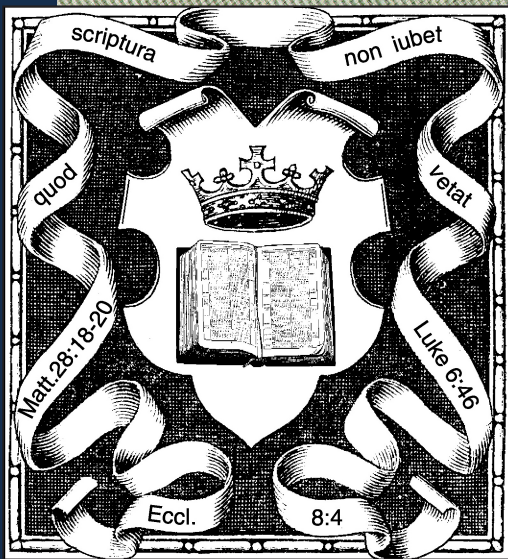


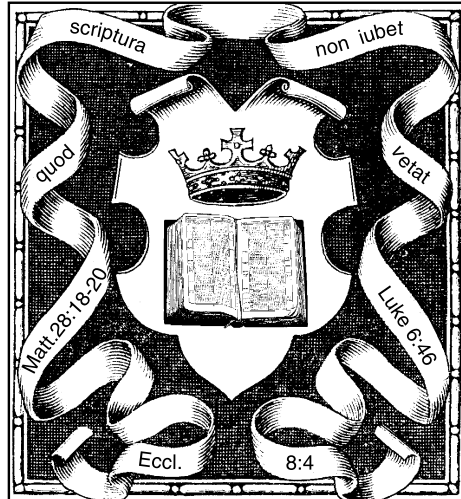
The Baptist Distinctives Series

Number 1



# Baptist Principles Reset

Jeremiah B. Jeter



### *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. Iams 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*.



# BAPTIST PRINCIPLES RESET



# BAPTIST PRINCIPLES RESET

CONSISTING OF ARTICLES ON

## Distinctive Baptist Principles,

A SERIES BY THE LATE

Jeremiah B. Jeter, D. D.,

AND ALSO ARTICLES BY

President HENRY G. WESTON, D.D., LL.D., of Crozer Theological Seminary  
President Emeritus ALVAH HOVEY, D.D., LL.D., of Newton Theological Institution.  
President E. Y. MULLINS, D.D., LL.D., of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.  
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**NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION.**

RICHMOND, VA:

THE RELIGIOUS HERALD CO.

1902



**The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc.**

NUMBER ONE IRON OAKS DRIVE • PARIS, ARKANSAS 72855

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

*Reprinted in 2004*

*by*

**THE BAPTIST STANDARD BEARER, INC.**

No. 1 Iron Oaks Drive

Paris, Arkansas 72855

(479) 963-3831



**THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM**

*lux lucet in tenebris*

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

ISBN #1-57978-527-1



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# BAPTIST PRINCIPLES RESET



# PREFACE.

---

Dr. J. B. Jeter died February 18, 1880. In the autumn of 1876, in execution of a purpose formed long before, he began a series of articles on "Distinctive Baptist Principles." He was at this date, had been for many years, and continued till his death the first among his brethren. His mind was not only rich in accumulated stores of information, well digested, but it was characterized by a manly vigor and a most uncommon candor, which commanded the respect and admiration of all who knew him. Dr. Jeter was a model controversial writer. Scrupulously fair in his statement of an opponent's views, he never descended from the high plane of courteous debate to indulge in personalities. He was incapable of subterfuge or indirection. He took no short cuts in discussion. The articles from his pen which we print in this volume illustrate these characteristics. No word of bitterness will be found in them. They are not marred by any attempt at smartness. They are never extravagant, never hysterical. They are marked by a sober and conscious strength, which makes them very convincing. It is only just to Dr. Jeter to say that these papers were prepared for the *general* reader. While not a technical and professional scholar, he was well acquainted with the conclusions of the best scholarship, and these are embodied in his articles. But we venture the

opinion that the reader will find no obscure sentence, nothing abstruse or recondite. They are plain, clear, coherent. Moreover, let no one neglect the papers under the impression that they will be dull and lifeless. The writer's remarkable command of his mother tongue, his kindly humor, his style, marked by vivacity as well as sobriety, most of all his clear and well-reasoned conviction of the unshakable truth of his contention, will give growing interest to the series.



