explicate his view of theological film criticism. Chapter eight introduces the reader to proper film criticism, chapter nine highlights ethical concerns involved in viewing films, and chapter ten details what Johnston believes is the optimal way to engage film theologically. In the final chapter, he provides a detailed example of this optimal criticism by examining the films of Australian director, Peter Weir.

Because Johnston believes that a good dialogue between theology and film involves proper film criticism by necessity, he asserts that a healthy theological critique involves such criticism. For Johnston, proper film criticism cannot be ignored by theologians who seek to dialogue with film, for it is “the first step toward a total criticism” (216).

Once the theologian begins with film criticism, he is then able to move to a theological approach towards film. Johnston sees theological film criticism as taking place on two axes: a “sacramental” axis and a “critical” axis (241). The sacramental axis involves the degree to which the theologian views the film as a “revelatory event”—he determines to what extent the central meaning of the film produces a purely human experience or an encounter with God (242–45). The critical axis concerns how far the theological critic’s film criticism goes—he decides to what extent he will keep his criticism entirely within the film itself or move into analytically critiquing the film through outside theological resources (250–53).

Depending on the individual film or critic, ideal criticism can fall anywhere on the matrix created by the intersection of the two axes; some films are perhaps better suited for producing a divine encounter than others, just as some films open themselves to critique from an outside theological perspective more so than others do. Still, wherever a film might fall on this matrix, for Johnston, the proper approach to the film must begin with an examination of its artistic sense. After that the film “will open the viewer to an overflow of meaning as the inner meaning of the film and the viewing

'self' are grasped together, stimulating faithful belief, right practice, and even divine contemplation" (261).

Perhaps the greatest strength of this book is its introduction to proper film criticism. Any believer attempting to dialogue seriously and intellectually with film needs at least a minimum understanding of what film criticism involves. Not only does Johnston provide this, but he also shows why it is so important for intelligent theological discussion of film. Another strength consists of Johnston's numerous examples from films to illustrate the process of criticism. Rather than leaving the reader to grasp the concepts on his own, Johnston shows the reader exactly what he means by applying the concepts to actual films.

The book is not without its drawbacks, however. The largest weakness concerns Johnston's nebulous view of the potential for films to provide a "divine encounter" or "revelatory event." Throughout the text, Johnston's position regarding divine revelation is ambiguous at best. He does not explain what authority these divine encounters or revelatory events might have for the Christian and does not touch upon their need to be tested against Scripture. A second weakness is that Johnston is perhaps too "open" towards morally objectionable films. While he does make clear that not all films are appropriate for all Christians, he neglects that the matter of whether or not an individual Christian should view a certain film falls directly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Reel Spirituality is a book for Christian laypersons, ministers, and theologians alike. Rather than being passive viewers, believers should seek to interact critically and theologically with film, perhaps even encountering God in the process. Johnston's work is a step in the right direction towards such a fruitful dialogue between theology and film.

Matthew C. Millsap
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***Towards Baptists Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision.* By Steven R. Harmon. Studies in Baptist History and Thought, vol. 27. Milton Keynes, U.K.: Paternoster, 2006. 275 pages. Softcover, \$39.99.**

In *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition and the Baptist Vision*, Steven R. Harmon focuses on the relation of Baptist identity to the catholic tradition. Harmon aims to show how Baptists, particularly those in North America, can make a move toward catholicity and explains how such a move will better equip Baptist theology and worship for a postmodern setting.

Harmon describes Baptist catholicity as “a reclaimed consciousness that Baptists belong to what the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed confesses is the ‘one, holy, catholic (Greek *katholike*, “general” or “universal”), and apostolic church” (3). A key word here is “reclaimed.” In several of his essays, Harmon tries to show that the use of tradition to construct Baptist theology and worship is not a new thing nor does it betray Baptist principles. Rather he contends there is much precedent, particularly among early Baptists, for a move toward the catholic tradition.

