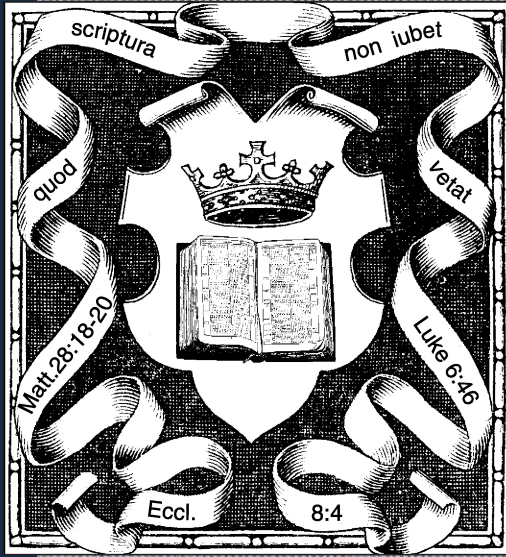
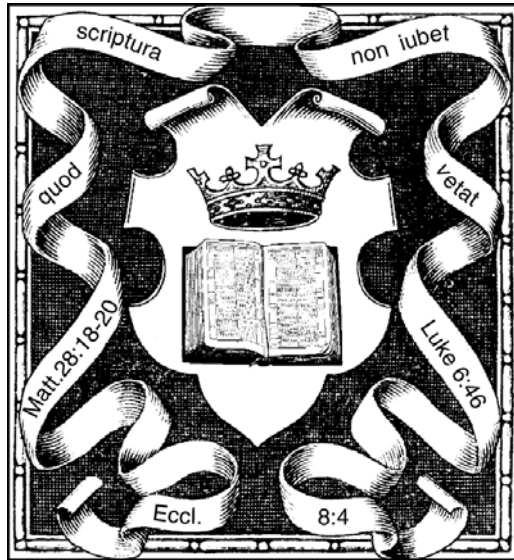


The Baptist Distinctives Series      Number 31



# A Sober Discourse of Right To Church Communion

William Kiffin



## *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*.





A  
***SOBER DISCOURSE***  
of  
*Right*  
to  
***CHURCH-COMMUNION***



WILLIAM KIFFIN, A.M.  
1616-1701

A  
**SOBER DISCOURSE**  
of  
*Right*  
to  
**CHURCH-COMMUNION**

By

***William Kiffin A.M.***

*With a Biographical Sketch of the Author  
by John Franklin Jones*

LONDON: 1681



**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.  
— *Psalms 60: 4*



*Reprinted 2006*

*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# 1579782396

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



	<i>Page</i>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	11
<b>TO THE CHRISTIAN READER</b> .....	13
<b>THE PREFACE</b> .....	19
<b>CHAPTER ONE:</b> <i>The Question Stated</i> .....	25
<b>CHAPTER TWO:</b> <i>Reasons Why Unbaptized Members May Not Be Admitted to the Lord's Supper</i> .....	29
<b>CHAPTER THREE:</b> <i>Shews that this Practice of Admitting Unbaptized Persons to the Lord's Supper, is Against Scripture</i> .....	39
<b>CHAPTER FOUR:</b> <i>Shewing that this Opinion that Unbaptized Persons May Be Admitted to the Lord's Supper, is Against the Practice of All Christians in All Ages that have Owned Ordinances</i> .....	51
<i>To Illustrate this Point Further We Will Give a Brief</i> .....	59

Abstract of Some Things  
Recorded in that Excellent  
History Compiled by the  
Divines of Madeburg.

**CHAPTER FIVE:**  
Wherein the *Objections*  
*Against this Position* viz.,  
that None May be Regularly  
Admitted to the Lord's  
Supper, that are not First  
Baptized, *are Answered.* ..... 75

**A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF**  
**WILLIAM KIFFIN**  
(1616-1701)  
BY JOHN FRANKLIN JONES ..... 97







A  
*SOBER DISCOURSE*  
OF  
*Right*  
TO  
*CHURCH-COMMUNION.*



Wherein is proved by *Scripture*, the Example of the *Primitive* Times, and the Practice of All that have Professed the *Christian Religion*: That no Unbaptized person may be Regularly admitted to the *Lord's Supper*.

