

*Chaplains' Corps Chronicles*  
*of the*  
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*"That in all things Christ might have the preeminence."*



*"I think it worth a lifetime of hardship to prepare, under God, one of our dear defenders thus to die."*  
*Chaplain J. Wm. Jones*

Chaplain-in-Chief W. Herman White  
407 Coe Avenue,  
High Point, N. C. 27263  
E-mail: [Rebelrev@hotmail.com](mailto:Rebelrev@hotmail.com)

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Editor: Past Chaplain-in-Chief H. Rondel Rumburg  
PO Box 472  
Spout Spring, Virginia 24593  
E-mail: [hrrumburg41@gmail.com](mailto:hrrumburg41@gmail.com)  
[ConfederateChaplain.com](http://ConfederateChaplain.com)

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Assistant Editor: Past Chaplain-in-Chief Mark Evans  
20 Sharon Drive,  
Greenville, SC 29607  
E-mail: [markwevans@bellsouth.net](mailto:markwevans@bellsouth.net)

**“That the Southern people literally were put to the torture is vaguely understood, but even historians have shrunk from the unhappy task of showing us the torture chambers.” Claude G. Bowers**

## **The Sesquicentennial of Reconstruction**

**1865 - 1876**

**“Reconstruction was ... an artificial fog, behind which the ‘master minds’ staged a revolution that changed America from a democracy to a plutocracy of ever-growing magnitude.” Rep. B. Carroll Reece (R-TN) 1960**

### Quote from a Confederate Chaplain

**“Jesus *was* in our camps with wonderful power, and that no army in all history—not even Cromwell’s ‘Roundheads’—had in it as much of real, evangelical religion and devout piety as the Army of Northern Virginia”**

**Chaplain J. William Jones**

**13th Virginia Infantry**



### **Editorial**

#### **Fellow Compatriots in the Chaplains’ Corps and Friends of the Cause:**

Greetings friends as we issue another monthly installment of the CCC. Hopefully this issue will prove a blessing to you. We encourage our readers to share this e-journal with their friends and any who have an interest in Christian history.

Please consider the quiet victory of Jesus that His Father gave Him. “He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory” (Matthew 12:19-20). These are the words God the Holy Spirit gave Matthew to write into sacred Scripture; they make reference to the meekness, not weakness, of God’s special envoy. His earthly entrance was not a flash-bang method of rushing roughshod over those about him. This coming is without noisiness to draw attention and without the splendor of notoriety. This is the way Christ comes!

As a child he grew up in a hill town and in a working class family. This town was in a despised area of the nation. This child was completely obedient to his parents when their requirements of him were according to God’s will. He was trained in his father Joseph’s shop where he worked till he was thirty years old. The only thing we know about his young life occurred on a trip that ended up in the place of worship where he

asked questions about the things of God. When he left home he became an itinerate minister. His food was common, and he had no place of his own to lay his head at night. His life and work were pure and merciful and peaceful.

His ministry was mostly away from the public. Not once did he make an appointment in advance to preach in a particular place. Every sermon of his was preached as the situation demanded. The size of his congregations never concerned him except when they became too large. Then he would withdraw to a secret place or else bring up a doctrine that thinned the crowd. His most famous sermon on the New Birth was preached to a single Jewish leader. He encountered a Samaritan woman at a well, who was of dubious character, and gave her the water of eternal life. He climbed to a mount where he was transfigured and his audience was three frightened fishermen. While on that mount he was visited by Moses and Elijah; there these fishermen made a grievous mistake of wanting to make tabernacles to each, but they missed the nature of the one whom they served. He performed miracles and kind deeds in abundance but never for notoriety.

When he came to the end of his ministry he was captured as if a thief and tried as a criminal. No one could find any sin in his life. Most likely there were not many in attendance at his execution. He had no one that observed his resurrection from the dead. When his work was completed and just before he returned to his Father who had sent him, there were a handful of fearful men gathered on Mount Olivet. These eleven were not many to show for a life's work, but he promised them that in a few days they would be immersed in the Holy Spirit. Little did they know he would use them to change the world!

His last words to them were precious as they gathered around him. While they looked at him he was taken up in a cloud; he was headed home to heaven. Yes, without trumpet blast or any noise he was caught up and away. There were no blinding lights flashing; there was no voice from heaven; there was no echo of thunder reverberating; but he returned home to his Father after a thirty-three year absence. There were only two men in white standing by, and no myriads of angels in view. There was not even a chorus of heavenly hosts saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." No, just a cloud opened to receive him from their earthly view. However, in heaven the glorious conqueror of sin and purchaser of our redemption was received as the King of Glory. This was Jesus Christ the Lord.

Confederate Chaplain J. C. Hiden (1837-1918) commented, "This is not a noisy process. No machinery is necessary. You need not wait for turbulent exercises of mind before receiving Christ. The Redeemer did not break the bruised reed of the old dispensation. He did not stamp out the expiring sparks in the smoking flax of the mosaic economy. The gospel quietly superseded the legal economy. There was no violent revolution, but a quiet reformation. Have you no interest in this work of Christ? Then remember His 'judgment' and His 'victory.'"

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This issue contains an editorial of your editor. Also, we have Part II of the Chaplain-in-Chief's message. Your editor has provided a biographical sketch of *Chaplain George Boardman Taylor, Part II*. Assistant editor, Mark Evans, has written an article entitled *Truth and War*. This issue, as usual, includes *A Confederate Sermon* submitted by Kenneth Studdard, preached by Rev. Stephen Elliott, which is titled *This is Mine Infirmity*. Our *Book Review* is by your editor on *The Evidences of Christianity*.

Soli Deo Gloria,  
Editor H. Rondel Rumburg

*[Compatriots, if you know of any members of the Chaplains' Corps or others who would like to receive this e-journal, please let us have their names and e-mail addresses. Also, feel free to send copies of this journal to anyone you think would like to receive it. If you want to "unsubscribe" please e-mail the editor or assistant editor. Confederately, HRR]*



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## THE CHAPLAIN-IN-CHIEF'S MESSAGE

Dear Chaplains and Friends of the Corps:

I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus who loved us and gave Himself for us. For my message this month I am going to share part 2 of a message that I presented on November 4, 2005 at the SCV National Chaplain's Conference in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

**The text is from I Kings 21:1, 2, and 3**

## Part II

### III. What Must We Do With Our Inheritance?

#### A. In the Short Term.

1. We must be as fearless as Naboth, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, and Daniel.

Naboth knew what he faced and what could happen to him for taking a stand for God. And the same was true of the three Hebrew men, for they were not afraid to offend the king if that was what it took to please the Lord. These three men said to Nebuchadnezzar, in essence, and in good Southern vernacular, “We don’t have the faintest idea what God is going to do, but we know what we ain’t going to do.” They knew what the answer should be to what the devil motivated Nebuchadnezzar offered them. And they knew what God commanded concerning the worship of false gods. These brave men feared (reverenced) God more than the king. Jesus told the people in Luke 12:4, 5, “I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear Him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him.” Fear leads people to try to please every one as they themselves feel the need to be accepted by every one. This fear is the opposite of courage, and “God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (I Tim. 1:7).