Among the different essays, Harmon identifies several resources for his proposed movement. These resources include tradition, particularly the patristic tradition, Trinitarian reflection, as well as biblical interpretation and worship informed by catholicity and the patristic “perspective.” In addition, the book includes essays showing how Baptists can benefit from this movement toward catholicity in areas such as biblical interpretation, worship, and even higher education.

Baptists could learn much from the author’s call to (re-)examine the connection of Baptist doctrine and practice to that of the early church and the wider Christian community. Moreover, he is right in stressing that Baptists must think about how they relate to the current cultural milieu. Finally, these essays do not simply identify problems; they offer a constructive approach to a solution.

Nevertheless, Harmon’s answer to the question of how Baptists do theology and worship in a postmodern setting is not sufficient. In the end, Harmon renounces too much in the name of ecumenism, adopts much that is postmodern, and offers too little that is distinctively Baptist. For example, he contends that Baptists should not baptize individuals who were baptized as infants in other traditions and later joined a Baptist church; evidently, for Harmon believer’s baptism is no longer a mark of what it means to be Baptist. This raises an important question that Harmon never really answers in his book: What does it mean to be Baptist? After reading the book, one is left with the impression that perhaps the only key Baptist distinctive is dissent. It seems that in his attempt to show how Baptists are like everyone else, he neglected to show how they are different.

To be fair, Harmon does address “What Keeps You from Becoming a Catholic?” in the final essay. There he states, “[t]he most significant personal reservation which I have about becoming Catholic or Orthodox is my support for the ordination of women to offices of pastoral ministry, which of course runs counter to the current ecclesial disciplines of the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodoxy” (200). Overlooking for the moment key theological beliefs, such as a regenerate church, it seems ironic that a man who argues so strongly for a Baptist theology informed and shaped in connection to “the ancient ecumenical tradition” ignores that

same tradition and more importantly the Scriptures that shaped it when it comes to the ordination of women. Of course, this “personal reservation” as well as his negligible reservations for becoming Catholic suggests that Harmon’s reconstruction has at least as many roots in the modern egalitarian and ecumenical movements as it does in his concern to reclaim the catholic tradition in Baptist life and doctrine.

In the end, Harmon’s proposal is another description of a nonfoundational approach for reconstructing Baptist identity. Such approaches speak of the roles of Scripture, tradition, community, reason, and culture in doing theology, but ultimately the community becomes the true source of authority on which all the others depend.

John A. Nixon
Mobile, Alabama

Ethics and Philosophy

***Effective Parenting in a Defective World.* By Chip Ingram. Carol Steam, IL: Tyndale House, 2006. 181 pages. \$13.99.**

This a helpful resource for any pastor or parent, who is looking for a common-sense book on raising children in a problematical cultural context, or as the author calls it our “defective world.” One of the characteristics of this text is that it sets forth some sound principles of action, most of which have a biblical basis, and then develops several types of applications to modern family situations. Each of the principles, also confront a modern myth that many parents believe. For instance, some parents would hold the myth that a good parenting goal is to make their kids happy, while the parenting reality is that their goal should be to make their kids holy. Another parenting myth is that parenting could be straightforward if only they could find the right formula or how-to book, while the reality is that good parenting will always require adapting the parenting approach. It is interesting that Chip Ingram does have a penchant for setting forth lists of how-to’s and formula sounding presentations or arguments for approaches for handling a number of common problems in child-raising. Those arguments tend to be rather well nuanced, biblical and logical, as well as well illustrated, primarily by the author’s own experiences.

It cannot be said that this book has a depth of Bible exposition, but there are numerous biblical passages that are used in a somewhat popular fashion to forge the basis of many of the guiding principles that are given for healthy parenting. The author does not claim to be doing biblical counseling, but rather is carefully giving guidance for child raising in a positive,

Christian manner, with fairly regular doses of logic or reasonable insight and parenting experience given for added measure. It is an enjoyable and believable approach and one that could be beneficial to most pastors, family counselors, and struggling Christian parents.

The first three chapters deal with some essential guidelines for parenting. The next four chapters focus on some of the more problematic issues faced in parenting, such as discipline and punishment. The last two chapters share “five smooth stones” for preparing children to face the giants of life. For example, one of those “stones” is to teach them how to “suffer well,” or to suffer with understanding that suffering is normal and to be expected in life, even as Christians.