---

**By *W. Kiffin* a lover of Truth and Peace**

---

Act 2. 41. *Then they that gladly received His Word were baptized: and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls.*

Deut. 5. 32. *Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God hath commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.*

Col. 2. 5. *Joying and beholding your order and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.*

*London*, Printed by *Geo. Larkin*, for *Enoch Prosser*; at the *Rose and Crown* in *Sweethings-Alley*, at the East End of the *Royal Exchange*, 1681.





---

TO THE  
CHRISTIAN READER

When it pleased God of His free grace to cause me to make a serious inquiry after Jesus Christ, and to give me some taste of His pardoning love, the sense of which did engage my heart with desires to be obedient to His will in all things, I used all endeavors both by converse with such as were able, and also by diligently searching the Scriptures, with earnest desires of God, that I might be directed in a right way of worship; and after some time concluded that the safest way was to follow the footsteps of the flock (namely that order laid down by Christ and His Apostles, and practiced by the primitive Christians in their times) which I found to be that after conversion they were baptized, added to the church, and continued in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer; according to which I thought myself bound to be conformable, and having continued in the profession of the same for these forty years, although through many weaknesses, and fears, temptations, and sufferings, yet not without some witness from God of His gracious acceptance and strength to this very day: The sense I have of my own weakness and inability, would have been a bar to me to appear in this public way, did I not see a necessity lying upon me for the Truth's sake, and the sakes of many, by reason of some that have lately risen up to weaken, if not make void, that great ordinance of baptism, by endeavoring to maintain that all persons that believe, although they never did, nor do practice the same, may partake of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and all other Gospel instituted duties. A notion, not only contrary to the primitive pattern, but the constant practice of all that ever professed

## To the Christian Reader

the Christian religion, or that own the Scriptures to be the Rule of Faith and Practice; and it would be a happiness to the Christian religion, if all that profess the same, did in other things agree as they do in this; namely, that none ought to be partakers of the Lord's Supper but such as have been baptized; those that differ in this matter from them, would be found to be as few in number as they are weak in argument, and although I am well satisfied that the performance of all duties and ordinances, will be of no value to any man, further than Christ is enjoyed in them: the very Gospel itself severed from Christ, will prove the administration of death (2 Cor. 1:21). The most powerful preaching, and the clearest discourse of the free grace of God hath no life in it, unless the soul be led by the Spirit to Christ, Who is the life of all duties. Knowledge of the Truth, and obedience to it in outward performances, will as little save a man's soul as the covenant of works. Yet every man that hath an interest in Christ, is bound by the Word of God to be obedient to all His commands. It was the great commendation of Zacharias and Elizabeth, that they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, the ordinance of baptism is none of the least, the very foundation of religion being comprehended in the form thereof, as appeareth at large by the worthy and learned Dr. Owen, in his book of the Divine Nature and Personality of the Holy Spirit, page 50, viz., All things necessary to this purpose are comprised in the solemn form of our initiation into Covenant with God (Matt. 28:19). Our Lord Jesus Christ commands His Apostles to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Ghost. This is the foundation we lay of our obedience and profession, which are to be regulated by this initial engagement, page 51. No sense can be affixed unto these words but what doth unavoidably include His personality, we are alike baptized into Their Name, equally submitting to Their authority, and equally taking the profession of Their Name upon us. Again, by being baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, we are sacredly initiated, and consecrated, or dedicated unto the service and worship of



## To the Christian Reader

the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; this we take upon us in our baptism: herein lies the foundation of all our faith and profession with that engagement of ourselves unto God, which constitutes our Christianity; this is the pledge of our entrance into Covenant with God, and of our giving up ourselves unto Him in the solemn bond of religion. And concludes in page 52. If the Doctrine of a Trinity of Persons subsisting in the same undivided essence, be not taught and declared in these words, we may justly despair of ever having any Divine mystery manifested unto us. I leave the reader to peruse it at large.