2. We must know our enemies and how they work.

Our enemies use fear. They work to make any true Southerner afraid to acknowledge their Confederate heritage. They use the straw man of slavery to make our people and those that would help us in the Cause to be afraid to do so. I am speaking of *deadly fear*, for they desire to kill off the help of any one that would, and do, speak openly about their Confederate heritage.

Fear was how Mao Zedong’s, Lenin, Stalin, et al, were able to control their populations. It was deadly fear that silenced them. Mao’s master of this was Kang Sheng. Abject fear (groveling) and long lasting obedience was produced by terror followed by confession. To his victims he said, “Why does the Communist Party make so much effort to rescue you? When a person confesses to the party we immediately remove the evidence about him, and we are happy that he has become conscious of his error. Finally, I warn these people who do not wish to confess, we have maintained a lenient policy, but leniency has a limit.” Fear, fear, and more fear.

Doesn’t this sound like the tactics which our godless socialists are using? Socialist, globalist, are the ones promoting what is called “political correctness.” They may not have a full blown police state yet, but an all powerful central government is needed to implement their desired goals. If we jump through all their hoops and get a permit for a

memorial service at the courthouse square what happens? They will have the local police, sheriff's deputies, state troopers, and SBI in huge numbers. This accomplishes several things: first, they want the public to think we are a bunch hooligans that are a threat to their community (fear again). Secondly they have the TV cameras there to show our symbols as they interview some NAACP (Taliban) leaders so they can paint us, descendants of the Confederate Southern Americans, as racists, bigots, kkk, white supremists, etc. And thirdly, using this, and other venues of the media, these socialist hate groups, groveling politicians, school administrators, they then try to use just a simple memorial service to instill great fear. Thus they seek to kill any support for our Cause.

Most people desire to be accepted; they want to be liked and well thought of by others. But we men of the SCV draw a line, and I say draw it now if you have not already done so. We are not in a popularity contest. No indeed! We are in a spiritual warfare. Yes there is a risk of being wounded, but I had rather be wounded charging these enemies of righteousness than retreating or hiding from these heathen.

I know that our warfare is a righteous one, for the same bigoted elitists that seek to destroy our heritage are the same ones that have invaded the churches and moved them to reject the truth of God's word. These Christ rejecting apostates embrace the opposite of what God has to say about the homosexuals. They are not God's children no matter what these heretics claim. We must remember that we cannot please God and man. I choose to please God! *We absolutely must not compromise!*

I am not an idiot nor a coward. I know fully the results of taking a stand for the word of God, and our Confederate heritage. We will be called all kinds of names by people using all kinds of foul, filthy language. But we must continue to serve and honor the Lord Jesus who redeemed us from sin. Just as the truth of God is immutable, and there absolutely is no place for compromise, so is the truth about our Confederate ancestors and why they fought the invading heathen from the north. We must be just as courageous in this fight against the heritage passed to us as they were in fighting the heathen invaders of our sovereign States. They charged into rifle and canon fire against overwhelming odds. They fought to the very end no matter how hopeless their efforts appeared to be.

The overwhelming majority of the people we face have been brainwashed, and fear mongered into believing that we of the SCV are a bunch of racists that want to enslave blacks again. Their lying myths about the greatness of the God-rejecting reprobate Lincoln are as putrid as their lies about our ancestors. But we must fight on in the face of the overwhelming odds against us. We do not own newspapers, TV stations, etc. But we must fight on, for we must not betray the trust passed to us in the Charge. Just as those brave *Confederate chaplains* were fearless in their defense of the gospel of Jesus

Christ and the Southland, so we too must be. We must work to influence others to enlist in the fight to preserve our great Southern heritage.

In our churches we need to proclaim the word of God in the power of the Holy Ghost. For this is the most important part of the heritage they passed down to us. We need to be as fearless as Naboth, and we need to emulate those virtues that our Confederate ancestors passed down to us. We need to enlist likeminded individuals to help us to vindicate the Cause for which they fought; to defend the Confederate soldiers (civilians too) good name. There are now more scholars that are working to present their true history.

But we need to “be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8). Among the “perils” that Paul wrote about were “perils from false brethren, (II Cor. 11:26b). In Matthew 7:15 Jesus warned about “false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing.” These wolves among us seek glory for themselves and these egotistical charlatans have the same effect on the SCV as false prophets and false brethren have had on the church. Jesus said “ye will know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:16a).

What will we do with our inheritance? This question must be answered by each individual. As for myself, I choose to honor the Lord Jesus Christ and my great Southern heritage. I choose not to stand when some lame brain requests that we join him in singing the so-called “battle hymn of the republic.” At Gettysburg a few years ago there was supposed to be a SCV function taking place, and would you believe that they had a group sing that damnable song? I was standing as most were, so I turned my back. I wrote the general overseer of the denomination we were in at the time explaining what this damnable song was about. He never answered me. Did I care? No. For I am not in a popularity contest. But I am a servant of the living God, and a son of the Southland. May God bless the Sons of Confederate Veterans to ultimately give us victory over our enemies. But whatever the out come, as the great Christian General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson said, “Duty is ours, results belong to God.”

In Christ, and  
For Their Memory and Cause!

W. Herman White  
Chaplain-in-Chief





## Chaplain George Boardman Taylor

(1832-1907)

25<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment, Post Chaplain Staunton, VA

By H. Rondel Rumburg

Part II

### ***The Beginning of Life's Labor***

As noted, he did not finish his degree because of his physical breakdown. His biographer son wrote, "No doubt his physical condition accounts in a large measure for many seasons of mental depression, approaching morbidness." He seemed to have gone through a deep valley, but always rose up in Christ.

Soon after leaving the University he was called to the pastorate of the newly formed Franklin Square Baptist Church in Baltimore, where a meeting house was already under construction. Rev. George Boardman Taylor accepted the call and began his labors there in the fall of 1855. He was the congregation's first pastor. Dr. Richard Fuller, one of the great Baptist preachers of the day, also pastored in Baltimore. He must have been an encouragement to the young pastor. His living quarters there were in the home of Rev. Dr. Franklin Wilson, whose wife was his first cousin. Dr. Wilson was a man of means and had shortly before moved into a beautiful home he had built on the outskirts of the city. The home was called "Oakley." Dr. Wilson, after graduation, had lost his ability to speak publically because of the condition of his throat, but being very concerned for the spiritual needs of his city and denomination, sought to help in other ways. From his childhood he had been a lover of good books and study. Because of this love and having financial ability he had amassed a large library of well-selected books. It was said that "the very atmosphere of his home was literary and Christian." The young pastor was in his element again, for in one way it was much like being home where his father also loved and collected good books, but not with the liberality of his host.

Dr. Wilson had bought the periodical, *The Christian Review*, and he edited it along with Pastor Taylor. The periodical had been established in 1836 and had had for its editors such men as Dr. Barnas Sears and Dr. S. F. Smith. "Just at this period of his life,

too, the output of his mind found natural expression not only in the pulpit but perhaps even more appropriately in the pages of such a review,” noted his biographer.

