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*From Denominational Statesman
to Rejected Leader; From Neglected Author
to Recovered Author?*

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By any criterion—president, author, preacher, or pastor, Herschel H. Hobbs was one of the most influential leaders among Southern Baptists during the twentieth century. Recognition of that leadership has taken literary form.¹ Five years after Hobbs's death, James T. Draper Jr. declared that "there is no one today in the SBC that compares with Herschel H. Hobbs."² Even so, with the changing tides of denominational life, Hobbs in later life experienced rejection by fellow Southern Baptists that stood in contrast to the acceptance that he had received when he was at the pinnacle of his leadership.

I

The pinnacle was during his two-year presidency (1961–63) of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Although his predecessor, Ramsey Pollard, had warned Southern Baptists of disturbing trends in their colleges, universities, or seminaries,³ it is doubtful that Hobbs could have foreseen how critical his presidency would prove to be. The publication of Ralph H. Elliott's *The Message of Genesis*⁴ and the controversy that it evoked and the

¹Mark Coppenger, "Herschel Hobbs," in *Baptist Theologians*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman, 1990), 434–49; Jerry L. Faught, "The Biblical Theology of Herschel H. Hobbs: An Exposition of the Southern Baptist Roots via Media," Gaskin Lecture #1, Oklahoma Baptist University, 2000, typescript copy, 15 pages.; idem, "The Denominationalism of Herschel H. Hobbs (1907–1995): Conservative Advocate for Organizational Unity," Gaskin Lecture #2, Oklahoma Baptist University, 2000, typescript copy, 17 pages.; David S. Dockery, "Herschel H. Hobbs," in *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 216–32; idem, "The Life and Legacy of Herschel H. Hobbs (1907–1995)," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 7.1 (Spring 2003): 62–78; James Leo Garrett Jr., *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 468–73.

²Bill Sumners, Interview with James T. Draper Jr., August 2000, as quoted by Faught, "The Denominationalism of Herschel H. Hobbs (1907–1995)," 2.

³"President's Address," SBC, *Annual* (1960), 80.

⁴Ralph H. Elliott, *The Message of Genesis* (Nashville: Broadman, 1961).

work of the Hobbs-chaired Baptist Faith and Message Committee called forth great leadership skills from Hobbs. His parliamentary skills were exercised, for example, in his ruling that K. Owen White's 1962 motion should be divided into two motions.⁵ His two presidential addresses, among the most substantive in the history of the SBC, projected Hobbs as a leader of thought among Southern Baptists.⁶ In 1962, after rejecting theological liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, and Bultmannianism as theological routes for Southern Baptists, he appealed for a middle-of-the-road, non-creedal conservatism, called for more teaching and training and the renewal of expository preaching, and asked for respectful trust of the denomination's seminary professors, who in turn must strive to produce adequate leaders for the churches and be accountable to the denomination.⁷ In 1963, building on Acts 17:24–31, the Oklahoman developed a philosophy of history that interwove secular history and holy history and, facing the atomic age and the challenge of communism, called upon Southern Baptists to resolve racial problems at home and launch an unprecedented world mission advance.⁸ As convention president Hobbs was involved in mediating efforts between Elliott and the trustees of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, begun, it seems, at the request of President Millard J. Berquist and Malcolm B. Knight, chairman of trustees.⁹ Hobbs's own impact on the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message may best be seen in its threefold soteriological pattern—regeneration, sanctification, and glorification, which was not common in the earlier Baptist confessional tradition¹⁰ but was used in Hobbs's own writings, both before 1962¹¹ and after 1962.¹² Hobbs served on the boards of SBC agencies, as Baptist World Alliance officer, and on state convention assignments.¹³ He was the regular

⁵SBC, *Annual* (1962), 65, 68; Herschel H. Hobbs, "The Elliott Controversy," in *The Fibers of Our Faith*, vol. 1, ed. Dick Allen Rader (Franklin, TN: Providence House, 1995), 208; Jesse C. Fletcher, *The Southern Baptist Convention: A Sesquicentennial History* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 208.