If this ordinance of baptism be the pledge of our entrance into Covenant with God, and of the giving up ourselves unto Him in the solemn bond of religion, and we are hereby dedicated unto the service of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, then must it of necessity be the first ordinance, before that of the Lord's Supper. We may as well conclude a man may go into a house before he enters, and a man may be paid for his goods, and afterwards receive earnest, as any may lawfully partake of the Lord's Supper before he is baptized. And if we are sacredly initiated and consecrated, or dedicated unto the worship of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as that text Matthew 28:19 sheweth we are, and take this upon us in our baptism, and thereby owning the Spirit to be God, equal with the Father, and the Son, as that faith which is to be exercised by us in all other ordinances, then the admitting of persons to the Lord's Supper, and other instituted duties, before they are baptized, doth greatly weaken this main argument of the Spirit's being God, at least in the practice of these Gospel duties, for from what Scripture will be made appear, that He is so to be owned in them, if ye partake of them before, or without being baptized? If this be laid as the foundation of all our faith, and profession, which are to be built upon in all our profession, if it be omitted, the structure must needs be weak, we had need rather to have our faith strengthened in the belief of so great and essential a Truth as the Divine essence of the Spirit is, by the use of all means

appointed to that end.

## To the Christian Reader

Mr. Francis Cheynel, in his learned treatise, of the Divine Trinity, printed 1650, page 258, quotes it as the judgment of Iraeneus, Tertullian, Athanasius, Basil, and others of the ancients, that the principle fundamentals of the Christian faith are contained in the form of baptism, and founded on Matthew 28:19. And in page 185 tells us, if any man in Athanasius' time asked, how many persons subsist in the Godhead, they were wont to send him to Jordan, and there you may hear and see the blessed Trinity. Matthew 3:16, in page 381. God the Holy Ghost is to be obeyed, we are devoted and consecrated to the belief, worship and service of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. By which we may see, what esteem the ancients had of that ordinance, and great reason there is for every Christian to be found in the practice thereof, seeing they are thereby baptized into Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as the first foundation of our visible profession of Christ; for as repentance is the visible initiating grace; so baptism is called the baptism of repentance as the first initiating ordinance.

I have for the satisfaction of all, endeavored in the following essay to clear this truth both from Scripture and example, as also to produce the judgment of the learned in all ages. As for our modern divines, you have their own words set down faithfully by me, and as for those who are more ancient, I have requested a friend to translate the same, which I doubt not but is done impartially. And although I may expect to meet with censures from some who will be ready to charge the truth herein with uncharitableness and to be of a dividing nature; yet I can with comfort and sincerity of heart in the presence of God declare, I have no other design, but the preserving the Ordinances of Christ, in their purity and order as they are left unto us in the holy Scriptures of Truth; and to warn the churches to keep close to the rule, lest they being found not to worship the Lord according to His prescribed order he make a breach amongst them, neither are you presented with any new opinion, but that which hath been the judgment of all that have professed the Christian religion in all times; so that what censure any shall make upon it, respects not us only, but the servants of God of all

## To the Christian Reader

persuasions in all ages, and for myself, as I have a witness in my own conscience, so I doubt not but I have the same also with those that know me, that I have made it a great part of my duty, as I have had opportunity, to persuade all Christians to love and peace, to avoid judging, and reproaching each other under their differing persuasions, to turn their hearts and passions, which hath greatly abounded in our days one against another, into prayer, and supplication for another, that although they differ in their light, it may not make any breach in their love; He that knows most of the mind of God, knows but in part, for who art thou that judgest another man's servant? I shall trouble you no further, but leave the perusal of this small essay to thy serious consideration.

