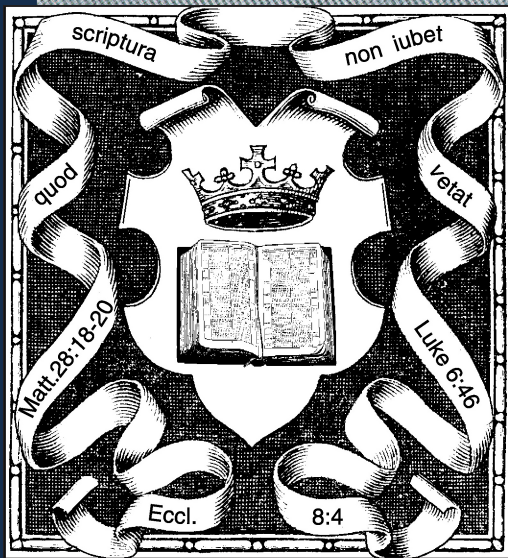
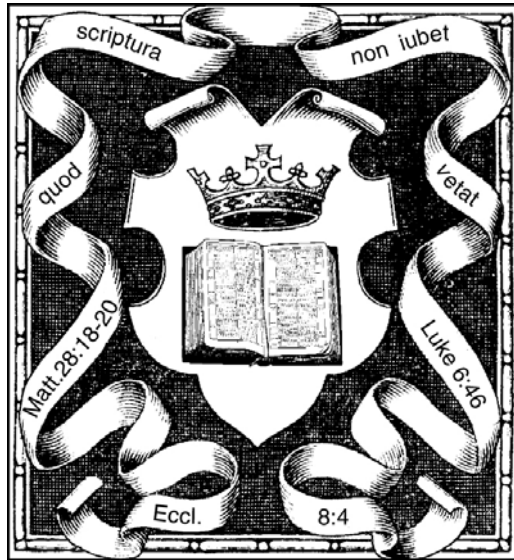


The Baptist Distinctives Series
Number 10



Baptism In Its Mode and Subjects

Patrick H. Mell



Quod scriptura, non iubet vetat

The Latin translates, “What is not commanded in scripture, is forbidden:”

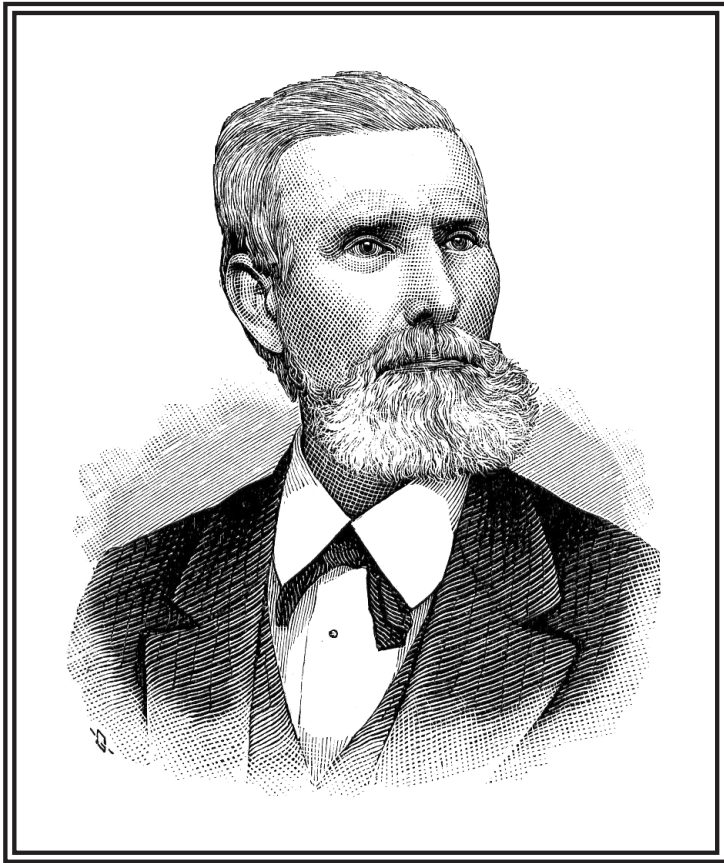
On the Cover: Baptists rejoice to hold in common with other evangelicals the main principles of the orthodox Christian faith. However, there are points of difference and these differences are significant. In fact, because these differences arise out of God’s revealed will, they are of vital importance. Hence, the barriers of separation between Baptists and others can hardly be considered a trifling matter. To suppose that Baptists are kept apart solely by their views on Baptism or the Lord’s Supper is a regrettable misunderstanding. Baptists hold views which distinguish them from Catholics, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Pentecostals, and Presbyterians, and the differences are so great as not only to justify, but to demand, the separate denominational existence of Baptists. Some people think Baptists ought not teach and emphasize their differences but as E.J. Forrester stated in 1893, “Any denomination that has views which justify its separate existence, is bound to promulgate those views. If those views are of sufficient importance to justify a separate existence, they are important enough to create a duty for their promulgation ... the very same reasons which justify the separate existence of any denomination make it the duty of that denomination to teach the distinctive doctrines upon which its separate existence rests.” If Baptists have a right to a separate denominational life, it is their duty to propagate their distinctive principles, without which their separate life cannot be justified or maintained.