It should be added that there is a video unit that can also be used to accompany this material for both individual learning and for group interactions. Each chapter finishes with a brief section of exercises for applying the concepts of the chapter. These can be helpful for the parenting couple, a single parent, or as conversation starters for a group process.

William E. Goff
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Flawed Families of the Bible: How God's Grace Works through Imperfect Relationships.* By David E. Garland and Diana R. Garland. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007. 235 pages. \$19.99.**

This book has a dual focus: 1) How women in the Bible were mistreated, misunderstood and misused, and 2) how God worked for good through his grace in each case. The study concentrates on an often overlooked facet of family dysfunctionality, especially at the point of the treatment of women and girls during the periods of the patriarchs and the early kings. There are also applications made to the plight of present day women in their problematical familial situations. The style is basically narrative with limited references and use of Scripture. The references are placed in parenthesis within the text, thus making this a more popular form of presentation.

There are several distracting and detracting matters with the book's presentation. The authors are certainly accurate in pointing out that there were real (and horrible) cases in the Old Testament in which women suffered injustices and mistreatment by their husbands, fathers, other family members and others in their society. Nevertheless, the reality of the flawed families in the Bible is not limited to the treatment of women. The title of the book, reflecting its actual content, would more accurately be, “The Mistreatment of Women in the Bible” (with the exception that the last

chapter deals with the Ethiopian eunuch, a case of how such singles were misunderstood and maligned). Where are the studies on Adam and Eve, Joseph and his brothers, Moses and his family, Hosea and Gomer, Samson, and several of the kings of Israel and Judah? There is no shortage of flawed families in the Old Testament, so there is no reason to limit the subject to the problems of the treatment of women.

The authors also seemed to dwell on the dark side of the cases, and there was only limited treatment given to the role of God's grace and any form of solution or positive application. Eventually this reader gained more of a sense of frustration toward how men mistreated women, including their wives and daughters, and a growing sense of depression that so few of those forbearers of our faith seemed to pay any attention to the Bible's positive and creative guidelines for having healthy families.

One further negative aspect of the book was that there was a decided slant given against male leadership in the telling of the stories chosen. It appears that they were told anachronistically from a modern perspective with limited sympathy for the ancient context. It also appears that an attempt is being made by the authors to address some of the maladies of the plight of modern women (rape, abandonment, adultery, rejection, etc.), but one wonders if the women reading this volume will be inspired and guided toward healthy choices and lifestyles by the treatment given to the grace of God, as well as the illustrations and applications of Scripture to life which were presented.

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Preaching and Pastoral Ministries

And I Turned to See the Voice: Rhetoric of Vision in the New Testament. By Edith M. Humphrey. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. 238 pages. Softcover, \$22.99.

The authors of the Scripture utilized various literary forms in their compositions. The literary form known as "vision-report" is the most appealing literary device to postmodern-minded readers due to its unique nature—hermeneutic openness. In other words, radical reader-response hermeneutics frequently has a tendency to pursue a deconstructive approach to interpretation by creating diverse meanings beyond the text. Symbol and imagination, in vision-report, have the potential both to depict creative pictures in the readers' minds and to forfeit the propositional notions in the texts.

Edith M. Humphrey, Professor of New Testament Studies at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, expounds upon the relationship between the words (argumentative substances) and images (creative effects) in the New Testament vision-reports, maintaining that New Testament writers employed the vision-reports to heighten both authorial notions and rhetorical impacts. She argues that “in the Jewish and Christian traditions, vision and words are typically conjoined, even while some aspects of the vision are left to make an imaginative rather than a cognitive impact” (22).

