

# FOUNDERS JOURNAL

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## Anniversaries Matter



Thursday Friday Saturday

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# The Founders Journal



Committed to historic Baptist principles

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## Anniversaries Matter



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Cover Image by Ken Puls

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# The Founders Journal



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# Anniversaries Matter

*Tom J. Nettles*

Every married couple knows that anniversaries matter. I write this on the forty-fourth anniversary of my being wed to Margaret. Year by year of life together creates new depths of love and appreciation for one's mate. Each year marks a memorial of faithfulness to a covenantal commitment and invites reflection on the increasing loveliness of the spouse and the maturing joy of life together. Anniversaries also bring to mind a massive exhibition of particular providences of God.

Also historians love anniversaries—and for much the same reason. Anniversaries remind us of how awesome it is to be the bride of Christ and observe how the Lord operates through decades and centuries to purify His bride that He might present her to Himself spotless, blameless, and beyond reproach. Particularly useful is the heuristic device of using those century and half-century markers as an occasion for profitable reminiscence. The year 2012 gives just such an opportunity. In 1612, four hundred years ago, Thomas Helwys published his famous, and perennially profitable work, *The Mystery of Iniquity*. Fifty years later, in 1662, in opposition to all that Helwys stood for, the English Parliament passed the “Act of Uniformity” that effectively brought to an end the Puritan experiment of purifying and reforming the parish congregations of the Church of England. In 1812, Ann Judson, Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice, Congregational missionaries, placed themselves on the mercy of divine providence when they dissolved their relationship with Congregationalism because they had adopted, and had personally submitted to, believers' baptism. These events stand as pivotal history changers and allow us to admire the truth that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. All of these events led to extraordinary displays of courage, much suffering sustained by the secret operations of divine consolation, and observable changes in the character of Christian discipleship, particularly the Baptist influence on important Christian issues.

The anniversary of the Act of Uniformity will be memorialized in this fascicle by Steve Weaver's article giving a description of the impact made by that event on Baptists. The year 2012, the rise of the “Traditional Baptist,” is treated in a critical analysis of their peculiar claims. As for Helwys and the Judsons, a few paragraphs will have to suffice.

## Thomas Helwys

Thomas Helwys was a member of the Separatist congregation served by John Smyth as pastor. Their exile to Amsterdam led to the adoption by the church of believers' baptism. When Smyth decided that they had gone about this change the wrong way, and should try to unite with the Mennonites, Helwys halted, separated from Smyth and returned to England with less than a score of the original congregation. He made the return in order to provide a witness to the truth and against condemning error to his "natural country men" many of whom were their "loving kindred in the flesh," and others their "most worthy and dear friends to whom we owe the best fruits of our lives and the entire affection of our hearts."<sup>1</sup> In 1611 Helwys wrote *A Short and Plaine Proof by the Word and Works of God that God's Decree is Not the Cause of Any Man's sins or Condemnation*. God did not decree that Adam sin or not sin, but gave him free will and left the determination of his destiny to his own choice. God's decree simply was "Obey and Live" or "Disobey and die." The options to obey or disobey were left entirely in the will of Adam possessed of free will. Adam fell, however, and his posterity have inherited a corrupt nature; They still, however, by proffered grace have a power to believe though their disposition is to evil. Christ has died for all and God's decree of election extends to all men that will believe, for He has not elected particular individuals thus passing by the rest, but has elected all that will believe. A refusal to believe, therefore, duplicates Adam's choice to disobey and secures one's condemnation. Helwys closed this work with a strangely ambivalent affirmation:

Thus Christ offers himself and man has the power and does reject Christ. He has put the word of God from him who resists the Holy Ghost and freely of his own will works his own condemnation. But he does not have the power at all to work out his own salvation. We say this only to clear ourselves from that gross and fearful error of free will from which the Lord in his great mercy has freed us.<sup>2</sup>

Helwys' most useful and justly celebrated writing is *The Mystery of Iniquity*. In spite of the periodized interpretation of Revelation 13 with Roman Catholicism and the pope as the first beast and Anglicanism as the second beast, Helwys' vigorous denunciation of the state church system and his clear and unalloyed call for liberty of conscience marks an important threshold in the history of Christian thought and political theory. He added strong criticism of the "so much applauded profession of Puritanism" for clinging to the hope of a purified Anglicanism and their, the Puritans, consequent inclusion in the establishment. Submission of conscience to Parliament was a spiritual atrocity in Helwys' view and of the essence of an antichristian posture. He challenged them with this observation: "By this you testify against yourselves that you are unreformed, and that there is a way of refor-

mation, of which you would be, if you might have leave or license to enter into it. Seeing you cannot obtain it, you justify that it is lawful to walk in an unreformed profession upon this ground because you may not have leave by act of Parliament to reform. What more false profession can be found on earth than this of yours, who profess that you know a way of much truth in which you would walk, but you do not, because you cannot by superior power be permitted.”<sup>3</sup>

The Separatists held on to infant baptism that they had inherited from antichrist. Inherited from Rome and defended as the fulfillment of Old Testament circumcision, infant baptism according to Helwys is the “mere vain invention and tradition of men” which can “never have favor or acceptance with God.” Under the New Covenant, however, that promises the Law to be written in the heart, to be manifest in repentance and belief, “it cannot possibly be conceived that under, or by this covenant of the New Testament infants should be baptized. The Lord requires no such thing in this covenant of men to baptize their infants.”<sup>4</sup> Helwys points out the absurdities to which the assumptions that undergird infant baptism lead.

What words might we take to ourselves to make this madness and the madness of all the world appear, who pretend that all the seed of Christians and of the faithful are to be baptized only under this pretense, and approve of baptism of the seed of all the wicked to the third and fourth generation, and to the tenth generation enemies of God, and blood persecutors of his truth, destroying the faith of Jesus, and advancing the man of sin. The seed of all these that are baptized, and by reason of this baptism they are all held and accounted as Christians by you, although they walk in the steps of their forefathers. Is there any knowledge of God in these things?<sup>5</sup>

Though they defended it, and claimed that if they sinned in maintaining this baptism, it was a sin of ignorance and, therefore, not damaging. Helwys responded, “Their ignorance is because of their own willful neglect. When through such ignorance they overthrow the ordinances of Christ, and abolish the laws of his testament, and do not repent, but justify themselves in their sins and say that they have not sinned in the matter.”<sup>6</sup> The pope could as easily claim the innocence of ignorance in all his bloody persecutions against the Protestants.

In his defense of religious liberty, Helwys argued that “none should be punished either with death or bonds for transgressing against the spiritual ordinances of the New Testament, and that such offences should be punished only with the spiritual sword and censures.”<sup>7</sup> Helwys wrote plainly and forcefully to the King, that like Helwys himself, he is but “dust and ashes.” He granted to him all legitimate power commanded by Scripture, but did not allow any power over conscience. Helwys pled, politely, but forcefully, that the king might remove the power

of the earthly sword from the prelates of the English church and that he might not seek any power over the consciences of his subjects. Helwys transcended virtually all thinkers before him in the scope of his vision for liberty.

We still pray our lord the king that we may be free from suspicion for having any thoughts of provoking evil against those of the Romish religion in regard of their profession, if they are true and faithful subjects to the king. For we do freely profess that our lord the king has no more power over their consciences than over ours, and that is none at all. For our lord the king is but an earthly king, and he has not authority as a king but in earthly causes. If the king's people are obedient and true subjects, obeying all human laws made by the king, our Lord the king can require no more. For men's religion to God is between God and themselves. The king will not answer for it. Neither may the king be judge between God and man. Let them be heretics, Turks, Jews, or whatsoever, it does not appertain to the earthly power to punish them in the least measure.<sup>8</sup>

### Adoniram Judson

Two hundred years later, a son of the Puritans broke with the prestige of the established church of Massachusetts and the supposed privilege of infant baptism, risked the disappointment of the Fathers of the church and his own earthly father in the flesh, by denying the validity of infant baptism and coming to the conviction “that the immersion of a professing believer is the only Christian Baptism.” On August 27, 1812, Adoniram Judson wrote to William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward that he and his wife, Ann Judson, had simultaneously but independently reached the conclusion that they were in “an unbaptized state” and that they wished to “profess our faith in Christ by being baptized in obedience to his sacred command.”

On February 7, 1812, Judson, along with Samuel Nott, Samuel Newell, Gordon Hall, and Luther Rice had been commissioned by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a newly formed body for the support of foreign missions among the Congregational churches of New England. They were sent to India with instructions that, as soon as possible, they would establish the seat of their mission in “some part of the empire of Birmah.” At the meeting of this Board in September 1813 they voted “that this Board consider the relation between this Board, and the Rev. Adoniram Judson, jun., as having been dissolved on the first day of Sept. 1812, when, in a letter to the Corresponding Secretary, he announced his withdrawal of himself from under our instructions.” The same notice was made concerning Luther Rice who stated that “it was no longer compatible with his sentiments to follow our instructions.” These instructions that they could no longer follow were to “baptize credible believers and their households.”

The Serampore, Carey, Marshman, and Ward, immediately took up the cause and admonished their American brethren to improve the surprising providence to the advantage of the Kingdom of Christ. "I hope the Baptist Brethren in America," they wrote, "will exert themselves to support the two who have for conscience sake deserted their all." Marshman wrote independently of both the poignancy and the privilege of the events. "It can scarcely be expected that the Board of Commissioners will support a Baptist missionary, who cannot of course comply with their instructions, and baptize whole households on the parents' faith." He reminded his Baptist brethren that this young man "ought not to be left to perish for want, merely because he loved the truth more than father or mother; nor be compelled to give up missionary work, for want of support therein." He then surmised, "It seems as though Providence itself were raising up this young man, that you might at least partake of the zeal of our Congregational missionary brethren around you." He continued, "After God has thus given you a Missionary of your own nation, faith, and order, without the help or knowledge of man, let me entreat you, and Dr. Messer, and brethren Bolles and Moriarty humbly to accept the gift."

The Congregationalists were as bewildered by these events as the Baptists were joyfully startled. Without impeaching the sincerity of the Judsons and Luther Rice, the Congregational brethren acknowledged that "it cannot, however, but be regarded with regret, if they had not... examined that subject, before so late a day:—before they assumed engagements of so high and responsible a character." Their actions, so they believed, placed everyone in an embarrassing and awkward position and had potential to damp the spirits of the recently energized missionary enterprise. It showed the necessity of thorough examination of the candidates before appointment and a sober self-examination on the part of candidates themselves. They recognized, however, that God was able to overrule these events "as to bring an accession of strength to the missionary cause." Such an outcome would be joyous.

Aside from the feelings of the Baptists and the Congregationalists, this change of mind did not come easily for the Judsons. Judson considered the separation from his denomination and from his missionary brethren "most distressing consequences of my late change of sentiments, and indeed, the most distressing events which have ever befallen me." When Ann wrote a friend in Massachusetts about the change, she began the letter, "Can you, my dear Nancy, still love me, still desire to hear from me, when I tell you I have become a Baptist?" She explained the lengthy and detailed process of examination and study and translation that led to the change and summarized, "Thus, my dear Nancy, we are confirmed Baptists, not because we wished to be, but because truth compelled us to be."

As the Congregationalists conceded, as the Baptists hoped, and as the Judsons had little reason to anticipate, their baptism in 1812 began a missionary enterprise that still maintains its zeal for taking the gospel to the nations. Their



following of truth, though the cost was high for them both, unleashed a missionary energy pent up in the heart of Baptists in America that has not been expended.

May all of our anniversaries bring to mind such profitable events. 🐦

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### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Helwys. *The Life and Writings of Thomas Helwys*, ed. Joseph Early (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009) 67.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 220f

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 300.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 209.

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## News

### 2012 Founders Fellowship Breakfast Audio

If you missed hearing Dr. Tom Nettles speak at the Founders Fellowship Breakfast this year, you can download the audio on the Founders website: [www.founders.org/audio/ffb12.mp3](http://www.founders.org/audio/ffb12.mp3)

An expanded version of Dr. Nettles' address appears in this issue of the journal: "*Traditional*" *Baptists Under the Microscope of History* (7–33).

### Founders Study Center

Registration for Fall 2012 courses is now underway at the Founders Study Center. Lectures for our 10-week courses, *Worship* and *Baptist Covenant Theology* will be available to download to your iPod. Our 16-week course, *Systematic Theology IV* is being offered for free for those who wish to audit the course.

For more information: <http://study.founders.org/>

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An Interaction with and Response to the Traditionalist Statement  
Of God's Plan of Salvation*

By Tom Ascol

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# “Traditional” Baptists Under the Microscope of History

*Tom J. Nettles*

The following is an expanded version of an address delivered at the Founders Fellowship Breakfast on June 19, 2012 at the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, LA.

