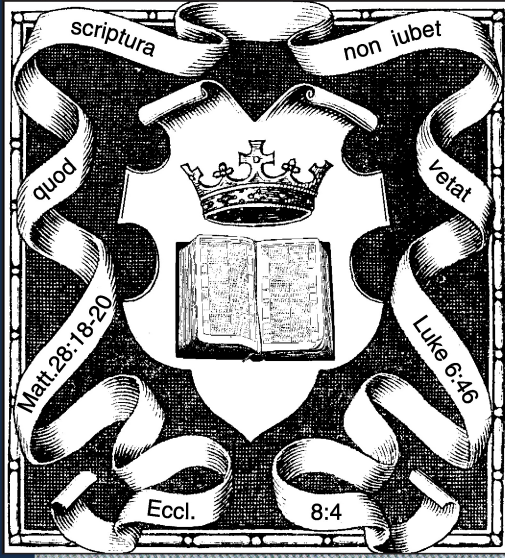


The Baptist Distinctives Series Number 43



Christian Discipleship and Baptism

Charles Stovel



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*.

**CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP
AND BAPTISM**

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP AND BAPTISM:

BEING

Eight Lectures

IN REPLY TO THE THEORY ADVANCED BY DR. HALLEY
IN THE CONGREGATIONAL LECTURE OF 1843.

DELIVERED BY THE

REV. CHARLES STOVEL,

IN THE LIBRARY OF THE BAPTIST MISSION HOUSE, MOORGATE-STREET,
LONDON, IN OCTOBER, 1845.

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.

— *Psalms 60: 4*

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THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM

lux lucet in tenebris

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

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ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN the following course of Lectures was projected, the Baptist Library, in Moorgate-street, appeared to offer the most suitable accommodation ; the use of it was, therefore, solicited, and finally obtained ; but, in granting that favour, the committee of the Baptist Missionary Society have only acted as trustees to the premises, and neither that society nor any person whatever, except the author, is answerable for any sentence the work contains. This service of the truth was undertaken from a deep impression of personal duty, and it has been performed, deferring only to the Lord.

As the undertaking advanced, it was found that incidental arrangements, necessary to secure the comfort of the audience and the safety of the Mission House and property, would require a constant supervision, and this was confided to the following gentlemen, who kindly consented to act as a Committee for that purpose :—

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To the kindness and wisdom of these gentlemen the author is greatly indebted. A perfect accommodation was secured for the audience, and a tender regard was paid to his own comfort. These helps were not only gratifying, and, therefore, deserving of thanks ; but became indispensable, for without them the labour, added to other engagements, and the oppressive feeling of responsibility, could not have been sustained.

David M'Laren, Esq., of Highbury Terrace, who acted as secretary to this committee, has, by his punctuality in business arrangements, his wise, Christian, and dignified suggestions, in everything relating to the delivery of these Lectures, laid all parties under peculiar obligation. His service, both to the audience and to the author, was invaluable.

The work was undertaken by the author entirely on his own responsibility, and at his own cost ; and thus the tickets were issued gratuitously ; but the committee and friends, who sympathised in the movement, generously defrayed the whole expense incurred at Moorgate-street, with all that attended the previous advertisements.

The Rev. Dr. Cox, and the Rev. Dr. Hoby, to whose affection the author has, in former times, been more indebted than can be here expressed, with Dr. Thomas Price, Dr. Davis, J. Whitehorne, Esq., J. Penney, Esq., W. Beddome, Esq., and the Rev. J. Russell, of Greenwich, afforded important assistance in occupying the chair ; and, by their judicious influence, added to the comfort of each attendance, and the accompanying devotional exercises.

To the committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, who granted the use of the room, and to all those parties by whom he was so essentially served while occupying it, the Author hereby presents his sincere thanks, confessing, at the same time, and most devoutly, that words can never express what is due, or what he feels, for acts of love granted,

as these were, at a time when conscience was imposing a most difficult and responsible task. He only, in whose cause the work was undertaken, can, by placing them to his own account, sufficiently honour such Christian offices.

At the unanimous request of the audience, which was full, and whose kind and patient attention could scarcely be greater, with prayer for a Divine blessing on the work, the Lectures are now presented to the public.

C. STOVEL.

*5, Stebon Terrace,
Philpot-street East, London.
March 26th, 1846.*

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P R E F A C E.

UNION is strength, and therefore it will be sought by all who are duly sensible of their own weakness. All objects involving practical difficulty require its advantage ; and, the more important the object, the more imperative will be the demand. Hence is seen the value of that bond which toucheth, encompasseth, and joineth into one fraternity, the persons who are hoping for salvation in Christ, and to whom are entrusted the means of promoting salvation in others. No object can be more important than that which is committed to their care ; and, in none, can the weakness of human nature be more deeply felt ; and, therefore, to none can the attainment of perfect union be more indispensable, and on none can the obligation of promoting it devolve with greater solemnity.

