

Selected Writings of James Madison Pendleton Volume 3 of 3

Compiled and Edited by Thomas White

SELECTED WRITINGS OF JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

VOLUME III

Theological



JAMES MADISON PENDLETON (1811-1891)

SELECTED WRITINGS OF JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

IN THREE VOLUMES



Theological

• Selected Writings on Various Topics of Theology



COMPILED AND EDITED BY THOMAS WHITE



he 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"

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SELECTED WRITINGS OF JAMES MADISON PENDLETON IN THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME ONE — HISTORICAL AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

- James Madison Pendleton and His Contribution to Baptist Ecclesiology
 by THOMAS WHITE
- Reminiscences of a Long Life
 by JAMES MADISON PENDLETON
- Article on the Death of J. M. Pendleton by M. M. RILEY

VOLUME TWO — ECCLESIASTICAL

• Selected Writings on Various Aspects of the New Testament Church

by JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

VOLUME THREE — THEOLOGICAL

• Selected Writings on Various Topics of Theology by JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

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Introduction

This volume is the third volume in a three volume series containing selected works of James Madison Pendleton. As this volume may be purchased separately from the other volumes, an introduction to the life of Pendleton is necessary. For a complete discussion of Pendleton's life and contributions to Baptist ecclesiology, see volume one in this series. For his writings which discuss ecclesiology, see volume two in the series. The current volume focuses on selected theological works by James Madison Pendleton.

A Brief Biography of James Madison Pendleton

James Madison Pendleton was born on November 20, 1811, to John and Frances Pendleton at "Twyman's Store" in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, during the presidency of the person after whom he was named—James Madison. In the autumn of 1812, Pendleton's family moved to Christian County, Kentucky. Here Pendleton was reared by "pious Baptist" parents where he attended "the neighborhood schools, at such times as he could be spared from labor."

¹ James Madison Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1891), 8. The article in *Baptist Theologians* incorrectly identifies Nov. 11, 1811, as the date of James Madison Pendleton's birth. For a complete biography see William Huddleston, "James Madison Pendleton: A Critical Biography" (ThM thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1962). For a more thorough discussion of Pendleton's influence, see Thomas White, "James Madison Pendleton and His Contributions to Baptist Ecclesiology" (PhD diss. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005).

² J. H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists* (Cincinnati: J. H. Spencer, 1885), 523.

During his teenage years, Pendleton demonstrated an acute interest in spiritual matters. Just before turning fifteen, Pendleton used money earned from selling wool to buy his first purchase—a Bible. Pendleton said, "I prized it highly and found great use for it." After turning fifteen, he decided to give great attention to religion, resolving to read his Bible and pray every day. After an extended time of reading his Bible, contemplating his own sinfulness, and attempting to save himself, Pendleton read a sermon by Samuel Davies from 1 Cor 1:22–24. After reading this sermon, he went into the woods to pray and understood for the first time the mercy of salvation through Jesus Christ.⁴

At age seventeen, on the second Sunday in April, 1829, Pendleton went before Bethel Church in Christian County, Kentucky, and told of his conversion experience which had occurred a few weeks earlier in those nearby woods. He was baptized by John S. Wilson the following Tuesday, April 14, in a creek not far from the meeting house.⁵

Pendleton's formal education was limited. Because his father, in addition to being a farmer, taught school, Pendleton learned much at home but did not begin attending the neighborhood school until the age of nine or ten. Although work on the farm often interrupted his studies, Pendleton learned well, and in 1831 at age nineteen, he tried his hand at teaching in the western part of Christian County.⁸ This lasted for only three months, and he returned home discouraged and with only three dollars in his pocket.⁹ By the end of the year, Pendleton moved to Russellville, Kentucky, to study Latin grammar under Robert T.

³ Pendleton, Reminiscences of a Long Life, 22.

⁴ Ben Bogard, *Pillars of Orthodoxy*, or *Defenders of the Faith* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1900), 256.

⁵ Pendleton, Reminiscences of a Long Life, 27–28.