While these articles were reappearing in one of our journals, the editors determined to follow them with another series, written by the ablest and most representative of our living Baptist brethren. Accordingly the articles which are found in Part II. of this volume were, at their request, prepared and printed. Dr. Henry G. Weston, President of Crozer Theological Seminary—vigorous, clear, scholarly—contributes the first article, on that fundamental tenet of Baptists, "A Regenerate Church Membership." Dr. Alvah Hovey, President Emeritus of Newton Theological Seminary, who through his long, useful, and distinguished life has been growing "in the grace and knowledge" of his Lord—a most judicious interpreter of the Scriptures—compresses a most remarkable article on "The Subjects of Baptism" within very brief limits.

It is distinguished company into which our young and gifted President Mullins, of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, comes; but he is worthy

to take his place with these venerated and experienced teachers. His article, on "The Case for Immersion at Present," is one of the best.

In Dr. Jeter's fine series one aspect of the baptismal question was not discussed—its archæology. It is not extravagant to say that there is no living man more competent to deal with that matter than Dr. Howard Osgood, who is among the very foremost conservative scholars of our day and time. His article on "Archæology of Baptism—The Bath Under the Old Testament" is intensely interesting and highly informing.

When President Harper was gathering around him his great corps of teachers for the University of Chicago, he brought to the Divinity School Dr. Franklin Johnson. Dr. Johnson had already given evidence of his intellectual power—notably in a volume meeting and combatting the destructive criticism which was attacking the Bible. When his strong and stalwart articles on "The Lord's Supper" appeared, competent judges declared that he had covered the ground with surpassing skill. We do not know of any argument on the whole question so simple, strong, and conclusive.

Dr. Benjamin O. True, of Rochester Theological Seminary (Church History), one of the most accurate and sympathetic students of history, has brought us all greatly in debt to him by the fine and comprehensive glimpse which he has given of "Baptists and Religious Liberty." He makes us all long for more.

Then, to complete this remarkable series and to round out this distinguished company, we laid violent hands on our Baptist commoner, our philosopher-preacher, Dr. J. B. Gambrell, at present of Texas, but in spirit, in the sweep of sympathy and intelligence, a real "citizen of the world."



Now, in printing the articles by the revered and lamented Jeter, and in adding these by seven of the most distinguished and representative Baptist scholars and leaders in the world, it is modestly maintained that this volume is unique. Among all the treatises on denominational teaching that have appeared, we know of none like this. Dr. Jeter's articles were first published nearly a quarter of a century ago. They set forth views which had been formed probably twenty-five years earlier. In the first part of this volume, then, we have the product of one mind, thinking his theme through from start to finish. The articles in Part II. have been printed within the past few months. Seven men—one in Massachusetts, one in Pennsylvania, two in New York, one in Illinois, one in Kentucky, and one in Texas—furnish them. They write wholly independent of one another. Each develops his theme without considering how his discussion will fit in with those of his brethren.

Now, then, we come out upon a most remarkable result. First, they do make a singularly consistent and harmonious whole. The Jeter articles do not fit one another more perfectly than these. Secondly,



they harmonize entirely with the articles by Dr. Jeter. Probably fifty years lie between the Jeter articles and these by our living brethren. They have, too, been years of theological change—in some respects change that has been almost revolution. Great denominations have been rent and great institutions have been alienated from denominational control by theological controversies. The seminaries have been hot-beds of heresy. But every important Baptist theological seminary in the land, except one, is represented in this series, and Drs. Jeter and Gambrell fitly represent the many who have not taught or learned in these schools of the prophets. Still, with no authoritative formulary, with no doctrinal court to settle differences, the Baptists continue to think and believe alike. Thus this book illustrates, in a way all the more impressive because unintentional, that solidarity of doctrine is best preserved where human formularies have no voice of authority, and the true secret of denominational and of Christian unity is a free and reverent approach to Christ, the centre of our hopes and the object of our faith.

May God bless the book to the honor of his name and the spread of the truth!

R. H. PITT.

Richmond, Va., February 25, 1901.



## **Preface to Third Edition.**

The first edition of this book was so quickly exhausted that it became necessary to issue a second edition. In this the original volume was enlarged by the addition of Dr. A. E. Dickinson's monograph on "What Baptist Principles Are Worth to the World," Dr. Madison C. Peters' paper on "Why I Became a Baptist," Dr. W. R. L. Smith's article on "Candid Scholarship," and a brief paper by the undersigned on "Sunday Observance and Religious Liberty." We make this third edition still more valuable by printing an admirable article by Dr. B. H. Carroll, Principal of the English Bible Course in Baylor University, and by printing good likenesses of the contributors.

