

The *SBJT* Forum: Overlooked Shapers of Evangelicalism

Editor's Note: Readers should be aware of the Forum's format. Timothy George, D. A. Carson, C. Ben Mitchell, Scott Hafemann, Carl F. H. Henry, and Greg Wills have been asked specific questions to which they have provided written responses. These writers are not responding to one another. The journal's goal for the Forum is to provide significant thinkers' views on topics of interest without requiring lengthy articles from these heavily-committed individuals. Their answers are presented in an order that hopefully makes the Forum read as much like a unified presentation as possible.

SBJT: Whom would you name as someone whose impact has been underestimated?

Timothy George: Basil Manly, Sr. (1798-1868) was one of the most significant shapers of the Southern Baptist tradition, although his legacy has been somewhat eclipsed by his illustrious son, Basil Manly, Jr., one of the four faculty founders of Southern Seminary and sometime president of Georgetown College. For many years in the SBC, figures such as Manly, Sr., if noticed at all, were mere objects of affectionate obscurity. Now that it is once again acceptable to evaluate the theology and historic importance of such figures, Manly, Sr. deserves to be brought down from the shelf of historical curiosity and refurbished as a model of pastoral integrity, theological fidelity, and denominational statesmanship.

Manly was born at Chatham County, North Carolina, on January 29, 1798. His father was a Catholic but, like his mother, Basil became a Baptist. Converted to Christ through the witness of a slave, he was baptized in 1816 in the Haw River. Soon thereafter he was licensed to preach in the Sandy Creek Baptist Association. At

age twenty-eight Manly was called as pastor of the oldest and most prestigious Baptist church in the South, the First Baptist Church of Charleston, succeeding the venerable Richard Furman.

Manly had a great influence on an entire generation of younger ministers, including his own son and James Petigru Boyce. Manly was Boyce's mentor and father in the ministry. A strong advocate of theological education, Manly called for the creation of an Education Convention, which played an important role in the eventual formation of Southern Seminary, over which Manly also presided as chair of the first board of trustees.

Manly is doubly significant in Baptist history in that he served as a bridge between the more settled conditions of Baptist life on the eastern seaboard and the expansion of Baptist life into what was then the western frontier, that is, the Alabama wilderness. Manly served as the second president of the University of Alabama and also as pastor of the First Baptist Churches of Tuscaloosa and Montgomery. After an interlude of four years back in Charleston, he returned to Alabama in 1859 as a church planter and

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evangelist for the Alabama Baptist Convention, in which capacity he dubbed himself the “Baptist Bishop of Alabama.”

It is no surprise that Manly shows up on Brooks Holifield’s list of “gentlemen theologians” who had a decisive effect on Southern culture in the nineteenth century. Boyce described his itinerant preaching ministry thus: “His journeys were accompanied by melting hearts and streaming eyes.” He himself said that his preaching was “always close and practical, more like an earnest conversation directed immediately to an individual.” Many of his sermons survive in manuscript form. They deserve to be studied closely as a model of fervent piety and sound learning.

Manly’s most famous sermon was delivered on a day of public prayer and fasting following the inauguration of Jefferson Davis as president of the Confederacy. Taking his text from Judges 6:13, “If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?,” Manly declared in the tradition of sound Reformed theology that the people of God were not exempt from calamities of history. As chaplain to the Confederate Congress, Manly was clearly a partisan on the Southern side, but in this sermon he transcended the politics of the day to place the tragedy of the Civil War in the context of divine transhistorical purposes. In its poignancy and insight, this sermon is comparable to Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address. Later, when his own son, Fuller, was missing in action at the Battle of Petersburg, he was forced to live out personally the message he had proclaimed.

As one of the leading pastor-theologians of his generation, Manly had a great theological impact on the churches he served and the denomination he helped

to create. His chief vocation as a theologian was to pass the torch of Baptist orthodoxy and evangelical Calvinism from the giants of a bygone era, the Furmans, Fullers, and Mercers, to a new rising generation of powerful thinkers and doers, the Boyces, Mells, and Brantley, Jr.s. Manly opposed both Arminianism, which seemed to him to undermine the gratuity of God’s free grace, and Landmarkism, which placed undue and unbiblical restrictions on the fellowship of God’s people. Throughout his career, Manly’s approach to the ministry was characterized by what might be called an “evangelical ecumenicity.” Intensely loyal to Baptist principles, Manly did not hesitate to hold fellowship with other Christians with whom he shared a commitment to the doctrines of historic Christian orthodoxy. Eventually, most Southern Baptists were able to shed the harshest husks of Landmarkism, but the rustic Arminianism of the frontier worked as a slow dissolvent on Southern Baptist theology and piety. On both fronts, Manly still has much to teach his spiritual descendants today.

Manly was, of course, a child of his times as well as a shaper of his times. Like many Southern theologians of his day, he was blind to the horrible evils of slavery. His life was filled with both joy and struggle. He was driven to do the will of God, as best he understood it, as faithfully as he could, for as long as he could. When he died in 1868, the Civil War was past, but the scars of racism and poverty still plagued his beloved Southland. Both the glory and the suffering of Manly’s life remind us that all of us stand desperately in need of God’s grace and tender mercies.

SBJT: Whom would you name as someone whose contributions have been overlooked?