Thine in the service of Christ,

W. K.





## THE PREFACE

**W**hat was praiseworthy in those primitive Christians, to whom the Apostle Paul writes (1 Cor. 11:2), can be no blemish, but really a duty in other Christians, in after times, to imitate; his words are, I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you: our translation of the Greek word (rendering it “ordinances”) is excepted against by some Papists, especially Gregory Martin, reputed a great linguist in the Rhemish Seminary, who would have it translated (traditions) to countenance the Romish opinion; to which shall be opposed that the Greek word signifies indeed tradition, that is in English, a delivery, viz. of doctrines, ordinances, instructions, or institutions (2 Thess. 2:15), by those evangelical preachers to their auditors, which is nothing else but the Doctrine of the Gospel first preached (which is of the greatest and highest authority,) and afterwards committed to writing by the evangelists and apostles, as standing records to future ages; so that any traditions, besides what is written, are justly to be excepted against, and (in matters relating to Divine worship) to be esteemed apocryphal. Because a delivery of transactions or doctrines by ancestors to posterity by word of mouth, is liable to many mistakes and uncertainties, by reason of the different constitutions and circumstances of men, who frequently introduce that authority to color their inventions, or the product of their imaginary fancies, with respect to Divine matters. Though it is very apparent that such a rule is not at all self-evidencing, for it cannot prove itself; nor is it demonstrative, for it has no certain medium to convince; nor universally true in all times and places, because reports vary everywhere; neither is it unerring, being nowhere stamped with that character; and

## The Preface

lastly, not plain, for no doubting person can possibly examine all traditions. Now these are some of the properties of a general rule to try controversies by, which being wanting in oral traditions, the word cannot here be understood otherwise than by ordinances or institutions of the Gospel recorded in the Scriptures, which were given for our instruction (2 Tim. 3:16), written by the immediate dictates of the Spirit; preserved by the gracious Providence of God in the church from the injuries of time, ignorance, and fraud, through all ages; they have been kept with much greater care, than any other books, translated into all languages, retained both by orthodox and heretics, diligently observing and watching each other, so that there could not possible happen any remarkable variation or alteration in them, but that presently the whole world would have exclaimed against it.

Man's nature is very prone to be meddling with things beyond his commission, which has proved the very pest and bane of Christianity; for notwithstanding that dreadful prohibition (Rev. 22:18, 19) of adding to, or taking from His Word, is not Europe full of pernicious additions and subtractions in the worship of God, which are imposed as magisterially as if enstamped with a Divine character, though in themselves no other than (as Christ Himself calls them) the traditions of men (Matt. 15:3)! It is a superlative and desperate piece of audacity for men to presume to mend anything in the worship of God; for it supposes the All-wise Lawgiver capable of error, and the attempter wiser than his Maker. And if sovereign princes and worldly states be so jealous of their prerogatives and respective rights, that they will (to the utmost hazard) repel any invader: if men be displeased to have their laws undervalued by the private judgments of those who rather interpret than obey them: if the conquest of an enemy against the command of his general, cost a Roman gentleman his life, though his own father were the judge: if the killing of a lion contrary to the laws of the King's hunting (though to rescue the King himself) cost a poor Persian his head: if the architect that brought not the same (but as he judged, a fitter) piece of timber than he was commanded, to a Roman consul, was