⁶By request of the messengers, both of Hobbs's addresses were published in the SBC *Annual*. In *The Sacred Desk: Sermons of the Southern Baptist Convention Presidents*, ed. Ergun Caner and Emir Fethi Caner (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 204–09, the editors, following the policy of including only one sermon by each president, included "Crisis and Conquest."

⁷"Crisis and Conquest" (Presidential Address), SBC, *Annual* (1962), 81–89.

⁸"God and History" (Presidential Address), SBC, *Annual* (1963), 86–95.

⁹Hobbs, "The Elliott Controversy," 206, 210.

¹⁰William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1959), 153–71, 241–95, 361–67, 391–98. Neither the First London Confession (1644), the Second London Confession (1677), the New Hampshire Confession (1833), nor the Baptist Faith and Message Statement (1925) utilized this threefold pattern.

¹¹Herschel H. Hobbs, *Fundamentals of Our Faith* (Nashville: Broadman, 1960), 101–12; idem, *New Testament Evangelism: The Eternal Purpose* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1960), 107–23.

¹²Herschel H. Hobbs, *What Baptists Believe* (Nashville: Broadman, 1964), 97–106.

¹³He served as the Louisiana member of the Foreign Mission Board (1942–45), the Alabama member of the board of Baptist Bible Institute (later New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) (1945–49), an Oklahoma member of the SBC Executive Committee (1951–63),

preacher on “The Baptist Hour” (radio) from October 1958 until September 1976,¹⁴ and the Radio and Television Commission (SBC) published many of these in pamphlet form. From October–December 1968 to the posthumous October–December 1996 issue, the Oklahoma pastor authored four times each year *Studying Life and Work Lessons* and thus had a special teaching ministry among the adult Sunday School teachers in Southern Baptist churches.¹⁵ His books, expository, sermonic, and doctrinal, provided a similar ministry to Southern Baptist pastors and those of other denominations. For years, Hobbs wrote for the Baptist state papers a column entitled “Baptist Beliefs.” Hobbs understood his role to be that of a unifier among Southern Baptists, holding forth “unity in diversity” with more stress on the unity than on the diversity but with a unity that was not conformity or uniformity.¹⁶ Late in life, borrowing language from Albert McClellan, Hobbs affirmed: “I do not want to be known as a Conservative or a Moderate as those terms are now defined. I simply want to be known as ‘an old-time Southern Baptist.’”¹⁷

the Oklahoma member of the board of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1965–75), and a member of the SBC Peace Committee (1985–88). He was one of the vice presidents of the Baptist World Alliance (1965–70) and was defeated for the BWA presidency in 1970. He was president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (1957–58), moderator of the Oklahoma County Baptist Association (1955–56), and trustee and trustee chairman of Oklahoma Baptist University. Harold Bennett, “Foreword” to Hobbs, *My Faith and Message: An Autobiography* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), xv–xvi; Hobbs, *My Faith and Message*, 204; Faith Bowers, “New Structures for a Growing Family: The Baptist World Alliance in the 1970s,” in *Baptists Together in Christ, 1905–2005: A Hundred-Year History of the Baptist World Alliance*, ed. Richard V. Pierard (Birmingham: Samford University Press, 2005), 174–76; Bob Flournoy, “Laborers Together with God (1949–1963),” in *Lighthouse on the Corner: A History of the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*, ed. Phyllis Woodruff Sapp (Oklahoma City: Century Press, 1964), 109; Richard Cheek to James Leo Garrett, Jr. 15 September 2011.

¹⁴John Steven Gaines, “An Analysis of the Correlation between Representative Baptist Hour Sermons by Herschel H. Hobbs and Selected Articles of the Baptist Faith and Message” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991), abstract, 2. Gaines studied the evangelistic sermons preached by Hobbs between 1962 and September 1976. Hobbs’s sermons were “centered on the Christ event. Rarely ever do any of these messages avoid mentioning at least one tenet of Christology.” *Ibid.*, 100–01.