R. H. PITT.

Richmond, Va., February 20, 1902.

“In the estimation of all true Baptists *the Kingship of Christ* is a vital fact. To them he is in very deed the King of the Saints. They behold him on the throne, and hasten to ‘crown him Lord of all.’ They accept fully the declaration of the great apostle to the Gentiles, that ‘Christ is the Head of the Church,’ and thence they conclude that he is her one supreme Lawgiver. Hence, his will is to them the end of all controversy. In the most practical way they call him ‘Master’ and ‘Lord,’ by making his Word their highest rule of doctrine and duty. With them his voice silences doubt, debate and dissent, for it is the voice of their King, and its utterance is the final word, from which there is no appeal.

Remembering his words, ‘One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren,’ they insist upon an absolute equality of rights among brethren, and an absolute subjection of all to that one Master. Their churches, consequently, are in themselves so many simple democracies, in which all the members have equal rights; but, considered in its relation to our Lord, each of those churches is a pure Christocracy, knowing no law and, in matters of faith and practice, confessing allegiance to no authority but that of Christ alone . . . *this 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 peculiarities observable among Baptists.*

The average Baptist has no natural partiality for immersion . . . But Jesus has commanded immersion, and Jesus is King, and true Baptists have no choice in the matter, an authority which they dare not disobey has fully determined it. And the same thing is true of all their other peculiarities. They adhere to them simply because loyalty to the King requires it . . . the command of the King is all the warrant they require for any practice that may challenge acceptance. With them Christ's prerogative is indisputable. In everything it is his to command, and ours unhesitatingly to hear and obey.

Thus *the Kingship of Christ is the formative, the fundamental idea among Baptists.* It controls them everywhere and always,

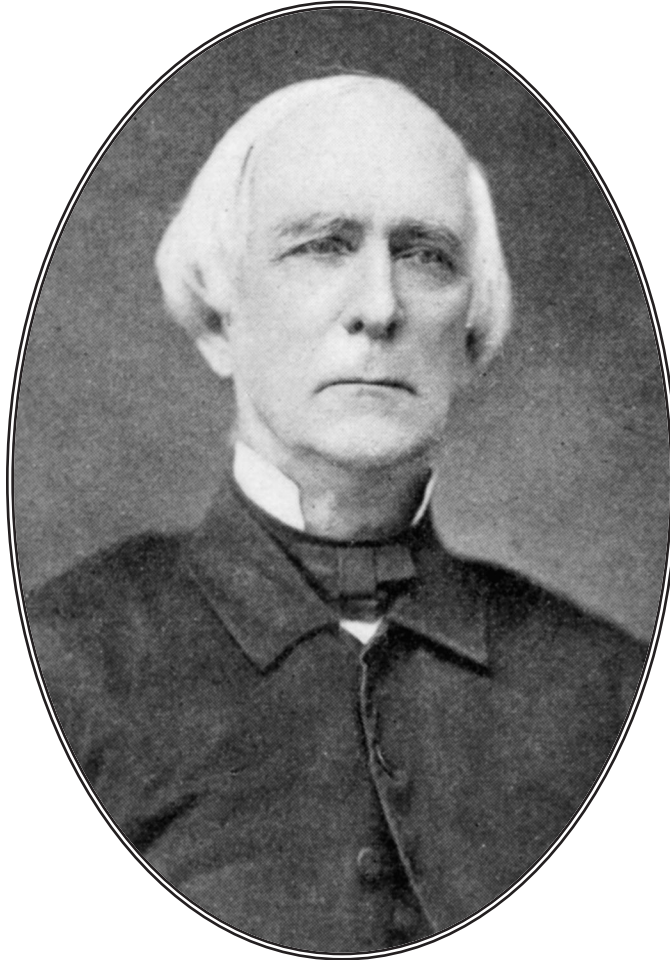
determining their beliefs and their practices from first to last. Their rejection of sprinkling, and their faithful adherence to the practice of immersion, are due to this idea alone. So, too, their practice of believer's baptism only, and their persistent rejection of the baptism of infants, are due to the same fundamental principle. And in like manner . . . the practice of restricted communion, is due to the same controlling idea, the practical recognition of the Kingship of our Lord in everything relating to his people and to his house. For his authority is as complete in the order of the ordinances as in any principle or precept of his gospel, and we may not set it aside . . . *this practical recognition of the Kingship of Christ is really the most vital of all the matters at issue between Baptists and Pedobaptists.* Theoretically all who call themselves Christians confess that Christ is King. But theory is one thing, and far too often practice is another and widely different thing. Theoretically our Pedobaptist friends say Christ is King, and almost constantly they sing, 'Crown him Lord of all;' but practically they reject his Kingly authority in the matter of baptism, and instead of rendering a joyful and implicit obedience to his command, they change that command to suit their own tastes, and then calmly tell us that their new way will do as well. Does this seem a grave charge against a vast body of the professed disciples of our Lord, and one that ought not slightly to be made? Well, I admit it. It is a grave charge, but it is as true as it is grave, and the evidences of its truth abound on every side. The current defense of sprinkling, viz., that it will do as well as immersion, deliberately sets aside the Kingship of Christ . . . In other words, it weighs the command of our Lord in the scales of its own petty human reason, and dares to set it aside, and to substitute for it a something different, which it pronounces just as good. If this is not a practical rejection of the Kingship of our Lord, what is it?"