⁸ Ibid., 15; 34.

⁹ Bob Compton, "J. M. Pendleton: A Nineteenth-Century Baptist Statesman (1811–1891)," *Baptist History and Heritage* 10 (January 1975): 30.

Anderson.¹⁰ Early in 1833, Pendleton accepted an invitation to minister in Hopkinsville, where he would remain until 1836. This afforded him the opportunity to study at the Academy under the charge of James D. Rumsey, "who had a fine reputation as a classical scholar."¹¹ Pendleton would focus his study on Latin and Greek. After moving in 1836, no further record of formal education exists. However in 1865, Denison University in Ohio conferred upon Pendleton the honorary title of Doctor of Divinity.¹²

Pendleton did not begin as the polished pulpiteer which was to characterize his career. He began by leading prayer meetings during which he largely read Scripture. He did not consider these engagements preaching, but in February of 1830, to Pendleton's astonishment, his home church licensed him to preach. He commented, "I thought it quite uncalled for and did not believe it possible for me to preach." It was the fourth Sunday in September, 1831, when Pendleton preached what he considered his first sermon at a church called West Union about ten miles west of Hopkinsville. Pendleton commented on his effort, "To call what I said a 'sermon' would be flagrant injustice to that term." He felt himself utterly incompetent to preach. His exhortations were very short, consisting of only a few sentences, and when he had said all he could think of to say, he "sought relief from his embarrassment in prayer."13 Some agreed with Pendleton's assessment of his preaching. One local pastor stated, "You say some pretty good things, but your preaching is neither adapted to comfort the saint nor alarm the

¹⁰ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 37. Anderson founded a school there in 1830. It was said of him, "In this profession he was preeminent, and was of incalculable benefit to the Baptists of Bethel Association, as well as others." See Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists*, 381.

¹¹ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 40. No further information can be found about this academy.

¹² J. J. Burnett, *Sketches of Tennessee's Pioneer Baptist Preachers* (Nashville: Marwill & Bruce, 1919), 406.

¹³ Pendleton, Reminiscences of a Long Life, 31–35.

sinner."¹⁴ However, Pendleton did not give up but continued to improve.

In 1833 while studying in Hopkinsville, Pendleton simultaneously served at two churches, Bethel Church and Hopkinsville, who each gave him a hundred dollars a year. He commented, "Some may think that this was poor pay; but my deliberate opinion is that the pay was better than the preaching." The arrangement with these churches was that he would preach one Saturday and two Sundays in the month to each of the Hopkinsville and Bethel churches. Before long, Pendleton's church at Hopkinsville, of which he had become a member, called for his ordination. The ordination council consisted of four men and met on November 2, 1833. 15

In the latter part of 1836, Pendleton was called to pastor the First Baptist Church of Bowling Green, Kentucky. He officially began January 1, 1837, and continued serving this church for twenty consecutive years with the exception of a few months, spent in Russellville, Kentucky, around 1850. 16 He was the first man in southern Kentucky to devote himself to full-time ministry, making four hundred dollars a year. In August of 1837, Pendleton went with John Waller to the Russell Creek Associational meeting at Columbia in Adair County, Kentucky, on a trip that would change his life forever.

The trip to the Russell Creek Association would cover over seventy miles on horseback. The two gentlemen stayed the night in Glasgow, which was almost half way, with Richard Garnett, and Pendleton was introduced to his daughter,

¹⁴ Bogard, Pillars of Orthodoxy, or Defenders of the Faith, 258.

¹⁵ Pendleton, Reminiscences of a Long Life, 40–42.

¹⁶ Spencer, *History of Kentucky Baptists*, 524. In January 1850, Pendleton kept a commitment to Alfred Taylor by helping him with his church at Green River. The church at Bowling Green, having been without a pastor, invited Pendleton to resume his former place of service. Pendleton accepted and moved back to Bowling Green. See Compton, "J. M. Pendleton: A Nineteenth-Century Baptist Statesman (1811–1891)," 30.