D. A. Carson: I confess I find the assigned topic this quarter unusually difficult. It is not that I cannot think of anyone who might qualify. The problem is that there are so many who might qualify, and I cannot find adequate criteria for adjudicating among them. A friend of mine who named his son Calvin told me (his tongue only slightly in his cheek) that he would have preferred Oecolampadius, but that too few people knew who this hero of the magisterial reformation was. Many have wondered how influential Balthasar Hubmaier would have become in the Anabaptist wing if he had not been killed so young. To make the matter of criteria still more difficult, I have to admit that various writers were a help to me when I was at some stage or other of my pilgrimage, even though later reflection has led me to think less of their views. When I was fourteen years of age, I read Watchman Nee's *The Normal Christian Life*, and found it a wonderful incentive to personal holiness. I remain grateful for that spur to holiness, even though a little more study has convinced me that in his major emphases Nee is exegetically dubious, theologically mistaken, and sometimes pastorally dangerous. So where do I rank him?

Moreover, a choice like this should be made with respect to the readership. If all the readers of *SBJT* were professional academics, my choice would be slanted in a different way than if they were all vocational evangelists. So bearing in mind the readership of this journal, I shall choose Robert Murray M'Cheyne.

M'Cheyne was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on May 21, 1813. He died on March 25, 1843, not quite thirty years old. He had

served as the minister of St. Peter's, Dundee, since 1836. Though he was the minister of this one "kirk" (church), his reputation extended all over Scotland and beyond. Throughout Scotland he was referred to as "the saintly M'Cheyne."

Where M'Cheyne excelled was in his mix of serious study and eminent piety. While still a theological student in Edinburgh, he met regularly with Andrew Bonar, Horatius Bonar, and a handful of other earnest ministers-in-training. The purpose of these informal meetings was to pray, to study, and to work through Greek and Hebrew exercises—disciplines M'Cheyne preserved throughout his short life. This group of students took the Bible so seriously in their living and preaching that when the eminent Thomas Chalmers, then Professor of Divinity, heard of the way they approached the Bible, he said, "I like these literalities."

M'Cheyne was constantly attempting to foster serious Bible reading. He prepared a chart for the people of his own parish to encourage them to read through, in one year, the New Testament and Psalms twice, and the rest of the Old Testament once. (That chart is still very much in use. John Stott has followed the M'Cheyne Bible reading scheme for decades.) To one young man he wrote,

You read your Bible regularly, of course; but do try and understand it, and still more to feel it. Read more parts than one at a time. For example, if you are reading Genesis, read a Psalm also; or if you are reading Matthew, read a small bit of an Epistle also. Turn the Bible into prayer. Thus, if you were reading the First Psalm, spread the Bible on the chair before you, and kneel and pray, 'O Lord, give me the blessedness of the man let me not stand in the counsel of the ungodly.' This is the best way of knowing the meaning of the

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Bible, and of learning to pray.

Stories of M'Cheyne are legion. At one point he used to go for a walk on Monday with Andrew Bonar. The two men served separate churches, but they often compared notes and prayed together. On one occasion Bonar told M'Cheyne that on the previous day he had preached on hell. M'Cheyne quietly asked him if he had been enabled to preach it with tears.

It was Andrew Bonar who, after his friend's untimely death, collected some of M'Cheyne's letters, sermons, and miscellaneous papers, and published them, along with a brief biography. The work appeared in 1844 under the title *Robert Murray M'Cheyne: Memoir and Remains*. Within twenty-five years it went through 116 British editions, in addition to those in America and elsewhere. It is still widely recognized as one of the great spiritual classics.

So why do I recommend M'Cheyne? First, he typifies a host of ministers who were scholar-practitioners, pastor-theologians, serious students yet fervent evangelists. The bifurcation between scholar and pastor that cripples so much of ministry today was not for him. Second, he brought piety and serious study together in unshamed union. So much of the Western tradition of study magnifies dispassionate distance from the subject. Certainly we need the careful listening to the text that avoids mere subjectivism. But our aim should not be to become masters of the text but to be mastered by the text. Third, M'Cheyne was passionately committed to reforming the church by the Word of God, and did all he could to promote a broad, deep, and reverent grasp of Scripture. By his standards, so much ecclesiastical ministry today seems mis-focused or even frivolous.

So I recommend M'Cheyne—and not just M'Cheyne, but a host of pastor-theologians who manifest similar values. They will inform our minds, warm our hearts, and steel our wills.

SBJT: What do you perceive to be a neglected influence or emphasis in evangelicalism?

C. Ben Mitchell: To their own peril, evangelicals, including Southern Baptists, have neglected liberal arts education that develops a Christian worldview. It is not that we lack colleges and universities. It is not that we have been miserly concerning buildings and books. But, sadly, we have neglected the central core of classical education—the integration of faith and learning throughout a humanities curriculum. In an age of increasing specialization a call to an emphasis on a broad-based humanities education may seem Paleolithic. Perhaps I am a young dinosaur. But, in my view, evangelical students are, for the most part, worse off for their Christian liberal arts educations, not better off.

