

A Modern-Day Reformation: The Battle for the Bible in the Southern Baptist Convention

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A. Theological Controversies—All concern the relationship of higher criticism to the full truthfulness of biblical text.

1. The Toy Controversy

2. The Evolution Controversy

3. The Elliott Controversy

4. The Broadman Commentary Controversy

- a. Planned in 1962 by Broadman Press**
- b. Volume 1 published 1969; Clifton J. Allen, Editor and writer of Introductory article on the Bible.**
- c. G. Henton Davies Writer of Commentary on Genesis**
- d. SBC 1970, Gwin Turner moved its withdrawal to be rewritten “with due consideration of the conservative viewpoint – Passed 5,394 to 2,170**
- e. SBC 1972, motion to withdraw entire set, new editor, “Truth without any error” – Defeated**

5. The Inerrancy/Baptist Identity Controversy

- a. *Why I Preach the Bible is Literally True* – 1969, W. A. Criswell**
- b. *The Battle for the Bible* – Harold Lindsell. 1976**
- c. SBC, Houston 1979**
- d. Dilday’s 1984 convention sermon and Honeycutt’s “Holy War” convocation**
- e. Glorieta Statement, 1986**

- f. Peace Committee Report [appointed, '85] 1987- Showed significant theological divergence;**
- g. Battle of New Orleans, 1990; Election of Morris Chapman**
- h. Report of Presidential Theological Study committee – 1994**
- i. Eventual clarity from moderates on the issue**
- j. Baptist Faith and Message, 2000**

6. The Inerrancy Question

- a. Is the issue really theological?**
- b. Confusion on the Autographs: Textually, theologically, Historically**
- c. Summary of the Controversy's developments**
 - Some, at least, of the moderate faction clearly rejected inerrancy.**
 - Some who for political reasons had resisted the concept of inerrancy found that they did indeed believe in the historic understanding of the inerrancy of Scripture.**
 - Moderates finally admitted that, at bottom the controversy was about theology, not political maneuvering for power, even when they remained unconvinced of conservative positions.**
 - Interest in the study of Baptist history greatly increased**
 - New American Commentary series commissioned by Sunday School Board**
 - The controversy, amazingly, was won by the conservatives, even though such victories within the continuing ebb and flow of doctrinal study are seldom final. Change in leadership and doctrinal orientation of all SBC agencies and institutions.**
 - The doctrine of inerrancy has undergone intense scrutiny and its terms defined so carefully, that none should profess confusion over the term.**