Catherine S. Garnett. Catherine, her brother, and another gentleman accompanied Pendleton to the associational meeting. After the meeting concluded, Pendleton had a thirty-mile ride back to Glasgow during which he became acquainted with Catherine. He wrote, "I was impressed with excellences of her character and her intelligence."17 In October 1837, Pendleton went to Louisville for the formation of the General Association of Kentucky Baptists. On his way home, he went about twenty miles out of the way to visit Catherine. On this visit, he informed her of his love for her and proposed to marry her. This took her by surprise. Thus, Pendleton urged her not to answer immediately. Before the end of the year, Catherine returned with a favorable answer to Pendleton's proposal, and on March 13, 1838, James Madison Pendleton and Catherine S. Garnett were united in holy matrimony. Beginning a family would not take long as the Pendletons gave birth to their first child on January 8, 1839. Their family would eventually include five children. 18

In February 1852, Pendleton invited J. R. Graves to preach at Bowling Green. Pendleton commented to Graves, "I have never given the matter of alien immersion a thorough study and I will be glad to hear you preach on that subject." ¹⁹ By the end of the meeting, Graves's preaching had convinced Pendleton to the point that he announced full agreement with him. Graves had excited the Pedobaptists on the issue of baptism so that several sermons continued to be preached upon the subject after his departure. ²⁰ In fact, the attacks against Graves by Pedobaptists encouraged Pendleton to

¹⁷ Pendleton, Reminiscences of a Long Life, 52.

¹⁸ Ibid., 66. John Malcom, his first son, was baptized in 1859. He and his father were on separate sides of the slavery issue, and young John joined the Confederate army. On October 8, 1862, he was killed by the fragment of a shell which struck his forehead. J. M. Pendleton claims that in not one of their letters was a harsh word uttered.

¹⁹ O. L. Hailey, *J. R. Graves Life, Times and Teachings* (Nashville: O. L. Hailey, 1929), 73.

²⁰ Pendleton, Reminiscences of a Long Life, 103.

defend him more vehemently.²¹ Shortly after the revival, Pendleton preached at Liberty Church in Logan County and gave his reasons for being a Baptist. These reasons were later expanded into Pendleton's first book and published under the title, *Three Reasons Why I Am a Baptist*. The relationship between Pendleton and Graves continued as Pendleton became a regular contributor to the *Tennessee Baptist* which Graves edited. Pendleton wrote four articles in particular that addressed the issue "Ought Baptist to Recognize Pedobaptist Preachers as Gospel Ministers?" Pendleton answered negatively and his articles were later published in a booklet which Graves titled, "An Old Landmark Re-set."²²

On January 1, 1857, Pendleton left Bowling Green for Union University where the trustees appointed him head of the Theology Department. The trustees said, "They wanted a man who had learned his theology from the Bible." As one of the conditions of his coming to Union, he also became pastor of the Baptist church in Murfreesboro. Pendleton taught between forty and fifty ministerial students. After the death of the President of Union University, Joseph H. Eaton, he acted as Chairman of the faculty.

²¹ J. M. Pendleton, "Letter to Brother Graves," *Tennessee Baptist* (June 5, 1852). Says, "And here is to say once for all, that when a minister visits this place at my solicitation, as you did, and conducts a meeting on principles which meet my hearty approbation, as you did, if after his departure, he is calumniated and persecuted, as you have been, I will defend him, though I hear a thousand thunders rolling through the Pedobaptist heavens."

²² Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 103. The rights to this book were sold to Graves and first published in 1853. In 1856, Pendleton added an addition preface, made some corrections, and included an appendix on the fourth reason for being a Baptist–communion. Pendleton later revised and expanded the book. In 1882 it was published by the American Baptist Publishing Society under the title *Distinctive Principles of Baptists*. See Keith Eitel, "James Madison Pendleton," *Baptist Theologians*. Edited by Timothy George (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 188–204.

²³ Pendleton, Reminiscences of a Long Life, 108.