¹⁵Hobbs, *My Faith and Message*, 219.

¹⁶Hobbs, “Crisis and Conquest,” 85; *idem*, *My Faith and Message*, 266; Hobbs, Interview by Dennis Ray Wiles, June 1990, in “Factors Contributing to the Resurgence of Fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist Convention, 1979–1990” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992), 225. Gregory A. Wills, “Progressive Theology and Southern Baptist Controversies of the 1950s and 1960s,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 7.1 (Spring 2003): 19, 27, has reached almost contradictory conclusions about Hobbs. On the one hand, relative to the 1958–59 crisis at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary he reports that for Hobbs “the seminary was due for some purifying” lest Southern Baptists “would repeat the mistakes of the mainline [Protestant] denominations.” On the other hand, Wills declares that during the 1960’s “with the aid of such denominational statesmen as Herschel Hobbs and Duke McCall, progressive theology flourished at the seminaries.”

¹⁷Hobbs, *My Faith and Message*, 254.

In less than a decade after the pinnacle of presidential leadership, Hobbs faced at the SBC podium raucous and hostile rejection by some of the messengers. Unlike the SBC session at Fort Worth in 1890 when the issue was the establishment of a Sunday School Board, with James M. Frost, B.H. Carroll, and J.B. Hawthorne supporting and J.B. Gambrell opposing and brotherly debate led to Gambrell's being named to the committee for the new board and his and Frost's jointly writing its report,¹⁸ at the 1970 session in Denver brotherly debate was replaced by partisanly rude conduct. Hobbs was one of three who spoke against, while there were four who spoke for, Gwin T. Turner's motion that the SBC "request the Sunday School Board to withdraw Volume 1 [of the *Broadman Bible Commentary*] from further distribution and that it be rewritten with due consideration of the conservative viewpoint."¹⁹ The *Baptist Standard* reported that Hobbs said that "the convention was not in a position to make a decision."²⁰ But Hobbs recalled that he "noted that [G. Henton] Davies [had] discussed several views of Abraham's offering of Isaac before stating his own opinion" but that with one minute remaining, in which he wished to argue that Turner's motion was contrary to the SBC Constitution, numerous messengers "hooted and hollered that Hobbs was speaking beyond his three minute time limit," and Hobbs left the podium.²¹ Turner's motion was adopted by a vote of 5,394 to 2,170.²² At Denver, Hobbs was, on the other hand, successful in opposing Jerry Don Abernathy's motion to insert a new sentence on the inspiration, authenticity, and authority of the Bible into the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message. Hobbs argued, according to the *Baptist Messenger*, that the addition was "unnecessary."²³ At the session's close, the Oklahoman appealed to the messengers to consider the decisions of the body as "our decisions" and to "maintain and magnify our unity under the lordship of Christ."²⁴

In the 1979 SBC session at Houston, Hobbs spoke in support of Wayne Dehoney's motion that the "Convention reaffirm the 1963 Baptist Faith and

¹⁸Fletcher, *The Southern Baptist Convention*, 97–99.

¹⁹SBC, *Annual* (1970), 76, 63.

²⁰Don McGregor, "Volume Withdrawn; Agency Uncensured," *Baptist Standard*, 10 June 1970, 3.

²¹Faught, "The Denominationalism of Herschel H. Hobbs (1907–1995)," 13–14, based on Hobbs, *My Faith and Message*, 220–21. According to a Baptist Press story, "editorial reactions to the SBC in Denver prompted at least 17 Baptist state papers . . . to question editorially the 'unChristian,' 'bitter,' 'hostile,' 'vitriolic,' 'arrogant,' 'unforgiving,' and 'militant' spirit and attitude the editors said some convention messengers exhibited." "Editorials Rap 'Hostile' Denver Spirit," *The Alabama Baptist*, 25 June 1970, 1.

²²SBC, *Annual* (1970), 77–78.