Many among today’s professing Baptists have an agenda to revise the Baptist distinctives and redefine what it means to be a Baptist. Others don’t understand why it even matters. The books being reproduced in the *Baptist Distinctives Series* are republished in order that Baptists from the past may state, explain and defend the primary Baptist distinctives as they understood them. It is hoped that this Series will provide a more thorough historical perspective on what it means to be distinctively Baptist.

The Lord Jesus Christ asked, “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46). The immediate context surrounding this question explains what it means to be a true disciple of Christ. Addressing the same issue, Christ’s question is meant to show that a confession of discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ is inconsistent and untrue if it is not accompanied with a corresponding submission to His authoritative commands. Christ’s question teaches us that a true recognition of His authority as Lord inevitably includes a submission to the authority of His Word. Hence, with this question Christ has made it forever impossible to separate His authority as King from the authority of His Word. These two principles—the authority of Christ as King and the authority of His Word—are the two most fundamental Baptist distinctives. The first gives rise to the second and out of these two all the other Baptist distinctives emanate. As F.M. Jans wrote in 1894, “Loyalty to Christ as King, manifesting itself in a constant and unswerving obedience to His will as revealed in His written Word, is the real source of all the Baptist distinctives.” In the search for the *primary* Baptist distinctive many have settled on the Lordship of Christ as the most basic distinctive. Strangely, in doing this, some have attempted to separate Christ’s Lordship from the authority of Scripture, as if you could embrace Christ’s authority without submitting to what He commanded. However, while Christ’s Lordship and Kingly authority can be isolated and considered essentially for discussion’s sake, we see from Christ’s own words in Luke 6:46 that His Lordship is really inseparable from His Word and, with regard to real Christian discipleship, there can be no practical submission to the one without a practical submission to the other.

In the symbol above the Kingly Crown and the Open Bible represent the inseparable truths of Christ’s Kingly and Biblical authority. The Crown and Bible graphics are supplemented by three Bible verses (Ecclesiastes 8:4, Matthew 28:18-20, and Luke 6:46) that reiterate and reinforce the inextricable connection between the authority of Christ as King and the authority of His Word. The truths symbolized by these components are further emphasized by the Latin quotation - *quod scriptura, non iubet vetat*— *i.e.*, “What is not commanded in scripture, is forbidden.” This Latin quote has been considered historically as a summary statement of the regulative principle of Scripture. Together these various symbolic components converge to exhibit the two most foundational Baptist Distinctives out of which all the other Baptist Distinctives arise. Consequently, we have chosen this composite symbol as a logo to represent the primary truths set forth in the *Baptist Distinctives Series*.

BAPTISM
IN ITS
MODE & SUBJECTS



PATRICK HUES MELL
1814-1888

BAPTISM
IN ITS
MODE & SUBJECTS

BY

P. H. MELL.

Professor of Greek and Latin, Mercer University, GA

With a Biographical Sketch of the Author by John Franklin Jones



CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA
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Thou hast given a *standard* to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth.
-- Psalm 60:4

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THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM

lux lucet in tenebris

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

ISBN# 1579784208

DEDICATION.



TO THE
ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH AND CONGREGATION,
IN
OGLETHORPE COUNTY, GEORGIA,
THIS VOLUME
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE
PASTOR.

P R E F A C E .