The reason evangelical students are ill-prepared by most Christian colleges and universities is because very few of those schools seem to be committed to traditional humanities curricula from a Christian worldview. Students are untaught when it comes to integrating the disciplines under the rubric of a robust Christian world and life perspective. So, instead of graduating scholars whose faith shapes how they think about the world and their place in it, these schools repeat the worn nostrums of a largely secular view of culture.

A liberal arts education focuses on the big issues. Ultimate questions like the nature of the universe, the meaning of life, the existence of God, and the problem of evil occupy such an education. Moreover,

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a Christian liberal arts education traces the contours of global thought. History, philosophy, and theology loom large in the curriculum. Great literature, both fiction and nonfiction, figure into a worldviewish Christian education, not just for the sake of learning information, but for the purpose of cultivating imagination. Thinking God's thoughts after him requires skill at transcending the mundane and pedestrian ways of looking at the world. Science and mathematics enable us to understand God's universe more completely and, thus, more faithfully. Music and art evoke the imagination and warm the heart to the beauty of God's creation.

Are these merely the musings of a maudlin romantic? Perhaps. But, perhaps a curriculum like this would, in part, fill the God-shaped vacuum within the human soul. Perhaps a Christian liberal arts education would equip students to exegete the world around them, to understand its way of life, diagnose its ills, and penetrate the façade of self-satisfaction that marks our culture.

An emphasis on liberal arts education is contrary to the present emphasis on specialization and the pragmatic concern of getting a job after graduation. In fact, a good deal of energy is spent today trying to devise a curriculum that will give graduates certain marketable job skills. This is a laudable goal. An emphasis on liberal arts education, however, does not *necessarily* mitigate against subsequent specialization. Instead, a strong Christian humanities curriculum will provide students with the cognitive and hermeneutical skills to understand and interpret their world. Furthermore, those who are equipped with these skills will be in the best position to penetrate and engage every discipline to bring it under the Lord-

ship of Christ.

Take the burgeoning field of molecular biology for example. Clearly, the field requires an impressive set of specialized skills. Geneticists are constantly pushing the envelope with respect to research and discovery. We have learned more about genetics in the past forty years than we learned in all the millennia prior to them. We are likely to learn exponentially more in the next four decades. If the emphasis on gaining specialized skills triumphs, physicians, scientists, biotechnologists, and others will know a great deal about alleles, genomes, and germ cells. But the more important theological and philosophical issues will remain unanswered unless these biologists are informed by a rigorous Christian worldview perspective.

In addition, the persons who are actually doing genetic research are in the best position to ask the moral question, "Just because we *can* do something, does that mean we *should*?" The technological imperative begs to be obeyed, yet the moral imperative asks whether or not one should succumb. Those closest to the science are in a better position to consider the moral imperative, all things being equal, than those removed from the science. Yet, without the kind of Christian worldview education for which I am calling, the scientist would not even know what questions to ask. Instead, as today, scientists do research and ethicists, philosophers, and theologians supervise. Recently a researcher told me that he "can't afford to think about whether what I'm doing is ethical. That's someone else's job. I do science." Despite the fact that this arrangement provides jobs for persons of my ilk, it is nevertheless a disaster waiting to happen (or maybe it already has happened). As never before in the history

of humanity, scientists need to ask the moral questions.

At the risk of sounding politically incorrect, evangelicals are the only ones who can offer a holistic, robust, liberal arts education from a Christian worldview perspective. No one else will do so and no one else should do so. Mainline Protestant institutions have capitulated one by one to secularism, and secular institutions demonstrate almost no tolerance for evangelical presuppositions. If evangelicals will not provide hearty liberal arts programs, who will? If they will not provide them now, then when?

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war the way the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Co 10:5, NAS). At the end of the day, a strong Christian liberal arts curriculum that integrates faith and learning is a demonstration that the people of God honor Christ and desire to bring every thought captive to him.

SBJT: What do you consider to be an important but neglected movement in contemporary culture?

Scott Hafemann: One of the most significant moves in recent culture has been the gradual exclusion of people and perspectives of faith from the ranks of the professors and curricula in contemporary universities. This loss of the “soul” of the American university has been well documented by George Marsden in his important work, *The Soul of the American*

University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief.¹ The long-range implications of such a vacuum among the gate-keepers of the American mind can be easily imagined. But rather than dwell on what has happened, let me call our attention to Marsden’s own positive response to this development and offer my own brief response as well. I will be referring to his *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*,² in which he argues that Christians still have a legitimate place in the schools that used to be their own. I think that Evangelicals and other Christians have neglected a commitment to specifically Christian scholarship, and this must be regained. Marsden’s book offers some interesting thoughts on what this transformation would include.

My calling attention to this issue is the flipside of the issue addressed in our Forum by Ben Mitchell. I heartily agree with our need to take the liberal arts seriously and to pursue the integration of faith and learning for all we are worth (I do teach at Wheaton College, after all). Often, we squander the opportunities we have to bring together faith and learning. I am concerned with the corresponding question of education in our culture at large as raised by Marsden’s two works. I am afraid that Mitchell’s call cannot be heeded in most circles because of the downsized version of Christianity that is often brought to the task of integration itself. We are faced today with a crisis of both presence and proclamation in colleges and universities.

