

## How Ignorance Of Our Heritage Happened And What It Has Produced

In our last article we examined a statement from Dr. Sewell S. Cutting. This statement points out how indifferent Baptists are to their own heritage. The thing to keep in mind as you read this statement is that it was made over 150 years ago. If Dr. Cutting was right about Baptists over 150 years ago, what do you suppose is our condition today? I assure you that in spite of all of the technological and educational advances we've made over the past century and a half, we are in worse condition today than at any other time in history. Baptists are truly ignorant of their own heritage.

Baptist people are in trouble. Everything God warned us about seems to be happening before our eyes. The last lesson showed us in the Bible, that when we become disconnected from our heritage, we both forget and deny God. We learn that a lack of stirring could be a result of a lack of remembrance. These things are very prevalent in our generation.

Before the problem of ignorance can be fixed, it is imperative that several facts be brought to light and accepted. First Baptist must admit that we are truly ignorant of our history. Secondly, Baptist must understand how this ignorance came about in the first place. Then, we must make sure that we do not allow this to happen again. Lastly, each one of us must do our best to become acquainted with our history, and then commit ourselves to teach it to our children.

Some may ask, "Are we really that ignorant of our heritage?"

### We Really Are Ignorant of Our Heritage

The following points prove our lack of knowledge.

- 1. Of the over one dozen Baptist people groups that have existed in the church age, most Baptists cannot, off hand, name three of them.** Can you?
- 2. Most professed Baptists cannot give a viable explanation as to why they are Baptists, other than – "Baptists stick closest to the Bible."** Can you?
- 3. The average Baptist today doesn't know when the Baptists began.** Do you?
- 4. Many Baptist believe that the Puritans gave America religious liberty, were a friend to the Baptist, and that without them America would have a state church – non of which are true.** Do you know who the Puritans were? Did you know they persecuted our Baptist forefathers? Did you know that they tried to force our Baptist forebears to succumb to a state-church?
- 5. Many Baptist have not only heard of the Great Awakening, but also wrongly esteem it as the greatest revival in American's history.** At the same time, they do not know anything about the Separate Baptist Revival, which was truly the most Scriptural and greatest revival America has ever seen.
- 6. Most Baptists don't know who started the first Baptist church in America.** Do you?
- 7. Most Baptists don't know that it was Baptists that gave America the Bill of Rights.** Did you?

In addition to all this, Baptists have been taught lies as the truth. Namely, that here were no great Baptist evangelists in America's history and that Baptists are inherently Calvinistic or they hold to predestination. Both of these are great lies that have been taught as truth and accepted without question by Baptists.

The above is a small representation of the utter ignorance and indifference prevalent among present-day Baptists.

### **How Did We Become So Separated From Our Baptist Heritage?**

**History reconstructionists, revisionists and corrupters.** Since Christ began His church, until today, there has been a steady stream of men who have attempted to corrupt and/or destroy the true testimony of the Baptists. William Whitsett, a 19<sup>th</sup> century Southern Baptist professor and Rousas H. Rushdoony, a twentieth century author, are just a few of these corrupters.

**Our own Baptist schools, for many years, have completely ignored Baptist history in the classroom.** This is because 90% of the material we use in our Baptist schools is prepared by Protestants. This, along with a lack of theological training, has been the downfall of our Baptist schools. A prominent Baptist historian recently stated that, "Baptist history hasn't been properly taught for over 100 years."

**The creation of the Fundamentalist Movement has played a major role in destroying our knowledge of Baptist history.** For some, this has been a hard saying to accept, but it is absolutely imperative to understand if we are going to restore our testimony to its rightful place.

- (A) There were 1900 years of Baptist history written before Fundamentalism arose. Baptists were ecclesiastically separated from all non-Baptist groups. Baptists throughout the ages held to certain distinctive that caused them to hold to a rigid separation from error, at any cost.
- (B) In the early 1900s the Evangelical Alliance was fighting the battle of German rationalism in their schools. These non-Baptist, Protestant schools were threatened to the point of total apostasy through this heresy.
- (C) When the Evangelical Alliance finally took a stand on certain, basic Christian doctrines, many Baptists in their day applauded them.
- (D) What happened next was an event that would hurt Baptists in many ways.
- (E) The Evangelical Alliance produced the Fundamentalist Movement. Everyone who rejected German rationalism and adhered to certain, basic Bible doctrines was welcomed in the club. Sadly, some Baptists inadvertently turned their backs on ecclesiastical separation and 1900 years of glorious history and unwisely joined the ranks of Fundamentalism. Remember that these fundamentalist churches were the daughters of Rome, having as their origin and alleged authority, the Protestant Reformation.
- (F) The great mistake was for men who already stood for the whole Bible to join a club that only required you to stand for certain select "fundamentals" of the Bible. One of the first doctrinal creeds defining Fundamentalism came from the Niagara Bible Conference in 1878. The Creed listed fourteen articles. The most famous listing of the Fundamentals, which are commonly cited today, are the so-called five Fundamentals, identified by the 1910 General Assembly of the Northern Presbyterian Church: (1) Inerrancy (2) Virgin Birth (3) Substitutional Atonement (4) Bodily

Resurrection (5) Authenticity of Miracles or the Second coming of Christ. We should note that there is no mention of baptism in any creed of the Fundamentalists.

- (G) Realize that whenever you emphasize certain truths, you inevitably must de-emphasize others. If some are fundamental, then others are not. If we will separate over some truth, then some truth is not important enough to separate over.

The problem is that doctrinally, the Baptists were already to the right of every Protestant group. Their origins were more pure and their heritage more rich.

All that could happen in an unscriptural union such as this is that the pure would become unpure. When some Baptist embraced this ecumenical, doctrinally weak, fundamentalism, the Baptist faith was hurt in several ways.

### **What did Fundamentalism do to our Baptist Heritage?**

Aside from all of the doctrinal and separation issues, which are very important but not pertinent to this particular study, Fundamentalism effectively severed us from our testimony. Sadly, Baptists turned their backs on 1900 years of Baptist history and inadvertently accepted the relatively short history of Protestantism as their own. This is one of the greatest victories the Devil has ever won. Many Baptists think the title "Fundamentalist" is better than the title "Baptist." I am not just a "Fundamentalist;" I am a fundamental "Baptist."

1. Our doctrine has been polluted with a broader, more inclusive, ecumenical twist. An ecumenical spirit, false baptisms (both in mode and authority), a corrupted Lord's table, false church governments, hyper-Calvinism, false Bibles and other heresies polluted our churches.
2. Our heroes of the faith have been almost exclusively Protestants. We have venerated Moody, Sunday, Torrey, Brainerd and others while at the same time ignoring John Leland, Obadiah Holmes, Daniel Marshall, Isaac McCoy and Shubal Stearns. The men that replaced our forefathers, although not wicked men, embraced the typical, doctrinal errors of their Protestant peers. Many of the Protestants we lift up as heroes were of denominations that baptize infants.

The need of our generation is to understand what happened to us and to never let it happen again. We have a responsibility to God and our children. We must give our children back their heritage!