



Baptist History Out of Focus

Issue 18

Fall 1994

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The Founders Journal



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The Founders Journal is a quarterly publication which takes as its theological framework the first recognized confession of faith that Southern Baptists produced, [*The Abstract of Principles*](#).



Baptist History Out of Focus

Tom Ascol

The sesquicentennial anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1995 focuses attention on the history and heritage of our denomination. All across the denomination, in local associations of churches, state conventions and especially at the national convention in Atlanta, festivities are being planned to help Southern Baptists celebrate their 150 years of existence.

Never in our history have we stood in greater need of re-examining our roots. Many today have little interest in or knowledge of the spiritual and theological heritage from which we have come. This is a great tragedy because history is a helpful perspective-builder. It adds tremendous depth-perception to analyses of contemporary trends or movements. It also serves as a tracking chart to discover how closely we have stayed to our original course. To be deprived of these benefits which history can provide is to be disadvantaged in our efforts to move productively into the future.

More alarming than the widespread indifference to our denominational heritage is its mischaracterization by some who ought to know better. The chronic misreading of history seems to have spread among many who have been regarded as denominational leaders or spokesmen during this present generation. They exhibit an annoying and damaging tendency to misconstrue important issues when referring to our Baptist heritage.

Historical Myopia

Three different types of this blurry-eyed-view of Baptist history repeatedly manifest themselves among us. The first, which could be called "historical myopia," tends to regard our Baptist heritage-especially our Southern Baptist heritage-as stretching back only 50-60 years. Where this malady exists "traditional" means "the way we have done it (or understood it) the last few years."

A striking example of historical myopia was displayed last summer during the change of leadership at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Outgoing President Roy Honeycutt criticized the promises of his successor, Al Mohler, after the latter pledged to make the seminary responsible to the convention by returning it to its historic roots-that is, to an honest commitment to the Abstract of Principles. After claiming that he had kept the seminary true to its heritage during his 11 year tenure, Honeycutt sounded an alarm over the stated intentions of Mohler. Honeycutt warned, "We are moving in a new direction where we have never been; not to a renewal of our beginnings and the theology of (seminary founder) E. Y. Mullins."[\[1\]](#)

If E. Y. Mullins founded Southern Seminary he did it *in utero* because he was not born until 1860, the year after Southern was established in Greenville, South Carolina. Now, it must be granted that the parenthetical description of Mullins as "seminary founder" may have been an insertion by the writer who quoted Honeycutt (that would be bad enough!) and not the actual words of the former president. Nevertheless, Honeycutt did wed "the renewal of our beginnings" to "the theology of E. Y. Mullins" in his statement.

Mullins tremendously influenced the seminary in a variety of ways during his 29 year tenure as president. But that tenure did not begin until 1899 when the seminary was 40 years old. A genuine renewal of Southern Seminary's beginnings will look beyond the theology of Mullins to that of James P. Boyce, who in fact was the real founder and first president. It is Boyce's reformed understanding of the gospel (which was shared by his colleagues) which is outlined in the seminary's Abstract of Principles and, further, which is representative of the doctrinal consensus which characterized the first 50-75 years of the Southern Baptist Convention. To see the beginnings of Southern Seminary linked to the theology of E. Y. Mullins reveals a severe case of historical myopia.

Historical Tunnel Vision

Another way the Baptist heritage gets out of focus is through reading the record with "historical tunnel vision." This approach takes an isolated example from history and assumes that it is normative. Other evidence is ignored completely in order to draw conclusions from the one example. This is like the man who found a pear tree growing in pine forest and then went home thinking he had discovered a pear orchard.

An illustration of this was provided earlier this year when Cecil Sherman, Coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), sought to justify why his organization does not and should not have a confession of faith. To make his case he invoked the memory of Pennsylvania Baptists from "two hundred and fifty years ago." Despite being falsely accused of being Anabaptists and "dogged with questions of what they believed," these early Pennsylvania Baptists, according to Sherman, "decided not to make a confession."[\[2\]](#)

Sherman cites a "Michael Welfare" as a spokesman for Pennsylvania Baptists and quotes his rationale for eschewing confessions:

When we were first drawn together as a society . . . it had pleased God to enlighten our minds so far as to see that some doctrines which we once esteemed truths, were errors; and that others, which we had esteemed errors were real truths. From time to time He has been pleased to afford us farther light and our principles have been improving, and our errors diminishing. Now we are not sure that we are arrived at the end of this progression and at the perfection of spiritual or theological knowledge; and we fear that, if we should once print our confession of faith we should feel ourselves bound and confin'd by it, and perhaps be unwilling to receive further improvement and our successors still more so, as conceiving what we their elders and founders had done, to be something sacred, never to be departed from.[\[3\]](#)

Sherman commends this quote by saying, "These people had thought more clearly and written more carefully than we. And we need to go back and read them again."[\[4\]](#) If by "these people" he means 18th century Baptists, then arguably, he is right. And if he were to follow his own advice to "go back and read them again" Sherman would find that Mr. Welfare's comments are not at all representative of the Pennsylvania Baptists of his day.

From the time of its formal organization in 1707 the Philadelphia Baptist Association exerted tremendous influence throughout Pennsylvania as well as the rest of the middle and southern colonies. This association was comprised of Baptists who consciously regarded the 1689 London Baptist Confession as their own.[\[5\]](#) In 1742 the association formerly adopted this confession in the slightly modified form which Benjamin Keach recommended.

It is curious to note that the Philadelphia Confession, as it came to be called, was officially adopted *two years prior* to the above comments made by Michael Welfare. This confession, in the hands of the evangelistically aggressive Philadelphia Association "fixed for generations the doctrinal character of Baptists in this country as evangelical Calvinism."[\[6\]](#)

Welfare's comments do not fit with the overwhelming historical evidence that the Philadelphia Confession was widely known and accepted by his contemporaries. Perhaps he was simply mistaken or maybe he was on the periphery of Baptist life. Whatever the case may be, to take his words as indicative of Baptist sentiments in 18th century Pennsylvania is to read the historical record with tunnel vision.

If Cecil Sherman wants to eschew confessions because "God is trying to tell us more about himself all the time" and because "revelation has moved on," that is surely his prerogative.[\[7\]](#) But for him to justify his anticonfessionalism by appealing to an isolated statement of an unknown Baptist as if it represented mainstream Baptist thought is historically unjustifiable.

Historical Astigmatism

History also gets misconstrued when it is read through a faulty lens, a malady which we might call "historical astigmatism." This approach does not actually overlook large segments of history, rather it is simply unable to bring the evidence into sharp focus. Blurred distortions of past events are assumed to be an accurate representation of what actually took place. The person who reads history in this way tends to make sweeping generalizations that contain just enough elements of truth to make them appear credible. Upon closer investigation, however, these generalizations are exposed as distortions of the evidence in question.

In an interview earlier this year James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, was challenged to defend his assertion that President Bill Clinton "is in the mainstream of Baptist history." Dunn responded by explaining his astigmatic understanding of historic Baptist positions:

The mainstream of Baptist history is non-creedal. It affirms the right of private interpretation of Scripture. It magnifies the priesthood of the believer. It doesn't subscribe to either an ethical or theological guideline that everybody has to march with because-that's the essence of Baptists.[\[8\]](#)

As Tom Nettles has clearly demonstrated in Part One of the article that continues in this issue, Baptists have a rich heritage of the careful use of confessions and creeds (see *FJ* 17). Furthermore, it is only modern Baptists that have "magnifie[d] the priesthood of the believer" (singular). The doctrine which Baptists have historically articulated is the priesthood of all believers (plural). The difference is more than linguistic and, as Timothy George has convincingly argued previously in this journal, this biblical doctrine does not teach that a person can believe whatever he wants and still be considered a Christian (much less a Baptist Christian; see *FJ* 3).