Recently, a group of anti-Calvinist Baptists claimed that they have exclusive rights to the term “Traditional Baptist.” Calvinists, therefore, should resign themselves to the status of a distinct minority among Southern Baptists and be willing to receive the grace of mere toleration. With that they should be happy, and be content to expect little else. Perhaps a bit of historical perspective can serve to amend this strange perception.

## A Doctrinal Profile of Baptist Identity

When Baptists emerged out of seventeenth-century English Separatism, they already were identified with several specific marks inherited from the Reformation. The Theological Orthodoxy of the early church, received by the Reformers, they claimed as their own. Like their fellows Protestants, they revolted from the sacerdotalism that dominated Roman Catholic soteriology and developed a more highly purified evangelicalism than even their Protestant brothers. The confessional stewardship that had thrived in early Christianity and that was renewed in sixteenth-century Protestantism became an important and strategic part of Baptist witness. Confessions operated at three levels for Baptists, as indicated by a confession adopted by the Mt. Nebo Baptist Church in Louisiana. First a confession stated the Baptist commitment to the “Faith once delivered to the Saints” in indicating that they made their confession “to the honor of Christ and the Glory of his name.” Second, the confession embodied something of the witness of the church itself as a local body. Mt. Nebo expressed by acknowledging, “Having been enabled through divine grace to give ourselves up to the Lord & to one another by the will of God; we account it a duty incumbent on us to make a declaration of our faith and practice.” Baptists, however, more than any other group looked upon confession as an individual responsibility for each member of a local congregation— “knowing that as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, our declaration is as follows.” Baptists, while finding these areas points of agreement and fellowship with other

Christians, have integrated Orthodoxy, Evangelicalism and Confessionalism into an ecclesiology consistent with the formation of the people under the New Covenant provisions.

The Development of an Evangelicalism that included both Arminianism and Calvinism arose from the historical dynamics of Puritanism and Separatism with some input from the Continental Anabaptists. The General Baptists survived opposition, persecution, internal division, and major theological heterodoxy to provide an evangelical Arminian witness through leaders such as Thomas Helwys, Thomas Grantham and Dan Taylor. Particular Baptists arose out of London Separatism and from the beginning were aggressively resistant to any identification with Arminianism. They resented the misrepresentation of contemporary observers “charging us with holding Free-will, Falling away from grace, denying original sinne.” They also were familiar with the charge that to hold an atonement that was a constituent element of a covenant of grace designed to save certain of the fallen race and not others was inconsistent with the universal proclamation of the gospel. In the First London Confession they responded, “That Christ Jesus by his death did bring forth salvation and reconciliation onely for the elect, which were those which God the Father gave him; & that the Gospel which is to be preached to all men as the ground of faith, is, that Jesus is the Christ, the Sone of the everblessed God, filled with the perfection of all heavenly and spiritual excellencies, and that salvation is onely and alone to be had through the beleeving in his Name.”<sup>1</sup>

## The Beginnings and Growth of Baptists in America

This phenomenon was almost exclusively a manifestation of Particular Baptist life. When Obadiah Holmes suffered the brutal whipping in Massachusetts for his Baptist convictions, he sent the letter describing his whipping at the hands of the magistrates of Massachusetts to John Spilsbery, William Kiffin, and “the rest that in London stand fast in the faith.” John Clarke, founding pastor of the church in Newport, the second Baptist church in America, where Holmes was a member, defined election as “the decree of God, of his free love, grace, and mercy, choosing some men to faith, holiness and eternal life, for the praise of his glorious mercy.” Predestination he defined as “the wise, free, just, eternal and unchangeable sentence or decree of God, determining to create and govern man for his special glory, viz. the praise of his glorious mercy and justice.” In a well ordered personal 35 article confession of faith, Holmes himself says, “I believe that all those that are in this covenant of grace, shall never fall away not perish, but shall have life in the Prince of Life, the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe no man can come to the Son but they that are drawn by the Father to the Son, and they that come, he in no wise will cast away. I believe that by the shedding of his precious blood is my redemption, and not mine only, but all that are or shall be saved.... I believe God hath laid

the iniquity of all his elect and called ones, upon him. I believe the Father is fully satisfied, and the debt is truly paid to the utmost farthing, and the poor sinner is quit, and set free from all sin past, present, and to come.”<sup>2</sup>

The First Baptist Church of Boston, established in 1665 out of the troubled conscience of Thomas Gould over the issue of infant baptism (and having Richard Goodall, recommended from William Kiffin’s church, as one of the initial members) held the Calvinist doctrines of New England Puritanism and embraced the London Baptist Confession of 1677 when that text appeared. William Screven became a member of that church and was approved by the congregation to establish a church in Kittery, Maine. In giving independence to that church, the First Baptist church of Boston sent a committee in 1682 that reported: “Upon careful examination of them in matters of Doctrine & practice & soe finding one with us by there (we hope) Conshienous acknowledgment of ye Confession of Faith putt forth by ye elders & Brethren of ye Churches in London and ye Contry in England dated in the year 1682,” and finding them sufficient in number they recommended that they be recognized as an independent congregation.

This church moved in 1696 to Charleston, South Carolina, becoming the first Baptist church in the South. When Screven resigned in 1713, he urged the church, due to some developing conflict with a few General Baptists in the Charleston Church to “Be sure you take care that the person be orthodox in faith, and of blameless life, and does own the confession of faith put forth by our brethren in London in 1689.”

The Philadelphia Association, resulting from the evangelistic labors of Elias Keach (the son of Benjamin Keach) and Thomas Killingsworth, was established in 1707 with five churches. No later than 1724 they used the Second London Confession to answer “queries “ from the churches In 1742 they reprinted the confession for churches and its members to own a copy. In May 1774, they began to give expositions of each article of the confession meeting by meeting. The influence that Philadelphia Association had in the formation of other Associations and in the eventual regular communication it had with associations and churches of like Faith and Practice, according to their minutes, is quite remarkable. In October 1774, the Association entertained President Manning of Rhode Island College, Benjamin Coles from Connecticut, received minutes from the Baptist Association in Medfield, Massachusetts, along with “our much esteemed brother in the ministry, Isaac Backus.” They received a letter and minutes from the Kettocton Association in Virginia showing that “the brethren there are walking in truth” accompanied by their messengers the esteemed brethren David Thomas and Daniel Fristoe” and received a letter and minutes from the Charleston Association advocating a plan to support Rhode Island College. In addition they received into the Association a church from Fairfield Connecticut after “satisfaction given of their faith and practice.”



The Charleston Association formed in 1751 under the influence of Oliver Hart with four churches cooperating. In 1767 this association adopted the Second London Confession as their Confession. The impact of this Association in the South was perhaps even greater than, or perhaps we should say an intensified extension of, that of the Philadelphia Association in the middle and lower New England portions of the country.

The Separate Baptists arose from New England New Light Congregationalism with Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards and Eleazar Wheelock as their Calvinist mentors in experiential Calvinistic preaching. Those that removed to the South were the same theologically as those that remained in New England. In his argument for the rights of freedom of conscience for Baptists in New England, Isaac Backus described these churches “against which such opposition has been made.” He said that “In General, their faith and practice come the nearest to that of the first planters of New England, of any churches now in the land, excepting in the single article of sprinkling infants.”<sup>3</sup> He then gave a fourteen point statement of their faith and order., “In particular they believe,

- “1. That God set Adam as the public head of all mankind; so that when he revolted from heaven, and seized upon the earth as his own, all the human race fell in him, and all bear his earthly image, until they are born again.
2. That in infinite mercy the eternal Father gave a certain number of the children of men to his beloved son, before the world was, to redeem and save; and that he, by his obedience and sufferings, has procured eternal salvation for them.
3. That by the influence of the Holy Spirit, these persons individually, as they come into existence, are effectually called in time, and savingly renewed in the spirit of their minds.
4. That their justification before God, is wholly by the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by faith.
5. That every such soul will be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto eternal salvation.
6. That according to God’s institution regenerate souls are the only materials for particular Christian churches.
7. That the right was of building such churches is by giving a personal, verbal account to the church of what God has done for their souls, to the satisfaction of the church.
8. That the whole power of calling, ordaining and deposing officers, is in each particular church; although it is ordinarily proper and expedient to call in the advise and assistance of sister churches upon many such occasions.

9. That the whole power of governing and disciplining their members is in each particular church; though advice and counsel from others, in some cases, is becoming and even necessary.
10. That the government of the church should be wholly by the laws of Christ, enforced in his name, and not at all by the secular arm.
11. That gospel ministers ought to be supported by his laws and influence, and not by tax and compulsion enforced by the civil power.
12. That ministers ought to preach, and not read their sermons, at least in ordinary times, that being evidently the apostolic practice; and the contrary enable men to impose upon people, by reading the works of others, and is attended with other evils.
13. The free liberty ought to be allowed for every saint to improve his gifts according to the gospel; and that the church should encourage and recommend such as are qualified for the gospel ministry.
14. That officers, when chosen and ordained, have no arbitrary, lordly, or imposing power; but are to rule and minister with the consent of the brethren, who ought not to be called *The Laity*, but to be treated as men and brethren in Christ.

### Consolidation of Baptist Views in the South

Orthodoxy in its classic form was accepted virtually without controversy or any generational need to reestablish any footing on those issues. Periodic flairs of Arianism, Socinianism, or Hoffmanite Christology were quickly noted, condemned and their perpetrators, if the case was clear, were dismissed from fellowship.

Ecclesiological identity was vigorously maintained mainly through the interaction of local churches through Associational life. Associations served as advisory councils, considered “Queries” on doctrinal and practical issues, sent circular letters to the churches, and maintained confessional unity. The associations were zealous for the central ideas that gave them unity, being in voluntary confederation with other churches that maintained like faith and practice.

In Evangelicalism, Baptists in the South purposefully defined themselves in terms of confessional Calvinism in soteriology. Temporary divergence on these issues was met with clear, confident, forthright expositions of the doctrines of grace with the confidence that these pockets of decline were inconsistent with the hitherto solid Baptist adherence to the doctrines of grace.

Georgia Baptists provide a good example of this desire for unity of this issue. The Confession of the Kiokee Church, founded by the zealous Separate Baptist

church planter Daniel Marshall, stated, by way of affirmation “According to God’s appointment in his word, we do hereby in his name and strength covenant and promise to keep up and defend all the articles of Faith according to God’s word, such as the great doctrine of Election, effectual Calling, particular redemption, Justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone, sanctification by the spirit of God, believers baptism by immersion, the saints absolute perseverance in Grace; etc.” Then by way of denial the church added, “denying the Arian, Socinian, & Arminian errors, & every other principle contrary to the word of God.”

When the Association adopted a confession, it came as a measured response to an Arminian dissent from the general consent of the associational churches. The confessional statement written around 1790 affirmed that “it is impossible to have communion where there is no union.” For that reason they “set forth a concise declaration of the faith and order, upon which we intend to associate.” The relevant doctrinal articles to the controversy immediately under consideration stated:

- 4th. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory: And that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the Father and the Son, before the world began in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed.
- 5th. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them.
- 6th. We believe that all those who were chosen in Christ, will be effectually called, regenerated, converted, sanctified, and supported by the spirit and power of God, so that they shall persevere in grace, and not one of them be finally lost.

These articles were printed in the Minutes beginning in 1827.

In Alabama, the Tuscaloosa Association had to define its theological commitment in a similar controversy. Wayne Flynt described the controversy in Alabama between the Tuscaloosa Association and the North River Association under the influence of the aggressive Arminian David Andrews. Basil Manly Sr. in 1844 presented an Association circular letter on “Election” giving a scriptural exposition of the third and seventh articles of the Association’s Abstract of Principles. and eventually preached “Divine Efficiency Consistent With Human Activity” in 1849 that brought to a happy resolution the conflict.

R. A. McLemore points out that the first Baptists in Mississippi came from the Pee Dee river area of South Carolina and were part of the Charleston Association. At their organizational meeting in 1806, they adopted “Articles of Faith,” a statement “On Gospel Order,” and Rules of Decorum.” The articles of faith affirm

an orthodox Trinitarian Theology, their belief in the inspiration and sole authority of Scripture and then these articles on salvation:

- We believe in the fall of Adam; in the imputation of his sins to all his posterity; in the total depravity of human nature; and in man's inability to restore himself to the favor of God.
- We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people; in the eternal unconditional election of a definite number of the human family to grace and glory.
- We believe that sinners are only justified in the sight of God, by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is unto all and upon all them that believe.
- We believe all those who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world are, in time, effectually called, regenerated, converted, and sanctified; and are kept, by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.
- We believe there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who, by the satisfaction which he made to law and justice, 'in becoming an offering for sin,' hath, by his most precious blood, redeemed the elect from under the curse of the law, that they might be holy and without blame before him in love."<sup>4</sup>

Concerning Louisiana Baptists, Glen Greene in *House upon a Rock* noted, "For the most part the early churches of Mississippi and Louisiana stemmed fundamentally from religious influences set in motion in South Carolina. In Louisiana, practically all of the early churches were the fruit of independent local efforts by transplanted South Carolinians." The confessions of faith of the churches founded through most of the nineteenth century reflected the Charleston theological position. A group from Georgia, however, established the Mt. Nebo Church in 1813 and the confession they adopted in March 1814 reflects a zealous and aggressive commitment to Calvinistic views.

