



## E. Y. Mullins

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**F**ew individuals had as great an influence on Baptists in the twentieth century as did Edgar Young Mullins. A native Texan, Mullins graduated from Texas A & M and went to pastor in the North. Leaving a successful pastorate to assume the presidency of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the wake of the Whitsitt controversy, Mullins devoted the remainder of his life to two great endeavors, theological education and Baptist unity. One biographer, William E. Ellis, identifies Mullins as *A Man of Books and a Man of the People*.

From 1899 to 1928, Mullins served as president and professor of theology at Southern Seminary, guiding that institution in a strategic relocation of its campus and in further strengthening its academic program. As a writer, he contributed significantly to theological education and the development of Baptist theology through such important texts as *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression* and *The Axioms of Religion*. As a denominational leader, he contributed to unity through his participation in the Baptist World Alliance and his leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention. When the Convention was threatened with division over the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the 1920s, it was Mullins who steered the Convention carefully to a moderate, conservative position in the conflict. He served as the primary author of the revision of the New Hampshire Confession of faith into the *1925 Baptist Faith and Message* that became Southern Baptists' first confession of faith. In the preface he and his committee thoughtfully explained the proper purpose and limitations of a Baptist confession of faith.

Mullins's theology emphasized the authority of the Bible and the importance of Christian experience. His individual spirit was one of reconciliation and compromise but also one of strong personal conviction. He defined quality Baptist seminary education and stressed personal integrity. In his article on Mullins, Fisher Humphreys remarks that his "greatest theological achievement may have been to guide Baptists, especially Southern Baptists, away from some of the more extreme expressions of Calvinism and Landmarkism."

Humphreys adds, "Mullins was a responsible, careful theologian; he read widely; he thought carefully; he was constructive; he spoke to the concerns of his time; he was not rationalistic, narrow, vague, or overly defensive; he was a great Baptist theologian."

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