Does the essence of the Baptist faith really consist of the absence of ethical or theological guidelines that are universally applicable? Absolutely not. Eighty years ago J. B. Gambrell, former Southern Baptist editor, seminary professor and convention president, prophetically rebuked the very attitude which Dunn advocates:

The cry against creeds is lacking in sound judgment. It comes mostly from those who wish to evaporate religious thoughts into theological mist that it may be crystalized into other forms. They wish all the fences pulled down and everything unsettled.[\[9\]](#)

I do not know to which stream Mr. Dunn was referring when he made his outlandish claims, but one thing is indisputably clear: it is nowhere near the "mainstream of Baptist history."

One of the great challenges of our day is the recovery of our Southern Baptist heritage. For too long the facts have been forgotten, ignored or distorted beyond recognition. Love for God and man ought to motivate us to be as honest and accurate as possible when examining the the rock from whence we are hewn. Because God rules the world by his providence, history really is His story. To misconstrue the historical record, therefore, is to falsify the works of God. Further, love for our fellow men, especially for our brothers and sisters in the faith, demands that we not bear false witness against them-regardless of when they lived. Consciously misrepresenting history is a violation of this law of love and should be regarded as a sin to be avoided.

Southern Baptists have a valuable spiritual and theological heritage which is unknown to the majority of our members. The recovery of it can help direct us back to the old paths of vibrant, doctrinal Christianity. This is the reason for the *Founders Journal*. It is the rationale behind Mission 150. May our Lord help us all to be honest and faithful in our efforts to rediscover our heritage. And may He use all of our labors to stoke the fires of renewal and reformation which we so desperately need.



¹"Honeycutt Defends Stance on Abstract in Last Address," *Baptist Standard* (June 2, 1993), p. 8.

²"Should CBF Have a Confessional Statement?," *Fellowship News* (January/February 1994), p. 2.

³*Ibid.* Sherman takes this quote from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, (New York: Pocket Books, n.d.), p. 143.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1969 revised edition), p. 349. See also H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman, 1987), pp. 211, 240-41.

⁶McBeth, p. 241. The whole scenario becomes even more curious when the fact that Benjamin Franklin, whose autobiography quotes Welfare, favorably commented on the confession when he printed it for them in 1743.

⁷*Fellowship News*, p. 2

⁸From an interview with James Dunn reported in *The Lofton Letter* (April 1994):1.

⁹"Concerning the Use of Creedal Statements," J. B. Gambrell, *Baptist Standard* (January 22, 1914), p. 1.



¹"Honeycutt Defends Stance on Abstract in Last Address," *Baptist Standard* (June 2, 1993), p. 8.

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The Lordship Controversy and the Carnal Christian Teaching (Part 3)

[Ernest Reisinger](#)

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In this series of studies we have been considering some of the theological differences between the non-lordship and the Lordship teaching on some very, very important Christian doctrines. There are some Christians who are a bit afraid of the word theology and there are others who simply do not like the word. It is not uncommon to hear remarks such as "don't talk theology to me, just tell me about Jesus." That may sound very pious but the truth is that when we teach who Jesus is and what He did and why He did it-His virgin birth, His sinless life, His vicarious death and His victorious resurrection-we are into the deepest kind of theology.

Before we get into the study of man's nature it may be well to say a word about theology. The truth is, every Christian has a theology whether he knows it by that name or not.

Theology is a compound of two words, basically meaning an account of, or discourse about, gods or God. The word denotes teaching about God and His relation to the world from creation to the consummation. The acid test for all theology was well expressed by Thomas Aquinas: "Theology is taught by God, teaches of God, and leads to God."

Charles Hodge in speaking of the necessity of systematic theology said,

It may naturally be asked, why not take the truths as God has seen fit to reveal them, and thus save ourselves the trouble of showing their relation and harmony? The answer to this question is, in the first place, that it cannot be done. Such is the constitution of the human mind that it cannot help endeavoring to systematize and reconcile the facts which it admits to be true. In no department of knowledge have men been satisfied with the possession of a mass of undigested facts. And the students of the Bible can as little be expected to be thus satisfied. There is a necessity, therefore, for the construction of systems of theology. Of this the history of the Church affords abundant proof. In all ages and among all denominations, such systems have been produced. It cost the Church centuries of study and controversy to solve the problem concerning the person of Christ; that is, to adjust and bring into harmonious arrangement all the facts which the Bible teaches on that subject. We have no choice in this matter. If we would discharge our duty as teachers and defenders of the truth, we must endeavor to bring all the facts of revelation into systematic order and mutual relationship.

In this study we will consider another serious theological error related to the carnal Christian teaching of the non-lordship teachers, that is, the two nature theory, the "new man" and the "old man" teaching. What we shall see in this study is that the old man, new man teaching goes hand in hand with the two classes of Christians-carnal Christians and spiritual Christians.

In this study I want to show that the Bible does not teach that when a person becomes a Christian he becomes two persons: the *old man* and the *new man*. The old nature as one person and the new nature as another person.

What Changes in Regeneration?

The non-lordship teaching is that in regeneration (the new birth) nothing in man's nature changes. They teach that the sinner's "standing" which is his legal relationship to God changes; however, his "state", that is, his condition on earth does not necessarily change at the time of regeneration or even after regeneration. The error of this teaching is not in the distinction between "standing" and "state" but rather, in the denial that there is a vital connection or relationship between our standing and our state, that is, between justification and sanctification.

This erroneous dualism is evident in the non-lordship teaching of regeneration. The non-lordship teaching is that the "old" fallen nature remains untouched and unchanged. The Spirit regenerates and indwells the person (his body) but the Spirit does not indwell the old nature. The regenerate person is made a partaker of the divine nature but this divine nature is *not* his nature.

The non-lordship teaching is that the "old" sinful nature and the "new" nature are poles apart in the same person at the same time. This is real schizophrenia-it is an absolute and antithetical split between the finite created, sinful, old nature and the divine uncreated, infinite, sinless, new divine nature. The bottom line is the person is not changed at all. This teaching produces an underlying dualism-these two natures never influence one another. They go their separate ways-the old nature will ultimately be destroyed and the new nature will live forever.

This underlies the non-lordship teaching of two kinds of Christians-the "spiritual" and the "carnal." The spiritual Christian is one who, for some reason, is controlled by the indwelling divine nature; the carnal Christian is one controlled by the old nature.

The two nature theory, like all theology, is interrelated with other theological points; therefore, this study builds on past studies in this series. The two nature theory is vitally related to regeneration (what happens when a sinner is regenerated), sanctification and justification. Justification underlies sanctification. The best way to understand non-lordship justification and sanctification is to understand their view of regeneration (see *FJ* 13 & 15).

The non-lordship teaching is that a new nature is implanted in the soul. This results in two distinct natures in the Christian. Nothing actually happens to the old nature except that it has an entirely different new nature placed along side it-this is a real dualism.

The Lordship teaching is that a new foundation for action, a new disposition, is implanted in the old ego, thus the Christian is still one person with two struggling principles, and the new principle is destined to conquer the old. This is quite different from the non-lordship teaching of two utterly distinct natures, that is, two selves. This view has profound implications on the doctrine of sanctification. The old nature continues as it was before regeneration throughout the earthly life only to be annihilated at death. One of the non-lordship teachers put it like this - "Flesh is flesh, nor can it ever be made aught else but flesh. The Holy Ghost did not come down on the day of Pentecost to improve nature or to do away with the fact of incurable evil" This means that the old nature is not changed.

They teach that the new nature is actually the indwelling of the divine nature of God. This new nature really cannot be justified because it is the very nature of God Himself, and, therefore, could not possibly need to be justified. Lewis Sperry Chafer speaks for all the non-lordship teachers when he said "the experience of sanctification is absolutely unrelated to position in Christ" (*Systematic Theology*, vol. 7, pp. 279-284).