This came home to me recently while I was reading Marsden’s work on an airplane. After spending about 3,000 miles across the aisle from one another, the man next to me finally asked the question that had been prompted by the spine of

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Marsden's book: "So, in 100 words or less, just what is so outrageous about Christian scholarship?" After a startled pause, I said that the author's answer could be given in one word: God (that is, that he exists and that his existence has implications for everything that we study). Alright, it can be given in 17 words.

Of course, I was both right and wrong in my quick response. As the title of his book indicates, Professor Marsden is concerned with more than simply regaining a legitimate place within the secular academy for a general theistic perspective, as fundamental as this is. In the end, Marsden is committed to a specifically "Christian" scholarship. Moreover, Marsden tipped his hand that his particular brand of Christianity is that of the Reformed tradition, so that his "entire account of Christian scholarship is built on an Augustinian base."³ It was this move from a bare theism to *Christianity*, and then from Christianity to *Augustinian* Christianity that gave me pause. If such a move from the generally religious to a specific religion, to a specific brand of this religion, is legitimate within the academy, and I think Marsden has demonstrated that it is, then what's good enough for Marsden is good enough for me. As Marsden himself points out, "there are not simply 'religious' views of various subjects. There are only the views of *particular* religions...."⁴ So, in following his lead, what does his study mean for us as evangelicals? As evangelical Baptists? As evangelical Baptists who are Augustinian in their soteriology? To paraphrase Marsden here, "what difference could it possibly make" that we have these particular adjectives? In other words, to take just the first question, what is the distinctively *evangelical* response to the *Christian* response to the

secular response to the world in which we live?

To broach this question today is not easy. Marsden points out that to be explicit about one's *particular* beliefs is the "most difficult" thing to do in a pluralistic setting.⁵ While simply being religious may be viewed phenomenologically as part of a very common human experience, to assert particular beliefs is seen as "inherently offensive" within a pluralistic academic culture. Thus, if Christian scholarship appears outrageous, then evangelical scholarship looks really outrageous. Indeed, if Christians are being excluded or forced into silence in our universities, then evangelicals are confronted with a double argument for their marginalization: the naturalistic reductionism of the secular academy and the theological reductionism of Christian liberalism and pietism. Naturally we should resist the pressure of the academy, to whom we appear naive and unscientific, but should we risk the scorn of our fellow Christians, to whom we appear unduly separatistic and sectarian, even fundamentalistic?

Marsden is certainly right that "contemporary university culture is hollow at its core," for its loss of belief in God's existence strips morality of its transcendent basis.⁶ From an evangelical perspective, however, much of western Christianity has itself been hollowed out, since objective revelation is denied. As a result, Christianity has often been trivialized as just one more manifestation of religious feelings, what Marsden calls an "extra-curricular activity that is irrelevant to academic pursuits."⁷ But liberalism and pietism do not care. They are happy with being relegated to a separate sphere, a "transcendent realm that science could not grasp."⁸ At least they can still

have a place at the proverbial “table” of discussion. But what is left of the Faith is merely faith, a religion of the heart which centers on the conviction that God has authoritatively revealed himself in a time and space *apart from us* as recounted and interpreted for us in his written word.

Marsden’s own history of liberalism’s capitulation to the dominant culture, only to be usurped by the secular academy, makes it clear that if evangelicalism is to survive we must not retreat from our conviction concerning the Bible to personalized moral ideals and piety. Marsden’s analysis of mainline Protestant colleges and universities demonstrates that devotions and chapel are not enough to sustain us academically nor to preserve the faith in the midst of objectivist naturalism on the one side and what he calls “*relativistic postmodern anti-realist naturalism*”⁹ on the other. Maintaining personal piety and a social location marked by communal worship are necessary, but not sufficient. What is needed is an explicit, publicly discussed, growing understanding of our faith, not only as a verb, but also as a noun—the Faith as formed and continually reformed by Scripture. For as Marsden points out, in the past, “the taken-for-granted aspect of the Christian context had the paradoxical effect of inhibiting the development of explicit Christian perspectives. Because a broadly Christian outlook could be presumed, not much effort was made to relate Christianity specifically to what was being studied.”¹⁰ As a result, “The Christian heritage was thus relatively easy to undermine academically.”¹¹

Marsden’s book consequently raises the question of whether evangelical colleges are not increasingly making the same mistake that he points out was made earlier

by liberal Protestants. Have we too become content to take our evangelicalism for granted, emphasizing instead “the unifying moral dimensions of our spiritual heritage, rather than the particulars of traditional Protestant doctrine”?¹² Whereas liberal Protestantism became non-sectarian in order to promote a unified national culture, evangelicals often downplay their own distinctives in order to assimilate into a generalized Christian culture. Hence, just as the mainline denominations consequently discriminated against “more traditionalist Protestantism,”¹³ it is revealing that we often give the impression that our primary fear is fundamentalism. For under the pressure of pluralism, “Protestantism that made a distinction between the saved and the lost...or that emphasized the exclusive authority of biblical revelation,” becomes an embarrassment to “the unifying cultural project. The authority of naturalistic science, social science, and history validates the disparagement of traditional Protestantism and endorses the superiority of nonsectarian liberal Protestant views.”¹⁴ But Marsden’s warning should be heeded by evangelicals: the separation of faith from history into a so-called “two level view” of reality was the key to the secularization of mainline Protestant schools.¹⁵