- 3rd We believe that before the world began, God did elect a certain number of Men unto everlasting salvation whom he did predestinate to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ of his own free Grace and according to the good pleasure of his will; and that in pursuance of his Gracious design he did contrive and make a Covenant of Grace and peace with his Son Jesus Christ on behalf of these persons wherein a Saviour was appointed and all Spiritual blessings provided for them as also that their persons with all their Grace and Glory were put into the hands of Christ and made his Care and charge.



- 4th We believe that God created the first Man Adam after his own image and in his own likeness an upright holy and innocent creature, capable of serving and Glorifying him: but sinning; all his posterity sinned in him and came short of the glory of God; the Guilt of whose sin is imputed, and a corrupt nature to all his offspring from him by ordinary and natural generation; that these are by their first birth Carnal averse to all that is god incapable of doing anything and prone to every sin; and are also by nature Children [of] wrath and under sentence of Condemnation; and so are subject not only to a Corporeal death; but involved in a morel one commonly called Spiritual; and are also liable to Eternal death as considered in the first Adam; fallen and sinner from which there is no deliverance but by Christ the second Adam.
- 5th We believe the Lord Jesus Christ being set up from everlasting as the Mediator of the new Covenant and he having engaged to be the surety of his people, did in the fullness of time really assume Human nature, and not before either in whole or in part [several lines on orthodox Christology, etc. ] in which nature he really suffered and died as their substitute, in their room and stead; whereby he made that satisfaction for their sins, which the Law and justice of God could require; as well as made way for all those Blessings which are needful for them; both in time and eternity.
- 6th We believe that eternal redemption which Christ has obtained by the shedding of his blood is special and particular, that is to say that was only designed for the Elect of God and sheep of Christ, who only share the special and particular benefits of it.
- 7th We believe that the justification of God's elect in only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them without the condition of any works of righteousness done by them and the full free pardon of all their sins and transgression past present and to come in only through the blood of Christ according to the riches of his grace.
- 8th We believe that one work of Regeneration, Conversion, sanctification, and faith is not an act of mans free will and power but of the Mighty efficacious and irresistible grace of God.
- 9th We believe that all those who are chosen by the Father redeemed by the Son and Sanctified by the Spirit shall certainly and finally persevere so that not one of them shall ever perish but shall have everlasting life.

Article 10 affirms the resurrection, judgement, vengeance on the wicked and the introduction of God's own people into His Kingdom and glory. Other articles affirmed that baptism and Lord's Supper are ordinance until the second coming,

only those baptized by immersion may be introduced into communion, and that the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is an ordinance. Their theological seriousness is seen in the closing statement of stewardship, “Now all and each of these doctrines and ordinances we look upon ourselves under the greatest obligation to embrace maintain and defend believing it to be our duty to stand in one Spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.”<sup>5</sup>

In Kentucky, according to Spencer’s history, “The early Baptists of Kentucky were distinguished by the titles, Regular and Separate. Originally the Separate Baptists were more extreme Calvinists than the Regular Baptists; but refusing to adopt any creed or confession of faith, they were constantly changing in their doctrinal views. They also held a wide diversity of opinions among themselves.” He then makes the point that the Regular Baptists, especially in the Middle and Southern States, generally adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. This policy eventually was followed also by the Separate Baptists of Virginia which paved the way for an easy union between them and the Regular Baptists, in 1787. In Kentucky, however, they were “much divided on the subject.” A majority, it seems, opposed all human creeds refusing even to have even written rules of order and decorum. This state of affairs led to consistent controversy and extensive division. Spencer points out, “The more Calvinistic, including nearly all of their most valuable preachers, united with the Regulars in the new country, adopted the confession of faith, and henceforth traveled with them in much harmony.” On the other hand, the less confessional and more Arminian party of the Separates moved “farther and farther from the common standard of orthodoxy, till many very grave heresies crept in among them.” Spencer points out the failures in orthodoxy in his description of their history.<sup>6</sup>

## The Southern Baptist Convention

The SBC was formed with a focus on unity for the sake of sending the gospel to the nations and expanding the influence of gospel churches in the South through evangelistic church planting. It began with an ecclesiological understanding of unified effort different from the society model that had dominated the prior union of the General Missionary Convention. The implications inherent in this new model would be one of the major efforts for the next century and would become the singular *distinctive* of what it meant to be *Southern* Baptist. It was widely understood that *distinctives in themselves* are meaningless apart from the broad doctrinal common places inherent in orthodox Christianity and Protestant Evangelicalism.

Very quickly the ideas of publication and education were seen to be a necessary manifestation of Baptist life in the South as demonstrated in the efforts to establish the Bible Board of 1851 and the Sunday School Board of 1863, and the

long struggle to establish a center for theological education of ministers called out by the churches finally culminating in the founding of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Greenville, SC. Fifty years later, B. H. Carroll, with much the same vision as J. P. Boyce founded a Seminary for the Southwest in Waco and soon moved it to Fort Worth. Though the seminaries adopted confessional standards, no convention-wide confessional profile was adopted because of the unity already manifest through the strong association relations of the churches in the South and the purity engendered by the principle of “like faith and practice.”

## A Pattern of Southern Baptist Development

The preservation of our doctrinal framework while this distinctive denominational symbiosis was developing has unfolded in a pattern that is instructive for us as we look at the present and the future. The movement in general was giving consolidation to the emerging Southern Baptist identity in three stages: first the reassertion of soteriological Calvinism; second the reclaiming and clarification of their view of biblical inspiration; and third, the solidification of Southern Baptists as a viable denominational expression of the Baptist witness to the world. The development of these aspects of Southern Baptist identity could be seen as moving through history in a chiasmic fashion: Element one, fashioning an evangelical Calvinism; element two, reaffirming the importance of a doctrine of biblical inspiration; element three, structuring a viability for the independent existence of Southern Baptists. Then revisit element three, an intensification and expansion of the potentialities of Southern Baptist denominational strength; revisit element two, regain a focus on the importance of a doctrine of biblical inspiration; revisit element one, work through the tensions of adjudicating the controversy caused by a revival of evangelical Calvinism.

### Establishing Evangelical Calvinism

Though mixed with important denominational and ecclesiological discussion prompted by the rise of Landmarkism, early decades of Southern Baptist life saw significant energy expended on reasserting a unified view of Calvinistic standards of soteriology. In the penultimate year immediately preceding the Convention's birth, C. D. Mallary, who would be one of the first officers of the Convention, wrote a series of articles on election in the *Christian Index*. He closed the first with the conclusion, “Hence, then we are driven by the doctrine of human depravity into the doctrine of sovereign, particular, unconditional election.” He closed the second with the confident summary, “Thus we conceive that we have proved the doctrine of particular, personal, and eternal election to be a scriptural truth; necessarily involved in other important and fundamental doctrines, and unfolded in clear, direct and intelligible declarations.” In his third article he began by

defending a view of divine sovereignty and human free agency today known as compatibilism saying, “If the above position be not true, I do not see how God can infallibly accomplish one single design which is connected with the actions of voluntary agents; the fulfillment of prophecy, the overthrow of Anti-Christ, the conversion of the Jews, the universal establishment of the Redeemer’s kingdom on earth sink down into matters of the most dark and uncertain contingency;—man is left without a ruler, the Church without a Head, the universe without a King.” He argued cogently that the doctrine is not opposed to, but promotive of, piety and powerful in the conversion of sinners. He included a defense of the necessity of preaching it.

But admitting the doctrine to be true, is it important to investigate it, and to proclaim it? If it is a part of God’s word, it should be diligently studied and properly taught. Is it a light matter to pass by any portion of the counsel of God? The doctrine has no doubt been abused. Incompetent teachers have torn it from its proper connexions, mixed it with much of their own imaginings, and held it up in a distorted light, to the injury of the cause of truth. Antinomianism has been one of the deadly fruits of this perversion. How much our own denominations has suffered from this spiritual malady, I need not say. The spell I trust has been broken. But are there no other evils to fear? Happy indeed shall we be, if in disengaging ourselves from this dangerous extreme, we do not hurry on to its opposite, fritter down the doctrines of grace, and give countenance, by our faith and teaching, to self-righteous presumption. If I do not mistake, there is a tendency in some portion of our brethren to this very evil.”<sup>7</sup>

P. H. Mell’s interaction with Methodist evangelist Russell Reneau provided an opportunity in 1849 to warn Baptists about the danger of allowing their attachment to the doctrines of grace to become lukewarm. “I have been pained to notice,” Mell observed, “for some years past, on the part of some of our minister, in some localities in the South, a disposition to waive the doctrines of Grace in their public ministrations.” He had noticed a growing number of cases where some “have been entirely silent about them” and preached doctrines inconsistent with them, others had “given them only a cold and half-hearted assent,” and “some few have openly derided and denounced them.” He believed that this trend was the child of “lack of information” on the one hand, and on the other, a fear that “the doctrines of Grace are synonymous with Antinomianism.” For that reason, he thought “that a concise and popular exposition of those doctrines was urgently demanded. It is true, there are many able treatises on them extant; but they are all locked up in voluminous Bodies of Divinity and, therefore, not accessible to the general reader. I confess, then that it was to supply, to the extent of my ability, this demand and to counteract, as far as I was able, the tendencies to Arminian-



ism, that I took up my pen.”<sup>8</sup> Twenty years later, Mell, reading an essay entitled “Calvinism” before the Georgia Baptist Ministers Institute, opined “It becomes a serious and practical question—whether we should not make these doctrines the basis of all our pulpit ministrations. If this be, indeed, the gospel system, sustained by such arguments, and attested by such effects, every minister should be imbued with its spirit, and furnished with its panoply.” While the presentation need always be in the form of dogmatic or polemic theology—though some occasions call for just such indoctrination—“our hearers should never be left in doubt as to the fundamental truths, that sinners are totally depraved and utterly helpless” and thus utterly dependent on the gracious actions of the triune God for every stage of the saving work.

In 1857, the Southern Baptist Publication Society published John L. Dagg’s *Manual of Theology*. This provided a strong presentation of the doctrines of grace under a section entitled “The Sovereignty of Grace.” Dagg agreed entirely with Mell on the evangelistic importance of the doctrines of grace. “Yet, every sinner,” Dagg argued when defending particular redemption, “who trusts in Christ for salvation, is bound to commit himself, unreservedly, to the sovereign mercy of God. If he requires some previous assurance that he is in the number of the elect, he does not surrender himself to God, as a guilty sinner ought. The gospel brings every sinner prostrate at the feet of the Great Sovereign, hoping for mercy at his will, and in his way: and the gospel is perverted when any terms short of this are offered to the offender.” Likewise when concluding an exposition and defense of the doctrine of election Dagg argued, “Hence it arises, that the doctrine of election, or which is the same thing, of God’s sovereignty in the bestowment of his grace, often becomes the point at which a sinner’s submission to God is tested. When this doctrine is cordially received, the sinner’s rebellion against God ceases.”

Thirty years after the publication of Dagg’s volume, H. H. Tucker commented on the proposal in Maine of a union between the Regular and the Free Will Baptists in 1887. When the editor of the *Advocate* said that doctrinal changes had removed any reason for maintaining the division, Tucker commented “If he means to include all the Baptists of the United States, then we protest. The Baptists of the South hold to the doctrines of grace just as they have always held them.”

Basil Manly Sr. labors in the Tuscaloosa Association again demonstrate the importance of this theological consensus for the first generation of Southern Baptists. When the North River Association veered away from the confessional articles of the Tuscaloosa Association, the Association adopted a recommendation to be observed by their churches.