It is obvious that Chafer does not believe that there is an inseparable relationship between justification and

sanctification, that is just why many of the non-lordship teachers do not believe in progressive sanctification.

The non-lordship teaching is: "Regeneration is not a change in the old nature, but is the introduction of a new. . . . Nor does the introduction of this new nature alter in the slightest degree the true, essential character of the old. The old nature continues to be what it was, and is made in no respect better; yea, rather, there is a full display of its evil character in opposition of the new element."

Many, if not all, non-lordship teachers teach that progressive sanctification is false, and is not to be expected.

The non-lordship teaching is that the evil nature is not at all weakened by grace, but, rather inflamed. The old nature is not changed at all. The old nature remains in all its distinctness, and the new nature is introduced in all its distinctness.

The new nature has its own desires, its own habits, its own tendencies, its own affections. All of these are spiritual, heavenly, divine. All the aspirations of the new nature are upward.

One antinomian teacher stated it very clearly, "Be warned that the old nature is unchanged. The hope of transforming the old nature into holiness is as vain as the dream of a philosopher's stone, which was to change the dross of earth into gold." This is just why I must emphasize and reemphasize, in this study, that the teaching of the non-lordship teachers is that the old nature is not changed in regeneration or at any time thereafter.

There is not one text in the New Testament that teaches that regeneration is the implanting of a "new nature" beside the old, or, that the renewed man has two hostile natures. What he does have is two hostile principles in one nature.

But I see another law in my members, warring against my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members (Gal. 5:17). For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish (Rom. 7:23). Here the great apostle teaches that the renewed man (one man and one nature still) is imperfect having two principles of volition mixed in the motives of the same acts. Paul does not teach in these passages, or any other, that the renewed man becomes "two men." The Lordship teaching is that there is one nature, originally wholly sinful and is by regeneration made imperfectly holy, but progressively so. I recommend on this point Thomas Boston's *Human Nature in its Fourfold State* (Banner of Truth).

Boston divides human nature into four states: The State of Innocence, The State of Nature, The State of Grace and The Eternal State.

Summary

A quote from one of the non-lordship leaders will assist us in summarizing their teaching. "Regeneration is not a change of the old nature, but the introduction of a new. . . . Nor does the introduction of this new nature alter in the slightest degree the true, essential character of the old. This latter continues what it was, and is made in no respect better; yea, rather, there is a full display of its evil character in opposition of the new element."

Speaking of the new birth this same non-lordship leader goes on to say: "It is a new birth, the imparting of a new life, the implantation of a new nature, the formation of a new man. The old nature remains in all its distinctness, and the new nature has its own desires, its own habits, its own tendencies, its own affection. All these are spiritual, heavenly,

divine." He goes on with these dangerous words: "Be warned that the old nature is unchanged." This is to say that there are two men in the Christian.

Robert L. Dabney tells the story of an emperor of Germany who bitterly rebuked a great episcopal feudatory for his violences, so inconsistent with his sacred character. The lord bishop answered that he represented two men in one, being both clergyman and baron, and that the military acts complained of were done in his secular character of a feudal baron. "Well, then," replied the emperor, "bethink thee how the clergyman will fare when the devil is roasting the baron for his rapine and murder."

Paul teaches that the renewed man (one man and one nature still) is imperfect, having two principles of volition mixed in the motives even of the same acts; but he does not teach that he has become "two men," or has "two natures" in him. Paul's idea is, that man's one nature, originally wholly sinful, is by regeneration made imperfectly holy, but progressively so. Dr. Dabney makes the following comment on this passage. "Among the texts which seem to favor this dualistic view, none is claimed with more confidence than Eph. 4:22-24, which speaks of "putting off the old man," and "putting on the new man." We note this as a specimen of the manner in which Scripture is over strained, and an example of the way in which it may be cleared of these extravagances. One can hardly deny that, in this well known passage, it is the most natural interpretation to regard the putting off of the old as in order to putting on of the new; then the two are not coexistent, but successive. But more decisively; Who is the old man, and who is the new? The obvious parallel in I Cor. 15:22; 45-49, shows that the "old man" is Adam, and the "new man" is Christ. The statement which we have to expound, then, is substantially this: that believers have "put off" Adam in order to "put on" Christ. That is, they have severed their connection with the first federal head, in order to enter into a connection with the second federal head."

John Newton, the great preacher and hymn writer, describes the inward warfare in a poem:

The Inward Warfare

Galatians 5:17

Strange and mysterious is my life,
What opposites I feel within!
A stable peace, a constant strife;
The rule of grace, the power of sin:
Too often I am captive led,
Yet daily triumph in my Head.

I prize the privilege of prayer,
But oh! what backwardness to pray!
Though on the Lord I cast my care,
I feel its burden every day;
I seek His will in all I do,
Yet find my own is working too.

I call the promises my own,
And prize them more than mines of gold.
Yet though their sweetness I have known,
They leave me unimpressed and cold:
One hour upon the truth I feed,

The next I knew not what I read.

I love the holy day of rest,
When Jesus meets His gathered saints:
Sweet day, of all the week the best!
For its return my spirit pants;
Yet often, through my unbelief
It proves a day of guilt and grief.

While on my Saviour I rely,
I know my foes shall lose their aim,
And therefore dare their power defy,
Assured of conquest through His name;
But soon my confidence is slain,
And all my fears return again.

Thus different powers within me strive,
And grace and sin by turns prevail;
I grieve, rejoice, decline, revive,
And victory hangs in doubtful scale:
But Jesus has His promise past,
That grace shall overcome at last.

Conclusion

The foundational error behind the carnal Christian theory and the two nature theory of the non-lordship teaching is in their erroneous view of sanctification. They fail to teach progressive sanctification, in fact, they oppose the teaching of progressive sanctification. If the non-lordship teachers had more respect for what the Holy Spirit taught our Christian fathers they would not embrace and teach their views on the carnal Christian or the two natures.

The following three paragraphs are taken from chapter 13 of both the Westminster Confession and the Old Baptist Confession of 1689.

1. They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by his Word and Spirit, dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.
2. This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.
3. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ, as Head and King, in his Word hath prescribed to them.

If these three paragraphs are biblical and true the non-lordship teaching is out of business because the truths expressed in these paragraphs are a million miles from the non-lordship teaching. They do however, represent the Lordship view.

The substance of the material in this study is from Dr. Robert L. Dabney's *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*. Volume I, p.190ff. Published by Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621 Carlisle, PA 17013.

I would also recommend Dr. John H. Gerstner's book *Wrongly Dividing The Word of Truth A Critique of Dispensationalism*, published by Wolgemuth & Hyatte, Publishers, Inc., Brentwood, TN.

For a more exhaustive study on our subject I recommend John Owen, Vol. 6 *Temptation and Sin, Mortification of Sin, Indwelling Sin in Believers*. Banner of Truth



Missions and Creeds (Part 2)

[Tom Nettles](#)

([Part 1](#) of this article appeared in [FJ 17](#) and gives a cogent explanation and defense of the proper use of creeds and confessions.)

Missions

The Foundation

The second factor downplayed by revisionist historiography relates to the doctrinal base of SBC expansion and early missionary practice. The emphasis given to the cohesive force of missions in Southern Baptist life is important and must never be usurped by a competitive interest. The very idea of missions, however, is supported by a significant network of doctrinal assertions and is defined in terms of those doctrines.