In this volume, the contribution she makes to an understanding of vision passages is the balanced discussion of both their allusive imageries and their authors’ assertions. In order to explicate this correlation between allusion and assertion, Humphrey selects fourteen vision/dream-report passages in the New Testament (Matt 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 1:5–2:40; 9:28–36; 10:17–24; Acts 7:54–60; 9:1–25; 10:1–11:18; 22:1–22; 26:1–24; 2 Cor 12:1–10; Rev 1:12–3:22; 4:1–5:14; 11:15–12:17) and compares them with each other using literary-rhetorical analysis. She examines the functions of these vision-reports in both narrow and broad literary contexts by categorizing them into four groups. Even though her criteria are not always apparent, especially in her second and third classifications, this categorization system is a seminal guideline for grasping the divergences among vision-reports.

In the first classification, “Making a Case: Word Clinched by Vision” (31), Humphrey argues that “a creative speaker might well use the vision-report as a building block in an argument if its significance were manifest to his designed audience” (35). In the polemic argument of Paul (2 Cor 12:1–10) and the narrative of Luke (Acts 7:54–60), these explicit vision-reports function as supporting more directly the authors’ main arguments. With this classification system she clearly substantiates a straightforward meaning of certain vision-reports in their literary contexts.

The second classification, “Directing the Argument: The Power of Repetition with Narrative” (57), presents the more rhetorically equal relationship between speeches and implicit vision narratives (Acts 9:1–25; 10:1–11:18; 22:1–22; 26:1–24). Humphrey argues that “the visions do not present a *fait accompli* but are artfully presented and combined to lead the hearers within the story, and the readers of the story, to certain conclusions” (81). These reiterated vision-reports are just as difficult to interpret explicitly in narratives; however, they lead the readers to join implicitly in the author’s arguments.

In the third classification of “Shaping the Narrative: Embryonic and Strategic Visions” (103), Humphrey argues that certain embryonic visions (Matt 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 1:5–2:40; 10:17–24; Luke 9:28–36) are “placed judiciously alongside hymnody so as to grasp the imagination of

the reader and set up the implicit argument” (197). These visions of *chreia* (i.e. anecdote), infancy, and Jesus’ transfiguration move readers from closed to “open potential” meanings (103). The main focal point of these rhetorical narratives, however, is Christ.

The last classification, “Firing the Imagination: Visions with Embedded Propositions” (151), focuses on the apocalyptic literature of John (Rev 1:12–3:22; 4:1–5:14; 11:15–12:17) which is “composed almost entirely of allusive visionary language and [is] seemingly far removed from the rational, discursive mode of Paul, more perplexing than the implicit rhetoric of Luke’s repeated narratives, and less univocal than the transfiguration episodes” (152). Humphrey asserts that John intentionally employed this symbolic literary form to create deep visual impacts based on his propositions for the readers.

Examining conspicuous functions of vision-reports in their literary contexts, while underlining implicit or explicit authorial intents, is Humphrey’s most noteworthy contribution in this work. Despite this profitable achievement, this book still has two problematic areas. First, concerning her primary methodology of literary-rhetorical analysis, Humphrey succeeds in judiciously accounting for the literary contexts and devices of the vision-reports. This, however, is not sufficient to delineate the unique rhetorical effects in this analysis. She needs to explicate more particular rhetorical functions and devices among vision-reports.

Second, she presupposes that according to the traditions of Jewish and Christian writing, “Every example of vision-report in the New Testament is connected with a clear interpretive word or direct context” (22). However, she fails to address substantially the linear hermeneutic connection between Jewish and Christian traditions in vision-reports in this work. Despite these two weaknesses, anyone interested in investigating the vision-reports in the New Testament cannot afford to overlook this work.

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***The Shape of Preaching: Theory and Practice In Sermon Design.* By Dennis M. Cahill. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. 175 pages. Softcover, \$13.99.**

Every preacher knows the stress of designing the structure of his sermon. Dennis Cahill helps alleviate that stress as he discusses the various shapes sermons may take in *The Shape of Preaching*. Cahill brings more than twenty years of experience in preaching to his new work on sermon design. Having served as the founding pastor of Christ Community Church in New Jersey, Cahill’s book is a practical work that ministers to those who

are doing the hard work of preaching week to week. Cahill expresses the thesis of this book when he writes, “The goal of this book is ultimately practical—greater variety and ability in preaching the gospel to the world in which we live” (10).