Since Pastor George B. Taylor had not been able to attend any seminary, the Baltimore experience became his self-made theological seminary. During this time he thought through the great problems in theology and philosophy. He began to study the inspired theologian, the Apostle Paul, and his great theology called the *Epistle to the Romans*. If any man can be said to have mastered the Epistle to the Romans, he certainly tried. His biographer son said, his father went through those days with “many seasons of mental agony and distress, nevertheless he came out into a peace and trust which were to go with him through life, growing stronger and stronger to the end.”

He was not physically strong, and was also plagued with headaches and more serious spells of suffering. However, he personally sought some relief by exercise in the open air through frequent walks. The more extended walks often included Rev. John Berg, an English brother, who was a pleasant companion and conversationalist. When those adventurous walks were not too long he was accompanied by Appleton, his cousin, who was yet a small boy. He was found to be a companion who did not find it annoying to hear sermonizing as they walked. Appleton loved to go to his Cousin George’s room, and there he passed many a happy hour. Pastor Taylor was very patient with the lad and took time to tell him stories and suggest ways for Appleton to amuse himself.

The days at “Oakley” were very delightful, especially in the evenings when the events of the day and the books of the day were discussed. The needs of the city, especially along with the Christian needs of the place, were of great interest. There were often drives to various places of interest. The gardener and general utility man, Gustave Burger, was an ingenious and kindly German, who was a valued member of the home.

Franklin Square Baptist Church prospered under the pastoral care of its young minister. This was indeed a learning experience. There seemed to be an inclination to preach over the heads of his people, especially during the time he was studying the Book of Romans so extensively. They were taken through the deep things of the gospel. He began preaching to children during this pastorate. Dr. Wilson was a trustee of the House of Refuge which had many young people, actually more in number than children in the congregation. So he was learning to reach the hearts and heads of the young, which helped him regarding preaching to the adults under his ministry.

It was during his Baltimore pastorate that Pastor Taylor was invited to make the first alumni oration delivered to Richmond College. A student who was providentially to rise in prominence as a preacher described the scene. He said that he saw a small figure of a man on the platform with mildly reddish hair with a fixed stoop in his shoulders. To him the man had the face of a student and deep blue eyes that seemed to emit kindness. At first there was no prominence in the approach to the lectern, but “from his first word he seized me; I had heard no man so young who seemed to know things so well and could frame them so wisely.” The student said that he had hit the nail on the head that day.

Pastor Taylor attended the Southern Baptist Convention in Louisville in May of 1857. He was elected as one of the recording secretaries, a position to which he was reelected four years in a row. During this trip he reconnected with his good friend of college and university days—Rev. Z. Jeter George. These were pleasant days away from the pastorate and in fellowship with a friend. These few days were a sort of therapy to the young men.

Toward the end of his Baltimore pastorate, George B. Taylor filled the pulpit of the Fredericksburg Baptist Church one Lord's Day. This visit was very eventful, for in the kind providence of God he met for the first time Miss Susan Spotswood Braxton. As a result he found reasons to return to Fredericksburg for the express purpose of seeing this lovely young lady whose charm and intellect had overcome him. When he arrived he discovered that she and her family had gone to the mountains, so he set out to find her. When he reached the place the family was supposed to be they had gone on to another of the marvelous springs of Virginia. Not to be outdone, he followed on till his perseverance was rewarded. She was the lady he desired for his wife, and he was the man she desired for her husband. At the appropriate time their engagement was announced.

Pastor George B. Taylor resigned his pastorate in Baltimore before his marriage in order to accept a call to become the pastor of Staunton Baptist Church. On May 13, 1858, their lives were joined in holy matrimony as they pledged themselves before God and in the company of family and friends. They both felt they were enriched and blessed by this marriage. The event occurred at "Hazel Hill," near Fredericksburg, in close proximity to the Rappahannock River. This was the home of J. Warren Slaughter whose wife was the sister of the bride. Susan Spotswood Braxton was one of four sisters distinguished for beauty, charm and intellectual gifts; they were also known for their personal piety. Susan Braxton was no less an ardent Baptist than George Boardman Taylor. She had a warm and generous heart. Her gracious personality was to make her an exceptional pastor's wife. The new Mrs. Taylor was a descendant of Carter Braxton who was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. When she was about sixteen, her father and mother died in quick succession, leaving her and her sisters and brother in the care of a maiden aunt in Fredericksburg. "From her earliest childhood she had learned to love the Saviour, and ... with her sister she was baptized in the Rappahannock by Rev. Samuel Smith," their pastor. She was very active in the little Baptist church to which she belonged.

They went on their wedding trip to Baltimore and Richmond. They attended prayer meeting in Richmond at Grace Street Baptist Church as they visited Pastor and Mrs. James B. Taylor, his parents.

After the wedding, Rev. George B. Taylor became the pastor of the Staunton Baptist Church. This was a new and struggling work in an area where Baptists were despised. His son, in writing about his father, asked if his father's "first pastorate [had] been a prophecy?" The Lord seemed to be putting him in beginning ministries which had many

struggles to overcome. At that time, west of the Blue Ridge, was a stronghold of Scottish Presbyterians, and the Lutherans were strong there because of the German population. There was an old saying that “Baptists and sweet potatoes will not grow west of the Blue Ridge.” Pastor Taylor was in a difficult field. The ministers of the town, discovering that a Baptist preacher had arrived, called a meeting to take steps to drive that preacher out. Pastor Taylor, hearing about a meeting of ministers, although he did not know the purpose of the meeting, attended that meeting. He had no awareness at the time of the aim of the meeting, but his presence prevented the adoption of measures to rid the town of him. Long afterward one of the other ministers told him what had occasioned the gathering of the ministers he visited. The Baptist pastor and his new bride went to work among the people of Staunton. They thought they were in a beautiful area situated in this mountain town. They gave themselves without reservation to the poor and needy of their own congregation.

Upon first coming to Staunton they lived in various rooming houses until he was able to buy his own home. Yes, they stayed in a hotel that belonged to a generous deacon and in rented places. Things seemed somewhat temporary at first. Pastor Taylor was the only Baptist minister in a large area of that part of Virginia. His days were marked by strenuous sermon preparation and pastoral calls. He was graciously helped by his wife who never begrudged being hospitable. On one occasion they arrived home to find an elderly couple enjoying themselves in their sitting room. They were Baptists seeking a place to stay, and they were welcomed. Susan Taylor in the following sixteen years gave birth to eight children and buried four in their childhood.

Besides his duties to his church, the pastor preached frequently for the colored people, for the State Insane Asylum, and for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Institution located in Staunton. Though at first the flock he pastored was very small, to Pastor Taylor it was quality, if not quantity. He described them as “a mere handful, but good as gold.” Speaking of the background of the formation of the work of the Lord in Staunton, Pastor Taylor said,

The aged Brother Anderson, a slave of Simpson F. Taylor, had for years made it his prayer that a Baptist Church might be planted in Staunton, and, like Simeon, lived to see the answer to his prayer. Two other colored persons, free born, Mrs. Laura Campbell and her venerable mother, members of this church, esteemed in the whole community, were the excellent of the earth, helpers of my joy, earnest listeners to the preached word, ready to every good work.

