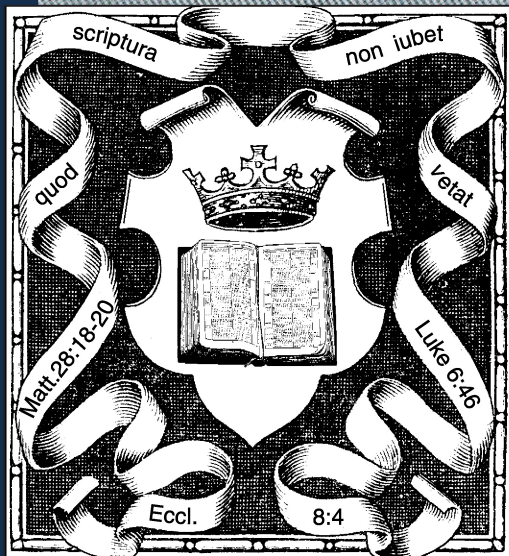


The Baptist Distinctives Series
Number 8



The Church and The Kingdom:

A New Testament Study

Jesse B. Thomas



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 CHURCH
AND
THE KINGDOM**



JESSE B. THOMAS
(1832-1915)

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

A NEW TESTAMENT STUDY

BY
JESSE B. THOMAS, D.D., LL.D.

*Professor Newton Theological Institution; Author
"The Old Bible and the New Science," "The Mould
of Doctrine," "Significance of the Historical
Element in Scripture," etc.*

With a Biographical Sketch of the Author by John Franklin Jones



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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# 1579785212

PREFACE

The following pages embody the substance of an elective course lately given to students of Newton Theological Institution.

Some portions of the discussion (in Parts IV., V. and VI.) had been previously published in the *Western Recorder*, of Louisville, Ky. I am indebted to the courtesy of the late editor of that paper, Dr. Eaton, for permission to use the matter taken from his columns. The articles then published aroused enough interest in Wales to induce an application from the Rev. J. Spinther James, of Llandudno, for the privilege of translating them into Welsh for circulation there.

Care has been taken to derive authentic information as to the tenets of the various bodies mentioned, from the language of their official standards, supplemented by interpretative utterances of recognized leaders among them. Only representative bodies have been selected, in order to avoid needless prolixity. The effort to classify these bodies, and especially to summarize their views, is,

PREFACE

of course, a precarious one; the result must be taken "with a grain of salt." The "logical sequences" specified are by no means to be interpreted as *actual*, except where definitely alleged to be so. Endless differences in interpretation and application of the language of the documents cited from, are discoverable (and will probably disclose themselves in heated protest, if this volume should arrest the attention of dissidents). Moreover, logic and practice do not always travel together. Horace Walpole said the Anglican Church had "a Romish ritual, a Calvinistic creed and an Arminian clergy," and his sarcastic arrow went near the mark.

It should be added that nothing here said as to the fictitious conception of a "church universal" should be construed as questioning the substantial reality of that underlying unity of the followers of Christ throughout the ages and the world which, however wrongly named, is unquestionable. The "kingdom" is a present fact; but, thus far, only a fact "within."

Nor is there any disposition to carp at or hinder the sanguine endeavor of sincere men, clerical or lay, to hasten the visibility of Christian union by legitimate means. Doubt

PREFACE

is expressed as to supreme reliance on “business methods” of human device, or military organization into mass movements. There is peril in relying solely on the momentum of a burst of enthusiasm. The methods of the Crusades did not prove effective in the end. The kingdom of heaven is not to be “taken by violence.” It will come, “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” It is like a “grain of mustard seed”—not a keg of dynamite.

It is not necessary to say—what will be only too obvious to the reader—that the author is a Baptist, and must be understood as speaking only from his personal point of view—not as a “master in Israel.” He asks for patient reading only; not for credence, except where buttressed by the “law and the testimony.”

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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).

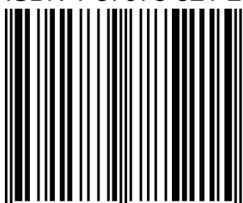
“There is something distinctive in the principles of Baptists. They differ from all other denominations; and the difference is so great as not only to justify, but to demand, their separate existence as a people . . . What distinctive mission have the Baptists, if this is not their mission? - to present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

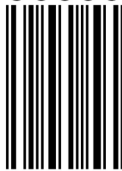
Distinctive Principles of Baptists.
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1882).

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