²³*Ibid.*, 74, 78, 81–82; Abernathy's motion failed by 2,920 to 3,936. "Bible Commentary Rejected," *Baptist Messenger*, 11 June 1970, 4. According to James T. Draper Jr. (with John Perry), *LifeWay Legacy: A Personal History of LifeWay Christian Resources and the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), Hobbs "was shouted off the platform."

²⁴SBC, *Annual* (1970), 83.

Message Statement on the Scriptures,” and the motion passed,²⁵ while Larry Lewis’s resolution on doctrinal integrity vis-à-vis the SBC seminaries was ruled out of order.²⁶ In 1980 at St. Louis, Hobbs spoke effectively against the motion by Wayne A. Stevens, which would prescribe “quadrennial sessions” of the SBC with “regional conferences . . . in the intervening years,” and the motion failed.²⁷ Hobbs argued that the business of the SBC was “too big” for quadrennial meetings.²⁸ But on a more substantive issue Hobbs was not successful. To the resolution on doctrinal integrity, now more specific by requiring SBC seminary professors to teach “the infallibility of the original manuscripts” of the Bible, Hobbs offered an amendment which, in place of this more specific language, would strongly urge seminary trustees and administrators to make sure that all teaching is “within the framework of the Abstract of Principles and/or the Baptist Faith and Message Statement of 1963.” The amendment failed, and the resolution was adopted.²⁹ Bill J. Leonard has reported that Hobbs “was drowned out by a chorus of boos from the audience,”³⁰ and, according to Jesse Fletcher, it was now “certainly obvious” that “traditional leadership no longer wielded its old power.”³¹

At the 1985 SBC session in Dallas, Hobbs the veteran statesman was named to the 22-member Peace Committee as proposed by Bill Hickem of Florida and Franklin Paschall of Tennessee.³² He would be considered a neutral or nonaligned member.³³ At Dallas the Oklahoma pastor was successful in speaking against the motion by Anthony Scotto of Florida to remove the words “mixture of” from article one of the Baptist Faith and Message so that it would read “truth, without any error, for its matter.”³⁴ Hobbs noted that the words had been taken from the 1925 Baptist Faith and Message, which had taken them from the 1833 New Hampshire Confession. Moreover, he argued, Adrian Rogers and Paul Pressler had endorsed the language.³⁵ Scotto’s motion failed.³⁶ As a member of the Peace Committee, the Oklahoman successfully contended that the four indicia of the conservative understanding

²⁵Ibid., 1979, 31, 45.

²⁶Ibid., 32, 55–56.

²⁷Ibid., 1980, 29, 43.

²⁸Toby Druin, “1980 Convention Asserted Conservatism,” *Baptist Standard*, 18 June 1980, 3; see also “Barnett Loses Change Bid,” *Baptist Messenger*, 19 June 1980, 9.

²⁹SBC, *Annual* (1980), 50–51. Hobbs argued against the resolution on the basis that it was a threat to Baptist freedom and could lead to creedalism. “Messengers Debate Abortion, Doctrinal Integrity, School Prayer Issues,” *Word and Way*, 19 June 1980, 4.

³⁰Bill J. Leonard, *God’s Last and Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 52.

³¹Fletcher, *The Southern Baptist Convention*, 268.

³²SBC, *Annual* (1985), 64–65, 77–78.

³³Hobbs, *My Faith and Message*, 254.

³⁴SBC, *Annual* (1985), 73, 87. Fletcher, *The Southern Baptist Convention*, 284, misinterpreted this action when he reported: “Hobbs was roundly defeated when he made an effort to alter the Baptist Faith and Message to a more conciliatory position for inerrantists.”

³⁵“Messengers Defeat Revision of Statement,” *Baptist Standard*, 19 June 1985, 9.