Our generation is in particular need of some theological reinforcement. Many, even among evangelicals, are diminishing their affirmation of the utter uniqueness of the gospel message as the means by which God establishes a saving relationship with sinners. Secondary probation, annihilationism, and even universalism are making appearances within the evangelical community. A Southwestern Seminary missions professor recently advocated the idea that Christ saves in other cultures by means of other religions.^[1] A former Southern professor wrote, in the context of interpreting the Great Commission, that the disciples "may have mistaken some of the instructions and commands."^[2] Clark Pinnock, formerly a strong conservative as a Southern Baptist, now rejects what he calls the exclusivist view of salvation, the "view that restricts eschatological salvation to the number of confessing Christians." Instead he opts for a view which claims that "God's goodness and justice imply that God will not expect people to invoke Jesus' name who cannot possibly do so, since they are ignorant of it through no fault of their own."^[3]

Those theologies affect not only the method of missions but call into question the very rationale for it. If one does not even have to be a Christian to know God and find forgiveness, or if perhaps Jesus did not tell his followers to go into all the world, the missionary enterprise can be justified only by the most obtuse reasoning. In fact, it could be seen as triumphalistic sectarian aggression, energized by an imperialistic motivation, and insensitive to the truth value of other religions.

One unusual development brought forth by the current theological milieu is that resistance to Calvinism is assumed to be a common denominator between moderates and many conservatives. Leonard, in what is an insightful, hard-hitting but gentlemanly, vigorously-presented but open-armed, article need only mention that faithfulness to original Southern Baptist doctrine would involve "Reformed theology" to score a virtual coup in the interchange.^[4] Henry Smith argues strongly against Reformed theology, especially the "pernicious doctrine of limited atonement."^[5] Paul Basden can be confident that Southern Baptists will not return to their Calvinistic beginnings because "Southern Baptists are committed to foreign missions" which, in his opinion, presupposes the "free choice of individuals." Belief in a "God who predetermines" will "eventually undermine missionary zeal."^[6] Walter Draughon III, in outlining his perception of Dale Moody's contribution to Southern Baptist theology, attributes to him a view of the atonement which "served as a corrective to those who interpret the cross in terms more consistent with Calvinist confessional literature than with the Bible." He continues:

Moody gave Southern Baptists a real denial of limited atonement: Christ died for every human being, and every human being may experience salvation by faith in Christ. This negation of the dominance of Calvinism over the interpretation of the message of reconciliation gives Southern Baptists a theology of mission that contains the element of hope for the salvation of the world.^[7]

This phenomenon inserts another irony and a dilemma into current tensions. Some moderates contend that all theologies should be viewed as equally acceptable and non-threatening to missions, except the one which energized every man present at that original meeting which designed a structure to elicit, combine, and direct all the energies of the Southern Baptist Convention in one sacred effort for the propagation of the gospel. This group elected an articulate Calvinist, W. B. Johnson, its first president. C. D. Mallery, who had just completed a series of articles in the *Christian Index* strongly defending the tenets of Calvinism against Arminianism, was appointed corresponding secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, though he was unable to serve. J. B. Taylor, another Calvinist, took his place and served for twenty-five years. Thus, we confront the dilemma. Either we must conclude that our founders were wrong in the most distinctive aspect of their understanding of the gospel, or, if right, they were unprincipled in their action or completely imperceptive as to the connection between theology and practice. How could it be that those whose theology has such a pernicious influence on missions established a missionary organization?

The Content

Theology, however, does not function only as a pre-mission justification for engaging in the task. It is the tool by which the task is accomplished. Sometimes Southern Baptist theological conservatism has led to expansion by drawing others into the orbit of truth with which they identify and in which they desire to participate. Next, theology has served to define the kind of person sent to be its proclaimer. Also, theology constitutes the content by which the task itself is done.

Defines the Group

The dovetailing of conservative doctrine and mission involvement prompted the movement of Southern Baptists from a sectional to a national denomination. A group of Baptist churches in Illinois separated from American Baptists in 1907 over three issues: the toleration of ministers who denied the deity of Christ, a lack of firmness on the "full inspiration and authority of the Holy Bible as the revealed will of God," and the practice of open communion. They had no desire to assist in "planting and supporting churches that would not stand for the Old Baptist faith and practice."^[8] In 1910, they united severally with the Southern Baptist Convention as churches within the Illinois Baptist State Association.

Many Arizona churches became Southern Baptist under similar circumstances. Having separated from American Baptists (i.e. Arizona Baptist Convention), the leaders of the exodus were accused of acting from "personal and petty" motivation. On the contrary, claimed the seceders, the matters were weighty and doctrinal. To continue affiliation with American Baptists would "crush the spirit and power of our churches and weaken their testimony to the authority and the inspiration of the Bible."^[9] This group of Arizona churches became part of SBC life in 1928.

California was received into SBC life in 1942 so that they might be in a group who held "the fundamental doctrines of the Bible." From California, Southern Baptist work moved into the Northwest.

Describes the Person

Early in the history of the Foreign Mission Board doctrinal screening was negligible, if present at all. Theological latitudinarianism was not the reason for this policy, or lack of policy, but the confidence that theological unanimity reigned in the Baptist Zion of the South. More than just a desire for missions in "some form or other" was expected in the doctrinal perceptions of missionaries. In 1886, N. W. Halcomb, an effective missionary several years into his service, resigned his charge because of a theological struggle over the deity of Christ. Lottie Moon engaged in personal Bible study with Halcomb in an effort to get "his feet upon a foundation that nothing can shake." She wanted to keep "the strongest man we have" from leaving, all the while admitting that if he retained the doubts expressed in his resignation letter "he cannot remain a missionary." When Matthew Yates, who served forty-two years as one of Southern Baptists' first foreign mission appointees learned that Halcomb's position on Christ's deity had been "growing more unsettled for years," he agreed fully

with Halcomb's decision to resign.[\[10\]](#)

In 1881 a very trying stream of events demonstrated the priority of theological purity to personal affections. T. P. Bell, an attractive and talented theological student, received special encouragement to sign with the Foreign Mission Board to be "the man for China so greatly needed by us." "Will you apply or shall we extend a call?," H. A. Tupper wrote him.[\[11\]](#) When Bell and his friend, John Stout, both applied they were accepted enthusiastically by the board in May.

Soon after the news of their appointment was released, J. P. Boyce wrote asking Tupper if the board had examined the men on their views of inspiration. A recent candidate, a Brother Walker, had been examined on inspiration. John Stout was aware of this and offered to make his views known before the board but apparently no questions on that subject arose during the interview.[\[12\]](#) Tupper told Stout that the question "had never been raised with regard to himself but it would do no harm" to send him a statement of his views "to be used at my discretion." Upon receiving Boyce's urgent question, Tupper engaged in a flurry of "confidential" letter writing asking for advice of different leaders. He also wrote Stout reminding him of his offer to provide his views, stating that it might be the wise thing to do. He asked him to confer with Bell and probably sent a similar letter to Bell. When the two responded, he issued a call for a special meeting of the Foreign Mission Board. Stout's response had been clear, Bell's somewhat confusing. The following preamble and resolution were adopted:

Whereas Rev. John Stout has candidly and courteously presented to the Board of Foreign Missions his views on Inspiration; and whereas his views do not seem to the Board to be in accord with the views commonly held by the constituency of the Southern Baptist Convention; and whereas, Brother Stout reduces the question between himself and the Board to the simple point, whether the Board will give him their consent to teach or print if thought advisable by him, these views as a missionary of our Board, therefore

1. Resolved that while the Board distinctly and emphatically disclaim the least right over the conscience or Christian liberty of any man, they have no right to consent to any missionary teaching or printing anything regarded by them as contrary to the commonly received doctrinal views of the constituency of the Southern Baptist Convention.

This along with two other commendatory resolutions was sent to Stout asking for his response. Since Bell's response was not clear, he was asked to appear before the board for examination. Stout answered the resolution quickly and, within one week, on June 24 the board was meeting again. The responses of Stout and Bell were read. Stout wrote, "The matter is settled, and I see no other course open but the withdrawal of my appointment." He further insisted that the "responsibility of formally dissolving the relation existing between me and the Board shall rest upon them." Bell wrote that he would not mind appearing before the board but saw no reason for it since he had read Stout's paper finding himself in "substantial accord with him in the views expressed and give a hearty 'Amen' thereto." He further informed them, "I shall teach the conclusions arrived at where ever I may be, if occasion arises."[\[13\]](#) On the basis of those responses the board was "reduced to the necessity of withdrawing their appointments of these honored and beloved brethren as missionaries to China."