The One Spirit by which Christians are led, and the

one hope of their calling, by which all are sustained and comforted, supply a preparation for that unity which is required. An attraction of moral affinity is thus produced, which naturally awakens the expectation of unity; for, as like loves like through all creation, it is to be expected in the body of Christ.

Had any suspicion rested on the lawfulness of yielding to this tendency, the strong combining influence of Christian principles in mankind would have called for extreme watchfulness and self-denial; but the Lord has spared his people from any such restraint: he has written his command to love one another with as much clearness as can be given to any form of words whatever. To indulge the love of union is, therefore, in the body of Christ, converted into positive duty.

To make this duty the more binding, the Lord, to whom every Christian is indebted for all that he possesses or hopes to possess, has actually combined his own honour with its observance. The wealth, the honour, the learning, the power, and all the things which men are prone to love, seek, and delight in upon earth, are totally disregarded by him; he pronounces his benedictions on the poverty of his people's spirit, and their persecution for righteousness' sake; and, in these their peculiar disadvantages on earth, he says, "This is my commandment, that ye love one

another ; then shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.”

When the position, duties, and enemies of Christians are properly considered, these facts cease to be surprising. They stand where the things of time take hold upon eternity, for the earthly house of their tabernacle hath its aspect altogether in that direction. Each one knows that it looks out upon the sea, and that, when it falls, it will fall into the ocean. Yet the uncertain moment, during which he stands upon the falling precipice of time, is occupied, under the eye of the Redeemer himself, in duties which involve the salvation of other souls ; and not one duty can be performed, but in the face of this world's steadfast opposition, led on by the great deceiver. If other men need watchfulness, these need more ; they require to be all eyes and all attention, that no opportunity be lost, that no energy be wasted, but that all the resources entrusted to them be perfectly used, at the point and moment of action. It is not only requisite that each should be faithful and diligent, it is necessary that all should be one.

Divine aid is covenanted by the Redeemer, who saith, “I am with you always, even to the end of the world ;” yet is that aid so imparted, to each of his servants, that no one is permitted to feel sufficient in

himself alone. The Lord deals with his people as with a flock, a family, a body composed of many parts, which cannot be perfect if one be wanting. The meanest is thus essential to the rest ; and he who is most exalted in station and endowment, is as nothing without the brethren he is called to serve. Separated from the body of Christ, a believer is an incomplete and an unmeaning existence, resembling an amputated limb.

By a vital union to Christ, and the indwelling of the Spirit, an actual union between all true believers is rendered inevitable ; but this is not all that the commandment and the case require. Men are voluntary and moral agents after, as well as before, conversion to God. In the exercise of all their faculties they are to serve the Lord who redeemed them, and brought them to himself. Hence the union of such must be a willing and visible action, recognising the Lord's injunction, and raising, to highest estimation and honour, that work of grace by which each has been created anew in Christ Jesus.

How this union of Christians should be recognised and declared, by each individual, and by the body of Christ, has long been a subject of dispute, even amongst true believers. This is the more to be regretted, because thereby a broken front has been

presented to the adversary, and the external fissures of division have been widened and deepened, until the separating of believers from believers has become as much a matter of course now, as in former times and by the law of Christ, was the separation of believers from the world.

Few have paid much attention to Christian affairs, without perceiving this evil ; and none who love the Saviour can see without deploring it. Hence the numerous expedients proposed for its redress. Time, money, and great good feeling, have been expended profusely, but without effect. The church or body of Christ is still divided, though division is deprecated and deplored. The external appearance and the internal working of Christian fellowship declare with too much distinctness for misapprehension, that hitherto a remedy for this evil has not been prescribed.

One cause for this failure may be found in the wrong assumption on which the various expedients have been adopted. It seems to be forgotten that, for such calamities, it is not the province of man to prescribe at all. Human weakness and frailty are congenial with the introduction of moral evils, such as this is, but absolutely fatal to the working out of a cure. Men may divide, but union can only be effected *in* the Lord. All deliverance from moral calamity

and wrong must be obtained, if at all, under his direction, and by his aid.

Another cause of failure is to be discovered in the fallacy of the proposed rule of action, by which a greater degree of unity is sought. Charles V. of Germany used his utmost power to produce a quiet resignation of points of difference, and subjection to defined principles and doctrines. He is only an example by which the absurdity of this compulsory effort may be elucidated; but the most remarkable fact is, that union should be sought by proposing the voluntary quiescence on such points now, which, when blood had flowed in rivers, could not be imposed by any power that then or formerly obtained an existence upon earth. It is said, Let the points on which we differ be passed by, and investigation cease; or, in other words, let us cease to learn, that we may be united. To show the fallacy of such a proposal, it is sufficient to say, that by ceasing to learn, we cease to be disciples, and that the pursuit and diffusion of truth can never be relinquished, except by those who do not love it.