By contrast, it is not accidental that the evangelical statements of faith typically contain a summary of our understanding of the Bible. This particular contribution of evangelical Christian scholarship to learning was underscored for me by the conspicuous absence in Marsden’s work of any discussion of the role and nature of the Scriptures. Evangelicals are not united because we all share the same expressions of worship and religious experience. To put it bluntly, we are

evangelicals not because we love Jesus, but because we share certain theological convictions that grow out of the Bible. Loving Christ is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for being an evangelical, since we take seriously Marsden's point that "for those who believe God is at the heart of reality, other knowledge is distorted if divorced from the context of theological truths."¹⁶ Evangelicals take Marsden's plural noun "truths" very seriously, because evangelicals have a *network* of beliefs, not just *a* belief. This accords with Marsden's definition of theology as "any serious thought about God and God's revelation according to a particular religious tradition."¹⁷ If we are to integrate faith and learning as Mitchell rightly admonishes us, then we must all become, to some degree, *biblical theologians*, not just worshipers. I agree with Marsden that we should not reduce our work only to its theological dimensions.¹⁸ But Marsden also points out that mainline "Church related institutions that affirm continuity with their religious heritage by talking of their emphasis on values are saying almost nothing."¹⁹ In the same way, evangelical colleges that stress religious experience as the foundation of their enterprise are equally vacuous.

We may not be able to make it back into the university as evangelicals in many fields, but at least we can be evangelical in our own schools. In mainline Protestantism, faculty development in colleges and universities will mean cultivating "the Christian academic consciousness of faculty who are already seriously religious."²⁰ For them the burden is to move from being religious to being Christian. But for evangelicals, faculty development means cultivating the particular evangelical academic consciousness of faculty who

are already Christian. For us the burden is to move from being Christian to being a particular kind of Christian as a result of being shaped by a particular set of Christian truths.

ENDNOTES

¹George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994).

²Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997).

³*Ibid.*, 98.

⁴*Ibid.*, 8.

⁵*Ibid.*, 10.

⁶*Ibid.*, 3.

⁷*Ibid.*, 20.

⁸*Ibid.*, 21.

⁹*Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 16.

¹²*Ibid.*, 14.

¹³*Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 123-124, n.11.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 104.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 106.

SBJT: What truth are Christian scholars neglecting as they seek to construct a Christian worldview?

Carl F. H. Henry: What earlier generations considered a noble evangelical endeavor—the integration of faith and learning—now easily deteriorates into an academic cliché that obscures essentials of the Christian view. Faith becomes a rubber word. It accommodates so many options that it readily invites faith in faith. It can embrace

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faith in Allah, or even faith in New Age, no less than faith in Christ.

For some, integration involves no indispensably unique cognitive content, but only an openness to reality that escapes rational exposition of the self-revealing God of the Bible. Faith implies only the challenge of the transcendent, the necessity of religion, the priority of the paradoxical, the advocacy of the non-rational. If faith has infinite nuances (and not necessarily a fixed inherent meaning), the term “learning” is similarly ambiguous. It is hardly a summary term for an unchanging body of knowledge. Nor need Christians applaud it as the timeless wisdom of the ages. Moses was familiar with Egyptian learning and Daniel with that of the Babylonians, but the biblical spokesmen hardly exalted them into universal truth to be “integrated” with the revelation of Yahweh.

Human learning is subject to ongoing revision and displacement. A science textbook only a decade old is usually considered outdated. But the inspired biblical writers insist that the Word of the Lord is fixed and final, and that Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb 13:8, NAS). Notably some contemporary religionists correlate Jesus Christ the God-man with faith but not with learning. They internalize rather than objectify religious claims.

The term “integration” raises other questions. Does it propose a role for logical consistency and validity, or simply an open-ended presentation? Are logic and systematic consistency alien to the Christian revelation? Not a few professedly evangelical theologians argue that if one aims to present a logically consistent world-life view, one rationalizes and falsifies Christian truth.

Some emphasize—rightly—that Christian revelation must not be confused with the “eternal truths” that pantheistic and idealistic philosophers affirm. But if this implies that Christian truth is not eternally true, one falls into costly error. The temporal and historical particularity of the Gospel do not imply that it is not eternally true. It is eternally true that Jesus’ crucifixion and third-day resurrection are integral to the divine redemption of sinners.

Some confusion over the integration of faith and learning seems to have invaded even the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities. The very epistemic foundations of the Christian revelation are confused. The unbroken authority of Scripture and its inerrancy are minimized or obscured. A tendency arises to view scriptural inerrancy as merely an evangelical distinctive rather than as a necessity of evangelical doctrine. Yet if Scripture is partly erroneous, the process of integration is frustrated. A partially reliable Scripture cannot be logically correlated either with faith or learning.

Another consequence of affirming the Bible’s errancy is that evangelical campuses are tempted to neglect, or even to avoid, formation of the Christian worldview, on the mistaken premise that this would involve an unjustifiable rationalization of scriptural revelation. Christian truth is then formulated not only in opposition to speculative philosophies, as is needful, but lamentably also in opposition to an explicit evangelical world-life view predicated consistently on Scripture teaching. Sometimes this maneuver involves substituting natural law speculation for an explicitly biblical theology, the minimization of which has implications for the entirety of a revelatory system. In any event, the epistemic foun-

dations of Christian faith are endangered when scriptural teaching is neglected or considered problematical. The Bible affirms that only if one begins with the knowledge of the self-revealing God does one become wise in the knowledge of life. The beginning of wisdom is rooted in the fear of the Lord (Pr 9:10).