In 1858, Pendleton joined A. C. Dayton and J. R. Graves as joint editors of the Tennessee Baptist. Pendleton also served as editor of the Southern Baptist Review and Eclectic for the six years of its existence—1855 through 1860. With the Civil War approaching, slavery became an increasingly volatile issue. Pendleton's views on slavery had been clearly published in The Examiner, some of which were republished in a Nashville paper. He wrote more than twenty articles for TheExaminer under the name "A Southern Emancipationist."24 Pendleton clearly distinguished himself emancipationist and not an Emancipationists believed that slavery should be gradually eliminated while abolitionists sought to do away with slavery immediately. However, some still sought Pendleton's dismissal. The trustees did not wish for Pendleton to offer his resignation, so he continued to teach until the institution suspended service in April 1861.

Graves spent hours trying to convince Pendleton, the only Southern born member of the Landmark triumvirate, to support the Confederacy. Pendleton would not be convinced. He despised the flag which symbolized the Confederacy saying, "I was unwilling to look at it, because it was usurping the place of the flag of the United States—the flag of my heart's love. The 'stars and bars' were utterly distasteful to me." ²⁵

Because of the war, the Pendleton family went north in 1862. After arriving in Hamilton, Ohio, Pendleton preached several times and accepted the call to serve as pastor of the church there. While serving there, his mother passed away. He ministered in Hamilton until October 1865, when he received the call to serve at Upland Baptist Church in Upland, Pennsylvania.

²⁴ Ibid., 93.

²⁵ Ibid., 122. Pendleton inherited a female slave when his mother died in 1863. The law did not allow him to free her so he hired her out and paid her the money she earned plus ten percent. He says, "I was not a slave-holder *morally*, but *legally*." See pages 127–28.

While at Upland, he served as trustee of Crozer Theological Seminary, added thirty feet to the meeting house, built a new baptistry, and planted two churches. Twenty-five husbands and wives made professions of faith, and Pendleton eagerly baptized them. During this time, Pendleton published what he considered to be his "best and most important book" titled *Christian Doctrines*. This decidedly biblical theology was written specifically for the benefit of "colored ministers" in the South but was acceptable to other readers as well.²⁶

In June 1883, Pendleton resigned from Upland Baptist Church at the age of seventy-two under the belief that judicious ministers should not pastor after reaching the age of seventy. The Pendletons spent their remaining time visiting their children, and he continued to write. It was fitting that Pendleton ended his life where he devoted so much of it—Bowling Green, Kentucky. He died on March 5, 1891, at 12:40 P.M.²⁷ Those speaking at his funeral included such notable figures as T. T. Eaton and William H. Whittsitt.²⁸ Pendleton was buried in Fairview cemetery about one mile outside of Bowling Green. Mrs. Pendleton was buried in the same location on September 21, 1898.²⁹

SUMMARY OF THE WORKS IN THIS VOLUME

The following book contains many articles written by James Madison Pendleton. Most of these works have never appeared outside of the pages of the *Tennessee Baptist* newspaper or the *Southern Baptist Review* periodical. The only copies of the *Tennessee Baptist* or *Southern Baptist*

²⁶ Ibid., 152.

²⁷ Unsigned article, "Editorial Notes of Death of J. M. Pendleton," *Western Recorder* (March 12, 1891).

²⁸ Ibid., 198. Interestingly, Whitsitt was involved in a controversy while President at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary over the origin of Baptists in which Landmarkers were his chief opponents.

²⁹ Huddleston, "James Madison Pendleton," 92. The information was apparently given through a letter written by Mr. Claude L. Thomas, Superintendent of the Fairview Cemetery, in a letter dated March 9, 1962.

Review remaining are housed in various libraries on microfilm in a barely readable form. For this publication, the works have been retyped with some archaic language updated and Roman numerals replaced with Arabic numerals. These articles provide new insight into the theology and into the historical surroundings of J. M. Pendleton, but more importantly these articles reveal a man who typified the pastor/theologian. These articles will reveal that Pendleton contained the mind of academician with a heart for the local church.