Several of the Churches in this body having stated in their letters that they have suffered great distress the past year, in consequence of heresy and division; the Association feel called upon to say that the body of people call-

ing themselves “The North River United Baptist Association,” are a different denomination from ourselves, holding principles adverse to ours, in fundamental and vital particulars, and pursuing a course of conduct such as we could not expect even from the feeling of good neighborhood.... We would call on the members of our Churches individually, to take pains to acquire just and thorough views of the doctrines which are most surely believed among us; we call on the Churches to insist on these views in the reception of members; and to recollect that no addition or fullness of numbers is desirable from among persons, who, either are willing to remain ignorant of the great doctrines of the Gospel, or who doubt or disbelieve them.<sup>9</sup>

Manly Sr.’s circular letter on “Election” clarified the pivotal theological issues involved and sealed the position to which the schismatics must be brought before reconciliation could be effected. The rift between these two groups continued until 1849 and again Manly Sr. intervened. He built a bridge between them by giving a clear demonstration of the compatibility between divine sovereignty and human free agency. He dealt clearly with other aspects of the doctrines of grace but in particular the teasing out of the Edwardsean development of compatibilism consolidated the groups on a Calvinistic basis. His major points were “Men’s actions are their own,” “Necessity in human action is not the same as compulsion,” “Sinners are free in working out their own destruction,” “God converts sinners in a way consistent with their moral freedom,” “God is perfectly sincere in his counsels and invitations notwithstanding his divine foreknowledge of the consequences.” Under the second point, Manly wrote, “What is moral freedom of the will? We can give no better definition, than that a man is always at liberty to do that which he thinks, on the whole to be best. That a man should be just as capable of doing, and as free to do, what he thinks not best, is not notion of freedom at all. It is an absurdity. It is necessary that he should be inclined by his constitutions, to do that which, (all things taken together,) seems to him, at the moment of choice, best: and, if not, —he would not be a free moral agent. He may differ from all others in his estimates of what is best, and even from his own estimates at other times;—but to be influenced by the highest motive in the mind, at the moment,—this is the precise nature of moral freedom.”

In his rejection of compatibilism and affirmation of libertarian freedom, David Allen rejects Manly’s view, as well as Mallary’s, Dagg’s, Mell’s and others. Allen says precisely the opposite of Manly in asserting, “In this construct, God imposes regeneration, and the individual is ‘free’ to exercise faith but he is not free to choose any differently. By any normal understanding of freedom, this is not freedom.” Manly claimed, “This is the precise nature of moral freedom.” Whatever else may be said about Allen’s claim, the case cannot be made that this is “traditional” Baptist theology. It is much more like the contra-causal freedom (what

Allen had to mean when he wrote, “we deny compatibilism and affirm genuine freedom”) of Open Theism than the primal generation of Southern Baptists. This amounts to a rejection of the standard Baptist understanding of human freedom from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. His view might be right (but if it is he would have no way of truly convincing anyone that it is right, for he has committed himself to a principle that decisions made on the basis of internal persuasion are not truly free and thus have no moral significance), but it certainly is not traditional.

A young J.P. Boyce in his inaugural address at Furman University noted that “The most superficial observer must perceive that in our day the sound doctrine of our Churches is much imperiled.” He mentioned that not only Campbellism had made its threat and left its leaven, but “the distinctive principles of Arminianism have also been engrafted upon many of our churches; and even some of our Ministry have not hesitated publicly to avow them.”<sup>10</sup> For this reason he warned that “a crisis in Baptist doctrine is evidently approaching, and those of us who still cling to the doctrines which formerly distinguished us, have the important duty to perform of earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.” In recommending a confession of faith that would serve in halting the progress of error and helping restore unity to Baptist doctrinal witness, he proposed, “For all the purposes aimed at, no other test can be equally effective with that Confession of Faith—the doctrines of which had almost universal prevalence in this State at the time of the foundation of the Institution” (Furman). By this he meant the Charleston Association Confession of Faith. “Let that then be adopted, and let subscription to it on the part of each Theological Professor be required as an assurance of his entire agreement with its views of doctrine, and of his determination to teach fully the truth which it expresses, and nothing contrary to its declarations.”<sup>11</sup>

The *Abstract of Principles* provides the first confessional manifestation of the broad doctrinal commitment of the denomination was seen in the struggle to initiate and perpetuate the concept of a denominationally viable institution for theological education. While every aspect of denominational identity was bound up in this, in particular the principles of confessionalism and evangelicalism rose to the top. In 1877, Boyce related the importance of this moment in the initiation of theological education among Southern Baptists as the Seminary struggled to establish itself in SBC affections in the midst of its move to Louisville. Obviously he believed that the information he gave about the adoption of the doctrines of grace as a vital and necessary element of the confessional abstract he considered as something that would commend it to Southern Baptists and engender a more broad-based support from the entire geographical constituency of the Convention.

Had not these principles guided the Convention, the Seminary could not have been established. There were brethren there—and I admit that I was one of them—who would then and there have abandoned our object, rather than aid in raising an institution whose funds and endowment were not secured to the maintenance of the principles and practices then prevalent, and still prevailing, in our Southern Zion. The doctrines of grace are therefore distinctly brought out in the abstract of principles.<sup>12</sup>

These two principles ruled the concerns of Southern Baptists. First, without an Abstract of Doctrine the enterprise would have been rejected. Second, unless it presented a clear expression of the doctrines of grace it would have been a capitulation to external non-Baptist doctrinal pressures with the potential of corrupting Baptist life. So Boyce said, “The abstract of principles must be “a complete exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of grace, so that in no essential particular should they speak dubiously.” These ideas are succinctly and clearly propounded.

#### IV. Providence

God from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any wise to be the author or approver of sin nor to destroy the free will and responsibility of intelligent creatures.

#### V. Election

Election is God’s eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life—not because of foreseen merit in them, but of His mere mercy in Christ—in consequence of which choice they are called, justified, and glorified.

Also the *Abstract* defines regeneration as “a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, who quickeneth the dead in trespasses and sins enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness. It is a work of God’s free and special grace alone.” This is precisely the doctrine of regeneration, and the resultant compatibilism, rejected by the newly-minted “traditional” Baptist movement.

Thus, the documents show that a conscious movement of Calvinistic consolidation characterized much of the effort expended by Southern Baptists in the first half of the nineteenth century, It gave stability and unity to Southern Baptists for the rest of the century and into the twentieth. In 1883, F. H. Kerfoot could write a confession for his church in Baltimore, Maryland affirming to them that “In common with a large body of evangelical Christians, nearly all Baptists believe what are usually termed the ‘doctrines of grace,’ the absolute sovereignty and foreknowledge of God; his eternal and unchangeable purposes or decrees; that salvation in its beginning, continuance and completion, is God’s free gift; that, in

Christ we are elected or chosen personally or individually, from eternity, saved and called out from the world, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; that we are kept by His power from falling away, and will be presented faultless before the presence of His glory.” The Sunday School reprinted this analysis of Baptist doctrinal coherence in 1905.<sup>13</sup>

## Establishing a Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration

The next challenge was on the issue of the authority of the Bible from about 1879–1892. The Toy controversy at the Seminary in Louisville led to a clarification and reaffirmation of commitment to the inspiration of Scripture as foundation to a conviction of its errorless nature. Crawford Howell Toy’s shift on the concept of inspiration led to widespread investigation of his ideas with a consequent flood of serious theological interaction. While some of the students that had been deeply impressed by both the piety and the scholarship of Toy defended him and believed his views would help Southern Baptists remain intellectually relevant, a powerful presentation of the doctrines of inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy came from a broader and more firmly established veteran constituency. J. B. Jeter wrote a series on “The Inspiration of the Scriptures” for the *Religious Herald* which appeared under that title in Charles A. Jenkens’ *Baptist Doctrines*. Jeter wrote, “That God can inspire men to reveal his truth infallibly to the world, it is atheistic to deny.” In dealing with the biblical claim that “All Scripture is inspired of God,” Jeter concluded, “The language clearly means, not merely that every book of Scripture, but that all the contents of every book, historical, geographical, and scientific, as well as doctrinal, is inspired of God; and therefore infallible, and fitted to make the man of God perfect.” In his conclusion, Jeter reiterated, “On the whole, the more carefully the Scriptures are examined, the more obviously their entire inspiration appears. It is really wonderful to notice how, amid the conflicting systems of science, philosophy and politics, the inspired writers steered their course, without falling into errors, which would have discredited their inspiration.”<sup>14</sup>

Basil Manly, Jr., in *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, shows that not only does the Bible have doctrines of Christ and justification and sin etc. but that it sets forth a doctrine of its own inspiration. As one element of his defense of the inspiration of Scripture, Manly employed what present theologians would call compatibilism.

This full recognition of the human authorship of the Scriptures is of prime importance; for much of the force of the argument against a strict doctrine of Inspiration consists in proving this human authorship of the sacred writings, which we think is undeniable, and then inferring from that their fallibility. “Human, therefore fallible, they say; “fallible, therefore, false in some measure.” But this favorite line of argument seems to us

to be more plausible than powerful. It is a mere assumption that their being human forbids their being also divine; that God cannot so inspire and use a human being as to keep his message free from error; that the human origin, under divine control, necessarily involves either falsity or fallibility. This seems to be perfectly plain: yet this fallacy underlies whole pages of vigorous denunciation and confident appeal.<sup>15</sup>

Manly goes on to say that such confluence of the divine and the human, while objected to vigorously by many as an attempt to combine influences and factors that are contradictory, noted that “if the two things affirmed were plainly incompatible with each other, logical contradictions, so that their union is inconceivable and impossible, the objection would have decisive weight.” But such a thing, Manly contended, is “not beyond the power of God to effect.” He continued to argue, therefore, and place layer upon layer of evidence for his contention that “the Bible is throughout divine and human, all inspired by God, all written by man.”<sup>16</sup>

E. T. Winkler, as editor of the *Alabama Baptist*, also engaged the issue of inspiration. He noted that Toy professed “utmost reverence for the Bible,” while also proposing to show “that there are human infirmities and errors in the Word of God.” Such a demonstration, in Winkler’s view, “destroys the Bible.” Winkler viewed Toy’s assumptions as faulty, and would lead to massive confusion and danger to the eternal interests of people. Winkler was convinced that the “only safe position that we as Baptist can hold, is that the Bible is free from error.” Toy did not accept that and Winkler believed that “Our denomination will arm itself against this crusade of vainglorious scholarship.”

John A. Broadus, who wrote *The Questions Concerning the Bible* and *The Permanent and Paramount Authority of the Bible* as antidotes to the influence of Toy, summarized the consensus of “our denomination” in the simple statements in his Catechism under “The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible” when he affirmed that the writers of Scripture were “preserved by the Holy Spirit from error, whether in learning or in writing these things,” and concluded the section by affirming, “There is no proof that the inspired writers made any mistake of any kind.” The Toy controversy brought a surge in close reasoning of the doctrine of inspiration and forms the second stage of development in the development of a peculiarly Southern Baptist consciousness.

## Defining and Independent Integrity for Southern Baptists

The challenge to denominational existence in 1882 by the Home Mission Society of Northern Baptists gave rise to the third stage of this development. With this overt attempt to displace the Home Mission Board of Southern Baptists, a surge in denominational consciousness, relevance, and definition emerged. From 1882–1914, at the end of the comity agreements with the Home Mission



Society Southern Baptists began to develop an expanded view of how they should function as a denomination. The Comity Conferences finally established the peculiarly distinctive manifestation of Southern Baptists as a viable denominational presence among American Evangelicals. This conflict, and eventually amicable agreement on principles, emphasized the principal autonomy of each local Baptist church, pointed to the moral inter-dependence and necessary cooperation of Baptist churches, and created operable respectful boundaries between denominations as well as the entities of a denomination and the freedom of a local church. The challenge of the Home Mission Society led to a well reasoned justification for maintaining a separate denominational presence in the South.

## A Century of Chiasm

In Chiastic fashion these identity patterns continued their development through the twentieth century and now into the twenty-first century.

### Articulating a Strengthened Denominationalism

With the confidence engendered by the Comity conferences, Southern Baptists continued to focus on SBC denominational distinctiveness though the 75 Million Campaign, the development of interim Convention operations through an executive committee, the development of the Cooperative Program in 1925, adopting that same year *The Baptist Faith and Message*, a confessional statement urgently promoted in light of the victory of liberals in the American Baptist Convention in defeating an attempt to adopt a confession. J. B. Gambrell conceived of this programmatic development as “orthodoxy in action.” He might be the last person that saw it quite that way for the next fifty years. This most recently articulated aspect of SBC life, denominational integrity, was now massaged and developed in the next decades with great care and attention. Southern Baptistness as a distinct way of being a denomination was developed carefully and with much affection and gained an almost unbreakable hold on the commitments of those reared in that church culture.