A third cause of failure may be seen in the desire to combine incongruous elements. He was a wise Master-builder who said, "What fellowship hath light with darkness?" The fall of a building and the ruin

that attends it, will justly be imputed to the man who, with fraud or carelessness, builded into its walls and arches, blocks of ice for stone. God has decreed that his people shall be separate from the world, and he has endowed them with principles to which the men of this world are positively and absolutely opposed. If, by a forced contact, these unfriendly principles be, for a time, suppressed, the explosion, when it transpires, will be augmented by all the violence that is now employed in restraining them. Nature will, eventually, have her own way. It is a prerogative granted by her Creator.

Hence, it would appear, that union between Christians and the men of this world, is not to be sought as if there were no difference between them. On the contrary, Christians are to come out from among them and be separate. But the union of Christians with each other is to be sought with all perseverance, and since it can only be obtained in Christ, it must be sought by a scrupulous and absolute conformity to his instructions. This must be obtained, not in one particular only, but in all. Moral society, like a vast and complex machinery, is broken and ruined by departing from truth in any one of its centres. When the working is found to be wrong, therefore, he is the kindest and wisest man, who brings the greatest skill, and devotes the most attention, to those parts of the machinery in

which the wrong may be, by possibility, detected ; for, by securing conformity to Divine law, we secure unity, smoothness, and efficiency of action.

If the investigation, conducted in this work, has not altogether failed, it will serve to illustrate, at least, that simple and most practicable law by which the Lord provided for the union and holy fellowship of his people. The baptismal rite, requiring a credible declaration of repentance and faith, marked and set apart individual believers for the embraces and fellowship of each other. Protected by the discipline which cast out, until subsequent repentance was evinced, every offender against the law of Christ, the baptismal profession and recognition defined a sphere within which the Christian disciple is bound to indulge the affectionate confidence which his regeneration produces, and the cultivation of which his Lord commands. This natural basis and protected sphere for exercising brotherly love and Christian fellowship, is the great desideratum of our time ; and nothing can be more pleasing than to observe how directly the efforts to promote Christian union are bringing us back to the law of our Lord, and the practice of ancient times. If Christians are to be one, each one ought to have, and must have, some way of determining who the Christians are. He cannot examine every one ; and to give every professor the endearing

confidence of Christian love, is to expose with weakness the best feelings of his heart to constant violation and abuse. This the Lord hath nowhere commanded ; and nothing can show its impropriety more than that sentimental feeling which, professing to love all mankind as Christians, reveals a mind utterly unacquainted with the nature of that holy principle, from which it has purloined the name. He who opposeth, in nature, the attractions of affinity, as far as in him lies, urgeth a dissolution of all her beautiful organisations, and of all the jewels that enrich her mountains ; and he who burlesques the union of Christians with Christians, and yet pleads for Christian unity, pleads, under that phrase, for a restoration of that moral chaos in which God has ever been dishonoured, and from which Christians have been redeemed. The rites and discipline of the Christian church were designed to bring accredited Christians as purely and as closely as possible within the sphere of each other's influence. Thus, like the particles which form a diamond, they are prepared to obey that attraction of moral affinity which produces an aggregated union not to be dissolved.

Dr. Halley cannot receive too high an encomium for the spirit with which he has entered a perplexing and unpopular discussion with this aim. He has ventured in a track not much trodden, and led his in-

quiry to points from which, if all parties are not instructed by their own observations as well as his, it will be their own fault. If he has failed in his main object, this has often occurred to the best of men, even where the purest motives have led to the undertaking ; and should it appear that, in the warmth of his feeling, some departures from cool propriety have occurred, these accidents are too few and insignificant to diminish, in any great degree, the praise which is due to his eminent superiority over writers who have formerly appeared on his side.

Observing the work he performed, and the importance of the investigation, because of its influence over the health and communion of Christian churches, it was felt to be a duty to lay before the brethren of all classes, the thoughts which are contained in the following lectures. To give them the most general character, and facilitate the attendance of all parties, the use of the library was requested and obtained, and admission was granted, by tickets gratuitously distributed, on application. The kindness shown to this individual effort in defence of truth, far exceeds all desert or expectation ; and the result is, by request of those who heard the exercises, herein presented to the reader. If an earnest desire to find, exhibit, and defend the truth has led to any undue severity, or the least discourtesy of expression, it is altogether without

design, and will, when discovered, be deeply deplored. It was felt that Dr. Halley's theory of indiscriminate baptism and discipleship was not sustained by truth and led to pernicious consequences, by filling the church with elements of disunion, defeating the principal aim for which the Lord had appointed it, and, in the highest degree, endangering the whole interests of personal religion. Whether these views be well supported, the reader will decide. The work, with all its demerits, is presented to him in the hope that its perusal will be attended with a Divine blessing.

“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).

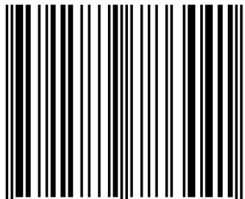
“There is something distinctive in the principles of Baptists. They differ from all other denominations; and the difference is so great as not only to justify, but to demand, their separate existence as a people . . . What distinctive mission have the Baptists, if this is not their mission? - to present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

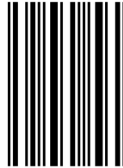
Distinctive Principles of Baptists.
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