THIS publication owes its existence to the following circumstances: During the month of August last, the Lord blessed the church at Antioch, of which I am the pastor, with a season of refreshing from his presence. During its progress, we had, for nearly two weeks, daily occasion to administer the ordinance of baptism. As is my custom, I availed myself of the opportunity afforded, to address the people at the water's side on the subject—making some nine or ten addresses in all, and going over, in a hasty and superficial way, nearly all the references to the ordinance in the Scriptures. These remarks, as was to have been expected, created some little interest in the minds of those opposed to them.

Within a mile of Antioch is situated a Methodist Meeting House, called "Centre." The next "Quarterly Conference" appointed the very estimable gentleman, Rev. Wm. J. Parks, the Presiding Elder, to preach a sermon on Baptism at "Centre" Meeting House. It was never publicly avowed, I believe, but it was very generally understood, that it was to be a reply to my remarks at the water's side. After giving very general publicity to the appointment in all the surrounding region, the sermon was preached to a large congregation on Thursday, the 29th of October. I attended, and received all that courtesy which is due from one gentleman and Christian to another. And it gives me pleasure to testify to the very excellent spirit which my Methodist

brethren have, as far as I know, manifested in this *quasi* controversy.

On the next two Lord's days succeeding, I preached at Antioch, taking up baptism as a subject, and replying to the arguments of Mr. Parks and others. There I expected the matter to rest, as far, at least, as I was concerned. On the 6th of November my church, by unanimous vote, requested me to write out my remarks for publication, and served me, through their committee, with the following formal request :

“ OGLETHORPE CO., GA., Nov. 6th, 1852.

Rev. P. H. Mell.

DEAR BROTHER :—At a regular Conference of the church at Antioch, the undersigned committee were appointed to solicit from you, for publication, a copy of your very instructive discourses delivered at that place on the subject of baptism.

“ Your compliance with this request will prove a source of gratification to your immediate brethren, and will, we doubt not, be productive of lasting good to the Baptist denomination generally, &c. Signed by William Edwards, A. J. Lumpkin, W. Thos. Edwards, John A. Bell and Marshall W. Edwards, Committee.”

Not having a reason which the church would consider satisfactory, for declining, I consented to write out my sermons according to their request. At first, I hoped I could compress them within the compass of a pamphlet of medium size ; but, as I wrote, the subject expanded under my hands, so that I had very soon to abandon this idea in despair. Besides, as the subject on which I was writing was a controverted one, I very soon became convinced that if I published at all, prudence would require that I should go into it in detail, and guard it at every point ; for what advantage will a wall, built never so impregably in front, be to one, if his enemy have free and unobstructed access to him in the

rear? I, therefore, resigned myself, with all the philosophy I could command, to the inevitable necessity that was upon me, *to write a book on baptism*—as well as I could. And I have done it. It is customary, I believe, for writers to beg pardon of their readers—at least to apologize for publishing a book, especially on this subject of baptism. Let the above, then, be received as my apology. If it be not satisfactory, I cannot help it—now.

Besides preaching on the subject, Mr. Parks distributed in our community, a number of works, large and small, on baptism, the most conspicuous of which was a new work by Dr. Summers, of Charleston.* All these, of course, I had to attempt to answer; and the reader will find that I have done so, though the name of Dr. Summers alone is mentioned. Besides these, I have consulted all the standard pedobaptist authors whose works I could get access to; among the rest Drs. Woods and Miller, of this country, and Dr. Wardlaw of Europe—and have made their arguments the bases of my replies.

My desire has been to furnish an exposition of the subject that the vast body of the people can appreciate; and I have endeavored to adapt the argument that is based upon Greek criticisms even, to the apprehension of the common-sense reader. And I beg the unlearned not to be disheartened when they encounter crooked Greek words. Let them go bravely on, and who knows what reward they may get for their pains?

It will be observed that I do not hesitate to seek our opponents in all the little irrelevant corners in which they have hid themselves, and have endeavored to prove everything which they have demanded, however unreasonably, at my hands. Our writers have generally contented themselves, in such cases, with saying, the requirement is unreasonable, or the proof is implied already, or the burden of proof rests on somebody else, and they are sus-

* *Baptism: A Treatise on the nature, perpetuity, subjects, administration, mode and use of the initiating ordinance of the Christian Church. With an Appendix.* By Thomas O. Summers. Richmond, Va. and Louisville, Ky.: Published by John Early, for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South—1852.

tained in their course by the principles of logic. But, unfortunately, the large majority of readers are not logicians, and cannot tell upon whom the burden of proof lies. I have adapted my argument, therefore, not so much to the rules of logic as to the condition and the wants of the great mass for whom I write. Whether I have succeeded or not, is a question for others to decide, not me.