So much attention was given to this and the necessary unity involved in the expansion of such an aggressive enterprise, that the gains were made virtually to the ignoring of confessional identity and allowed the absorption of modernist ideas on the nature of Scripture, and a corruption of views concerning the doctrines of grace. Some of this happened by indifference and others by a self-conscious development of an alternative formulation of both Scripture and soteriology. Though those that contributed by both indifference and aggressive purpose are legion, two names that symbolize specific periods of this phenomenon are W. O. Carver and Dale Moody. Both of these were very receptive to higher criticism, evolution, rejection of inerrancy, and rejection of the confessional Calvinism to

which they had signed their names. Inattention to doctrine in the quest for a denomination high on organizational unity and efficiency and increasingly non-descript in doctrine allowed the free development of liberalized views of biblical authority and anti-calvinist doctrine to walk hand-in-hand for half a century. Conservatives during this time were working for denominational unity with the divisive quarrels on evolution and Norrisism always in the side view mirror, seeking some kind of working consensus with the one and steering clear of the brittle fractiousness of the other, thus ignoring what would be considered insignificant doctrinal divergences. Two competing groups developed, the conservatives emphasizing the personal evangelism espoused by L. R. Scarborough and the other the social ministry emphasis of W. O. Carver. Any care for confessional Calvinism had become irrelevant to both sides of this developing conflict.

### **Reaffirming Biblical Inspiration**

Through the sixties and seventies, conservatives became keenly aware that biblical inspiration was under attack in both the schools and other denominational agencies. This moved the attention away from the intensified denominational development back to the issue of inspiration. The Conflict of 1879 was renewed in 1979 when the Conservative Resurgence worked and strategized to recapture an affirmation of the doctrine of biblical inerrancy at the denominational level. This was opposed by the so-called denominational loyalists. They argued that inerrancy was not historically an element of Baptist life but was imported into it through evangelicalism, especially through the Princeton development of a theory of the inerrancy of the autographs. The traditional Baptist understanding of authority was more experiential and subjective, so they claimed, and built largely on the idea of soul liberty. No one had a right to impose any externalized objective truth authority on the conscience of a Baptist.

Conservatives countered. The two pronged points of discourse to refute this were exegetical and historical. The exegetical demonstrated that the Bible claimed its own inspiration and errorless nature (echoing much that had been said late in the nineteenth century by Baptists involved in the Toy controversy), and that all the individual parts of Scripture contributed to the development of the multiplicity of doctrines and were thus to be considered as important facets of revelation, and so incapable of error. Part of the argument, theologically and philosophically, in fact, was the demonstration that a free personality could operate with complete responsibility for the language of his epistles, histories, songs, poetry etc. and at the same time being thoroughly under the control of the Spirit of God in producing the words that would constitute divine revelation. In other words, compatibilism was accepted as a valid defense of the relation of the divine and the human in the production of Scripture.

Historically, conservatives demonstrated that the errorless nature of the autographs had been a Baptist viewpoint from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, antedating the twentieth century liberal impact on the dissolution of a theology of Scripture. They also showed historically the falsehood of claiming that the Baptist doctrine of Liberty of Conscience contradicted denominational subscription to an objective external authority of an errorless revelation inscripturated in the Bible. The dichotomy between liberty and inerrancy was an illusion. This movement, because it sought to institute a requirement that all denominational employees be able and gladly willing to sign a belief in inerrancy, operated to gain authority in the internal political operations of convention structure.

## Negotiating the Return of Calvinism

To complete the chiasm, we now find ourselves in an upsurge of rediscovery of the older confessional view and theological settlement of Southern Baptists, a view of salvation that affirms the distinguishing traits of Calvinism. Several factors conspired in the mid 1980's to initiate a small movement that sought a renaissance of the original confessional Southern Baptist position on the doctrines of grace. The attention to history generated by the inerrancy controversy prompted a rediscovery of a more fulsome and encyclopedic confessional heritage of Baptists.

This movement to reaffirm historic Baptist confessional Calvinism has not sought to gain any degree of political power but has sought to make its way by promulgating its views in a variety of settings inviting ecclesiastical market-place interaction with a view to discerning the truth about these issues. Conferences, pastoral relationships, writing, and preaching have been the main means of promoting knowledge of these ideas. That movement has now grown to the point that it has engendered a massive amount of theological pushback. The content of Calvinism and the aggressiveness of Calvinists come under examination from those that differ at a variety of levels.

## Critical Enquiry into the Resistance

So this is the future, it has come upon us with greater rapidity and ferocity than I had anticipated. We are involved in a vigorous surge of interest in giving clear articulation to the gospel with consideration of the historical formulation of Calvinist thought, the completion of the chiasm—some framing their ideas with specific denials of Calvinism and others with clear affirmations of those ideas. For about three decades in SBC life, Calvinists have been engaged in subjecting the church and theological culture around them to critical enquiry on both doctrinal and practical matters. As in all human matters, they have made mistakes and their zeal sometimes has exceeded their knowledge and impaired their judgment. Others that disagree have responded with books and dialogue, and conferences set-

ting forth a critical interaction with the theological methods and conclusions of Calvinists, and likewise have made their own mistakes. This is the way theological progress works; we convince by the sword of the Spirit and not the sword of steel. The question that always lurks in the back of everyone's mind is, "Do we agree on enough of the elements of the gospel to maintain a union of cooperation in preaching this gospel to the nations?" So far the common theological affirmations that have emerged from the Conservative Resurgence have been sufficient ground for maintaining fellowship and a united purpose to teach, preach, evangelize, and fellowship together.

On doctrinal differences, what many hoped would continue as an exercise in discussion, and fraternal interaction has become quickly confrontive. Some of the characteristics of this confrontation are two fold, practical and doctrinal.

## The Practical Resistance

The practical outworking has developed into an attempt to marginalize Calvinistic Southern Baptists. The Preamble of the Traditional Southern Baptists' document of ten affirmations and denials speaks of a "long-standing arrangement" of the relation of Calvinists to "Traditional" Southern Baptists. What arrangement is this? I don't recall an arrangement by which a Calvinist could be tolerated as long as he did not seek to propagate his views. This is the fundamental practical assumption that has given rise to this challenge. The present phenomenon not only gives criticism to Calvinist thought, but seems nonplussed that a Calvinist could want his church to have an "exclusively Calvinist understanding of salvation." Indeed that a Calvinist would want all churches to have that same understanding seems to this emergent "traditionalism" to be shocking and a violation of some social arrangement that has normally governed the place of Calvinists in Southern Baptist life. Before, Calvinists were so rare and so seemingly odd that they provided comic relief to the more thoroughbred Southern Baptist. It was good to have them around, for some oddities in life provide amusement and a target for good-natured humor. The traditionalist was just fine with the occasional presence of an inconsequential Calvinist. But they have now become uppity and have dared to take their own views of truth with the seriousness with which convictions about truth should be taken. They think their view of the gospel should impact evangelism, missions, church discipline, preaching and theological education. How dare they violate the "arrangement." See how nasty and aggressive they are, see how vile they act as they seek to drink from the same water fountain as the traditionalist, when they claim an equal right to argue their case, propagate their views, and are unembarrassed to accept all the common rights of what it means to be Southern Baptist. The former Calvinist deserved credit, the approval of the majority, for he did not demand the adoption of his view as a standard—oh, no

that was the position of the traditionalist. But now, serious-minded, competent, earnest, self-sacrificing “Neo-calvinists” are “pushing for a radical alteration of this long-standing arrangement.” We cannot allow the Help to be so brazen; we must put a stop to it!

One way to oppose it is to represent it as something new, a new spirit, and new aggressiveness, a new cock-sureness. One observer has stated, that there is a “new kind of Calvinism among us. Some, not all, new Calvinists... are hostile, militant and aggressive. This kind of Calvinism is troubling our churches, hindering evangelism and missions, and disrupting the fellowship of our Convention. I would hope that men of good will, whether Calvinist or not Calvinist, would repudiate that kind of Calvinism.” So according to this objection, it is not Calvinism that is the problem but “this kind of Calvinism.” If this characterization is true, a trouble-making, divisive, anti-mission kind of confrontation, then we have much repenting to do; if it is merely a rhetorical way of stigmatizing earnest Bible-preaching men who love their churches and love Christ and are not content to privatize their view of truth so that it has no effect on their practice of ministry or the content of their conversation—if this kind of transparent commitment is interpreted as trying to force their views on others—then the repenting must come from the objectors.

One way to stop it is to inform all the churches through Directors of Missions that Calvinism is dangerous and will destroy your church. So give hints to the deacons as to how they can detect a Calvinist and generate as much prejudice as possible against him. If he resists the charges that are given, and a group within the church comes to his side then he has become the typical Calvinist church splitter. See how divisive they are.

Apply a majoritarian pressure that indicates that it is not appropriate for Calvinists to hold positions in which their salary comes from the Southern Baptist Convention, the property of the traditionalist. No matter their competence, their orthodoxy in historic Christianity, their views of biblical authority, their thorough commitment to Baptist ecclesiology, their involvement in church-planting, missions from the local church and evangelism, their faithfulness to conscientious and contractual obligations to support *ex animo* a chartered confessional statement, the newly-minted tradition says that we do not want such a person in a position of influence. Does the rhetoric of the traditionalist indicate developing strategy to organize politically against Calvinists in the way Conservatives organized against non-inerrantists?

## The Doctrinal Strategy

The doctrinal strategy has two elements, one an issue in historical theology and the second an issue in philosophical theology. The first issue is in the realm

of historical theology, specifically the adoption of the nomenclature “Traditional.” This “tradition” ignores the virtually unanimous pre-modernist doctrinal conclusions of Baptist confessions immediately connected with the development of Southern Baptist Theology. Two men that were paradigmatic for the initiating of Southern Baptists as an entity on the one hand and the intensification of a peculiarly Southern Baptist denominational witness on the other, Basil Manly Sr. and J. B. Gambrell could not be included as “traditional” Southern Baptists by their accounting.

The Preamble claims, “While some earlier Baptist confessions were shaped by Calvinism, the clear trajectory of the *BF&M* since 1925 is away from Calvinism. For almost a century, Southern Baptists have found that a sound, biblical soteriology can be taught, maintained, and defended without subscribing to Calvinism.” It must also be remembered that the “trajectory” of those years carried the Convention away from affirmations of biblical inerrancy. Whether a “sound, biblical soteriology can be taught, maintained, and defended without subscribing to Calvinism,” remains to be seen, but the very assertion seems to beg the question.

The second doctrinal point concerns a rejection of *compatibilism* for libertarian freedom. This undergirds from a philosophical standpoint the rejection of Calvinist soteriology. Libertarian freedom, or contra-causal choice, must be affirmed to sustain the argument that divine determination and effectuality in salvation eliminates true freedom from the moral structure of the world. “We do not believe that compatibilism comports with genuine freedom. The reason should be obvious. In this construct, God imposes regeneration, and the individual is ‘free’ to exercise faith but he is not free to choose any differently,” says one defender of the document. He then likens the Calvinist understanding of divine sovereignty to “coercion” or “compulsion,” not well-chosen terms since compatibilists distinguish clearly between those terms and action built on internal necessity. E. T. Winkler, one of the leading thinkers among the first generation of Southern Baptists pointed to this distinction in an article entitled “A Philosophical Sketch of the Will of God” published in *The Christian Index* for October 2, 1846.

The fact then that God, has *decreed* all human actions, and that man freely performs them does not necessarily involve a contradiction. God in creating man must have known all the events, which would be the result of such an organization; and the same act of the divine will, which called such a being into existence, foreordained all the acts which would spring from such a nature. If human liberty imply an *uncertainty* in action, then man is not free—but if it imply that he acts in accordance with the laws of his own nature, without external compulsion, or in other words, that he acts as he chooses, then man is free in the full sense of the term, and yet God has foreordained every action, which he performs.



Romans 7 is this defender's proof text that choices at least sometimes are made in opposition to our desires, an example of contra-causal choice. (The obviously conflicted struggle of the man in Romans 7 with his deep awareness that all his choices partake of all the moral propensities in him seems to be a poor selection of textual support to make the point). Again he says, "The first proposition in the denial should be understood to mean that we deny compatibilism and affirm genuine freedom," sadly for his case fixing the dichotomy and thus demanding that human choice, genuine freedom, always arises contrary to any system of explanatory factors. He adds also the gratuitous statement, "the freedom we do possess in no way conflicts with or ever overrides the sovereignty of God." He gives no theologically integrated discourse on how that is so. If God desires the salvation of all men, singularly so, and yet in most cases has His perfect will overcome by the contrary will of man, this does not look much like sovereignty to me but like a kind of voluntary surrender of sovereignty, if such a thing were even possible for a being possessed intrinsically with sovereignty as the only self-existent being. Perhaps he is trying to say that God is really in control by choosing not to be in control. So whatever happens outside His control is evidence that He is in control, an idea that reduces sovereignty to the self-control God exhibits when so many of His plans never seem to work out.