The first few articles in the volume relate to the pastorate. The first set of articles is titled "Letters to Young Preachers." This work originally appeared as fifteen separate articles in the pages of the *Tennessee Baptist* newspaper. This set of discuss the following subjects in introduction; 2) call to ministry; 3) the sacredness of your calling; 4) worldly wealth and the call to ministry; 5) take heed to yourself; 6) love and evangelize the lost; 7) take heed to what you preach; 8) present the Gospel in its doctrinal, experimental, and practical aspects; 9) the importance of the Scripture: 10) the dignity of deportment; 11) trifling words: 12) of scholars and preachers; 13) the preparation of sermons; 14) text or subject sermons; and 15) the minister's theological library. The articles are of infinite value to young ministers.

The second article, "Extemporaneous Preaching" establishes Pendleton's belief concerning the proper method of preaching. Pendleton believes that sermons should be presented without notes; however, these sermons must be well researched and thoroughly prepared. In addition, this article established his belief concerning the necessity of expositional preaching. Lest one be confused, Pendleton did not use notes with the sermons later printed in this volume.

The third, fourth, and fifth articles appeared in the *Southern Baptist Review*. These articles are titled respectively, "The Importance of Ministerial Piety," "An Able Ministry," and "A Good Minister of Jesus Christ." All three articles display Pendleton's concern for the spiritual maturity of those in the

ministry. These articles also state that ministers should be gifted and competent in their abilities to perform the ministerial tasks. Pendleton presents piety as one of if not the most important quality for the Gospel ministry.

The next grouping contains several short sermons extracted from Pendleton's book titled Short Sermons. sermons chosen were deemed to be important for their theological implications, the topic discussed, or the fact that the sermon best represented Pendleton's preaching style. In order, they are: 1) "Not Ashamed of the Gospel" from Rom 1:16; 2) "The Inspiration and Utility of Scripture" from 2 Tim 3:16; 3) "Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life" from John 14:6; 4) Justification from Rom 10:4; and 5) The Dying Christian Triumphant from 2 Tim 4:7–8. These sermons demonstrate Pendleton's common practice of developing an expository sermon and concluding with remarks which attempt to make the sermon applicable. The most important sermon in this collection is the sermon on the inspiration of Scripture where Pendleton clearly supports an inerrant view of the Scriptures. Pendleton printed many "Short Sermons" and many "Sabbath Morning Thoughts" in the Tennessee Baptist. The influence of these sermons cannot determined but one can imagine that they were of benefit for many bi-vocational and otherwise busy ministers who perused the pages.

The seventh article is titled "Thoughts on Christian Duty." Pendleton states concerning these articles, "They were designed for Christians generally, and for young converts particularly." The various topics discussed include: 1) the Christian profession; 2) holding fast to our profession; 3) reading the Scriptures; 4) what are the requisites of availing prayer; 5) family worship; 6) public worship; 7) prayer meetings; 8) congregational singing; 9) growth in grace; 10) requisites to Christian usefulness; 11) the example of Christ; 12) Christian love; 13) humility; 14) Christian joy; 15) the government of the tongue; 16) separation from the world; 17) God's people are his witnesses; 18) the proper use of money; 19) the endurance of affliction; and 20) the prospect of death and heaven. If the current author could recommend but three

of these short articles that speak prophetically to modern generations, they would be the articles on family worship, prayer meetings, and congregational singing. Pendleton in these articles emphasizes the necessity of dedicating family time to worship, of gathering for the purpose of extended times of prayer, and for singing that involves the entire congregation and is not entertainment driven. Despite special emphasis on these three, all of the articles are beneficial, especially to new or immature believers in Christ.

The eighth article is titled, "Thoughts on Giving" and includes fourteen articles originally published separately in the *Tennessee Baptist* newspaper. The topics addressed include: 1) more blessed to give than to receive; 2) how much do you owe the Lord; 3) God is the sovereign proprietor; 4) systematic giving; 5) do not wait to give; 6) do not wait (cont.); 7) Jewish sacrificial requirements; 8) as God prospers you; 9) weekly contributions; 10) on monthly or annual giving; 11) how much should you give; 12) reasons to give; 13) reasons to give (cont.); and 14) reaching the world for Christ. These articles constitute the closest Pendleton ever came to espousing a theology of giving.