³⁶SBC, *Annual* (1985), 87.

of the Bible (Adam and Eve as historical, named authors of biblical books as authors, historicity of miracles, and accuracy of historical narratives) should be retained as “Findings” in the committee report rather than be made “Recommendations.”³⁷ In 1993, Hobbs urged Oklahoma “moderates” “to get in or get out” of the newly formed Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF).³⁸ In February 1993, the veteran Southern Baptist statesman issued to Baptist news media an eight-page proposal entitled “Food for Thought.” He called upon the SBC’s “fundamental-conservative leaders to share power with their moderate-conservative brethren” by adhering to the Peace Committee’s recommendation for balanced appointments to boards, commissions, and committees. Convention leaders are not free to act contrary to this recommendation, Hobbs argued, and following it could end the controversy and give the CBF “no valid reason to exist.” Neither Morris Chapman of the SBC Executive Committee nor Cecil Sherman of the CBF was encouraging in response, but Hobbs urged both sides to come together at the forthcoming SBC session in Houston.³⁹ In May, Lloyd Elder issued “a 16-page research report on SBC trends” in which he advocated amending the SBC constitution and bylaws so as to make five changes:

1. Involve state conventions in the nomination of half the people to serve on SBC boards, commissions, and committees.
2. Change how messengers qualify for the SBC annual meeting.
3. Increase the maximum number of messengers from a church from 10 to 20.
4. Have the SBC’s president and first vice president be elected for two years and alternate between lay people and ordained ministers.
5. Have the convention be held every two years and include simultaneous regional conventions through television hook-ups.

Chapman criticized the Elder proposal as a “total departure from time-honored, historic Southern Baptist practice.” On 31 May, Hobbs and Elder met and agreed to combine their agendas and invited “all state convention presidents, state convention board chairmen, and state convention executive directors to a dialogue session June 14 in Houston” “as a last-ditch effort to save the SBC from splitting or dwindling away.”⁴⁰ A committee from the 14 June meeting was to continue to study the proposals,⁴¹ but neither side had

³⁷Ibid., 1987, 232–42; Hobbs, *My Faith and Message*, 262–63.

³⁸Fletcher, *The Southern Baptist Convention*, 342.

³⁹Greg Warner, “Hobbs Urges SBC Leaders to Share Power,” *Baptist Standard*, 24 February 1993, 3, 5.

⁴⁰Mark Wingfield, “Hobbs, Elder Ask New ‘Mission Movement,’” *Baptist Standard*, 9 June 1993, 3–4.

⁴¹Presnall H. Wood, “SBC Houston: A Message-Sending Meeting,” *Baptist Standard*,

the will to move toward implementation.⁴² Neither side was listening to the veteran denominational leader from Oklahoma or to the former president of the Sunday School Board.

II

What has been Herschel Hobbs's legacy during the sixteen years since his death, whether in the CBF or in the SBC? In 1987, Leon McBeth had written that "future [Baptist] historians must take account" of Hobbs as a pastor-theologian.⁴³ In 2000, Jerry Faught reckoned him as "perhaps the finest denominational statesman Southern Baptists have ever known" and one who "prized denominational solidarity, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the gospel."⁴⁴ In 2001, David Dockery identified Hobbs as "one of the most influential and shaping leaders in Southern Baptist life in the twentieth century."⁴⁵ But in the twenty-first century has Hobbs been read, discussed, and/or followed?

It is hardly to be disputed that E.Y. Mullins serves as the leading theological influence in the CBF.⁴⁶ Nor is it likely to be disputed that Hobbs was the leading exponent of Mullins's theology during the last half of the twentieth century.⁴⁷ One would have reason to expect that during the two decades of its existence the CBF would exhibit a strong emphasis on the theology of Hobbs, but the opposite has occurred. The leading living thinker in the CBF, Walter B. Shurden, has celebrated Hobbs but has not habitually quoted from Hobbs's writings. In a study course book published in 1987, Shurden alluded to Hobbs as "probably" the "most prominent denominational statesman" among Southern Baptists.⁴⁸ But thereafter Shurden has been silent as to the Oklahoma pastor. In *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms*,⁴⁹ he did not mention or quote from Hobbs or list any writing of his in a bibliography. In the four books edited by Shurden and designed to explicate these freedoms,⁵⁰ no author cited or quoted from Hobbs or included him in a

23 June 1993, 6.

⁴²Fletcher, *The Southern Baptist Convention*, 375.