When Lottie Moon heard the news she was disconsolate. Not only had the promise of personnel strengthening failed, the final verdict on her possible marriage with C. H. Toy was inevitable. Tupper wrote her, "This is a dreadful disappointment. But you'll say, 'Is it not your own fault?' Now, my dearest sister, don't turn on the friend seeking your good office. I know of your love for Dr. Toy, which cannot be greater than mine."[\[14\]](#)

Soon after this Lottie Moon, now realizing that Toy could never come to the mission field, briefly considered moving back to the States to marry him and work along with him in academic pursuits. Lottie Moon was not quick to condemn the theological pilgrimage of others. This seems sufficiently demonstrated in her patience with Halcomb later. She, therefore, (as indicated by notations in books in her library) began studying the issues that Toy introduced to her. She concluded that the claims of Toy and God on her life conflicted and there could be no question as to the result.

Constitutes the Message

Theology in missions was not simply a tool of personnel discrimination, but actually functioned in a positive way to sculpt and define the missionary message and method. Scriptural revelation confronted the false world views of the non-Christian. Lottie Moon functioned in this way, joining Mrs. T. P. Crawford in the use of a catechism with boys and girls in China teaching the basics of the Christian faith as a foundation for evangelism. Also, her personal work with women involved the direct teaching of Christian truth (doctrine) as a corrective to the paganism of the Chinese. She recalled the following anecdote.

Imagine the missionary with a book in her hand, sitting or standing as may be most convenient, and trying to fix the attention of the women on the most important subjects. "I have come to tell you something very important," says the lady. "You must listen well. I ask these children not to make a noise." "How old are you?" inquires someone. Answer and go on: "If it were not very important, we would not take all this trouble to come here to tell you." Audible approval. "Good people," they say, "come here to tell us a good doctrine. Listen to what they say." "Sad it is," goes on the lady, "that you all here, almost without exception, worship mud-images, and you do not know that it is a sin. We have come to tell you that it is a sin against the heavenly Father." "How many children have you?" "One," says Mrs. H. if she happens to be the speaker. "Boy or girl?" "How old is he?" "Is he married?" The missionary goes on with her talk. ("How white her hand is!" "She doesn't look more than seventeen or eighteen." "How pretty she is.") . . . "Pray don't talk," says the lady, "when I am through you may talk as much as you like." "Be quiet; don't talk," they say to each other. Silence two minutes, while the lady resumes her talk: "People cannot transmigrate, neither are they like lamps that go out, nor are they annihilated, nor does the wind blow them away, nor do they go to the temple after death to drink the soup of forgetfulness." "What! don't transmigrate?" exclaims some astonished listener. "No; after death there are but two places, a heaven of boundless happiness, a hell of endless suffering."[\[15\]](#)

This simple interchange is informed by a world of theological truth. The clarity of special over general revelation, the tendency of all to suppress the truths of general revelation, the sinfulness of this ignorance, the exclusivity of Christianity in its salvific content, the reality of heaven, and the non-existence of alternate means of escaping condemnation--all these doctrinal commitments lie behind this conversation.

Years later, *The Foreign Mission Journal* carried an analysis of China, its geography, its people, its customs, its religion, and its dominance over the development of Oriental culture. The writer of the article called Lottie Moon "that Princess of the Lord, that jewel of our female missionaries [who] has laid the sweetness of her piety and the splendor of her genius and culture on the altar for God." Among the great needs of China, the writer, Dr. B. D. Gray of Hazlehurst, Mississippi, emphasized the need for "teachers of theology there. What a mighty power would such men as Hodge, Boyce and Hovey be in China. Before their orderly and masterly systems of theology heathen systems would tremble and totter."[\[16\]](#) Even if he was given to exaggerated language, Gray saw clearly the distinctive truthfulness of the biblical revelation as opposed to paganism and had great confidence in the compelling power of Christian truth to bring into captivity every imagination that exalts itself against Christ.

Conclusion

A Christian should give no countenance to a system that draws a dichotomy between missions and creeds. Missionaries are not sent to present a contentless, individuated, existential encounter, but to set forth a world view built on the principles of the gospel. He or she presents the tri-une God revealed in Scripture, the absoluteness of the moral law, the sinfulness, corruption, and condemnation of all humanity, the covenant of redemption effected in the person of the God-man the Lord Jesus Christ, the necessity, perfection, and consistent righteousness, of his completed work of redemption by sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection, the certainty of the judgment of all rational beings, and the necessity of repentance toward God in light of our rebellion and deserved condemnation and faith in Jesus Christ in light of the excellency and

sole sufficiency of his work as redeemer. These things should be believed by the missionary and fuel his zeal. It is also the content of that which is to be believed and heartily embraced by the convert. Creeds and missions are perfectly congruent; they are neither exclusive of each other nor adiaphoristic in their relationship, but depend on each other and, in reality, are defined in terms of each other.

In addition, creedal statements must both implicitly and explicitly have missions as a guiding principle. The triune God himself is the original missionary. In his great missionary and infinite wisdom he devised a strategy by which to seek and save the lost. This good news he published promiscuously. Even to those who were not his sheep, the savior spoke clearly, fervently, and with compassion. Within every section of a confession, the tendency of truth in general to call for belief, and the purpose of Christian doctrine in particular to be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death must set a tone of infinite urgency about the importance of the doctrine taught. Henry Fish's "Scriptural Catechism" is remarkable for this feature. The *Baptist Faith and Message* appropriately includes an article on "Evangelism and Missions." These are urged on individuals and churches as their duty and privilege. This confession proposes that missionary outreach rests "upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life" as well as the explicit commands of Christ. It advocates the use of all methods "in harmony with the gospel of Christ." The content of the gospel implies missions, explicitly commands missions, and governs the methods of missions.

Another side of this coin is that missionaries and evangelists must seek to be "creedal"-in the very best sense of the term. The tenacity of their missionary zeal and the purity of the vision of the necessity and nature of conversion is roughly proportionate to the strength of their knowledge of and commitment to Christian truth. The missionary life and method of Adoniram Judson illustrates this point beautifully. Historically, some missionaries have shunned the necessity of conversion and others have embraced the religion of those to whom they were sent. Clear understanding of the faith and its coherence as a system, an unwavering commitment to its veracity, along with an ability to defend it in the face of opposition are virtual necessities (Acts 17:2-4; 18:4, 19, 25-28; 19:8). A missionary cannot escape being a creedalist.

Finally, those who believe the doctrines of grace must see the mission field as a most propitious place of following Christian calling. It was in the context of preaching to unbelievers in a culture molded by pagan values that the Apostle Paul learned experientially what he knew by revelation: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16). Thus, not only can a missionary not escape being a creedalist, a true creedalist cannot escape being a missionary. "But having the same spirit of faith according to what is written, 'I believed, therefore I spoke,' we also believe, therefore also we speak" (2 Cor 4:13). May God give us again the union of the believing and the speaking in our generation.



¹Henry Smith, "Salvation in the Face of Many Faiths: Toward a Hermeneutic of Optimism," in *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, Spring 1993, pp. 26-31. Smith asks, "Why not rejoice that God the Creator and Redeemer has many and various ways of revealing himself to people, whether or not they know the specifics of the Christian gospel?" In interpreting the Cornelius event in Acts, Smith wrote, "Luke's long story about Cornelius does not speak of the great steps God takes to get the gospel to someone who might believe; it speaks of the great steps God took to open the racially, culturally, and

religiously conditioned community of early believers to God's own redemptive work in the larger world." Jesus' own ministry shows that "good deeds manifest a person's faith in God, *regardless* of the cognitive content of that person's faith" [emphasis mine]. It is a matter to be appreciated that Southwestern took action to remedy the problem of having this theological position taught in its missions classes.