His friend, Dr. John A. Broadus, came to preach a protracted meeting that was followed up by Dr. Cornelius Tyree. This began a time of great spiritual revival and some valuable members the Lord added to the assembly.

Pastor George B. Taylor was not yet twenty-five when he took the church in Staunton. His former professor, Dr. Gessner Harrison, suggested that he catechize the

church. There was some opposition to doing this, but he carried the congregation through Dr. James P. Boyce's catechism for adults.<sup>1</sup> His first Lord's Day in this pastorate, in the morning worship, he preached the dedication sermon on, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house and the place where Thine honour dwelleth." That night he preached on, "As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also," little dreaming that he would literally do just that and spend a large portion of his life there.

He was also busy holding protracted meetings. This constituted a lot of travel over the country by buggy, horseback, and railroad. He went forth preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. For example, he wrote, "In the evening we drove to Lewisburg, where I preached to a large and attentive congregation.... The next morning we proceeded to the Blue Sulphur Springs." At another time, he wrote, "Tomorrow morning I expect to leave for Mechanicsville and preach a week, though it suits me very illy to do so."

Their firstborn child Bessie died in early summer of 1859 at only a few months. This was accompanied by great sorrow when the light of that little life that had brightened their home went out. There were different pastors in town that helped in the funeral service, which showed that things had changed toward the Baptists. Pastor Taylor was in Charlottesville on a speaking engagement when she had died. Of his wife and himself he said, "We have both been sweetly sustained by our Heavenly Father." He declared that after the loss of little Bessie he loved little children better than he ever had before.

The Taylors moved forward and sought a place to build a permanent dwelling. They found a lot which they purchased near the church on the last day in October, 1859. A substantial brick home was erected on that lot which they occupied for a number of years. It was mostly paid for in Confederate money and Pastor Taylor believed he was morally bound to pay for the house again during those terrible days called reconstruction, and so he had to let the property go into default.

In very late 1859 and early 1860 Pastor George B. Taylor became a part of the establishment of Alleghany College. He wrote of taking a freight train to Covington and stayed with one of his church members who had recently moved there. The next day he drove forty-four miles to Blue Sulphur. The meeting of the Board of Alleghany College met the next day. He observed that the student body was "a noble-looking body of young men." There was a report of ninety-four matriculates with several of these being promising preachers. The next day Taylor addressed the students. The Board accepted the new charter and adopted the title of Alleghany College. They organized the college

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<sup>1</sup> Boyce's Catechism did not appear until 1864. This information was from the speech delivered by Dr. Taylor at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Staunton Baptist Church celebrated at a meeting of the General Association on Nov. 15, 1903. Perhaps the good doctor forgot after all those years. Perhaps he used his friend Dr. Robert Ryland's catechism published in 1848? Ryland was president of Richmond College where Taylor matriculated.

and elected George Boardman Taylor as President of the Board. He was requested to take charge of the college, but he declined this.

Writing his brother James at the University of Virginia, he discussed a number of matters using a bit of levity. Then became serious as he confided that he thought he had preached his best sermon last Sunday on “the glorious gospel of the blessed God.” But he said that the sermon after that one was not quite so good, on “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel.” In this sermon he quoted from Macaulay the historian; the quote was regarding the Puritans from the historian’s article on Milton with which his brother had a familiarity.

### ***Precursor to George B. Taylor entering the War***

Trouble had been brewing for some time as the North became belligerent; they were not willing to leave the South alone to follow their dearly loved Constitution. Virginia wanted to be left alone, but found herself between a divided country. Virginia was between the disrupters in the North and the brethren to the South. Just before the war, George B. Taylor wrote his mother about forging ahead in preparing sermons. In that letter he confessed,

I am trying still to pursue the even tenor of my way. But it is very hard when times are so stirring in sister states, and a general civil war impends over our land.... I am indulging hope now that our miserable convention will at once pass an ordinance of succession, if they have not already done so. O! if they had only done this weeks ago and thus averted war.

His belief was that if Virginia had already passed an ordinance of secession this would have abated the possibility of war. The Virginia contingency that was dispatched to Washington to speak with Lincoln and his representatives had discovered that Lincoln actually wanted war and had only an interest in tariffs not peace.<sup>2</sup>

The prospects of war were weighing on Pastor Taylor. He even wrote, “Have been preaching miserably lately. This morning by hard work and the grace of God, retrieved myself.”

The Southern Baptist Convention met in Savannah in May of 1861. Pastor Taylor was one of the recording secretaries, so he made the trip there and then to Charleston. This was about a month after Fort Sumter’s attack. The trip must have impacted the young minister as he contemplated what was happening to the South. Much prayer and discussion among brethren had gone on in Savannah. In a letter he explained,

I liked many things about the South. But I came back with a heightened appreciation of Old Virginia. We were told we could not see Sumter. I determined to try, and addressed Governor Pickens a note, which secured not only admission, but

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<sup>2</sup> R. L. Dabney’s *Memoir of a Narrative Received of Colonel John B. Baldwin, of Staunton, Touching the Origin of the War.*

the quartermaster's boat for our party. The Governor and *everybody* seemed glad to do anything for Virginians. We all agreed the day, spent in visiting the several forts, among the most interesting of our lives. I brought back several souvenirs—as palmetto branches, and badges, shot thrown into Sumter, pictures of Beauregard and Davis. Everywhere in the South the tenderest sympathy is felt for the Border States, and though the battle may be fought on our soil, the brethren south will stand by us to the last. All are anxious to fight, and that in Virginia. And already nearly everybody is in arms. From Richmond to Charleston is one camp.... Our town is a rendezvous for troops, and companies are constantly encamped here. Yesterday every church had a company that came and left in file.... This morning I have been setting out plants. My place is lovely. I have a happy home, for which I trust I am thankful. But now I long to be with the men who are going to fight for their country. I am renewing my offer to be a chaplain. It is not probable I shall succeed, as there are so many applicants and so few chaplaincies—only one for each brigade.... I have bought Alfred's pistol—mean to teach Sue to shoot.

Pastor Taylor had been praying, thinking and preparing to do his part. What would that part be? Would he be accepted as a chaplain?



## Truth and War

Mark W. Evans

Past Chaplain-in-Chief

### **The Southern Cause was a true Cause.**

The South went to arms in order to repel an illegal invader. Each state exercised its constitutional and God-given authority to secede and to form a new government with a new constitution, beginning with these words: "We, the people of the Confederate States, each State acting in its sovereign and independent character, in order to form a permanent federal government, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity -- invoking the favor and guidance of Almighty God -- do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Confederate States of America."

The Northern majority had used its power to oppress the Southland with debilitating tariffs and unconstitutional demands that threatened the very fabric of Southern society. John Brown's raid not only demonstrated the reality of a Yankee instigated slave insurrection, but also revealed the raw hatred of its enemies. Abraham Lincoln's election shattered all hopes of deliverance from her enemies. Thus, Southern states lawfully seceded. Lincoln's remedy was to crush the fledgling country by military force. When the war finally ended, the South was devastated. Of the 800,000 that served in

the military, 260,000 died. Many returned home with permanent wounds. Non-combatant citizens were also killed, maimed, and left in dire poverty. Yankee forces destroyed food sources, burned homes, public and private buildings, and churches. Even graves were vandalized and desecrated. Our Southern ancestors were right to resist such tyranny and to seek the continuation of Constitutional principles secured by the blood of their fathers.