## The Preface

rewarded with a bundle of rods. If (Lev. 10:l, 2) Nadab and Abihu came to a tragical end for their prohibited service, in offering not the same that was commanded, but strange fire before the Lord; what shall we say to such as mix their inventions with the sacred institutions and prescripts of the great unerring Sovereign? When the same person who is to perform the obedience, shall dare to appoint the laws? Implying a peremptory purpose of no further observance than may consist with the allowance of his own judgment? Whereas true obedience must be grounded on the majesty of that power that commands, not on the judgment of the subject, or benefit of the prescript proposed; not so much from the quality of things commanded, as from the authority of him that institutes. Is not such a practice an invasion upon Christ's prerogative? Do not such men make themselves (as it were) joint authors of His ordinances? And may it not be truly said that whoever practices any institution otherwise than as was appointed by the Supreme Lawgiver, does not honor the ordinance, but an idol of his own making? Mixtures are useful for two purposes; viz. Either to slacken and abate some thing that is excessive, or to supply something that is deficient: and so all heterogenous mixtures do plainly intimate, either a viciousness to be corrected, or a defect to be supplied. Now it is no less than blasphemy to charge either of these upon the pure and perfect Word of God, and any glosses that take away or diminish the force of it, or human traditions that argue any defect, are equally dangerous and impious. To stamp anything of a human original with a Divine character, and father it upon God, is one of the highest and most daring presumptions the pride of man can aspire unto, and is provided against by special prohibitions and threatening (Deut. 12:32 and 18:20; Jer. 26:2; Prov. 30:6).

When that question shall be asked, Who hath required this at your hands? I doubt it will be no sufficient plea to say, that if we have erred in any punctilio's of Divine Truth, it was for peace and unions sake, etc. For, no motions of peace are to be made or received with the loss of Truth: nor may the laws, orders, and prescriptions of Christ be altered or varied, in

## The Preface

any tittle, upon any pretense whatsoever, God having never given any such prerogative to mankind, as to be arbitrators how He may be best and most decently worshipped.

It is not to be questioned but all protestants, or any sober impartial persons, that bear any reverence to the Divine Majesty and His Holy Word, will readily own these general theories, which are so self-evidencing, that if any gainsay them, he does at the same time strike at the Majesty, Wisdom and Authority of GOD, the most daring and desperate enterprise in the world.

Now this being (as it must be) granted, viz. That no part of God's law, or worship, whether we respect the manner or form, or the matter and substance thereof, is to be altered without the express order and direction of GOD Himself; it will lead us to a sober inquiry, Whether the opinion here examined, be grounded upon the Law and Word of God. To do which, for method's sake,

- Chapter 1 We will state the question.
- Chapter 2 We will propose some reasons why unbaptized persons may not be admitted to the Lord's Supper.
- Chapter 3 We will produce some Scripture demonstrations to evidence that such a practice (viz. so to admit them) is not evangelical.
- Chapter 4 We will shew that it is against the practice and judgment of all Christians that have owned ordinances, for above sixteen hundred years.
- Chapter 5 We will answer objections.

In the prosecution of which heads, we shall labor to sift out Truth impartially, propose our own judgment candidly and

## The Preface

plainly, without the least reflection upon, or prejudice to our Christian brethren that dissent from us in this point, with whom and with all that can own the name of the Lord Jesus according to his Gospel, we desire to live in brotherly love and Christian society, and if we find our brethren entertain any unsound notion with respect to Gospel Truths, we look upon it as our duty to endeavor to inform them of it, in a meek and sober way; and if we fail of success, then to leave them to the Lord, who in His own due season will uncloud those sacred mysteries, which yet are hidden to a great many.

We are not willing to be censorious, nor arrogate that wisdom to ourselves, as to think that we are wiser than others, yet in all modesty we may be bold to affirm, that in the point here handled, we have the Scriptures, and the concurrence (see Chapter 4 following) of all Christians from the beginning, to this age, on our side; whereas the opposite opinion can challenge but a few favorites, and is of a very late original: which is not the main reason brought here to oppose it, but only serves for a collateral evidence, to illustrate the arguments proposed from Scripture, and to shew that the eminent professors of, and sufferers for, Christianity have owned it, which is no slight circumstance to sober and considering Christians.



“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).

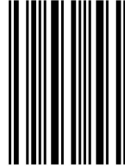
---

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 1-57978-239-6



90000>



9 781579 782399