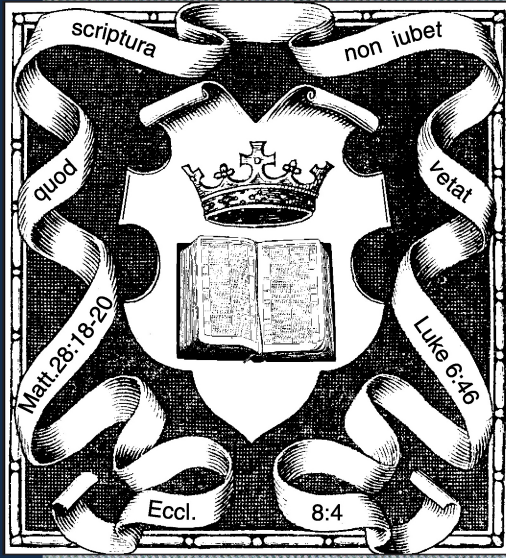


The Baptist Distinctives Series Number 19



The Evils of Infant Baptism

R. B. C. Howell



Quod scriptura, non iubet velat

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

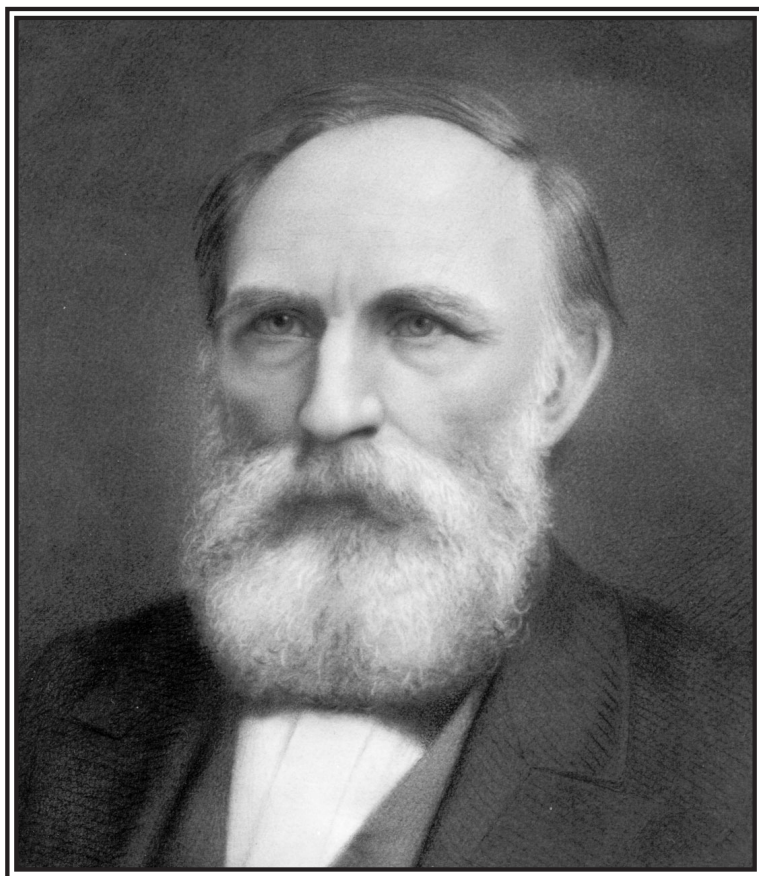
On the Cover: Baptists rejoice to hold in common with other evangelicals the main principles of the orthodox Christian faith. However, there are points of difference and these differences are significant. In fact, because these differences arise out of God’s revealed will, they are of vital importance. 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*.

THE EVILS
OF
INFANT BAPTISM



R. B. C. HOWELL
(ROBERT BOYTE CRAWFORD)
1801-1868

THE EVILS OF INFANT BAPTISM

BY R. B. C. HOWELL

AUTHOR OF

THE TERMS OF COMMUNION AT THE LORD'S TABLE

AND

THE DEACONSHIP

With a Biographical Sketch of the Author by John Franklin Jones

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

Charleston, South Carolina
The Southern Baptist Publication Society
1852



The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc.

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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# 1579785034

TO THE

Second Baptist Church, and Congregation,

IN THE

CITY OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA,

THIS VOLUME

Is Respectfully Dedicated,

BY THEIR DEVOTED AND OBLIGED

PASTOR.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

My gratitude is due to God, and to his people, for the kindness with which this little work has been received. A second edition is demanded at a much earlier period than I had anticipated. I have prepared it with as much attention as my circumstances would permit. Some portions of the book, as will be seen, have been recast, and a new Chapter has been added, on Infant Salvation. More perspicuity and conclusiveness have, as I think, been thus given to some of the arguments, and the whole work made much more complete. Again I send it forth, with the earnest prayer that it may prove a blessing to the cause of true religion.