### **The Southern fight was a righteous fight.**

Our ancestor's martial confrontation against the invading North was a righteous and just resistance. It was a defensive war. The men in gray fought for their wives, families, and constitutional liberty. Sovereign states exercised their God-given right to determine their own government. They performed the same action as their fathers who overthrew British tyranny.

Virginia's entrance into the war illustrated the necessity of Southern military action. Lincoln's Secretary of State promised Southern representatives that Fort Sumter, near Charleston, SC, would be evacuated in six days. Instead, Lincoln sent a fleet to reinforce and supply the Fort, thus threatening hostile action against Charleston. Confederate forces were compelled to fire upon the Fort to escape impending hostility. "Immediately on the fall of Sumter, President Lincoln issued his proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand troops to coerce the States which had passed ordinances of secession, and calling on the Border States to furnish their quota of these. With more or less emphasis the Governors of Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia refused to obey the call. Governor Letcher of Virginia, who had been one of the leaders of the 'Union party,' which had elected an overwhelming majority of the members of the State Convention then in session, replied to the requisition of President Lincoln, 'You have chosen to inaugurate civil war, and you can get no troops from Virginia for any such wicked purpose'" [J. William Jones, *Life and Letters of Gen. Robert Edward Lee*, p. 224]. The Confederacy must fight or perish.

### **The Confederate faith was a true faith.**

Confederate Chaplain W. W. Bennett wrote after the war: "In the midst of all the privations and horrors of war 'the grace of God appeared' unto thousands and tens of thousands in the camp and in the hospital, 'teaching them that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' The subjects of this revival were found among all classes in the army. Generals in high command, and officers of all lower grades, as well as private soldiers, bowed before the Lord of Hosts, and with deep penitence and earnest prayer sought the pardon of sins through the atoning blood of Christ" [*The Great Revival in the Southern Armies*, p. 18].

This Christian faith was in the heart of many Southerners before the war. Dixie gave no heed to the antichristian philosophies that took root in the souls of many in the

Northland. The Lord was pleased to bless Confederate warriors with a spiritual strength that was unailing, even unto death. A friend of James Chalmers, who died at Fairfax Court House, aptly described a fellow warrior with words that applied to many of Dixie's combatants: "He possessed all the higher attributes of a Christian warrior with hand on hilt and eye on heaven fighting at once under the banner of his country and the Cross of his Savior" [*Ibid.*, p. 425].

**The defeat of the Confederacy could not destroy  
the true foundations of liberty.**

Undergirding the South's cause were principles of liberty derived from the sacred Scriptures. Today's blasphemous and lying politicians would reject such teaching, but the Bible solemnly declares: "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever" [I Peter 1:24, 25]. The same promises and principles that upheld our ancestors, will keep us today. Chaplain J. William Jones recalled, "General Robert E. Lee, when questioned about the misery that the defeat of the Confederacy had brought, stated his conviction: 'Yes, all that is very sad, and might be a cause of self-reproach, *but that we are conscious that we have humbly tried to do our duty.* We may, therefore, with calm satisfaction, trust in God, and leave results to Him'" [*Life and Letters of Lee*, p. 438].



**A CONFEDERATE SERMON**

**Submitted by Chaplain Kenneth Studdard**

**Stephen Elliott** (1806-1866) was the first Episcopal Bishop of Georgia. Under his leadership the Episcopal Church in Georgia was greatly strengthened. He was a powerful preacher of the Gospel. His sermons are a fine example of preaching Christ. He served as Senior Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Confederate States of America. During the War he preached a number of influential sermons. The sermons were political in the spirit of the sermons that were preached during the Revolutionary period, that is, the principles of the Gospel were brought to bear on the current situation.

The following sermon is another excellent example of Elliott's preaching ability. It is from the posthumous collection, *The Sermons of Stephen Elliott*. It is one of the finest collections of sermons that I have ever read.

This Is Mine Infirmity

*And I said, This is mine infirmity: but I will remember the years  
of the right hand of the Most High. — PSALM lxxvii. 10.*

The Psalms are what may be termed, in modern phraseology, the “experience” of David. In them we are permitted to trace the workings of a Christian heart as distinctly as if they were the pulsations of our own; to examine minutely the dealings of God with a man whom He declares to have been, despite his infirmities, a man after His own heart. And an unspeakable privilege it is, to be allowed to read a soul in which God delighted, and to analyze feelings which were acceptable with Him. Left to ourselves, we should often be sadly disturbed at our own spiritual condition; we should be tempted to believe that no other Christian had ever experienced the sad variations which disturb our religious life. But having before us such an example as David; possessing what may be considered the daily journal of his feelings and emotions; studying them as they are laid bare in their weakness, as well as exhibited in their power: we can feel “the pulses of our Psalmist’s passions beating their ditties as we lay our hearts unto them.”

They become a standard for us; a spiritual mirror in which we may see our own affections reflected. His experience of God’s dealings with his soul is written for our instruction in righteousness; and the phases of his feelings are indications to us of what we may expect in the progress of our spiritual life. Just as we see him full of joy and peace in believing, to-day; and then tomorrow cast into despondency and unbelief: so may we anticipate changes in our perceptions of God’s relation to us. Our comfort, our sorrow; our fear, our confidence; our hope, our despair: are all exhibited to us in some one or other of those exquisite Psalms which he poured forth as indicative of his own emotions; and their rapid and often fearful variations are just as clearly marked in the vicissitudes of our condition. Many a Christian heart has found reason again and again to thank God for having condescended to unfold to us, through His Spirit, the inner workings of a human heart, as it was growing in grace and be coming assimilated to Himself. The sanctified heart, the heart already made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, is not what the Christian craves for his contemplation. He wants to study the heart in its struggles after sanctification;—in its throbs and pulsations as it battles in the stern strife with temptation and sin, and the enemies of its inner life. It is not the conqueror with the crown upon his head and the palm-branches of victory in his hand, that is the most useful exemplar to the warring child of God: but it is the man of infirmity, and yet the man after God’s own heart, whom it craves to look upon, as he rages in the midst of the battle-field,—now in the dust, and anon flashing the sword of the Spirit in the face of the adversary; now crying for help with the feebleness of a child, and anon shouting forth the praises of Him who hath delivered him from the power of the enemy. The soldier who is girding on his harness for the field cares not to look upon the triumphal car, save as it may prove an incentive to his ambition; but rather loves to fight over with the veteran the battles he has won, and to learn the arts and contrivances by which he overcame the foe and laid him prostrate in the dust. It is in the Revelation

only—the last and consummating Book of the Gospel of our Lord—that we find those pictures of victory and of Heaven which are so glorious for the Christian: as if to teach us that the greatest portion of our lives, like the largest portion of the Bible, is to be occupied with the good fight of Faith; while victory, triumph, rest, reward, are to be left for the consummation of all things.