The ninth, tenth, and eleventh articles come from the Southern Baptist Review. Number nine, one of more unexpected, is "A Plea for Thorough Female Education." This article argues for female education at time when it was not taken for granted. In addition, Pendleton being a Baptist joins John Dagg and others in this emphasis. The group often looked upon as not considering women equal actually fought for equal treatment through education. The tenth article is titled, "Obeying the Dictates of Conscience." In this article, Pendleton argues that conscience is fallible and cannot always be trusted to guide one into doing what is right because man is fallen. The eleventh article, titled, "The Atonement of Christ" can be found in a similar expression in his systematic theology, Christian Doctrines or in an expanded form in the book titled, The Atonement of Christ. This book written almost thirty years later contains a 173page discussion of the same topic. Pendleton claims that this work is the result of a half century of study on the subject,

and that his views of the atonement "may not be in entire accord with those of any writer known to me." The article contained in this volume discusses the nature, necessity, value, extent, and results of the atonement.

The next grouping comes from one of Pendleton's best works, his systematic theology titled Christian Doctrines. In this collection of his works, the reader will find his "Preface" to the work which reveals the work as a biblical, systematic theology. By this the author means that Pendleton never intended to include all historical data, but simply to provide a biblical foundation for the systematic doctrines taught in the Bible. One chapter from that work is also included. The chapter chosen was "The Bible a Revelation from God" which seemed to fit well considering Pendleton's overarching focus on Scripture. Throughout Pendleton's work as a theologian, one will recognized that Pendleton believed Scripture was sufficient for all faith and practice. Following the regulative principle, he applied Scripture to everything and believed it gave principles if not direct commands that should be applied to every area of theology but especially to the doctrine of the church.

The last grouping contains several miscellaneous short articles from Pendleton which appeared in the *Tennessee Baptist*. These articles begin with two sermons: God Is Not the Author of Sin from James 1:13; and Salvation by Grace through Faith from Eph 2:8–10; before including five additional articles: Are The Heathen Saved Without the Gospel?; Free Agency; Divine Purpose and Free Agency; Questions: Missions and Anti-Missions Movement; and Theological Schools. Most of the titles explain the subject discussed. Of special interest is Pendleton's support for missions and theological education.

This author will close this introduction with a fitting quote from Pendleton. He said in the preface to *Christian*

³⁰ James Madison Pendleton, *The Atonement of Christ* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1885), 7.

Doctrines, "Every page has been written in the interest of scriptural truth, and for its maintenance. I trust that it has not been written in vain, but that the blessing of God will go with the volume which is now sent forth." I suspect Pendleton would re-issue these remarks upon the republication of many of his best works.

"Good principles are good things, but they have no self-propagating power. Principles are powerless apart from the persons who hold them. Baptists sometimes forget this. They are so confident in the correctness of their principles as to feel that all will be well. They think that their views, without any effort on their part, will commend themselves to general acceptance. They suppose that a good cause may be left to take care of itself; but no cause, however good, takes care of itself. Its friends must advocate it, and by their advocacy secure its triumph. Baptists must not forget that they are 'fellow-helpers to the truth.' None of them should fail to give the 'truth' their help. None should ever act as if they were ashamed of being Baptists. Their principles, when assailed, should never lack defense or vindication from them. Their silence, when they should speak, would be a culpable and an injurious silence. Baptists should be ready not only to meet and to repel attacks made on their principles, but should earnestly engage in the propagation of those principles. Leaving, on suitable occasions, their fortresses of defense, they should invade the domain of error and become actively aggressive. This is one fault of some of the Baptists of this generation—that they do not zealously propagate their distinctive views. They should see to it that the truth as embodied in their distinctive principles is brought into direct, positive, constant, exterminating contact with the error opposed to those principles. What distinctive mission have 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 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 maintained."

JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

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

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