The Baptists

Beginnings in Britain - Vol 1

Tom Nettles

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DESCRIPTION

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Tom Nettles is Senior Professor of Historical Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

ENDORSEMENTS

Tom Nettles, The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming A Baptist Identity (Beginnings in Britain), Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2005. 390pp. Hardcover, $29.99.

Tom Nettles teaches at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the flagship seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Understanding history demands patience, humility, and love. If historical personalities are not treated by one who exercises these virtues, history easily becomes a club wielded by those primarily interested in pursuing their own agenda. Nettles exercises patience, humility, and love, and this is evidenced in his ability to explain why General Baptists (whose positions Nettles' does not hold), for instance, rejected the conclusions of the Particular Baptists (with whom Nettles agrees). One sometimes wonders if the contemporary heirs of these disputes have taken the time to understand why their opponents have rejected their conclusions. The SBC desperately needs a patient, humble, loving treatment of its Baptist heritage, and this is exactly what Tom Nettles has provided. The book under review here, Beginnings in Britain, is the first of a projected three volume series.

This volume is broken down into three parts: In Part I, "Competing Models in Setting the Profile," Nettles describes previous summaries of Baptist history and identifies major points of division among those who identify themselves as Baptists. Nettles describes two approaches to being Baptist. The first he labels "the soul-liberty party," which identifies with the enlightenment and emphasizes the primacy of Christian experience. The second, which Nettles argues for, identifies with the reformation, historic Christian orthodoxy, evangelicalism, theologically integrated ecclesiology, and a conscientious Confessionalism. Nettles calls this the "coherent-truth model." The "soul-liberty" people emphasize the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer to the point that each individual believer can pick and choose which parts of the Bible are authoritative. The "coherent-truth" people submit themselves to the authority of both Scripture and orthodox Christian thought as represented in historic creeds and confessions.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

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