⁴³McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 676.

⁴⁴Faught, "The Denominationalism of Herschel H. Hobbs (1907–1995)," 17.

⁴⁵Dockery, "Herschel H. Hobbs," 216.

⁴⁶*Review and Expositor* 96.1 (Winter 1999); *Baptist History and Heritage* 43.1 (Winter 2008).

⁴⁷See especially Herschel H. Hobbs (with E.Y. Mullins), *The Axioms of Religion* (Nashville: Broadman, 1978). In 1980, Walter B. Shurden called Hobbs "the E.Y. Mullins' of the 1960s and 1970s." "The Pastor as Denominational Theologian in Southern Baptist History," *Baptist History and Heritage*, 15.3 (July 1980): 21.

⁴⁸Walter B. Shurden, *The Doctrine of Priesthood of Believers* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1987), 21–22.

⁴⁹Walter B. Shurden, *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1993).

⁵⁰Walter B. Shurden, ed., *Proclaiming the Vision: The Bible* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1994); idem, *Proclaiming the Vision: The Church* (ibid., 1996); idem, *Proclaiming the Vision: Religious Liberty* (ibid., 1997); idem, *Proclaiming the Vision: Baptism, Lord's Supper*

bibliography. In a book highly critical of “fundamentalist” control of the SBC, Bruce T. Gourley wrote three pages on the Elliott Controversy and the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message without mentioning the name of Hobbs.⁵¹ In a 23-page booklet on Baptist theology weighted toward academic theologians rather than pastor-theologians,⁵² Fisher H. Humphreys made no mention of Hobbs. In their 224-page history of Baptists in the United States, Pamela R. Durso and Keith E. Durso have made no mention of Hobbs while devoting three pages to Mullins.⁵³

How has Hobbs fared in the SBC? Broadman & Holman, as of September 2011, has three⁵⁴ of Hobbs’s books in print and as ebooks: *Fundamentals of Our Faith*, *What Baptists Believe*, and *The Illustrated Life of Jesus*.⁵⁵ But in a major textbook in systematic theology with multiple authors for use in SBC seminaries, published in 2007, there was little reference to Hobbs or any of his writings in its fifteen chapters.⁵⁶ On the other hand, two Southern Baptist volumes, the one espousing and the other refuting Dortian Calvinism, have taken note of Hobbs. In the pro-Calvinist volume David Dockery asserted that Hobbs “led Southern Baptists . . . toward a modified understanding of predestination and foreknowledge,” “was almost a thoroughgoing Arminian who believed in eternal security, but . . . was also a thoroughgoing biblicist,” and “would not have been one of those trying to lead Southern Baptists to become another liberal mainline denomination.”⁵⁷ Malcolm B. Yarnell III similarly noted Hobbs’s redefinition of election “as an eternal redemptive plan for those who are ‘in Christ’” and his defense of perseverance.⁵⁸ In the anti-Calvinist volume Jerry Vines quoted Hobbs concerning John 3:16 and 2 Timothy 3:16,⁵⁹ and Richard D. Land cited two of Hobbs’s books.⁶⁰ But the most comprehensive and celebrative treatment of Hobbs,

(*ibid.*, 1999).

⁵¹Bruce T. Gourley, *The Godmakers: A Legacy of the Southern Baptist Convention?* (Franklin, TN: Providence House, 1996), 52–54, 94–95, 99–100.

⁵²Fisher H. Humphreys, *Baptist Theology: A Really Short Version* (Brentwood, TN: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2007).

⁵³Pamela R. Durso and Keith E. Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States* (Brentwood, TN: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2006), esp. 177–79. James P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, C.H. Toy, W.B. Riley, and Billy Graham were also not mentioned.