ROB'T BOYTE C. HOWELL.

RICHMOND, VA., Dec. 17th, 1851.

PREFACE.

THE following pages were written with the specific design of considering, not the “*mode* of baptism,” nor “the *subjects* of baptism,” but “*the evils of infant baptism.*” What baptism is, and who are authorized to receive it, have been questions of controversy during fifteen hundred years. The last two centuries have been especially prolific of essays and books on these subjects. Great learning and zeal have been called into requisition on both sides of the discussion. The conflict, as time passes, loses nothing of its interest, but grows each year, more and more warm. Nor will it ever cease until all christians fully understand the divine teachings in the premises, and submit themselves to the guidance of the word of God. The *evils* of infant baptism seem, however, to be a topic which has attracted heretofore, but very little attention. I have seen an occasional allusion to it in books, and periodicals, and sometimes a paragraph or two, af-

firming and sustaining the mischievous results of the rite. I myself wrote a small tract on the subject, more than twenty-five years ago, entitled "Plain Things for Plain Men," suggesting most of the propositions contained in this work. Beyond these almost nothing, so far as I know, has been published.* Consequently the advocates of infant baptism, driven from every other quarter, have here felt themselves safe. They affirm, and expect us to admit, that "If it does no good, it does no harm." It is innocent, and therefore may be practised. It was this very apology, offered in its behalf lately, by a friend in my presence, and which I had before so often heard, that called forth the book now before you. I thought it wrong to permit the public mind longer to remain involved in this error; and as I knew of no one who was likely soon to expose it, I determined to undertake the task myself. I have attempted, with what success

* Since the first edition of this work went to press, I have seen Dr. Gill's Tract, "Infant Baptism a Part and Pillar of Popery," edited by George B. Ide, D. D., and published in a handsome little volume, by the American Baptist Publication Society. This volume has a chapter by Dr. Ide on "The Influence of Infant Baptism on Protestant Churches, Historically considered." This is an able and conclusive chapter, of which, in this second edition, I have fully availed myself.

my readers will judge, to show that infant baptism is far from being harmless. On the contrary, that it is one of the most calamitous evils with which the church has ever been visited.

Permit, if you please, a word of explanation in the outset, regarding some terms, and phrases, of frequent occurrence. I have spoken of it as *baptism*, when only *sprinkling* was used, and *infants* were the subjects, not that I suppose any such thing *really baptism*, or that others than *believers* are capable of the ordinance, but simply as a matter of courtesy, and in compliance with common usage. In the same sense I have spoken of "the church," "the churches," and "the churches of Christ." In the use of these, and like expressions, I shall certainly, by all intelligent people, be perfectly understood.

One other prefatory remark will be pardoned. In this, as in every other book I have written, I have carefully sought the utmost simplicity and plainness. I write for "the million," and I have determined that "the million" shall understand me. I am unwilling to sacrifice force and directness to elegance of style. I do not enter in the presence of my readers, into labored criticisms, nor abstruse disquisitions, but give them the results simply, without fatiguing them with

the process ; and they have them in the plainest Saxon I can command. It has been my purpose to present the truth fully, fairly, and candidly, but at the same time, with all proper respect for the opinions of others. I have not introduced an argument which I do not believe to be logical and conclusive, a single passage of scripture which I am not persuaded is relevant, nor an authority from any writer, ancient or modern, which I am not assured is justly adduced, and applicable to the subject. My sole desire is the honor of truth, and the salvation of men.

With these observations premised, I send forth this little volume, earnestly praying that God our Heavenly Father, may make it a blessing to his cause and people.

ROB'T BOYTE C. HOWELL.

RICHMOND, VA., March 24th, 1851.

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“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).

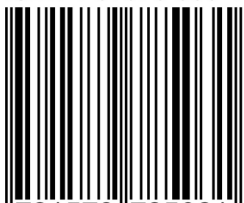
“There is something distinctive in the principles of Baptists. They differ from all other denominations; and the difference is so great as not only to justify, but to demand, their separate existence as a people . . . What distinctive mission have the Baptists, if this is not their mission? - to present 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

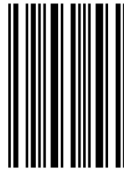
Distinctive Principles of Baptists.
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1882).

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