Hence is it so very interesting a feature in our Liturgy, that such large portions of the Psalms of David are appointed to be read upon every Lord's day;— enough to ensure to every Christian soul the “meat in due season” which it requires. So intermingled are the Psalmist's joys with his lamentations; so rapid is the change from the full assurance of hope to the deep despondency of a forsaken soul; so frequently does he run the gamut from the lowest notes of a sinner humbled in the dust to the highest outbursts of thanksgiving and of praise: that almost every selection of Psalms will furnish its tone for every heart, and the mourning Christian and the peaceful Christian and the rejoicing Christian will each find something that shall harmonize with his own condition and satisfy the cravings of his own soul. Sadly ignorant must be that mind, or miserably dull that spirit, which can find no music in the tones of David's harp; which can pass uncheered through such a flood of Christian light. Still more forlorn the condition of those who can quarrel with the Church, because she brings these glorious ditties so daily to her children's minds;—because, like a tender mother, she gives them line upon line, and precept upon precept, from the song-book of the sweet Psalmist of Israel.

How cheering to us that David had his infirmity! —that he was not a being of perfection, and that his infirmity was just the infirmity which is most common to us all, —that of distrusting God; of not believing in His promises, because they seem, for a little while, to lack fulfillment. The burden of the Psalm from which my text is taken, is a declaration of his distrust of God; and he recovers himself by confessing that it was his infirmity, and by casting himself back upon the memory of God's mercy and loving-kindness in the years that were gone. “I said, This is mine infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.” I say, how cheering this is, that it is not only we who have our infirmities, who are filled with murmuring and distrust, who require to look back to past experience for our comfort and our assurance: but that this veteran servant of God, this chosen child of grace, this man of Christian struggle from his boyhood, this spiritually-minded saint, is compelled to make the confession of his weakness, and to pursue the very course which we must pursue for the resumption of his faith and his peace. Such confessions are our life, not because we rejoice in iniquity, not because we are glad over the infirmities of the Saints, but because it gives us hope that as they conquered those infirmities, through grace, and “obtained a good report,” so may we overcome ours through the strength which is in Christ Jesus, and rejoice through hope of the grace of God. This feature runs through Christianity, and makes it the precious Gospel which it is. The infirmities of the Saints are never concealed, but are made manifest, so that the struggling saints of God, conscious of their weaknesses, may

not despair, but may rather rejoice that they have a God who has unveiled the infirmities of His chosen children; that they have a Saviour who can be touched with a feeling of those infirmities; that a Spirit has been vouchsafed them, who is promised especially to help those infirmities.

It is frequently made an objection to the Bible that such and such individuals, patriarchs, prophets, kings, apostles, have been exhibited therein as men of very great infirmities, and, in some instances, as men who have committed enormous sins. The impression seems to be left upon certain minds, that such individuals could not be accepted by a holy God; nay, more, that a religion must be worth very little whose chief Saints could have been guilty of such weaknesses,—to use no harsher word. The fact I shall not controvert; but that it ought to be an objection to the scheme of religion contained in the Bible, I cannot admit. To me it is one of the clearest proofs of the inspiration of the Bible; for, if the Saints of the Bible had been represented as faultless men, their conduct would not have harmonized with the plan of salvation, with the scope and purpose of the economy of grace. As I understand Christianity, it has come to save sinners, and to change them into saints meet for the inheritance of Heaven. These sinners are to be saved through grace, not by any merit or deserving of their own. And when this grace has worked upon the heart, it is only the beginning of a growth in grace, which is to go on through a lifetime of discipline until it shall be perfected in glory. “And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the ‘seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” If, according to the plan of salvation, the children of God were to be perfect at once, why a Saviour, continued in Heaven to be their Advocate? Why such a precious promise as this, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins?” Why a Spirit sent to earth to witness with our spirits, to cheer, to comfort, to sanctify us, to help our infirmities? Why the chastening rod of a Father held perpetually over us, and the solemn declaration sounded in our ears, “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth?” Why the constant injunctions of the Apostles to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling,”—to “run, not as uncertainly,”—to “fight, not as one that beateth the air,”—but to “keep under the body and bring it into subjection, lest while preaching to others,” he himself “should be a castaway?” No! this manifestation of the infirmity of the Saints is just in harmony with the Gospel scheme;—especially what ought to have been expected in the development of a “salvation by faith, through grace.” It is only when we turn to a spurious Christianity, that we find perfect saints. The Saints of the Bible are all men of infirmity, and therefore it was that they gloried in a “High Priest that might be touched with a feeling of their infirmities”; therefore it was that they cried out for a “Spirit that might make intercession for them with groanings, which cannot be uttered.” As the religion, so the saints. A religion of grace: Saints having infirmity. A religion of merit; and, as a consequence, saints

pretending to perfection,—“whited sepulchers, full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.”

Such is the harmony, as I feel it, between saints having infirmity and a salvation through grace; and such is the attitude which, as all analogy teaches us, should be occupied by those who are in a state of tutelage. What is the necessity of spiritual discipline, if ‘we are already perfect? What of chastening, if we have no faults? What of the means of grace, if we have no evil habits to be rooted out, no good ones to be built up? All the instruction of the Bible, and all the institutions of the Church, teach us that the Church of Christ is a school, planted in the world, in which Christians have to be prepared for their places in Heaven,—prepared through temptation, through weakness, through suffering, through trial. And, if this be so, is not infirmity necessarily a part of the very being of a Christian? What the need of placing a child at school, unless it may be trained in knowledge and in virtue? When praising the management of a school, do we say that it is a school whose scholars have no infirmities: or that it is one where those infirmities are gradually cured? Certainly the latter. And we give our faith to it when we see the vicious reclaimed, and the ignorant enlightened, and the weak character made strong; and not when we learn that the entrance to the school has been debarred to all such! When praising the success of a parent’s efforts, do we speak of his family circle as well-disciplined when we say that his children had no faults: or when we show that very gross faults have been cured under his arrangements? And so with Christianity. So far as the justification of a sinner is concerned, that is the effect of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; but after we have received peace through that justification, we must be sanctified and made meet for Heaven. Now what should be the praise of the Church,—and ‘this brings us back to the objection we are considering,—that there are no infirmities within the Church: or that she gradually cures them? that as soon as an individual crosses her threshold, his sins are all laid down: or that she is a school in which the teachings of the Holy Ghost are made responsive to the infirmities of the creature, and thus weak sinful men are gradually built up into the image and likeness of Christ? How futile, then, to make it an objection to the Bible, containing the scheme of salvation which it does, that it portrays for our example, and for God’s commendation, Saints who have been men of like passions with ourselves!