The segregation of faith from learning has, in recent years, been the theme of numerous volumes. In a review of three such books Hillsdale College professor, John Reist, penetratingly identifies the shared failure of almost all such studies in respect to faith or theology and religion and morals. He laments their delinquency in not providing a compelling theory of religious knowledge. Reist examines David A. Hoekema's *Campus Rules and Moral Community. In Place of Loco Parentis* (Univ. Press of America, 1994), Thomas O. Buford's *In Search of a Calling: The College's Role in Shaping Identity* (Mercer Univ. Press, 1995), and Warren A. Nord's *Religion and American Education: Rethinking a National Dilemma* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1995).

Reist notes that no amount of lamentation over the present academic crisis regarding self-knowledge can compensate for loss of God-knowledge. When students are taught the importance of religion yet are told that religious commitment is a matter only of personal preference, or of revered tradition, the cognitive claims of the Christian religion will be ignored.

Nord frankly states his disinterest in the question of the truth either of the Christian option or of an alternative secular view of reality. Yet he affirms that religious studies have potential to provide critical perspective on the unsolved dilemmas of liberal education and on the claims

of modernity and of post-modernity as well. Nord deplures uncritical acceptance of the philosophical assumptions inherent in public education, and he champions a required course in religion. But without insistent focus on the question of cognitive truth he cannot escape Pilate's inquiry, "What is truth?" or ignore Jesus' insistent answer, "I am the truth."

Hoekema focuses especially on the issue of campus rules and behavior. He asserts as passé the regulatory and disciplinary power of administrative authorities. Containment of problems of drugs, alcohol, and sexual misconduct will rest more on stressing consequences and on effective behavioral models than on sheer prohibition and regulation. The relevance of Christian ethics to the student mind gains no visibility.

Buford concedes that "the academic life of the college is morally empty" and calls this a crisis in self-knowledge. To be sure, he notes the displacement, by modern concentration on technical reason and career preparation, of traditional views of God and/or moral reasoning. Buford would leave student interest in morality and religion mainly to the church and home. He stresses the biblical doctrine that humans bear the image of God and focuses on reason and imagination. Yet he resists universally valid truth grounded in a transcendent metaphysical center. Buford's own cognitive claims in support of his view are insufficient to displace careerism by divine calling.

Contemporary academe yearns to retain a religious identity and seeks to rise above a merely experiential view of morality, yet it fails to challenge the contemporary mind by its evaporation of intellectual supports beyond personal opinion. The integration of faith and learn-

ing requires a precise view of faith and a logically compelling view of learning; it requires also a quest for integration that does not readily collapse into feeling or volition.

SBJT: What do you consider to be an unrecognized influence in the development of Baptist theology?

Greg Wills: Historians have noticed the influence of New England Theology on Presbyterians and Congregationalists, but have not attended to its influence on Baptists. Like Presbyterians of the same period, Baptists had their old school and new school Calvinists. The old school leaders looked to John Gill's works and the Second London Confession of Faith (a Baptist revision of Presbyterianism's Westminster Confession of Faith) as the best expressions of their views. The new school leaders thought that the works of Andrew Fuller and Timothy Dwight were more scriptural. Like their Presbyterian counterparts, new school Baptists distrusted creeds.

William B. Johnson, first president of the Southern Baptist Convention, wrote in 1848 that South Carolina Baptists were fast becoming "moderate Calvinists."¹ By this he meant that they were adopting some of the distinctive views of New England Theology. Johnson approved of the change. He praised Furman University theology professor James S. Mims for being "imbued with the Spirit of 'New England Theology.'"² Throughout the South Baptist leaders embraced the New England views.

Successors of Jonathan Edwards such as Joseph Bellamy, Samuel Hopkins, and Timothy Dwight modified traditional Calvinism to develop what became known as New England Theology or New Divin-

ity. They retained commitment to unconditional, eternal election and to the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work of effectual calling for conversion, but they introduced two significant changes. First, they advocated a moral government theory of the atonement, and second, they rejected the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin and guilt to his posterity.³

Teachers of the moral government theory held that Christ died for all persons—his death was a "general atonement." Christ did not take the punishment that sinners deserved, but rather suffered in sufficient measure to show that the law was holy and that God abhorred sin. Christ's substitution, Johnson wrote, was a "full equivalent for the dishonor cast upon the law of God by disobedience." God accepted it as satisfaction for sin because it demonstrated "Jehovah's opposition to the conduct of the sinner."⁴ Christ did not suffer the actual penalty the sins deserved. If he had, moral government advocates argued, then redemption would have been a matter of justice, not of grace. They held that when God forgave sinners strict justice remained unsatisfied. Instead, God reckoned the death of Jesus an acceptable substitute to penal justice. In the larger view, they argued, this was the highest justice, since it resulted in the greatest good for the most persons. It was the theological equivalent of the political theory that good governors sought the public welfare above all, even when it meant omitting strict justice.