This "genuine freedom" or "contra causal" principle relates to depravity, calling, atonement but strangely not to perseverance. With a disarming innocence of the palpable inconsistency of the assertion, their doctrine of perseverance states. "**We affirm** that when a person responds in faith to the Gospel, God promises to complete the process of salvation in the believer into eternity. This process begins with justification, whereby the sinner is immediately acquitted of all sin and granted peace with God; continues in sanctification, whereby the saved are progressively conformed to the image of Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit; and concludes in glorification, whereby the saint enjoys life with Christ in heaven forever." How the saved man loses contra-causal freedom is left unexplained. How this view of divine promise and determination is consistent with their rejection of compatibilism, is not, and cannot be, explained.

Contra-causal freedom is at the bottom of their rejection of the federal relation of Adam to the race, the rejection of the atonement as an efficient power from which flow all the blessings of salvation, their affirming grace as the driving energy of salvation while maintaining a final synergism in its effectual execution. Their rejection of both depravity and effectual calling comes from the idea that if an action arises necessarily from the propensities of one's nature (whether it be corruption from Adam or regeneration from God), then the action is not free; the acting agent has no true responsibility for his action, and thus is morally vacuous. For a truly responsible action, therefore, one's action must not be attributable to any prevailing or preponderant inclination of the will. Freedom must always go

contrary to inclination. If a choice is in the direction of the prevailing inclination it must be made disconnected from that prevailing inclination; choices may just as easily arise contrary to all explanatory factors as they do in accord with them for even those in accord with them have no real connection to them.

One, it is an argument for atheism. Thousands of things come into existence, actions of will, with no cause and even in opposition to sufficient cause. If existences are here with no cause then the cosmological, teleological, axiological, and ontological arguments for the existence of God carry no weight at all for we live in a reality that simply pops up without cause.

Two, it denies God true freedom. God's nature cannot change, is infinitely perfect, and is the cause of all his actions. He cannot be other than holy. He cannot be other than truthful. He cannot be other than just. Every action of His conforms to these revealed attributes and to the operations of His infinitely glorious wisdom by which His reasons transcend our understanding, but are, nonetheless, *reasons*. All of God's actions, therefore, because so determined are unfree and thus moral non-entities.

Three, God's foreknowledge must be denied, to say nothing of His decree. With the force of historical necessity (events that have occurred are now necessary as factors to be considered), His absolute foreknowledge means that nothing can be other than what He has always known before the foundation of the world. His true knowledge of all things, all events, and all outcomes means that nothing can happen outside His knowledge. Does true freedom operate within those strictures? If not, must we become free-will theists, asserting the impossibility of God's perfect knowledge of all future free actions of men for true freedom to exist?

Four, the perfect obedience of the human nature of Christ must be seen as non-meritorious. The obedience of Jesus, according to Hebrews 5 and other passages, must be tested and proven in order to be perfected for justification. This involved a series of free decisions of perfect obedience in spite of great pressure from the world and the devil to the contrary. At the same time, the perfect and inseparable unity of the divine and human natures, plus the divine prophecies of His perfect sinlessness and His substitutionary death for sinners (dying for sins not His own) made His obedience certain, determined. Do these eliminate His perfect freedom and thus the meritorious nature of both His righteous life and His propitiatory death? Did Jesus actually have contra-causal freedom? If He did, how could any righteous action be a manifestation of His perfectly holy and righteous character?

Five, our most zealous, informed and effective efforts in evangelism and apologetics work against the freedom of choice if true freedom of choice is libertarian, contra-causal. The more we persuade the more we destroy the necessary freedom with which a person must choose to be saved. If a person, (whether by the Spirit

of God or by a human evangelist) has Christian truth pressed so powerfully into his mind and conscience that the evidence is of such a powerful nature that it becomes compelling, then to the degree that the person decides based on the persuasive nature of the presentation, to the degree that his choice is caused by preponderation of desire incited by a prospect of great blessing, to the degree that truth itself brings about his act of repentance and faith, his choice is insignificant because it has lost the element of freedom necessary to saving faith.

Six, a rejection of compatibilism throws away the Bible's presentation of the moral order of the world. Brief apertures into the divine purpose in all human events that we find with Joseph in Genesis 50:19–21, the death of Christ as explained in Acts 2:23, 24; our sanctification as depicted in Philippians 2:12, 13, and the destruction of the great prostitute in Revelation 17:15–17 is in opposition to the “traditionalist” concept of moral order. Their view also contradicts such pervasive biblical affirmations as Ephesians 1:11, 3:1–13, Daniel 4:34–35, 6:26–28, Romans 8:26–28 and others.

## Conclusion

Thus we have traced a historic movement that involved the consolidation of three doctrinal ideas and the reassertion and intensification of each doctrinal idea in chiasmic fashion as a major shaper of Southern Baptist denominational life. We are well within the development of the earliest, and thus latest, doctrinal reassertion. The dynamic is not without pain, as it has been in each case. The question now is, “Can we embrace again this recovery of an earlier confessional commitment and remain intact as a denomination?”

I close with two observations from the newly published volume *Whomever He Wills*. The Introduction makes an observation about the puzzling and disturbing nature of divine mercy.

Mercy still outrages because we do not want to be surprised by it; its intrinsic sovereignty is the very thing we try to suck out of it. Oh sure, God is powerful and is sovereign; to say less would be to have no God at all. But we can redefine sovereignty so that He relinquishes His own wisdom, changes the character of His mercy, and puts just a bit of human merit as a warrant for His display of grace by our contention that none of these will operate apart from human consent clearing the path. But the Bible still insists that mercy is an absolutely sovereign display of the divine goodness in glorifying His righteousness by saving a group of His own selection in spite of their unrighteousness.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, Jeffrey Robinson closed his chapter on “Baptists and the Doctrines of Grace” with the following observation.

Theological rediscovery of roots so fruitful in producing the godly stalwarts of Baptist life in the past should be a joyful experience like the discovery of valuable family gold coins feared lost forever. It certainly should not meet with anger at the discovery, disdain toward those that see their value, or resolute denial that such a family treasure ever existed. “Those coins belong to someone else and can do us no good,” is a most inappropriate response to the recovery of a valuable past that holds promise to enrich the future.<sup>18</sup>☺

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1969), 162

<sup>2</sup> Isaac Backus, *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Baptists*, 2 vols. in 1 (New York: Arno Press & the New York Times, 1969; reprint of Newton, Mass: Backus Historical Society, 1871) 1:207. This work originally appeared in three volumes published in 1777, 1784 and 1796. The chapters were rearranged for a two-volume publication in 1871 and are numbered consecutively ending with chapter XLV.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III:232.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Aubrey McLemore, *A History of Mississippi Baptists* (Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 1971), 34.

<sup>5</sup> Glen Lee Greene, *House Upon a Rock* (Executive Board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, 1973), 63, 64.

<sup>6</sup> J. H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists from 1769 to 1885*, 2 vols (Cincinnati, OH: J. R. Baumes, 1885) 1:482.

<sup>7</sup> C. D. Mallery, *The Christian Index* (January and February 1843), 44, 62, 75, 78.

<sup>8</sup> From the Preface to P. H. Mell, *Predestination and the Saints' Perseverance*, (*The Wicket Gate*), 15. Online: <http://founders.org/library/mell1/preface.html>

<sup>9</sup> *Minutes of the Twelfth Annual Session of the Tuskaloosa Baptist Association, 1844*. (Tuskaloosa: Printed by M. D. J. Slade, 1844), 4.

<sup>10</sup> J. P. Boyce, *Three Changes in Theological Institutions*, 33. In *Stray Recollections, Short Articles and Public Orations of James P. Boyce* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2009), 91.

<sup>11</sup> Boyce, *Three Changes*, 38; *Stray Recollections*, 96.

<sup>12</sup> J. P. Boyce, “The Two Objections to the Seminary, V” *Western Recorder* (June 20, 1874).

<sup>13</sup> F. H. Kerfoot, “What We Believe According to the Scriptures,” in E. C. Dargan, *The Doctrines of our Faith* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Board, 1905), 230, 231.

<sup>14</sup> J. B. Jeter, “The Inspiration of the Scriptures,” in Charles A. Jenkins, *Baptist Doctrines* (St. Louis, MO: Chancy R. Barnes, 1882) 42, 54, 68f.

<sup>15</sup> Basil Manly, Jr. *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1888), 30.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 29–32.

<sup>17</sup> Matthew Barrett and Thomas J. Nettles, eds., *Whomever He Wills: A Surprising Display of Sovereign Mercy* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2012), xxii.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 361–362.

# Baptists and 1662

## *The Persecution of John Norcott and Hercules Collins*

*Steve Weaver*

In his chapter on the period in *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, B. R. White, the doyen of seventeenth-century English Baptist studies, labeled the years from 1660 to 1688 as “The Era of the Great Persecution.”<sup>1</sup> During this period all Dissenters, including the Baptists, were persecuted.<sup>2</sup> As a result a rich body literature was produced that reflects a vibrant spirituality of persecution and suffering for the sake of the gospel. This article will examine the prison writings of one seventeenth-century English Particular Baptist in order to better understand how the persecuted minority of Baptists were able to persevere through their sufferings. These writings are characterized by confidence in the sovereign providence of God, a thankfulness for both physical and spiritual blessings, reflection upon the sufficiency of Christ, and a certain expectation of a future deliverance and reward. This article will argue that only such a vibrant spirituality will suffice to sustain one in times of persecution. Before looking at these writings, however, it is important to consider something of the historical context in which they were produced.

### Historical setting

Although Charles II had promised religious toleration when he returned to the throne following the Commonwealth Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, hopes for such were short-lived among the Dissenters. It is unknown whether Charles II actually had any intention of keeping his promise of religious liberty. What is known, however, is that Parliament passed a series of laws between 1661 and 1665 known as the Clarendon Code that were designed to enforce conformity to the worship of the Church of England. The Corporation Act of 1661, for example, required that a person had to have received the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in the Church of England within the past year to be eligible for election to any government office. Eligible persons were also required to take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy to the king of England. The Act of Uniformity of 1662 resulted in the ejection of approximately two thousand Puritan ministers from their pulpits since it would have required complete subscription to *The Book of Common Prayer*. Most Puritan ministers resigned rather than conform to these demands. The Conventicle Act of 1664 forbade the assembling of five or more persons for religious worship other than Anglican worship. This, in essence, outlawed Dissenting

churches. The Five-Mile Act of 1665 forbade any Nonconforming preacher or teacher to come within 5 miles of a city or corporate town where he had previously served as a minister. Each of these Acts was aimed at stamping out both the Dissenters and Catholics. Baptists were hit particularly hard by these laws since they made their conscientious worship of God illegal.<sup>3</sup> One of the Baptists whose life and ministry was affected by these laws was Hercules Collins (1646/7–1702).<sup>4</sup>

Collins served from 1677 until his death in 1702 as the third pastor of London's oldest Baptist church which was then the meeting in the Wapping area of London.<sup>5</sup> The second pastor of this congregation, John Norcott, is believed to have been one of a small number of Baptists who were actually ejected from their pulpits in Church of England in 1662.<sup>6</sup> Although only a handful of Baptists were affected by the actual ejection of 1662, the other laws of the Clarendon Code, of which the Act of Uniformity was a part, continued to have major effects for over a quarter of a century. Collins himself first appears in the public records in June of 1670 as a twenty-four year old who was arrested along with thirteen others for assembling in a conventicle in violation of the Conventicle Act (1664/1670).<sup>7</sup>

Collins became pastor almost one year to the day after Norcott died in 1676.<sup>8</sup> For the first half of Collins' ministry (until the Act of Toleration in 1689) the congregation had to meet in secret for fear of persecution. Spies and informers were employed by the government and given large sums of money for the discovery of Dissenting congregations.<sup>9</sup> The English Baptist historian Joseph Ivimey records that the meeting-house of Collins' congregation was attacked during this period, with the pulpit and pews being destroyed and windows smashed.<sup>10</sup> On July 9, 1683, Collins was indicted for failure to attend his local parish church.<sup>11</sup> But it was for his violation of the Five Mile Act (1665) that Collins was actually imprisoned in 1684 at the Newgate Prison.<sup>12</sup> Collins had directly addressed the Church of England in 1682 in one of his writings by saying, "If you do persecute us for our Conscience, I hope God will give us that Grace which may inable [*sic*] us patiently to suffer for Christ's sake."<sup>13</sup> Apparently God granted this desire, for the English Baptist historian Thomas Crosby, writing within forty years of Collins' death, recorded that he was "a faithful minister of the gospel; though he had not a learned education, yet was a useful and laborious servant of Christ, and one that suffered imprisonment for his sake. He began to be religious early, and continued faithful to the last, and was not shocked by the fury of persecutors."<sup>14</sup>

Ironically, it might have been this 1682 volume, titled *Some Reasons for Separation from the Church of England*, in which he expressed his willingness to suffer patiently which may have been the cause of Collins' imprisonment in 1684. In this work, which was framed in terms of a hypothetical conversation between a Conformist and a Non-Conformist, Collins asserted the historic Baptist distinctive of religious liberty. Baptists have always been ardent defenders of religious liberty for such an idea is in their DNA as champions of a regenerate church member-



ship which necessitates a separation of church and state. In the early seventeenth century, men such as John Smyth, Thomas Helwys and Roger Williams were advocates for religious liberty. Collins, in his dialogue with a member of the Church of England, appears to follow Roger Williams' 1644 work on religious liberty, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*, quite closely, demonstrating a clear dependence upon William's classic treatment.<sup>15</sup> However, Collins offers his own concise summary of the issue at stake by asserting in his words, "That none should be compelled to worship God by a temporal Sword, but such as come willingly, and none can worship God to acceptance but such."<sup>16</sup> For this principle, which preserves the idea of freedom of worship, Baptists like Hercules Collins were willing to risk their health, safety and freedom.