⁵⁴Selma Wilson to James Leo Garrett Jr., 7 September 2011. During the preceding six months more than 1,000 copies of these books were sold. Two of the three are doctrinal.

⁵⁵*The Illustrated Life of Jesus* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2000).

⁵⁶Daniel L. Akin, ed., *A Theology for the Church* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007). Nor was there much reference to W.A. Criswell.

⁵⁷David S. Dockery, “Southern Baptists and Calvinism: A Historical Look,” in *Calvinism: A Southern Baptist Dialogue*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Brad J. Waggoner (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008), 38–39. See also 40, 45.

⁵⁸Malcolm B. Yarnell III, “Calvinism: Cause for Rejoicing, Cause for Concern,” in *Calvinism*, ed. Clendenen and Waggoner, 84. See also 189, 260.

⁵⁹Jerry Vines, “Sermon on John 3:16,” in *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism*, ed. David L. Allen and Steve W. Lemke (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 13, 24.

⁶⁰Richard D. Land, “Congruent Election: Understanding Salvation from an ‘Eternal

though not uncritical, from an SBC author has been by Dockery.⁶¹ The only treatment that compares with Dockery, whether from the SBC or the CBF, has been Jerry Faught's carefully researched Gaskin Lectures.⁶² Had Hobbs lived to respond to R. Albert Mohler's application of triage in the hospital emergency room or disaster medicine so as to foster three levels of theological beliefs,⁶³ one might indeed anticipate that the Oklahoman would have agreed.

Is there a basis for advocating a renewal of interest today in the writings and leadership of Herschel Hobbs? I would argue in the affirmative. The works of Hobbs in biblical exegesis and exposition is foundational. His "unity in diversity" needs reconsideration. The CBF needs a focus on unity, and the SBC on diversity. Hobbs's textual, expository, and topical sermons make him a preacher for all seasons. His passion for evangelism and missions could help pastors and churches to get serious about church planting and about people groups. In a time when parachurch movements have attracted many and denominational loyalty is waning among many, Hobbs looms large as an exemplary denominational servant-leader. A renewal of interest in Hobbs does not require acceptance of all his positions, such as, for example, election as a plan, his idiosyncratic interpretation of Hebrews 6:1–6, or his anti-creedalism unbalanced by legitimate confessionalism.

Let representatives of the CBF break their silence concerning Hobbs so as not only to find him as Mullins *redivivus* but also as the full-orbed Baptist leader that he was. Let Broadman & Holman inaugurate a new series of twentieth-century Baptist classics, of which the republication of Hobbs's sermons would be a central feature, and I nominate five of these.⁶⁴ Let the doctoral studies in leadership⁶⁵ give serious attention to Hobbs's leadership. Let Oklahoma Baptist University make sure that a well-researched, well-written biography of Hobbs be written and published. Such would be some of the features of a renewal of attention to Oklahoma's adopted son, Herschel Harold Hobbs.

Now' Perspective," in *Whosoever Will*, ed. Allen and Lemke, 51n23, 55n31.

⁶¹Dockery, "Herschel H. Hobbs"; idem, "The Life and Legacy of Herschel H. Hobbs (1907–1995)."

⁶²Faught, "The Biblical Theology of Herschel H. Hobbs"; idem, "The Denominationalism of Herschel H. Hobbs (1907–1995)." Both Dockery and Faught had interviews with Hobbs.

⁶³<http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/07/12a-call-for-theological-triage-and-christian-maturity/> (Accessioned 14 September 2011).

⁶⁴*Who Is This?* (Nashville: Broadman, 1952), sermons on Christology; *The Gospel of Giving* (Nashville: Broadman, 1954); *Moses' Mighty Men* (Nashville: Broadman, 1958), sermons on all the men associated with Moses; *The Crucial Words from Calvary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1959), sermons on Jesus' seven words from the cross; and *Messages on the Resurrection* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1959), sermons on 1 Corinthians 15.

⁶⁵As at Dallas Baptist University.

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