**F. M. IAMS**

"The Kingship of Christ"

*Before The Foot-Lights*

(Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1884).



**JEREMIAH BELL JETER, D. D.**

**1802-1880.**

**Pastor of 1st Baptist Church, Richmond, VA  
and Editor of The Religious Herald, Richmond, VA.**

**PART I.**

**Distinctive Baptist Principles**

By the Late J. B. JETER, D. D.,

**Editor The Religious Herald.**

# DISTINCTIVE BAPTIST PRINCIPLES.

---

## **Introduction.**

We promised a series of articles on this subject, so soon as we could dispose of other matters claiming our attention. The time has come for us to begin to redeem that pledge. An elaborate discussion of the various points comprehended in our scheme must not be expected. We can attempt nothing beyond a brief and simple statement of Baptist principles, and the main arguments by which they are defended. Our statements or arguments may not be satisfactory to all our readers; but, in presenting them, we will endeavor to be candid, courteous, and fair. We shall earnestly aim so to write that, if any person should be offended, the fault shall be his, and not ours. We are so firmly convinced of the soundness of our principles that we can well afford to discuss them with calmness and good-will to all men.

Before we enter on an examination of the distinctive principles of Baptists, it is proper that the points regarding which they are in full and hearty accord with most Protestant Christians should be stated. The Baptists are united in the support of what is generally known as *Evangelical Christianity*. This system embraces the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures—their sufficiency as a rule



of faith and practice; the existence of God in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the perfection of the divine law in its precepts and in its penalty; the apostasy and guilt of man; his utter inability to attain to righteousness or justification by deeds of law or good works; the incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death of the Son of God; his resurrection, ascension, and assumption of universal empire; salvation by grace through his atoning blood; the necessity of the Holy Spirit's influence in the regeneration of the soul; free justification by faith in Christ; the necessity of good works as the fruit and evidence of faith; the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust; the general judgment; the eternal blessedness of the redeemed and the eternal punishment of the wicked.

We have presented these points, not as exhaustive of the evangelical system, but as comprehending its main articles. These constitute the fundamental, vital, soul-saving facts and teachings of the gospel. In their support and diffusion, Baptists are happy to unite with Christians of every name and party. We rejoice that they are received by most Protestant sects, and that, wherever they are heartily embraced, they bring forth the fruits of righteousness. We are ready to concede, too, that these points are far more numerous and important than those concerning which we differ from them.

It may be proper to add that Baptists generally hold to what may be termed, for the sake of dis-

tion, "moderate Calvinism." They are far from acknowledging Calvin as authority in matters of religion; but the system of doctrine which bears his name, as it has been modified by the study of the Scriptures, is now commonly accepted by Baptists. Fifty years ago, they mostly adhered to high Calvinism, as maintained by Dr. John Gill, of London. Since that time their views have been considerably changed, through the writings of Andrew Fuller and others. These differences of views, however, have not disturbed their harmony or hindered their co-operation, except with a small dissenting party, whose Antinomian views led them to proclaim their hostility to missions and to all liberal efforts for the diffusion of Christianity.