²E. Glenn Hinson, *Jesus Christ*. (N. P.: McGrath Publishing Co., 1977), p. 112.

³ Clark Pinnock, "Acts 4:12: No Other Name Under Heaven," in *Through No Fault of Their Own?* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), pp. 112, 113. In this article Pinnock has one paragraph entitled "If So, Why Missions?" After giving his rationale for continuing foreign mission involvement, he says, "It is easy to see the necessity of world missions on the exclusivist paradigm, and admittedly less easy in the lenient framework. But world missions can be seen to be vitally important once one moves away from the hell-fire concept of salvation to the fuller concept outlined above" (p. 115).

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⁵Henry Smith, *SWJT*, p.30.

⁶Paul Basden, *Has Our Theology Changed?*, p. 71.

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⁸*Annual*, Illinois Baptist State Association, 1907, pp. 5, 12. See also Robert J. Hastings, *We Were There: An Oral History of the Illinois Baptist State Association, 1907-1976* (Springfield, IL: Illinois Baptist State Association, 1976) pp. 2-18. W. P. Throgmorton wanted no part of fellowship with "Unitarians" or with the liberalism that had infiltrated American Baptist life in Illinois through the influence of the University of Chicago under the leadership of William Rainey Harper. "Close communion" also was an important issue to Throgmorton and he considered the Southern Baptists to be "free of open communionism" (Hastings, p. 13). Throgmorton did not encourage the Landmark resistance to the organization of cooperative efforts through boards but rejected Gospel Missionism and openly espoused the legitimacy of the "Board" system. He knew, also, that the newly-formed state association needed cooperation with some organized body to engage in missions. The Northern Baptist mission societies were too influenced by liberalism and non-Baptist ideas and the Southern Baptists were free of both. The convention in Baltimore in 1910 voted to seat the messengers from Illinois.

⁹*Annual*, Baptist General Convention of Arizona, 1928, p. 27.

¹⁰Letter of Lottie Moon To H. A. Tupper, July 27, 1886.

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Seminary, who formerly had taught Miss Moon also at Albemarle Female Institute, resigned from his teaching position at the seminary in 1879. This resignation came as a result of Boyce's disallowing his teaching the new critical theories which, flowing out of Europe, especially Germany, were beginning to inundate biblical studies in America. Toy had come to believe that there were inaccuracies and discrepancies in the biblical text. Its religious message, therefore, had to be separated from its historical setting if one were to continue to believe its "religious" truth. Toy was willing to do this in order to continue his reconstruction of the biblical history on an evolutionary model. Eventually, even his advocacy of the religious message of the Bible underwent severe amendment. For Toy's story see Bush and Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980) pp. 221-241. It seems that Lottie Moon was not aware of the real details of Toy's view and felt that Southern Baptists had over-reacted. She felt very joyful with his continued attentions toward her. The Bell and Stout incident greatly sobered her appraisal of the situation, led to a more detailed study of the issue, and closed a long chapter of tragic romance in the life of Lottie Moon.

¹⁵Lottie Moon, *Foreign Mission Journal*, September, 1880, pp. 3, 4.

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The 1994 Southern Baptist Founders Conference

Bill Ascol

The 12th annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Founders Conference answered the question, "Is Holy Scripture enough?" with a resounding, "Yes, absolutely!" Meeting once again on the beautifully landscaped campus of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, the conference participants heard twelve studies pertaining to various aspects of this year's theme, *The Sufficiency of Scripture*.

Pastor Walter Chantry, of the Grace Baptist Church in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, spoke three times during the evening sessions of the conference (whose crowds swelled to approximately three hundred) on the Sufficiency of Scripture for: 1) Evangelism, 2) Life and Doctrine, and 3) Moral Duty. The first message was a soul-searching exposition of Luke 16:19-31 (the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus). Among other things, he pointed out that the man in hell did not believe that the Scriptures were sufficient as a tool for evangelism in the life of his brothers. The man did believe, however, that if some supernatural sign or wonder were performed before his brothers, then such "power evangelism" could not fail to bring them to believe. The point was powerfully made that Abraham flatly refused the hellish suggestion because the brothers had the Scriptures.

Pastor Chantry's second message was taken from 2 Tim. 3 and 4. In perilous times when antinomianism abounds, it is critical for the gospel minister to remember that all Scripture is profitable and must be preached. His final message addressed Jesus' declaration in the Sermon on the Mount that He had not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17-20). In closely reasoned, exegetically based arguments, Pastor Chantry demonstrated that those who would in our day assert that the Moral Law has been eclipsed by Jesus Christ must do so on the sinking sand of not hearing Jesus' words and putting them into practice.

Rev. David Miller, founder of Line Upon Line Ministries and former Director of Missions for the Little Red River Association in Heber Springs, Arkansas, preached twice during the conference. A preacher without peer, Rev. Miller has been a favorite of conference attendees over the years. His piercing and insightful expositions have been widely used by God to bless many.

His first sermon addressed the theme, Preaching the Doctrines of Grace Expositionally, in which he urged pastors to preach the doctrines of grace as they are found on page after page of the Bible and because therein is the gospel of Jesus Christ. In his second sermon, taken from 1 Peter 1:1-5, he argued that Calvinistic Baptists have a reason to shout when they consider that they have been selected by God the Father, saved by Jesus Christ, and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

In the conferences opening exposition, Pastor Hal Wynn, of the Northside Baptist Church in Fort Myers, Florida and newest member of the Founders Conference Planning Committee, opened up Psalm 1. In a very clear and warm-hearted manner, Pastor Wynn set the tone for the rest of the week by directing attention to the power and benefit of God's Word.

Following is a brief summary of the remaining sessions:

The Self-Verification of Scripture. Dr. Tom Nettles, professor of Church History at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, asserted the self-verification of Scripture on the grounds that the Bible is a revelation which claims our loyalty by its strong demonstration of literary authenticity and historical veracity, as well as its

power and moral judgment.

The Life of R.B.C. Howell. Pastor Lloyd Sprinkle, of the Park View Baptist Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia, sketched the life of one Dr. Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, of our great Southern Baptist forefears. Howell was one of the original delegates to the founding meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Augusta, Georgia in 1845. His ministerial career was characterized as one in which he was highly esteemed by those whom he pastored and highly valued by those who labored along side of him in denominational causes. Throughout his ministry (which included serving as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee for more than a quarter of a century), he was a strong advocate for Baptist mission causes at home and abroad. A noted controversialist, Howell ably took up the cause of truth against encroaching anti-mission sentiments as well as the deadening effects of the Campbellite error.

The Sufficiency of Scripture and Church Growth Pragmatism. Dr. Don Whitney, Pastor of the Glenfield Baptist Church in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, ably analyzed the Church Growth Movement in the SBC and its implications for the doctrine of Scripture's sufficiency. In a very balanced and sensitive treatment, Dr. Whitney exhorted conference attendees to long for and labor toward the spiritual and numerical growth of our congregations while at the same time avoiding some pitfalls endemic to the church growth movement which tend to undermine the sufficiency of Scripture for worship and witness.

Martin Luther and Sole Scriptura. Dr. Timothy George, Dean of Beeson Divinity School on the campus of Samford University, thrilled conference participants with a stirring presentation of the life of Martin Luther as seen through the lenses of Luther's commitment to the sole sufficiency of Holy Scripture. Dr. George presented a balanced treatment of the life of Luther, showing how ultimately Luther robbed himself of a thoroughly reformed and evangelical theology by not strictly adhering to his principle of sola Scriptura. When Dr. George had concluded his presentation, there was very little doubt that if Luther had consistently followed this chief principle of the Reformation he would have died a Baptist!