To return to our subject of rejoicing,—that we find such a Saint as David confessing his infirmity, because each one of us has our infirmity. Who that kneels at this Communion Table, but has occasion to say of some weakness, of some shortcoming, “This is mine infirmity”? “The infirmities of the believer,” says a beautiful writer of the present day, “are as varied as they are numerous. Some are weak in faith, and are always questioning their interest in Christ. Some superficial in knowledge, and shallow in experience, and ever exposed to the crudities of error and to the assaults of temptation. Some are slow travelers in the divine life, and are always in the rear; while yet others are often ready to halt altogether. Then there are others who groan beneath the burden of bodily infirmity, exerting a morbid influence upon their spiritual experience;—a nervous

temperament—a state of perpetual depression and despondency—the constant corroding of mental disquietude—physical ailment—imaginary forebodings—a facile yielding to temptation—petulance of spirit—unguardedness of speech—gloomy interpretations of Providence—an eye that views only the dark hues of the cloud, the somber shadings of the picture.” Such is the catalogue of infirmities which a Christian of deep experience has drawn up for our consideration; and among them I fear that most of you can lay your finger upon someone and say, “‘This is mine infirmity,’ this has been the plague of my Christian life, the enemy of my Christian peace. With this have I battled! Against this have I struggled! Again and again hath it cast me down; again and again have I risen victorious over it. But still ‘it is mine infirmity.’ Shall it conquer me, or shall I be conqueror, and more than conqueror, through Him that loved me?”

Think not, child of God, whoever you may be, that you are bearing this infirmity alone! Think not that you are unpitied in your lamentations over it, without sympathy in your struggles against it. You have, thanks be to God, a High-Priest who can be touched with a feeling of your infirmities; who is always ready to pour out, upon every sincere struggler, of the fullness of His grace for that very single infirmity which is distressing you. What is it? “Is it sin, is it sorrow, is it sickness, is it want?” What is it? “Is it some fault of temper, some levity of disposition, some lust of the flesh, some temptation of the heart?” What is it? “Is it unbelief, is it despondency, is it faithlessness, is it coldness of spirit?” No matter what it is, my hearer, if you feel it as an infirmity; if you strive against it as an infirmity; if you mourn over it, and would cast it off, as an infirmity: you have the burden carried for you, for the Scripture tells us, “Himself took our infirmities and carried our sicknesses.” “Wondrous view of the incarnate God!” as one has beautifully expressed it: “That very infirmity which now bows you to the earth, by reason of which you can in no wise lift up yourself, your Saviour bore. It bowed Him to the dust, and brought the crimson drops to His brow. And is this no consolation? Does it not make your infirmity even pleasant, to remember that Jesus once bore it, and in sympathy bears it still?” It is a blessed consolation to feel that we have a Friend, closer to us than a brother, who is touched with our infirmity; who instead of covering us with reproaches because we are weak, bears those weaknesses for us. How tender is our Saviour! How beautiful our religion! How wreathed is it with the richest treasures of love and of sympathy! How little do they understand it, who would change it into a thing of harshness, and transform the gushing affections of an EMMANUEL, a GOD WITH US, into the stern severity of a God afar off!

And can you not, my fellow-Christians, imitate David, and find in your own experience some consolation for the infirmity which weighs upon you? It was when he was interrogating his gracious Lord in strains like these, “Will the LORD cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?” that he was fain to add: “This is mine infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.” And have you, my beloved

hearer, no such years to remember? Can you not look back to the days that are gone, and consider that in six troubles He has delivered you, yea in seven that no evil has touched you? And, considering this, can you not trust Him for the time to come? Hath He yet permitted your infirmity utterly to prevail against you? Has it ever so cast you down, as that you have let go the anchor within the veil? Then why lament for the future? Why distrust a God who has surrounded you with mercies and blessings, because perchance there remains one thorn in the flesh? Has He not told you, "My grace is sufficient for thee?" Comfort yourself in the past. Remember the works of the Lord,—works wrought by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit within your own heart,—wrought upon feelings, upon affections, upon intellect, upon the whole creature, soul and body, so that you know that you are a new creature in Christ Jesus. Remember His wonders of old,—wonders that you have seen and rejoiced in, when the way of the Lord was in the sanctuary. And even though now "His way be in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps be not known," still trust in Him, and be satisfied that He will put upon you no greater burden than you can bear.

And let the tenderness of God with our infirmities teach us also to bear the infirmities of our brethren. Ah! My hearers, there is a large field of exhortation open for me in this direction, but I can only touch it now. The bearing the infirmities of the weak is a grace too little understood, and yet it is the grace which assimilates us most nearly to Christ. His distinctive mark in prophecy was, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench;" and by these emanations of tenderness—so uncommon and so unknown in the world—was He to be distinguished among the children of men. And shall His disciples be distinguished by anything so unlike this as censoriousness, as fault-finding, as evil-speaking, as crushing those who are already down, as shooting poisoned arrows at the wounded and stricken heart? The love of Christ forbid! Are you, my hearer, strong in the Lord? Then remember, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Are you yourself "compassed with infirmity"? Then remember, that as you desire the Lord Jesus to bear your infirmities, so should you also-bear the infirmities of others. Has a Christian brother or sister been 'overtaken in a fault'? "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye, which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Let us in all things strive to do unto others as we would do unto ourselves. Our own weaknesses we confess to God, but we do not trumpet them forth to men. "We unveil them," as one has exquisitely worded it, "to His eye, and He kindly and graciously veils them from all human eyes. Be this our spirit and our conduct toward a weak and erring brother. Let us rather part with our right hand, than publish his infirmity to others, and thus wound the Head by an unkind and unholy exposure of the faults and frailties of a member of His body, and by so doing cause the enemies of Christ to blaspheme that worthy Name by the which we are called."

There may be some one here present who keeps aloof from the Church of Christ because of some infirmity which may be weighing upon the conscience. Is this wise?

How is the infirmity to be cured? Whence is the power to come which is to conquer the infirmity? Is it not better at once to place yourself, in all humility of spirit, in the school of Christ, under the discipline of Christ, and endeavor there to conquer in His strength? If you are kept away only by some infirmity, will it not lighten that infirmity to roll it upon Christ, to permit the Holy Spirit to share it with you? Oh, keep not away from Jesus because of the very weaknesses which He came to bear for you, which He has already borne for you! “Come unto me,” is His especial invitation, “all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”



## Book Review

### *The Evidences of Christianity*

Sprinkle Publications, 2006 (1869), 418 pages, hardback

by John L. Dagg

Review by H. Rondel Rumburg

This was the last volume, *The Evidences of Christianity*, from the pen of the old Confederate John L. Dagg D.D. [February 13, 1794—June 11, 1884].

*“Reverence for God requires a careful study of the Christian Evidences.”*

--J. L. Dagg

When the Word became flesh and dwelt among us Truth was incarnated. Our blessed Redeemer implored His Father, in His high priestly prayer, “*Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.***” The apostle Paul writing to the young minister Timothy reminded him that “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect (or complete), throughly furnished unto all good works.*” The believer’s only authority is the Bible which the sole guide for faith and practice. Yes, God’s Word is the title to our vast estate. Obviously, it is on the basis of such sacred revelation that Dagg’s words on evidences of Christianity find their genesis, “Reverence for God requires a careful study of Christian Evidences.” He strongly believed that a legitimate moral system and the authority for such must come from the Bible, which “regulates the duties appertaining to every relation in life....” Consider this formative remark,

The Evidences of Christianity are the proofs that the Bible possesses the authority of God, binding men to believe the doctrines which it teaches, and perform the duties which it enjoins. These proofs are abundant and conclusive; and the study of them forms an important part of popular education, claiming the careful attention of every one who desires to be proficient in useful knowledge.