Within a year of having published *Some Reasons for Separation from the Church of England* Collins was arrested, and by the next year Collins was imprisoned for exercising his understanding of religious liberty. Nevertheless, this time bore rich fruit for it was while he was in the infamous Newgate Prison that Collins penned two of the most devotional of his twelve writings.<sup>17</sup> These two works will be the focus of the remainder of this article.

### The prison writings

Though there is no indication of which was published first, the first work to be considered is *Counsel for the Living, Occasioned from the Dead*. This work, whose primary audience was Collins' fellow prisoners, was a discourse on Job 3:17–18. This discourse was written as a response to the deaths of two of Collins' fellow prisoners at Newgate: Francis Bampffield<sup>18</sup> and Zachariah Ralphson.<sup>19</sup> Both apparently died in early 1684 while Collins was also imprisoned.<sup>20</sup> The scriptural text that formed the basis for the address states regarding the eternal state, "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor" (KJV). Collins summarized these verses as consisting of three components: "first the Subjects; which are *Oppressors and Oppressed*: Secondly, The Predicate, *They shall Rest*: Thirdly, the *Receptacle*, or place of Rest, that's the *Grave*."<sup>21</sup> Collins focused on two aspects of "counsel" from Job 3:17–18, namely the future judgment of the persecutors and the corresponding relief of the persecuted. Collins believed that both of the ideas present in these verses were pertinent for his times. First, the persecuted needed to be encouraged by the fact that one day the persecutors would be stopped and they would experience relief, if not in this life, then in the life to come. Second, persecutors needed to realize that they would one day be judged for their mistreatment of the people of God. Collins' primary purpose in this discourse, however, was to provide comfort to persecuted Christians. This is seen in that at the end of the book he exhorts his readers to follow the apostle Paul's advice at the close

of his discourse on the resurrection of saints in 1 Thessalonians 4 to “Comfort one another with these words.” Collins concluded his *Counsel for the Living* by exhorting his readers with these words: “While Sin, Satan, and an Unkind World is Discomforting you, do you in a lively Hope of the Resurrection of the Body, the coming of Christ, your Meeting of him, and continuing with him, cheer up and Comfort one another with these things.”<sup>22</sup>

Before turning to offer comfort for the persecuted, Collins first indicted their persecutors as godless men. Collins characterized the persecutors of Christians as wicked men who “are troublers of the *Church*.” As such they are “Strangers to Gospel Principles, to a Gospel Spirit, and Gospel Teachings.”<sup>23</sup> Collins concluded that “a persecuting spirit is not of a Gospel-complexion.”<sup>24</sup> Judgment is coming for these evil-doers who “shall be made to confess their wickedness in not setting Gods People at liberty to Worship him; they shall fall into mischief, and be silent in darkness, and turned into Hell, with Nations which forget *God*.”<sup>25</sup> Note that the “liberty to Worship him” seems to be the main issue at stake for Collins. Further, Collins excoriated the persecutors elsewhere for arresting elderly men, “Men of threescore, fourscore Years of Age, hurried to Prison for nothing else but for worshipping their *God*.”<sup>26</sup> This seems to have especially raised the ire of Collins since Bampfield, one of the men whose death occasioned this sermon, was almost seventy when arrested for what would prove to be the final time.<sup>27</sup>

Saints, however, would be given rest. “The time is coming,” Collins asserted, when “God hath promised we shall no more hear the voice of the Oppressor.”<sup>28</sup> The saints “shall know no more Apprehendings...nor hear no more of, Take him Jaylor, keep him until he be cleared by due course of Law; we shall have no more Bolts nor Bars then on us, no more looking for the Keeper then, nor speaking to Friends through Iron-grates.”<sup>29</sup> The “rest” referred to in Job 3:17–18 was a “Rest in Sleep, being then out of all sense of care, trouble, pain, and all manner of distraction, so in like manner shall we be in the Grave.”<sup>30</sup> This was the rest that Bampfield and Ralphson had attained. However, this was not the only relief from persecution that Collins anticipated. His belief in the sovereign providence of God caused him to declare: “We shall none of us stay a night beyond God’s determination.”<sup>31</sup> Therefore, prisoners could be content with their circumstances “though limited to one Room, which was our Kitchin, our Cellar, our Lodging-Room, our Parlour.”<sup>32</sup> Like the apostle Paul, these persecuted believers had learned to be content in “every State.”<sup>33</sup> These prisoners believed “that place is best” where their Father had willed them to be.<sup>34</sup> Having their daily bread they confessed that “God is as good in Prison as out.”<sup>35</sup> Collins therefore exhorted his readers that God’s promises were not just to be read, but their truths trusted and experienced. “Beloved, it is one thing to Read the Promises, another thing to trust upon God by them, and experience the truth of them.”<sup>36</sup> These prisoners had experienced the promised presence and blessing of God in the prison cell and Collins wanted to

exhort other persecuted Christians to trust in the promises of their loving Father. Collins reminded his readers that:

Gods Providential Dealings with his people in this world, is like Chequer-work, there is the dark, as well as the light side of Providence, the most Refin'd and best State and Condition of the best Saints are mixed here; if we have some peace, we have some trouble; if we have large Comforts one day, we may expect a great degree of trouble another; least we should be exalted above measure, we must have a thorn in the flesh now and then.<sup>37</sup>

Trusting God's providence, Collins could confidently declare, "let men and Devils do their worst, God will in his own time loose the Prisoners."<sup>38</sup>

Not only were Collins and his fellow-persecuted brothers content with their situation because of God's providence, they were also deeply thankful for God's physical and spiritual blessings while jailed. Collins called these blessings "Prison-comforts."<sup>39</sup> They blessed God for his grace that enabled them to have "as much peace and satisfaction" in their one-room prison cell as when they had complete liberty to stroll through their houses, gardens, and the homes of friends.<sup>40</sup> They were also thankful for God's daily physical provision for them. "Blessed be God we have bread for the day; as the day so our strength has been."<sup>41</sup> These prisoners, however, were most grateful for their spiritual blessings. Chief among these blessings was the presence of Christ. Of his persecuted brothers Collins could write: "How much of the Presence of Christ have they had to inable them to bear the Cross quietly, patiently, contentedly."<sup>42</sup> These saints also rejoiced that though they were bound by physical shackles, they had been set free from the bondage of sin and death. "Again, let us bless God, though we are in the Prison of man, yet that we are delivered from the Spiritual prison of Sin and Satan, into the glorious liberty of the Children of God, and out of the Kingdom of darkness into the glorious light of the Gospel."<sup>43</sup> They realized that "the darkness of a Material Prison is nothing to the darkness of a Spiritual one." In this spiritual freedom believers "may have Liberty in Bonds, light in Darkness, Peace in Trouble."<sup>44</sup> It was the spiritual blessings that enabled the suffering servants of Christ to endure their trials. Collins explained how he and his fellow prisoners had personally experienced the soul-strengthening power of spiritual fellowship with God the Father. "Communion with God by the Spirit is a good Cordial to keep up the heart from fainting in this valley of tears, until we come to our Mount of Joy, where there is no limits of Joy and Blessedness."<sup>45</sup>

A second work that Hercules Collins published from his prison cell was *A Voice from the Prison*. This work was an extended meditation on Revelation 3:11 where Christ admonishes the church of Philadelphia with the words, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (KJV). Collins addressed this sermon "To the Church of God, formerly Meeting in Old-

Gravel-Lane Wapping, and all who were Strangers and Foreigners, but now Fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God.” Collins drew from at least 213 passages of Scripture in his sermon, to encourage his congregation to stand firm in the face of persecution.<sup>46</sup> Collins urged his besieged flock to not abandon the cause of Christ. “*Hold fast what thou hast*, when Satan would pull thy souls good from thee; when Relations, Husband, Wife, Children call upon you, and perswade you because of danger to cease from the work of the Lord, then hold fast.”<sup>47</sup> Collins offered as a motivation for holding fast to Christ and his work that the one who stood fast would hear Christ profess to the Father on the day of judgment the words:

These are they which have continued with me in my Temptation; therefore I appoint unto you a Kingdom; therefore, because you owned me in an Evil Day.

These are the Men, Woman, People, which spoke of my Testimonies before Kings, and was not ashamed when many Cried, Crucify him and his Cause; these are the souls which came forth and declared they were on the Lords Side: These are they, Father, whose Love to me many Waters nor Floods could not quench nor drown; these are they that chose me on my own termes, with the Cross as well as the Crown; these have made Choice of me with Reproaches, Imprisonments, with Fines, Confiscation of Goods, Banishment, loss of Limbs, Life, and all, they have born all, indured all for my sake, in the greatest affliction, they kept from wavering, and the more they endured and lost for my sake, the more they loved me.<sup>48</sup>

Just as Collins had encouraged persecuted believers in his *Counsel for the Living* to not give in because of the future rest which awaited them, so too in *A Voice from the Prison* he exhorted them to live in view of their future appearance before God’s judgment seat.

Collins also drew comfort from God’s sovereign providence during his imprisonment. He began his written address to his “Dearly Beloved” church by expressing his confidence that God was providentially at work in his suffering for the advancement of the gospel.

Forasmuch as I am present depriv’d by my Bonds, of the Liberty of Preaching; I bless God I have the Advantage of Printing, being ready to serve the Interest of Christ in all Conditions to my poor Ability; and doubt not, but God and Interest are Served by my Confinement, as by Liberty: and am not without hopes that I shall preach as loudly, and as effectually by Imprisonment for Christ, as ever I did at Liberty; that all those who observe Gods Providential Dealings, will be able to say with me hereafter, as Holy *Paul* once said in his Bonds at *Rome*; What hath befallen me, hath tended to the furtherance of the Gospel.<sup>49</sup>

Like the apostle Paul in Philippians 1, Collins' belief in the providence of God caused him to have confidence that God would bring good out of his imprisonment. One of the goods that Collins believed could come out of the sufferings of the Baptists was that some of their adversaries might be convinced of the truth when they saw how the Baptists patiently endured when persecuted. He argued that since "Actions are more Influential then words, and more Demonstrative of the Truth and Reality of a Person or Cause" and "as a man shall be better believed for his good works, then good words," suffering patiently would convince their persecutors.<sup>50</sup> Collins therefore encouraged his congregation:

so if we would Manifest our Integrity under a Profession, nothing will do it better then your Suffering, ... if by God called unto it; for, as a Tree is known by his fruit, so is a Christian by a Patient Wearing Christs Cross, this will and hath Convinced an Adversary, when a bare Profession will not.<sup>51</sup>

In a similar manner, in *Counsel for the Living*, Collins had maintained that God could "make people grow so much the more as their afflictions abound" for "thinking people will conclude they must be the Lords, that suffer patiently under such apparent wrong."<sup>52</sup> Therefore, Collins encouraged his fellow believers to "see how our Churches fill, come let us go on, we have good success, we shall bring them all home at last."<sup>53</sup> This proved to be true for Collins and his congregation: by the time of his death in 1702, as Michael A.G. Haykin has observed, Collins "was probably preaching to a congregation of roughly 700 people, which would have made his congregation one of the largest Calvinistic Baptist works in the city."<sup>54</sup>