Mercer University, Ga., Jan. 1853.

CHAP. II.—BAPTISM IS IMMERSION: PROVED FROM EXAMPLES OF ITS ADMINISTRATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHERE DETAILS ARE GIVEN, - - -	45
Sec. I. The baptism of the Saviour, -	ib
The Greek prepositions <i>en, eis</i> and <i>apo</i> ,	49
Sec. II. John's baptism Christian baptism,	61
Sec. III. Baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch,	80
1. Objections to the immersion of the eunuch answered, - - -	ib
2. The Greek prepositions <i>eis</i> and <i>ek</i> are not properly rendered, - - -	82
3. Not a supply of water in the desert,	93
4. No mention made of a change of ap- parel, - - -	94
CHAP. III.—THE INSTANCES OF BAPTISM WHERE DETAILS ARE NOT GIVEN, CONSISTENT WITH THE MEANING OF THE WORD, - - -	97
Dr. Summers' inconsistency in not denying the va- lidity of immersion, - - -	ib
His courtesy, - - -	98
Sec. I. Enon near to Salim. The three thou- sand on the day of Pentecost,	102
Objections to their immersion answered. -	ib
1. Not time enough, - - -	104
2. Not water enough in Jerusalem,	107
3. The subjects were without change of raiment, - - -	114
Sec. II. The baptism of Cornelius, -	ib
The baptism of Lydia, -	116
Baptism of the jailor, - -	120
Baptism of Saul of Tarsus, -	122
CHAP. IV.—THE IMPORT OF THE ORDINANCE, -	126
Objections to the import answered, -	128
1. The ordinance is emblematical of the Spirit's operations, - - -	130
2. It conforms in mode to the mode of the Spirit's operations, - - -	131
3. Christ was not buried, - - -	140
4. The burial of Christ was of no importance, -	ib
5. The burial of Christ, if important, not so much so as his death, - - -	141

6. Immersion does not properly represent the burial of Christ, - - -	142
CHAP. V.—THE METAPHORICAL USES OF THE WORD BAPTISM SHOW THAT ITS FORM IS IMMERSION AND NOTHING ELSE, - - -	
1. "I have a baptism to be baptized with,"	ib
2. Those baptized "have put on Christ,"	144
3. The Israelites at the Red Sea, -	ib
4. Salvation by baptism and by Noah's ark,	153
5. Baptism in the Holy Ghost, -	154
6. Other metaphorical allusions, -	155
CHAP. VI.—CORROBORATIVE ARGUMENTS — THE GREEK CHURCH, - - -	
Testimony of Ecclesiastical History, -	ib
CHAP. VII.—GENERAL OBJECTIONS ANSWERED, -	
1. Modes are not essential, - - -	ib
2. Immersion is an inconvenient rite,	163
3. Immersion impossible in some places because of cold, and in others because of scarcity of water, - - -	164
4. Immersion sometimes dangerous, and feeble ministers cannot administer it, -	165
5. It is an indecent rite, - - -	169
6. The Baptists rebaptize because they believe theirs are the only churches, -	170
7. Restricted communion, - - -	187
8. The Baptists make baptism a saving ordi- nance, - - -	192

PART SECOND.

THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM,	197
CHAP. I.—NO PRECEPT IN THE SCRIPTURES FOR THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS, - - -	
Sec. I. The commission affords no warrant,	ib
Objections answered, - - -	205
1. The disciples understood the commis- sion according to what they knew of Jewish proselyte baptism, -	ib
2. We must put ourselves into the position of the disciples as Jews,	206