The Bible is the ultimate authority for earthbound beings created in God's image. Cornelius Van Til gave a solid reminder,

This view of Scripture, therefore, involves the idea that there is nothing in this universe on which human beings can have full and true information unless they take the Bible into account. We do not mean, of course, that one must go to the Bible rather than to the laboratory if one wishes to study the anatomy of the snake. But if one goes only to the laboratory and not also to the Bible one will not have a full or even true interpretation of the snake.

The quest for truth must begin with the fact that God is and God has spoken. *"In the beginning God..."* the Bible asserts. God does not try to prove Himself to anyone because He is, and He makes a declaration of Himself which is authoritative.

John L. Dagg reminds us that the value of the Bible is not in its binding or paper, that is its external value, but "The true glory of the Bible belongs to its internal substance, the words which it contains, or rather the thoughts which these words express." Evidences of Christianity can only be properly studied in the light of the Bible. *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."* The Word of God is the final authority. This is especially clear in the matter of salvation.

The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience; although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men unexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will, which is necessary unto salvation.

There is a primary question that must be asked of any view, "Does it exalt and exonerate the Triune God or man?" Is it theocentric, that is God-centered? The present age is anthropocentric meaning it centers everything upon man and his desires. Humanism is intermingled with every discipline now. The "Me generation" now wants to call the shots. The statement has been made that "Underneath all forms of apostate philosophy is the notion of man as a law unto himself.... Fallen man seeks to be the original interpreter of all reality." Paul's contention was that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. God's Word is the only infallible rule. How wise the assertion of Dagg,

The very manner in which revelation addresses us is adapted to our ignorance. When human reason has fainted in its pursuit after the knowledge needed the Bible gives immediate possession of the good sought. It puts an end to vain efforts, uncertain conjectures, and perplexing doubts, by authoritative declarations from the source of infallible truth.

Dagg's view of Christian Evidences is anchored in the reservoir of truth, the Bible. As one reads the words flowing from the pen of this Southron theologian it becomes obvious that his studies were exceptionally broad. He had a grasp historically and philosophically of the major views and yet one is not burdened with technicalities. His knowledge of the literature in the field was extensive. He was a very learned man. The volume is smooth in its readability. Dagg is the kind of writer that you wish wrote more, more often and longer books.

Dagg makes it clear, in his Preface that his purpose was "to produce conviction in common minds." And he also wanted to direct readers to "the first and chief attention ... the Bible"

Dagg remarked that "the legitimate deductions of science do not contradict the historical testimony of the Bible..." His parting shot was at scientific infidelity, "When scientific infidelity has been compelled to admit the agency of the Almighty, it cannot consistently limit his mode of operation." His conclusion was not "if" such shall happen, but "when." The prospects to Dagg were much brighter than to some today.

He also has an extended "Appendix" dealing with historical evidences. Scriptural verification was given to his arguments as he dealt with various writers.

#### *The Chronology of Dagg's Pen*

Interestingly after resigning his presidency of Mercer University, Dagg lived with different relatives and friends, and in those places he wrote his major books. He went to Madison and lived with his sister and brother-in-law. From there he moved to Cuthbert to his daughter and son-in-law's home. Here he completed the *Manual of Theology* in the spring of 1857. When the manuscript was prepared to mail to the Southern Baptist Publication Society, Mrs. Dagg suggested that the book be sanctified to the Lord in prayer. Thus this labor of love was committed to the blessings of God. There was subsequently a volume on *Church Order* added to the *Manual*; it was finished the spring of 1858.

In the summer of 1858, brother and sister Dagg went to live once more with his sister and brother-in-law in Madison. That summer Dagg began his *Moral Science* and finished it in the summer of 1859. His next major project, which Sprinkle Publications is once again issuing for the public, was the *Evidences of Christianity*. Most of this volume was written in Cuthbert while living with the Thorntons. One of the reasons for the sojourn there was that Mrs. Dagg's eyesight had become so poor that she could no longer participate in assisting her husband. Rebecca Thornton, the oldest daughter of the Thorntons, now gave assistance in this labor, and from all indications quitted herself quite well.

#### *The Final Major Production of Dagg's Pen*

The *Evidences of Christianity* was his final major writing project. This volume was the most time consuming of all. He confided, "This work was longer in hand and

cost me more labor than any that I had written; and when it was completed, the war was raging and cut off the hope of getting it published.” The War of Northern Aggression disrupted Southern life and hindered the old professor in getting his book through the publishers. Also, during the throes of the war, while he was finishing the *Evidences of Christianity*, his dear wife finished her earthly course. The one who had assisted him as a pastor’s wife, as a university president’s wife and as a writer’s wife was called to her Lord and Saviour on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 1864. Her citizenship in the Confederate States of America was terminated in the midst of great struggle. She ascended beyond the clouds of war to enjoy her citizenship in heaven. Paul wrote of believers,

*For our conversation (or citizenship obligations) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body (or body of humble origin), that it may be fashioned like unto His (the Saviour’s) glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.*

Soon after his wife’s death in the Thornton home John Dagg moved to the home of his son, John F. Dagg. Here he was residing when the hostilities ended and the awful deconstruction period began to molest the South. When his son left Georgia and moved to Hopkinsville, Kentucky, where he became president of Bethel Female College, Dr. Dagg moved into the home of daughter Elizabeth and her husband S. G. Hillyer.

Did he ever get his final book published? Yes, in God’s own time he was able to see the volume that had cost him intense labor and the delay of war, through the press. He explained,

About the year 1868 I offered my work on the *Evidences of Christianity* to the Georgia Baptist Convention, on condition that funds could be raised for stereotyping it. Generous brethren contributed the funds necessary, and it was published by J. W. Burk & Co., of Macon, who now publishes my *Moral Science* also.

This last volume of Dagg’s was finally published in 1869. Another part of his ministry had drawn to a close as he pursued his journey to the Celestial City.

He lived with the Hillyers until his daughter Elizabeth died suddenly in January 1870.

When my daughter Mrs. (Henry) Rugeley in Lowndesboro, Alabama, received news of her death, she wrote to me, inviting me to come and live with them. I replied that I was too infirm to take so long a journey. She visited us in April, and prevailed on me to return with her. We arrived at Lowndesboro on the last day of April, and remained there until the first day of November, when we removed to Haynesville, where we have ever since lived, and where I now write this.

Dagg lived in Hanesville, which is not far from Montgomery, where the rest of his sojourn in this present world was completed. He remarked that once in Haynesville he never left the lot on which he lived. Dagg had lived in many places in the past, but now his movement was confined to a small spot in Alabama. John L. Dagg finished his course with joy on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 1884. He was ninety.



We must remember who we are and what we must be about:  
The SCV Challenge by Lt. Gen. S. D. Lee

*To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier's good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and those ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish. Remember, it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations.*

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**Chaplain's Handbook**  
*Sesquicentennial Edition*  
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