Collins also exhorted his readers to persevere for God has promised to reward the overcomers. He then draws on all the promises made by Christ in Revelation 2 and 3 to those who persevere through persecution. The overcomers shall "eat of the Tree in the midst of the Paradice of God"; they shall "not be hurt of the Second Death" and shall "have the hidden Manna"; "the white Stone, and a New name" will be theirs; they shall "have power over the nations, and rule them with a Rod of Iron"; and they shall be "clothed in white Rayment." Their "name shall not be blotted out of the Book of Life, but made a Pillar in the Temple of God, and he shall go out no more." Finally, those who overcome "shall sit with Christ on his Throne, as he overcame and sat down with the Father on his Throne."<sup>55</sup> These shall receive "a Crown not of Gold, but Glory, not fading but eternal."<sup>56</sup>

Collins knew that his readers would be able to "hold fast" if they were fully satisfied with Christ. As he put it in typical pithy Puritan fashion: "It is the Christ-finding Soul which is the Life-finding Soul."<sup>57</sup> Collins explained that when it is said in Scripture, "Christ is all, and in all," this means that, for the believer, "he is all, because all good is Comprehended in him, he is all in all; all in the Fullness

of all, for if we have all Earthly Injoyments, and have not him, we have nothing comparatively.”<sup>58</sup> However to have Christ was to “have all Equivalently and comprehensively.”<sup>59</sup> Therefore, Collins warned that it was important to “hold fast this Christ.” The world, he declared, would try to sink believer if he or she held it too closely to his or her heart. So then, he urged his readers: “Cast away all, shake off all, rather than lose a Christ.”<sup>60</sup> Thus, “will a Believing Soul suffer the Loss of all, so he may win Christ; none but Christ, saith an illuminated Believer.”<sup>61</sup> Collins seemed to speak on behalf of the “illuminated Believer” as he thus extolled how this view of the sufficiency of Christ enabled the Christian to endure hardships in this life:

There are many good Objects in Heaven and Earth besides thee, there are Angels in Heaven, and Saints on Earth: But, what are these to thee? Heaven without thy Presence, would be no Heaven to me; a Pallace with thee, a Crown without thee, cannot satisfie me; but with thee I can be content, though in a poor Cottage with thee I am at Liberty in Bonds; Peace and Trouble; if I have thy Smiles, I can bear the worlds frowns; if I have Spiritual Liberty in my Soul, that I can ascend to thee by Faith, and have Communion with thee, thou shalt chuse my Portion for me in this World.<sup>62</sup>

Some, however, were apparently being tempted to abandon the all-sufficient Christ for a respite from persecution. Collins warned that “without enduring to the End, all your Profession, your many years Prayers, all your Tears will be lost.”<sup>63</sup> Those who turned aside “mayst never more be called to be a witness for Christ.” In fact, “some have thought God hath not Lov’d them, because he hath not Exercised them this way.”<sup>64</sup> Elsewhere in this prison epistle, Collins soberly charged those who had been enabled by God’s grace to persevere not to boast in their state: “To all such as have not fallen in the Storm, who have kept their garments from Defiling, let God have the glory; thou standest by Faith, which God is Author of, be not High-minded but fear; glory not secretly, Rejoice not in thy Brothers fall.”<sup>65</sup> For those who had fallen, Collins offers a word of hope. “The Lord hath promised he will not let his Anger fall upon you, . . . therefore, Return, Return, . . . that we may look upon thee with Joy and Delight, as the Angels in Heaven do rejoice at the Returning of a Soul to God.”<sup>66</sup> Collins further exhorted his readers who had gone back on their profession to return to the arms of a merciful God: “Return to thy God from whom thou hast revolted, who stands with open Arms to receive you; return to the Church again, whom thou hast made sad by thy departing from the Truth, and humble thy self to God and them, and they will cheerfully receive thee into their fellowship.”<sup>67</sup>

Collins was sure that only those believers who had been mortifying sin daily in their lives would be enabled to endure persecution. “Let not that Man think



to wear the Cross of Persecution, that doth not first wear the Cross of Mortification.”<sup>68</sup> As Collins developed this concept:

We should inure our selves to wear the Publick Cross, by wearing it first more privately in our Houses, in our Families, in our Shops and Trades: For let not that Person think he will ever be able to part with his Houses, Lands, Liberties, for the Lord Jesus Christ, that cannot first part with a secret lust: But if we have Grace enough, to wear daily the Cross of Mortification of the old Man; you need not fear but he that giveth Grace to do the greater, will give Grace to doe the lesser; for I look upon the subduing of Corruption, a greater thing then enduring Persecution; though neither can be done as it ought, without help from Heaven.<sup>69</sup>

Those who, by the grace of God, were regularly putting to death their sins would experience an easier path in enduring physical persecution. Thus, Collins was encouraging personal holiness as the best means to prepare for persecution for the cause of Christ. Without this spiritual practice, professing believers would not be able to withstand the temptation to deny Christ in the face of persecution.

Ever the true pastor, Collins closed what amounted to a sermon from prison with a series of prayers to God. First, Collins prayed that God would purge the church of its impurities which he saw as a cause for their persecution. “God is contending with us: Let us all Banish and Expel the Achan out of our Hearts, out of our Churches, and shew our selves Zealous against Sin.”<sup>70</sup> Then, Collins asked God that his dear Son’s kingdom might come. “We should be willing to be Footstools, so Christ thereby might get upon his Throne.”<sup>71</sup> Third, Collins prayed for “a universal spreading of the Gospel” in order that “a greater degree of Knowledge and Holiness will be in the World then ever.”<sup>72</sup> This is a fascinating request, as it is often said that the seventeenth-century Puritans and Baptists were not missions-minded. Clearly, Collins was not devoid of a missionary passion. Finally, Collins prayed for deliverance from the persecution. “We have no might, but our Eyes are upon thee... Appear in thy strength, that the Kingdoms of the World may know that thou art God; and that there is none besides thee.”<sup>73</sup> But till then, Collins concluded, “let our Faith and Patience be lengthned out, to the coming of the Lord; till Time swallowed up in Eternity; Finite, in Infinite, Hope, in Vision; and Faith in Fruition; when God shall be the matter of our Happiness; when Fulness shall be the measure of our Happiness, and Eternity the Duration.”<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusion

The prison writings of Hercules Collins provide a window for better understanding both seventeenth-century English Baptist spirituality and a Baptist theology of persecution. The furnace of affliction revealed a deep and vibrant

spirituality which was like pure gold. These golden writings are characterized by a confidence in the sovereign providence of God, a thankfulness for both physical and spiritual blessings, reflection upon the sufficiency of Christ, and a certain expectation of a future deliverance and reward. It is hoped that a similar spirituality would become prominent among Baptists once again in order that they might be enabled to persevere through the persecution that increasingly seems certain to come. 🐣

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> B. R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (Didcot: The Baptist Historical Society, 1996), 95–133.

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent study of this era, see Gerald R. Cragg, *Puritanism in the Period of the Great Persecution 1660–1688* (Cambridge: University Press, 1957). See also Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters. Volume 1: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 221–262.

<sup>3</sup> For a fuller description of these Acts and their impact upon Baptists, see Ernest A. Payne and Norman S. Moon, *Baptists and 1662* (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1962).

<sup>4</sup> For details on the life of Hercules Collins see Michael A.G. Haykin “The Piety of Hercules Collins (1646/7–1702)” in *Devoted to the Service of the Temple: Piety, Persecution, and Ministry in the Writings of Hercules Collins*, eds. Michael A.G. Haykin and Steve Weaver (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2007), 1–30. See also Haykin’s entry “Collins, Hercules (d. 1702)” in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), s.v. and his article “Hercules Collins and the Art of Preaching” in *A Cloud of Witnesses: Calvinistic Baptists in the 18th Century* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Times, 2006), 21–26.

<sup>5</sup> See Ernest F. Kevan, *London’s Oldest Baptist Church* (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1933) for the remarkable first three hundred years of history of this congregation. The church is still in existence and is now called Church Hill Baptist Church, Walthamstow. Their website is: <http://www.chbc.org.uk/>.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the evidence, please see Geoffrey F. Nuttall, “Another Baptist Ejection (1662): The Case of John Norcott” in *Pilgrim Pathways: Essays in Baptist History in Honour of B. R. White*, eds. William H. Brackney and Paul S. Fiddes with John H. Y. Briggs (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), 185–188.

<sup>7</sup> Sessions of the Peace Rolls for 27 June 1670 – MJ/SR/1389 (file numbers P1010140–P1010150, London Metropolitan Archives). This document lists the names of Hercules Collins and the thirteen others who were arrested and sent to Newgate prison on June 29, 1670. The key text reads “Peter Sabbs for refusing to tell their m[eeeting?] they being taken at a conventicle & other misdemeanours.” Collins and his fellow conventiclars must not have been in prison long, for there is no record of them in prison at the next court record for August 29, 1670.

<sup>8</sup> Norcott died on March 24, 1675/6 and Collins became pastor on March 23, 1676/7.

<sup>9</sup> Kevan, *London’s Oldest Baptist Church*, 43.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1814), II, 448–449.

<sup>11</sup> Middlesex: Rolls, Books and Certificates, Indictments, Recognizances, ... 1667–1688, vol. 4.

<sup>12</sup> For a description of the horrors of the Newgate Prison during the seventeenth century, see Haykin, “Piety of Hercules Collins (1646/7–1702),” 14. See also Kelly Grovier, *The Gaol: The Story of Newgate—London’s Most Notorious Prison* (London: John Murray, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> Hercules Collins, *Some Reasons for Separation from the Communion of the Church of England, and the Unreasonableness of Persecution Upon that Account. Soberly Debated in a Dialogue between a Conformist, and a Nonconformist (Baptist.)* (London: John How, 1682), 20.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists* (London: John Robinson, 1740), 129.

<sup>15</sup> See especially Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution* (London, 1644), 2–3 and Collins, *Some Reasons for Separation*, 18–20.

<sup>16</sup> Collins, *Some Reasons for Separation*, 20.

<sup>17</sup> *A Voice from the Prison. Or, Meditations on Revelations III.XI. Tending To the Establishment of Gods Little Flock, In an Hour of Temptation* (London, 1684) and *Counsel for the Living, Occasioned from the Dead: Or, A Discourse on Job III. 17,18. Arising from the Deaths of Mr. Fran. Bampffield and Mr. Zach. Ralphson* (London: George Larkin, 1684). A complete list of Collins’ works can be found in *Devoted to the Service of the Temple*, eds. Haykin and Weaver, 135–137.

<sup>18</sup> For biographical details on Bampffield, see Richard L. Greaves, “Making the Laws of Christ His Only Rule: Francis Bampffield, Sabbatarian Reformer” in his *Saints and Rebels: Seven Nonconformists in Stuart England* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 179–210.

<sup>19</sup> Ralphson was the alias of Jeremiah Mardsen. For biographical details on Ralphson, see R.L. Greaves, “Marsden, (alias Ralphson), Jeremiah (1624–1684),” in *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals*, eds. Richard L. Greaves and Robert Zaller (Brighton, England: Harvester Press, 1984), 2:214–215.

<sup>20</sup> Keith Durso dates the death of Bampffield as February 16, 1684. See *No Armor for the Back: Baptist Prison Writings, 1600s–1700s* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007), 105. For a transcript of the proceedings of the trials of Ralphson and Bampffield, see *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* ([www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org); accessed May 20, 2010), January 1684, trials of Zachariah Ralphson (t16840116–18) and Francis Bampffield (t16840116–20).

<sup>21</sup> *Counsel for the Living*, 1–2.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 33–34.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 6–7.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> Haykin, “The Piety of Hercules Collins (1646/7–1702),” 15.

<sup>28</sup> *Counsel for the Living*, 21. Cf. also *Counsel for the Living*, 31.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 26. Collins is citing Philippians 4:11.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 26

- 37 Ibid., 28.  
38 Ibid., 26.  
39 Ibid., 25.  
40 Ibid.  
41 Ibid.  
42 Ibid.  
43 Ibid., 26–27.  
44 Ibid., 27–28.  
45 Ibid., 28.  
46 Durso, *No Armor for the Back*, 169.  
47 Collins, *Voice from the Prison*, 4.  
48 Ibid., 5.  
49 Ibid., 1.  
50 Ibid.  
51 Ibid.  
52 Collins, *Counsel for the Living*, 26.  
53 Collins, *Voice from the Prison*, 23.  
54 Haykin, “The piety of Hercules Collins (1646/7–1702),” 22.  
55 Collins, *Voice from the Prison*, 6.  
56 Ibid., 6.  
57 Ibid.  
58 Ibid., 8.  
59 Ibid.  
60 Ibid., 18.  
61 Ibid.  
62 Ibid., 18–19.  
63 Ibid., 3.  
64 Ibid.  
65 Ibid., 28.  
66 Ibid., 26.  
67 Ibid.  
68 Ibid., 30.  
69 Ibid.  
70 Ibid., 32.  
71 Ibid., 33.  
72 Ibid.  
73 Ibid., 34.  
74 Ibid.



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