Kentucky's Bethel Baptist Association endorsed a clear explanation of the moral government position in a circular letter which they adopted in 1836:

Atonement is the satisfaction made to Justice, where the laws of a government have been violated; so that

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the justice and dignity of the government may be sustained and honored as effectually as though the offender were punished....the atonement is a governmental transaction, rendering full and complete satisfaction to law and justice; so that God, the Ruler of the Universe, can consistently with justice and the honor of his government, pardon and restore to favor all who repent of their sins and submit to the government of Jesus Christ.⁵

In regards to the New England view's second change, New Divinity advocates rejected imputation primarily because they believed that God could not justly punish one person for the guilt of another. It was a legal absurdity, they held, to think that either guilt or punishment could transfer. God did not therefore impute Adam's guilt to his posterity nor did he impute Christ's righteousness to believers. Among the Southern Baptist leaders who rejected the doctrine of imputation were Thomas Meredith, editor of North Carolina's *Biblical Recorder* from 1835 to 1850, John B. White, president of Wake Forest University from 1848 to 1853, and Jesse Hartwell, professor of theology at Baptist colleges in South Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas, and Louisiana.

Many Southern Baptist leaders adopted these views concerning the moral government theory and imputation. Some learned them by reading such New England authors as Bellamy and Dwight. In fact, one Virginia minister reported that Dwight was a standard work in the Baptist minister's library at mid-century.⁶ Others learned them from professors at the New England colleges or seminaries.

The writings of Andrew Fuller, the English Baptist missionary leader, probably had the most influence on the acceptance of New Divinity views. Although Fuller did not teach a moral government

view of the atonement, he took some decided steps in the direction of the New Divinity when he redefined the atonement as making a general provision but with a particular intention to ransom the elect, and he redefined the doctrine of imputation, at times using moral government language. Fuller seemed to advocate such a combination of views that representatives of both the New England views and the old school Calvinism claimed Fuller as a member of their group.

Others also propagated the new views. Jonathan Maxcy, pastor of Providence, Rhode Island, First Baptist Church and president of Brown University, taught New Divinity views in South Carolina when he became the founding president of the University of South Carolina in 1809. William B. Johnson studied theology under Maxcy's tutelage and promoted the New England Theology throughout his distinguished career. John Mason Peck, the first home missionary of the Triennial Convention, worked in Missouri and southern Illinois from 1817 to 1858 and taught these views through his paper, the *Western Baptist*. A. M. Poindexter, who worked as an agent for Columbian College, Richmond University, and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, taught the moral government view.⁷

Many accepted the teachings of these men. J. R. Kendrick, editor of South Carolina's *Southern Baptist*, knew many colleagues who, like Johnson, preached both election and general atonement, the distinctive combination of the New Divinity. "Not a few advocates of what is denominated 'General Atonement,' rigidly adhere to the doctrine of Election."⁸ Joseph S. Baker, editor of the *Christian Index* from 1842 to 1848, proposed that the majority of Southern Baptists believed

that the atonement was general.⁹ The spread of moral government views contributed largely to this phenomenon.

There were Baptists who opposed the new school views, however. John Leland, popular evangelist of the Virginia's Revolutionary War period, opposed the New Divinity in his *First Rise of Sin*. In an appendix he assailed New England's general atonement views and argued in traditional fashion for particular redemption or limited atonement.¹⁰ So did Joseph S. Baker, writing, "I am a believer in a personal atonement, and believe that all for whom the Saviour has atoned will assuredly be saved.... I glory in believer's baptism, and the doctrines called Calvinistic."¹¹ Both John L. Dagg, president of Mercer University, and James P. Boyce, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, opposed the New England theory of the atonement in their classroom lectures and theological manuals.

Although the presence of both old and new schools among Baptists troubled the people at times, they did not polarize greatly on that account. James L. Reynolds, who taught at Furman University, Mercer University, and the University of South Carolina, ignited one of the few protracted controversies over New England views. He accused Furman University of promoting heresy when both its theology professor, James S. Mims, and its chairman of the Board, William B. Johnson, rejected the doctrine of imputation. Reynolds attacked their New Divinity views in a controversy that lasted from 1847 to 1850.¹²

After the Civil War the moral government theory began losing ground. By the time of the modernist controversies of the 1920s, it had disappeared. During its ten-

ure, it had appealed to those Calvinistic Baptists who felt that there was some contradiction between the general command to believe in Christ and the doctrine that Christ atoned for the sins of the elect only. It allowed them to hold both the eternal election of individuals and a general atonement. The wide interest in political theories from the late colonial through the antebellum period gave power and plausibility to the theory. Moral government views of the atonement suited an American body politic enamored with John Locke's theories of civil government.

By the 1920s most Baptists propounded the old school view of the nature of the atonement. They taught that the atonement was primarily a penal substitution for sinners, not a prop to God's moral government. Southern Baptist leaders defended the traditional Protestant view. Z. T. Cody, editor of South Carolina's *Baptist Courier*, defended penal substitution on many occasions because he believed it constituted a primary bulwark against the advance of Protestant liberalism. Although modernism had many forms, Cody observed, "all forms of it agree in the rejection of the substitutionary sacrifice of the Cross."¹³ In an essay published in various Baptist papers in 1921, E. Y. Mullins, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1899 to 1928, insisted that Christ "purchased" believers at the cost of his suffering and bore the penalty of their sin. Christ "took the sinner's place," Mullins said, and "assumed responsibility for our sin," so that by his blood "men are purchased for God."¹⁴ But old school influence ended there. Leaders in the 1920s taught a general atonement and many distrusted creeds.