3. If infants are not provided for in the commission, then they are not saved,	207
4. The commission does not forbid infant baptism,	210
Sec. II. Passages of Scripture usually relied on to prove it,	211
Mark 10: 13-16,	213
Inconsistency of Pedobaptists,	216
Answer to the argument from a Calvinist,	217
Answer to the argument from an Arminian,	223
Sec. III. Passages relied on, continued, 1 Cor. 7: 14 ; Acts 2: 39,	231
CHAP. II.—NO EXAMPLE IN THE SCRIPTURES OF THE BAPTISM OF ANY OTHERS THAN BELIEVERS,	
Sec. I. Household baptisms,	ib
Household of Cornelius,	236
Household of Lydia,	237
Sec. II. Household baptisms continued--the jailor,	247
CHAP. III.—INFANT BAPTISM CANNOT BE SUSTAINED BY INFERENCE AND ANALOGY,	
Sec. I. Female communion,	ib
Sec. II. Infant baptism not founded on the natural relations between pious parents and their children,	261
Sec. III. The Abrahamic covenant furnishes no support to infant baptism,	271
Sec. IV. The "Jewish church" and the Christian church not the same under different dispensations,	285
CHAP. IV.—THE TESTIMONY OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY SHOWS THAT INFANT BAPTISM WAS NOT INSTITUTED BY CHRIST,	
Conclusion,	295

INTRODUCTION.

It is, by general consent, in the Evangelical Christian world, agreed, that the Lord Jesus Christ has instituted but two ordinances, which are to be perpetually observed by his churches—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These originate not in the nature of things, but owe their existence to the will, and depend for their validity upon the authority, of the King in Zion. Without a dissenting voice, all the more important Evangelical denominations in this country maintain that it is the duty of every spiritual subject of Christ to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; but, unhappily, when they come to decide upon the form and the design of this ordinance, they are sadly at variance. This disagreement is not to be ascribed, hastily, to a want of honesty in those who differ from us: for from whence did we obtain infallibility, and who has conferred upon us the right "to judge another man's servant?" And yet it cannot, without irreverence, be said that the source of difference can be traced to the obscurity of the terms in which Christ has instituted his ordinance, nor to the unintelligibility of the record which the Holy Spirit has given of the manner in which it was administered by his

immediate disciples. We cannot, without dishonoring the Saviour, suppose, either that he did not have a clear conception of the design and form of his ordinance, or that he, inadvertently or otherwise, made use of terms, which, when interpreted according to the common rules of language, convey any other than the idea which he intended; and the Scriptures, in all that pertain to Christian duty, and to the way of salvation, are so plain, that any humble inquirer after the will of God, who uses diligence, can, in these respects, be "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Why, then, should there be such a difference of opinion among those who, in a judgment of charity, are equally honest?

Originally, doubtless, all the errors and divisions among the professed followers of Christ, had their source in the ignorance and wickedness that existed in the so-called Church. At the present time, however, and in this country, men find the Christian world divided into different sects, all of whom afford evidence, more or less conclusive, of possessing the favor of God, and the spirit of Christ. To one or another of these, when they obtain hope in the Saviour, they unite themselves, often without inquiry, influenced by taste, by association, by the bias of early education, or by the fact that the instrumentalities of that particular communion have been blessed to their conversion; and afterwards, should this controverted subject of baptism, or any other, be brought to their notice, they meet it almost of necessity with a bias, however unconsciously, in favor of the views of their party, and with a desire and confident expectation of success to

their cause. Should they be induced to enter upon the investigation, they do so not as the judge, who, identified with neither party, holds the scales of justice even, and gives the preponderance to the testimony which is most weighty, but as the advocate, who, hired to conduct to a successful issue, the cause of his client, gives to the showing on the other side only attention enough to qualify him to invalidate and refute it. Having committed themselves first, they either feel called on to defend, as well as they can, the opinions and practices with which they became connected originally, without inquiry, or refuse to investigate the subject at all. Thus many good men, when they speak or write on any controverted subject—and with none is this more true than with this subject of baptism—lay themselves open, with reason, to the charge of wresting the Scriptures, at the same time that they, through the deceitfulness of the human heart, are firmly convinced that they are reasoning with fairness, and deferring to the authority of God's word. This supposition, by way of solution of the question, I make, not with the design to fix it as a charge upon those who differ from me: for it becomes me, and those with whom I act, to see well to it, that we are not influenced by the same motives.