The book is written in two independent sections. In section one, Cahill deals with sermon forms and the theological, literary, and cultural issues related to sermon design. In the second section, he gives a step-by-step process for moving from sermon design to sermon structure and finally to sermon delivery.

One of the strengths of *The Shape of Preaching* is Cahill’s challenge for preachers to let the literary genre of a passage influence one’s sermon structure. Most preachers are comfortable using the same sermon design and form for a Pauline Epistle as they are for a narrative text in Genesis. Cahill, however, notes that when one preaches an Old Testament narrative the structure of the sermon will look much different than the structure of a sermon from Romans 12:1–2. Consequently, he challenges preachers to seek out sermon designs that will allow them to preach in new, effective ways, while following the structure of the text.

Cahill also helps pastors realize more is at work in the sermon design than the pastor himself. Sermon design is more “art than science,” yet he points out the vital role of the Holy Spirit in one’s preaching. Without the Holy Spirit’s help preaching is ineffective. He writes, “We should form the sermon with conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit” (88). Preachers do this best when they spend time in prayer as they develop the sermon. Cahill’s main focus, therefore, is that the “goal of [the sermon] must always be to speak the gospel well” (47). The gospel is spoken well when the Holy Spirit is relied upon and the structure of the sermon comes from the structure of the text.

When it comes to the area of improvements, I mention only two. First, Cahill intended the independent sections of the book to be uniquely useful; however, this approach has led to some redundancy and some disconnection between the two sections. The format of the book is such that one can read section two without having to read section one thereby leaving one with a method of sermon design and not a foundation for sermon design.

A second possible improvement pertains to his discussion on culture and sermon form. While his chapter on culture and sermon form is helpful, Cahill, however, places as much emphasis upon the audience as he does the structure of the text when it comes to sermon structure. While he does not say the audience is more important than the text of Scripture, his description of the role of the audience and culture, however, can be misleading and can point one to such a conclusion. For example, in chapter 5 he places

too much emphasis upon the culture when he writes, “If there are a large percentage of young adults (age thirty or below) in attendance, you may want to make more use of narrative or inductive forms” (75). Cahill, therefore, implies that deductive preaching should not be the preferred method of sermon structure if one is speaking to young adults. The problem with placing too much emphasis upon the audience in sermon design is that the preacher’s audience or culture dictates his sermon structure, rather than the text of Scripture. The text must reign supreme even above the audience. If, therefore, the shape of the text is deductive one’s sermon structure should be deductive regardless of the make-up of the audience.

Cahill successfully communicates that sermon structure and design matter. If preachers want to increase the effectiveness of their preaching they must give attention to the design of their sermons. *The Shape of Preaching* gives pastors the instructions they need to develop sermon structures that honor the text and thus glorify God. I encourage preachers of the Word to read this book and be challenged to present the gospel in a new, effective way while following the structure of the text.

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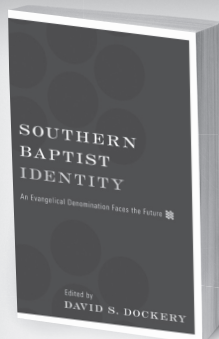
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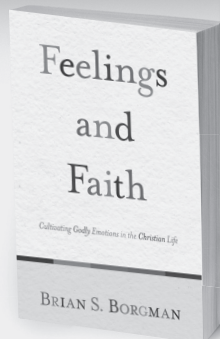


Southern Baptist Identity:
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David S. Dockery, ed.
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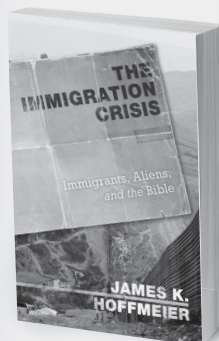


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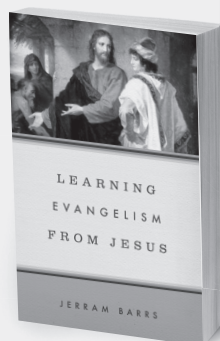


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