The Apostles' Creed. Pastor Bill Ascol, of the Heritage Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, demonstrated the usefulness of the Apostles' Creed in illustrating the Christian faith's content and continuity throughout the centuries. He also demonstrated that an accurate, Scripturally based creed or confession of faith, rather than replacing or undermining the Scripture, actually affirms the Scripture's sufficiency. Pastor Ascol challenged the participants to make use of the Apostles' Creed in their ministries as a tool designed to promote the doctrinal content of the gospel.

The Sufficiency of Scripture and Foreign Missions. Dr. Steve Haines, Southern Baptist foreign missionary to the Ukraine, made a very convincing appeal to depend more upon the sufficiency of Holy Scripture and less on man-made programs and gimmicks as the one tool which God has ordained to bridge language and cultural barriers in advancing the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Haines told the congregation that serving as a missionary in a foreign culture with limited means (and even less living space!) has heightened his sense of dependence upon and confidence in the Scriptures as the power of God for salvation.

Next year's conference will coincide with the 150th anniversary celebration of the Southern Baptist Convention. Scheduled to be held July 25 through 28 at Samford University, the theme will be, The Southern Baptist Convention from 1845 to 1995: A Heritage for the Future. Among the featured speakers is Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.



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The Christian's Harvest

Selected Quotes by C.H. Spurgeon

But if you should not live to see it on earth, remember you are only accountable for your labor and not for your success. Sow still, toil on! "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it again after many days," for god will not allow His word to be wasted; "It shall not return unto him void, it shall accomplish that which he pleases."

You shall have a harvest whatever you are doing. I trust you are all doing something. If I cannot mention what your peculiar engagement is, I trust you are all serving God in some way, and you shall assuredly have a harvest wherever you are scattering your seed. But suppose the worst-if you should never live to see the harvest in this world, you shall have a harvest when you get to heaven. If you live and die a disappointed man in this world, you shall not be disappointed in the next. I think how surprised some of God's people will be when they get to heaven. They will see their Master, and He will give them a crown. "Lord, what is that crown for?" "That crown is because thou didst give a cup of cold water to one of My disciples." "What! A crown for a cup of cold water?" "Yes," says the Master, "that is how I pay my servants. First I give them grace to give that cup of water, and then, having given them grace, I give them a crown." "Wonders of grace to God belong." He that soweth liberally shall reap liberally, and he that soweth grudgingly shall reap sparingly.

From *The Teachings of Nature in the Kingdom of Grace*.



News

New Consulting Editors Added to the *Founders Journal*

The *Founders Journal* is pleased to announce the addition of Drs. Roger Nicole and Timothy George as Consulting Editors. Dr. Nicole is the former Andrew Mutch Professor of Theology at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hampton, Massachusetts where he taught for forty-one years and is presently Visiting Professor of Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. He received a Th. D. from Gordon Conwell, a Ph. D. from Harvard University, and a D. D. from Wheaton College. Dr. George is also a graduate of Harvard University (Th. D.) and is the founding Dean of the Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama. He served ten years as a professor of church history and historical theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky and is the author of numerous articles and books, including the award winning *Theology of the Reformers* and *Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey*.

***Founders Journal* Subscription Price to Increase**

Since its inception five years ago the *Founders Journal* has held its subscription price to \$10.00 per year. The same period has witnessed numerous increases in postage and steady increase in printing costs. Recent announcements by the postal service have warned us to brace for yet another increase. In order for the journal to maintain wise financial stewardship, it has unfortunately become necessary to increase the subscription to \$12.00 per year (\$15.00 outside the USA) beginning in January 1995. Renewals for up to three years will be accepted at the current rate until December 31, 1994. Please use the enclosed renewal form.

Mission 150 Is on Schedule

The special SBC sesquicentennial issue of the journal is scheduled to be mailed in January. It will be a double issue combining numbers 19 & 20 (Winter and Spring). The next issue, # 21, will be mailed in the summer of 1995. Please continue to pray for this effort to challenge pastors and church leaders across the Southern Baptist Convention with the spiritual and doctrinal heritage of our denomination.

Spurgeon Goes to Southwestern Seminary

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas has announced the acquisition of over 500 original sermon manuscripts of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. According to Michael Quicke, Principal of Spurgeon's College in London, these sermons have never been seen or published before. They were discovered by a student who was cleaning a storage closet at the college two years ago.

Southwestern will house and record all of the sermons before the originals are eventually sold. Recently appointed Southwestern President Ken Hemphill stated, "We are privileged that young pastors now will have the opportunity to look at manuscripts which will be challenges to their ministries as pastors." Spurgeon's sermons most certainly will provide a challenge to contemporary pastors. He is worthy of emulation in his belief and practice.

The founder and first President of Southwestern, B. H. Carroll, called Spurgeon "the tallest and broadest oak in the forest of time" and "the sweetest, most silvery and far-reaching voice that published the glad tidings since the apostle Paul." In a memorial sermon at the occasion of Spurgeon's death Carroll went on to say, "His life and ministry have

demonstrated that the doctrine of free salvation, none of works but all of grace promotes the highest form of practical piety. . . . His ministry and its results prove that not Arminianism but, `The grace of God that bringeth salvation . . . teaches us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'"

It is a wonderful providence of God that this new attention on the Prince of Preachers coincides with the approach of the sesquicentennial of the SBC. As a part of the Mission 150 effort, a free copy of *The Forgotten Spurgeon* will be mailed to every reader who orders a new subscription to the *Founders Journal*. (some of the information in this news item was compiled from a Baptist Press release.)

Introducing Our Graphic Design Editor

The *Founders Journal* is pleased to officially introduce Mr. William Dollar as its Graphic Design Editor. Serving in this capacity since January, he is responsible for the design and layout of the *Journal*. A full-time Southern Baptist pastor for over ten years, Mr. Lollar is now currently on staff as Publications Manager for Mt. Zion Publications and Chapel Library in Pensacola, Florida. He also shares in the pastoral duties at Mt. Zion Bible Church and is active in the local Pensacola Bay Association.



Letters

We regularly get letters that encourage the work of the journal. Following are three recent such letters.

I just recently became aware of your outstanding publication and I am happy to see a periodical of this nature. We live in a time when there are a great many Baptists who are ignorant of their denomination's history. I feel that this is a big reason why the area between Pentecostals, Charismatics, and particularly Southern Baptists continues to blur. Please sign me on as a subscriber of your publication.

Cordially,
DLH, Oklahoma

Several years ago I was struggling to enter the ministry as a Southern Baptist. I had felt the Lord's call upon my life ever since I was thirteen, and I had directed my life toward the goal of becoming a pastor. But as I completed my seminary studies, I was chilled with the growing conviction that I might never realize my goal. Either I would pastor a Church--or I would remain a Southern Baptist. I could not do both.

My problem was caused by the theological apathy that pervades our Convention. Most of the pastors I had come into contact with through the years believed in "Eternal Security," but otherwise they were Pelagians. If that sounds a little severe, consider this: Arminians believe that man is totally unable to come to the Lord, even unwilling to come to the Lord, until the Holy Spirit enlightens his spirit. Even John Wesley held the doctrine of Total Depravity, and yes, he used that term and not "Natural Inability." But many of our pastors and teachers today simply teach that it is our choice to come to the Lord. They do not even address the issue raised by Jesus in John 6:44: *no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*

I was not taught the doctrines of grace in my early years as a Southern Baptist, nor did I even see the issue raised in any of the popular Christian books that I read. All I knew was that the Southern Baptist teaching gave us total free will until we were saved. Salvation was totally subject to our choice, until we were saved. After we were saved, we no longer had a choice. All of this was annoyingly inconsistent. Without knowing about the "five points" of the [contra] Remonstrance and of Dort, I did understand that you could not have absolute free will for the unsaved unless the saved had it as well. If salvation was absolutely subject to our free choice, then we could freely choose to renounce it later. After all, isn't the ability to change your mind about something absolutely essential to free will?

