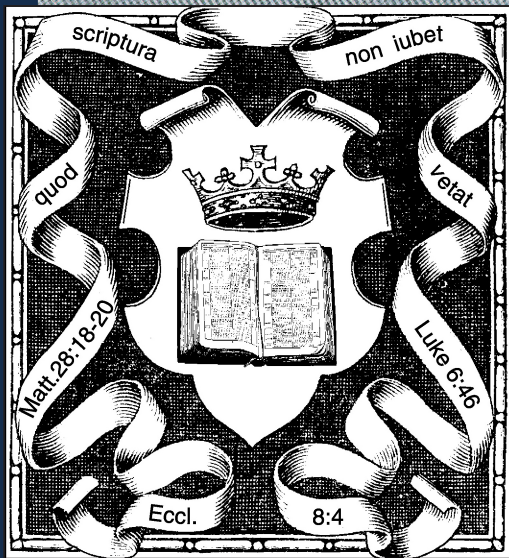


The Baptist Distinctives Series Number 16



Church Communion,

As practiced by the Baptists,
explained and defended.

W. W. Gardner



Quod scriptura, non iubet velat

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*.

CHURCH COMMUNION,

AS PRACTICED BY THE BAPTISTS,

EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED

CHURCH COMMUNION,

AS PRACTICED BY THE BAPTISTS,
EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED

BY **W. W. GARDNER,**

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN BETHEL COLLEGE, RUSSELVILLE, KY.

With a Biographical Sketch of the Author by John Franklin Jones

“And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” —ACTS ii : 42.

“Now I praise you, brethren, that ye . . . keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you.—For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,” &c.—PAUL.

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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”

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P R E F A C E .

THE substance of the following treatise on CHURCH COMMUNION was preached, by special appointment, before the "Bracken Baptist Association," of Northern Kentucky, in the fall of 1853; and in the fall of 1856, the author was requested by that body to condense the sermon into a circular letter for the churches composing the body. Several thousand copies were printed and circulated with profit to the members. This accounts for the fact that the present book retains somewhat the form of the original discourse.

A copy of the minutes containing the circular was sent to the "*Southern Baptist Publication Society*," then located in Charleston, S. C., and, in 1858, that society requested permission to republish the letter in a permanent form, as "*A Tract for the People*." The request was granted, the author reserving the right to revise and use it

at pleasure. With all its defects, the little "missile" was highly commended by many of our editors and ministers in the South and West, and several thousand copies were sold the first year. During the war, however, the plates were lost, and the tract is now out of print.

Not long before our late war commenced, the author was urged by judicious brethren to revise and expand the tract into a small book. Accordingly, he did so, and sent the manuscript to the Southern Baptist Publication Society for examination. It was examined, approved, and ordered to be printed. The corresponding secretary of said society wrote the author several letters commendatory of the work. But the unsettled state of our country and other causes induced the author to recall the manuscript, and its publication was indefinitely postponed.

Recently, however, a number of brethren renewed the request for its publication, believing that a small practical work of the kind was needed by our churches. In compliance with this oft-repeated request, the author has employed his *scraps* of time for a few months past in correcting, improving, and enlarging the treatise, which has grown into a small book. The revision has been hastily made, under a press of

other duties, and hence the work is by no means satisfactory to the author. Still, it embodies many important facts, and claims to be a work of *authority*, so far as the numerous quotations and statements are concerned; while the positions assumed and the views advanced are believed to be both *denominational* and *scriptural*. The book contains some *new* matter, and possesses a *character of its own*. The author has labored extensively, both as evangelist and pastor, in Middle, Northern, and Southern Kentucky, and hence has been compelled to grapple with mixed communion in its various forms, as held by Campbellites, Pedobaptists, and uninstructed Baptists, and he here gives but the *results* of twenty-five years' experience and preaching on the subject.

The following treatise has been written, not for critics, but FOR THE PEOPLE, and hence its style is designedly plain and simple. The Communion question has been so complicated that repetition was unavoidable. With more leisure, the work might have been condensed with advantage, but the author's engagements prevented it. His sole design in writing at all was to *do good*, and if he fail in this, his object will be defeated. The subject to many is distasteful, and he can expect to reap no laurels from its discus-

sion. The argument is somewhat *ad hominem*, but it is presented in *all kindness*, and with a sincere desire to promote truth and righteousness, and to suppress error and prejudice among God's people.

It is confidently believed that the better Christians of different denominations understand each other's views and practice on all religious subjects, the more charity will they feel one for another, and the sooner they will come to the unity of the faith. It is a melancholy fact, however, that the views and practice of the Baptists, in regard to the Lord's Supper, are generally misunderstood, and hence every-where misrepresented; and even some Baptists, owing to mistaken views of the nature and design of the ordinance, are disposed rather to *excuse* than to defend our practice. *These things ought not so to be.* The only proper means of correcting such evils is to instruct the people generally, and the Baptists in particular, on this subject. Owing to the false teachings of mixed communionists, many young converts, holding Baptist sentiments, and even some of our young members, are troubled in regard to our *Church Communion*. The author himself was greatly troubled on this subject when he first made a profession of religion. All such

persons ought to be supplied with suitable Books and TRACTS on Communion, and pastors ought to *preach frequently* on the subject. There is really nothing offensive in our practice of *Church Communion* when rightly understood; and if our views are explained and defended *in a Christian spirit*, no one will take offense, but all will see their reasonableness.

The chapter on the "*Evils of Mixed Communion*" contains the substance of an *essay* which was written by appointment, and read before the "*Bethel Baptist Minister and Deacon's Meeting*" of Southern Kentucky in 1864; and after free criticism, was unanimously requested for publication in tract form; but the limited means of the author prevented compliance with the request. The positions *assumed* in the treatise on Church Communion, respecting the ADMINISTRATOR of baptism, seem to require something more on that subject than could be given in the body of the work. Hence, the author has prepared a "MISSILE" on the subject, to accompany the book, showing *Who is a Scriptural Administrator of Baptism*; it being the substance of a sermon recently preached to his own congregation, and requested for publication by his brethren who heard it. The subject, though overlooked in our works on

baptism generally, is a *vital* one, and demands special consideration. It is a point in the baptismal controversy on which Baptist ministers and churches ought, if possible, to harmonize in their views and practice. On this, as on all other points of faith and practice, THE NEW TESTAMENT, and not expediency, must be our sole guide. What our inspired CREED requires, all true Baptists will obey.

Free use has been made of the best works, in the author's possession, on the subject treated, and his indebtedness to Drs. Curtis, Howell, Hibbard, and others is hereby gratefully acknowledged. The author holds himself responsible for the *correctness* of every quotation made, and, as far as possible, has quoted directly from the original works, giving book, chapter, and page. If any mistake has been made, it was unintentional, and will be corrected, as far as possible.

With these prefatory remarks, the little book is commended to all sincere inquirers after truth, with the fervent hope and prayer that God will bless it to the good of his churches and the glory of his name.

W. W. GARDNER.

RUSSELLVILLE, KY., *February* 10, 1869.

“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

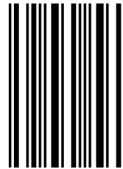
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