Nor is it a matter of little importance, whether we follow literally the instructions of the Master. All of Christ's institutions are essential to the purposes for which they were intended, and nothing can be adopted as a substitute for them. When we misrepresent or misapply them, either wilfully or through ignorance, we not only

lose the blessings which they were designed to convey to us, but we sin against God, and tend, by our course, to produce and perpetuate divisions among those who ought to be of one mind, having "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The Apostle Paul commended the Corinthians for their literal observance of the institutions of Christ: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." (I. Cor., ii., 2.) And never will the sad divisions among Evangelical Christians be healed, until they consent to obey literally the commands of Christ, and to follow implicitly the inspired examples that are recorded for their instruction.

God overrules the divisions among his people, as he does the wrath of man, for his glory, and for the advancement of his cause. But, surely, it is not necessary to prove that these divisions themselves, implying, as they do, the existence of error, cannot be pleasing in his sight. Never can the hosts of God expect with confidence to possess the territory of the aliens, so long as they themselves are "divided, discordant and belligerent." Christ prayed the Father, (John 17,) that his people might be one, and that, in keeping with unanimity the word which he had given them, they might convince the world of his divine mission. In like manner, all his followers should pray for Christian unity, and towards this, as one important result, their labors should constantly tend. This desirable object is to be attained, if at all, not by harsh epithets and an intolerant spirit—the tendency of which is to alienate—not by entering into compromises of truth

and duty, and "agreeing to disagree," when this involves a truce with error ; but by a candid and affectionate discussion of the points of difference with our brethren, taking care, while we argue with all the force at our command, to divest ourselves as far as possible, in fact and in appearance, of all party feeling. And thus, if we fail to dislodge the error from the minds of those who defend it, we may at least serve to cut off recruits to it, from the ranks of those who have not as yet committed themselves.

There are two extremes among religious controvertists. Some, though they reason with vigor, and advance arguments that, if left to their own force, would tend to convince, exhibit a bitter spirit, and assail with harshness the feelings and the motives of their opponents ; while others, from an excessive fear of giving offence, muffle the points of their arguments, and touch the opposing sentiments so delicately and tenderly as to make, if any, but a feeble impression. The true course lies between these two extremes. Persons should be treated with courtesy and Christian affection, feelings should be respected, and motives not touched at all ; while with the error we should grapple with all the vigor of which we are masters. This being a foe to God and man, we should wage against it a relentless war of extermination, and assail it with all the engines of lawful combat. Should its native weakness be aided by a strong position, fortified by superstition and perverted natural feeling, and an attack in front, therefore, be not the easiest way to dislodge it, we should feel no hesitation to turn its posi-

tion, if possible, and to pour upon it a destructive fire in the rear—a thing that distinguished military men, with reason, so much dread.

In the following pages I have to deal, not with my brethren, who differ from me, but with their arguments; and though my onsets, doubtless, when compared to others, will be feeble, I shall give no cause of offence, so long as I treat their arguments with fairness and justice, and conform my course to the principles of honorable and lawful war.

“REASONS WHY BAPTISTS OUGHT TO TEACH THEIR DISTINCTIVE VIEWS . . . First, *it is a duty we owe to ourselves.* We must teach these views in order to be consistent in holding them. Because of these we stand apart from other Christians, in separate organizations. . . We have no right thus to stand apart unless the matters of difference have real importance; and if they are really important, we certainly ought to teach them.”

JOHN A. BROADUS

The Duty of Baptists To Teach Their Distinctive Views.
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1881).

“No religious denomination has a moral right to a separate existence unless it differs essentially from others. Ecclesiastical differences ought always to spring from profound doctrinal differences. *To divide Christians, except for reasons of gravest import, is criminal schism.* Separate religious denominations are justifiable only for matters of conscience growing out of clear scriptural precept.”

J. L. M. CURRY

A Baptist Church Radically Different From Paedobaptist Churches.
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1889).

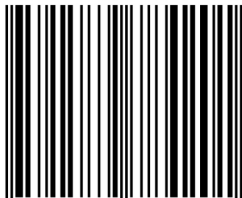
“There is something distinctive in the principles of Baptists. They differ from all other denominations; and the difference is so great as not only to justify, but to demand, their separate existence as a people . . . What distinctive mission have the Baptists, if this is not their mission? - to present the truth in love on the matters wherein they differ from Pedobaptists. What is there but this that justifies their separate denominational existence and saves them from the reproach of being schismatics? *If they have a right to denominational life, it is their duty to propagate their distinctive principles, without which that life cannot be justified or maintained.*”

J. M. PENDLETON

Distinctive Principles of Baptists.
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1882).

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