Faced with four point Arminianism versus five point Arminianism, I deemed five point Arminianism to be superior--and I still believe that to be true. If you teach universal atonement and free will, you ought to teach that a Christian can fall from grace.

That was when my pastor, a Calvinist, gave me your address. Not only did you give me a few copies of your Journal, but you also gave me half a bookshelf worth of doctrinal books. In that one mailing, you showed me that there was such a thing as consistent Christianity--in the doctrines of grace. I had seen some passing references to Calvinism in my theological studies, but they were regarded as too dogmatic, and too rational. Your Journal showed me that the doctrines of grace were not only a viable alternative to Arminianism, but that they are an expression of a living and vibrant Christianity in which the Holy Spirit works within us a holiness without which we cannot see God (Heb. 12:14). I discovered no less than this, that Southern Baptists can be biblical Christians, unyieldingly committed to the

word of God and to a living walk. Southern Baptists can preach of the necessity for an abiding faith (Col. 1:21-23) which perseveres to the end (Matt. 24:13). Southern Baptists can preach that we examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). Southern Baptists don't have to assure reprobates with a dead and demonic faith (James 2:19-20). Finally, Southern Baptists can, and once did, preach that the same salvation which has its source in grace, and which flows through faith (Eph. 2:8-9), also irresistibly recreates us unto good works (Eph. 2:10).

At the time I discovered your Journal, I was on the verge of becoming a Methodist. As a result of your Journal, I am now entering my fourth year as a Southern Baptist pastor. Now that I am working on my Doctorate in Theology, I am astonished that the simple consistency of the [contra] Remonstrance and of Dort is so foreign to modern Baptists. In my own county, every pastor I have spoken to is a four-point Arminian, except one (he is considering becoming a five-point Arminian). I wonder how many young people are like I was only a few years ago. I also cannot help considering that if I could see the problem of theological inconsistency, the best and brightest young men called into the ministry can see it as well. How many of them will leave our convention? We need to be reminded about the fact that Southern Baptists do in fact have doctrines, that they once thought those doctrines were important, and that those doctrines were not only consistent and rational, but intensely Biblical--not only theoretical, but experiential.

Today I keep hearing the cry, "we are Southern Baptists, we don't have any creed." Excuse me, but creeds and catechisms (or beliefs and teachings) are historic Southern Baptist possessions. When so many in our Convention do not know, or simply do not care, what our historic beliefs are, they can pass down nothing but the thinnest milk. We need to be reminded of who we are. Your Journal is doing that, and for that, I thank you.

In Him,
TEC, North Carolina

I just want to share with you and the staff of *The Founders Journal* a resounding "Praise God" for your magazine and your stand on God's Word!

As a member of a SBC church most of my life, I never heard the "Doctrines of Grace" until recently. There is no way I could write down all the events that led me to these Truths; so the summary could only be "Providence."

Please continue to make "your calling and election sure" and use this money to help send these Truths to every minister in our convention.

Your Brother in Christ,
AS, Alabama



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Book Review

The Pleasures of God

by John Piper; 1991, 328 pp. Multnomah, \$11.99

Reviewed by [Fred A. Malone](#)

"Does God enjoy you?" This is a question which I have frequently asked believers over the past few years. It usually provokes a confused look and is regularly answered in the negative. Either the awareness of remaining sin clouds their concept that a Holy God could have pleasure in them, or else they may not have considered that God has delight in His people at all, beyond His initial joy of salvation! The result may be a sincere trust in Jesus Christ alone to save them as sinners but an uncertain experience of God's daily pleasure in them. How can He delight in children who fall so far short, who still sin daily, whose best days simply prove that they are men at best? Would it not be a great source of daily joy to know that God has continual delight and pleasure in His yet imperfect children?

John Piper's *The Pleasures of God* is a "new classic" designed to clear up misunderstandings and to describe the immeasurable pleasures of our Holy God of Grace. Beginning with the pleasure and delight of God in Himself (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), Piper explains that our perfect God has no need of anything outside of Himself to be happy. The delight of the Trinity in the love and perfections of each other is enough.

However, Piper then moves to God's delight and enjoyment in all that He does, especially in His created works. His discussion of God's pleasure in electing sinners to everlasting life shows that this pleasure is not rooted in the worth of the object but rather in God's own delight in being kind. The cause of God's electing love is simply that it pleases Him to love; He is that kind of being.

Such a view of God's pleasure in saving sinners explains the strange yet wonderful pleasure of God in Isaiah 53:10: "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." Not the pleasure of causing the Son to suffer but the pleasure in what the Son accomplishes by His death. Included is a thought provoking comparison exposing George MacDonald's deficient view of the atonement as a God-pleasing self-atonement model in favor of reaffirming Jonathan Edwards view of it as an atoning satisfaction for sin, bringing pleasure to God.

Moving from the pleasure of God in the atonement, Piper describes in heart-warming detail the immense pleasure of a happy God in doing good for His children of Grace. Such experiences of God's goodness are not always apparent to believers in His providential acts on the surface. However, the sacrifice of Jesus for sinners stands as an unchangeable testimony of God's goodness toward His redeemed children, causing faith in Him to trust in God's goodness in all other acts of providence. God rejoices over His children with singing all the time (Zeph. 3:17), therefore we must never doubt His pleasure in doing good to us. This is a great daily comfort. He even loves and delights in those whom He disciplines!

Chapters 8 and 9 explain that this God of Grace who delights in sinners also delights in their prayers and attempts at personal obedience. These chapters could do much to remedy the sanctification errors which abound today. The impossibility of perfectionism coupled with the unchanging responsibility of faithful obedience does not have to end in despair, legalism, antinomianism, second work "higher life," or unbridled mysticism. Rather, a God of Grace who delights in His imperfect children's imperfect obedience puts meaning in the power of grace to motivate toward increased faithfulness: "sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace" (Rom 6:14). Pastors who are unclear, untaught, or erroneous in their understanding of the Reformation doctrines of the Law and

the Gospel would do well to study these chapters.

A final Appendix describes Piper's response to a friend over the Lordship Salvation controversy today. It is a helpful discussion in favor of Lordship Salvation.

The strength of this book is in opening Biblical vistas of God's delight in Himself, His works, and His children. Not a self-centered boastfulness but a well-deserved delight in the beauty of His own perfections and works. The description of the Father's pleasure in His Son is worth the whole book. When one reads such Biblical expositions by Piper, one finds the heart filled with delight in God Himself and His dear Son. That, says Piper over and over, is what brings the most pleasure to God from us: "He is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him" (p.216). How could one not be satisfied in the God described by Piper?! Piper's description of a joyful God attracts the soul to Him in admiration, trust, and submission. The outcome can only be a greater, more joyful satisfaction with God Himself, revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

To find significant weaknesses in Piper's excellent work would require pettiness. However, this reviewer would humbly appeal to Piper to carry a more definitive discussion of the Law and Gospel issues mentioned in Chapter 9 for the next printing. Perhaps another Appendix could be added on this subject, appealing to Luther, Bunyan, Bridges, and Murray (*Principles of Conduct*) for support. Such an addition would clarify His explanation of sanctification by the daily dynamic of faith (not attained by faith but pursued by the daily "obedience of faith " in Christ). It would also reveal and correct the theological errors which have created deficient views of sanctification such as antinomianism, legalism, mysticism, second work "higher life" teachings, etc.

In conclusion, *The Pleasures of God* by John Piper should be on every pastor's shelf, first for his own soul's edification and then for his people's benefit. It is a classic worthy of an annual reading. How can a pastor be ungracious to his people when faced with such a gracious God? How many pastors need to be reminded of God's gracious pleasure in them when their harried lives and undone tasks plague their consciences?! How many pastors need to be reminded of the good will of God in their lives when they face gloomy faces and frowning providences?! How many people of God need to be made aware of the height and breadth and length and depth of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus? I know at least one. Perhaps you know another. Piper's book will help.