One of the errors of the moral govern-

ment view was that it established an exaggerated separation between God and his law, between his love and his justice. It abstracted justice from the identity and character of God. In the moral government view, God in love wished to forgive sinners freely, but law and justice blocked the way. The law “demanded the execution of its penalty, and justice concurred.”¹⁵ God substituted Christ’s suffering for the actual penalty and removed all legal obstacles to the salvation of every sinner. Moral government teachers tended to portray the atonement as making propitiation to the law, not to God. Before any atonement was made, God held no wrath against sinners and did not need to be reconciled. It is a short step from this view to the modernist notion that law and justice do not hinder God’s fatherly benevolence.

For some Baptists, New Divinity views may have prepared them to accept modernism. Most rejected the modernist option, however. Instead, they jettisoned the new school’s moral government views of the nature of the atonement but retained its commitment to general atonement.

The enduring heritage of the New Divinity views was a redefinition of Baptist orthodoxy in the twentieth century. Most of the old school commitments disappeared, with only penal substitution enduring. The old school confidence in particular redemption and the indispensability of creeds dissolved. The new school commitment to general atonement and their suspicion of creeds gained consensus. This combination of views became a part of Baptist identity. The new school’s modified Calvinism was a bridge to some of the ideas that in the twentieth century became central to Baptist identity.

ENDNOTES

¹ William B. Johnson, letter to James S. Mims, 25 Mar. 1848, William B. Johnson papers, James B. Duke Library, Furman University.

² William B. Johnson, letter to James S. Mims, 6 Oct. 1851, William B. Johnson papers, James B. Duke Library, Furman University.

³ Bellamy retained the doctrine of imputation, but he was exceptional at this point. For discussion of New School Presbyterianism, see George Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1970). The classic works on New England Theology are Frank Hugh Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1907) and George Nye Boardman, *A History of New England Theology* (New York: A. D. Randolph, 1899). Among more recent works on New Divinity see Mark Valeri, *Law and Providence in Joseph Bellamy’s New England: The Origins of the New Divinity in Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994) and John R. Fitzmier, *New England’s Moral Legislator: Timothy Dwight, 1752–1817* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ. Press, 1998).

⁴ Johnson, “On Imputation—No. V,” *Southern Baptist*, 4 April 1849, 606.

⁵ Bethel Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1836, 6, 8. R. T. Anderson wrote the letter; a committee of four revised it. James M. Pendleton and Reuben Ross were active leaders in this association.

⁶ R. W. [Robert Williamson], “The Preacher’s Library, etc.,” *Biblical Recorder*, 14 Mar. 1888, 1.

⁷ See Jonathan Maxcy, “A Discourse on the

Atonement," in *The Literary Remains of Jonathan Maxcy, D.D.*, ed. Romeo Elton (New York: A. V. Blake, 1844) 53-80; William B. Johnson, "On Imputation—No. V," op. cit.; John Mason Peck, "Fulness of Christ—No. 1," *Western Baptist*, 1 Feb. 1831, 41-42; and A. M. Poindexter, "The Imputation of Sin to Christ," *Baptist Preacher* 9 (1850) 187. Poindexter, like Bellamy, retained belief in the doctrine of imputation.

⁸ Kendrick, "Communication on the Atonement," *Southern Baptist*, 7 Jan. 1852, 2.

⁹ Baker, "An Apparent Impeachment," *Christian Index*, 28 April 1858, 2.

¹⁰ Leland, "The First Rise of Sin," in the *Writings of the Late Elder John Leland*, ed. L. F. Greene (New York: G. W. Wood, 1845) 164-165.

¹¹ Baker, op. cit.

¹² See, e.g., Reynolds, no title, *Southern Baptist*, 3 May 1848, 414; anonymous, "On Imputation," *ibid.*, 21 Feb. 1849, 582; William B. Johnson, "On Imputation," *ibid.*, 7 Mar. 1849, 590.

¹³ Cody, "The Great Controversy," *Baptist Courier*, 8 Feb. 1923, 2. See also the unsigned report of his ministers' conference address ("The Ministers' Conference," *ibid.*, 8 Dec. 1910, 1) and two additional articles by Cody defending penal substitution ("Dr. Brown on the Atonement," *ibid.*, 3 July 1924, 2; and "Dr. Glover and the Atonement," *ibid.*, 19 July 1928, 2-3).

¹⁴ Mullins, "Was the Atonement Substitutionary," *Religious Herald*, 29 Sept. 1921, 4-5, and 6 Oct. 1921, 6, 11. The article appeared on about the same dates in the *Baptist Courier*, *Baptist Standard*, *Biblical Recorder*, and others. Mullins explained his view in more detail in *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression* (Nash-

ville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1917) 307, 322-330.

¹⁵ James M. Pendleton, *Christian Doctrines* (1878; rpt. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1906) 229.