Before we enter on a discussion of Baptist principles, it may be proper to state them briefly, that the reader may see the ground which we propose to traverse. A spiritual church membership lies at the foundation of all Baptist peculiarities. In harmony with this principle, Baptists maintain that only believers, or regenerated persons, are proper subjects of baptism; that only immersion on a profession of faith is true baptism; that only baptized believers are entitled to the privileges of church membership, and consequently that only church members should be admitted to the Lord's table. The last-named principle is held, not by all Baptists, but a large majority of them.

There are some principles held by Baptists in common with other Christian denominations, and

to which Baptists give peculiar prominence. Among these may be mentioned the sufficiency of the Scriptures for guidance in religious matters, and the independence of the churches, under Christ, in the exercise of discipline. All Protestant sects, so far as we know, except those of rationalistic tendency, adopt the first of these principles, though many of them seem to us to be sadly swayed, in the interpretation of the Scriptures, by tradition, creeds, and ecclesiastical relations. The second principle is held as firmly by the Independents of England, the Congregationalists of this country, and other minor sects, as by Baptists; though, perhaps, the latter give it greater prominence, and follow it more fully to its logical consequences than others do. These principles, however warmly they may be cherished by Baptists, cannot be classed among their distinctive views.

The peculiar principles of Baptists, while they do not constitute the main doctrines of Christianity, deeply affect the purity, progress, and triumph of the kingdom of Christ. If these views are erroneous, Baptists are more profoundly interested than any other people to discover the error. If they are deceived, they are exerting—unintentionally, but most unfortunately—a disturbing influence among the disciples of Christ. As we do not claim to be infallible, we should cultivate a candid spirit, diligently search the Scriptures, earnestly pray for divine guidance, and be ready to sacrifice reputation for truth. If these views, however, are true,

it is the solemn duty of those who receive them to expound, defend, and proclaim them in such manner as shall best secure their prevalence and final triumph. The differences between Baptists and Pedobaptists are not a mere question as to whether much or little water shall be used in baptism. They fundamentally affect church organization. They are all concentrated in this inquiry: Shall churches be composed only of believers, who profess their faith in the divinely appointed way, and prove their sincerity by lives in harmony with the gospel of Christ? To us, it seems that conformity to this method would free Christianity from more than half the evils by which it is brought into reproach and its progress and final triumph are hindered. It is clear that its adoption would deliver the world from all hierarchies, all connections between Church and State, except that created by mutual good-will, all pontiffs and lordly ecclesiastics, all persecution for conscience' sake, and all the immense expenditures lavished in support of the palaces and splendors of princely prelates; and the true friends of Christ would be left to support and extend his cause by the sanctity of their lives, the purity of their doctrine, the faithfulness of their labors, their liberal sacrifices, and the divine blessing on their efforts. Would not this be a gain?

It is to be lamented that Christians cannot discuss their differences with equanimity, fairness, and affection. They serve a common Lord, and he

is the God of truth. He takes no pleasure in error, however plausibly it may be defended. They have a common interest to promote, and that is the extension of the kingdom and the manifestation of the glory of their Redeemer. It is only by the knowledge and the diffusion of divine truth that they can promote the end for which they were translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. It is vain, however, to hope that the discussion of controverted religious questions, except in rare instances, will be conducted with a simple desire to discover and to maintain truth. The pride of opinion, the desire of victory, sectarian zeal, the prejudices of education, and personal interests, are likely to give more or less inspiration and heat to religious controversy, by which its proper end is, in a great measure, defeated.

As our arguments will be based chiefly on the common version of the Scriptures, it is proper to notice a few things concerning it. It was made, not by Baptists, but by Pedobaptists. The translators were instructed by King James to retain the "old ecclesiastical words" found in the existing versions. Whether baptism belonged to this category, we need not decide. Certain it is that the translators did not render *baptize* and its derivatives into English, but merely gave them an English termination and spelt them with Latin letters. The English reader is left to infer their meaning from their connection and the circumstances of the act which they denote. The reader must perceive that a ver-

sion made by Pedobaptist scholars, under such a restriction, can have no unfair leaning to Baptist principles; and yet we expect to show, by a proper use of it, their soundness.

**“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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The Baptist Standard Bearer, Incorporated is a republication society organized in 1984, and is recognized as a nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization. It was founded for the primary purpose of republication and preservation of materials reflecting the Baptist heritage.

ISBN 1579785271



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