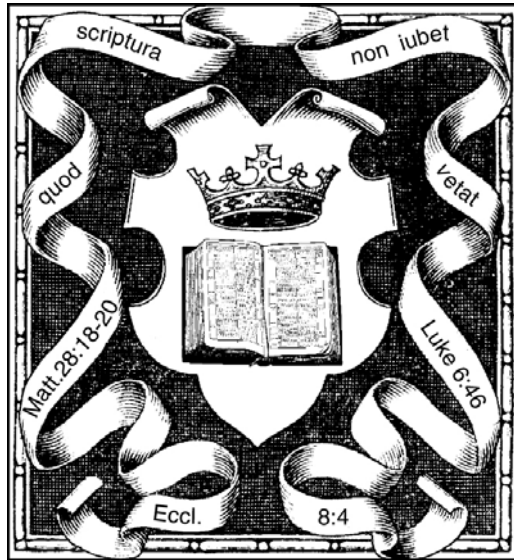


A Defense for the Baptists

Abraham Booth



Quod scriptura, non iubet vetat

The Latin translates, “What is not commanded in scripture, is forbidden:”

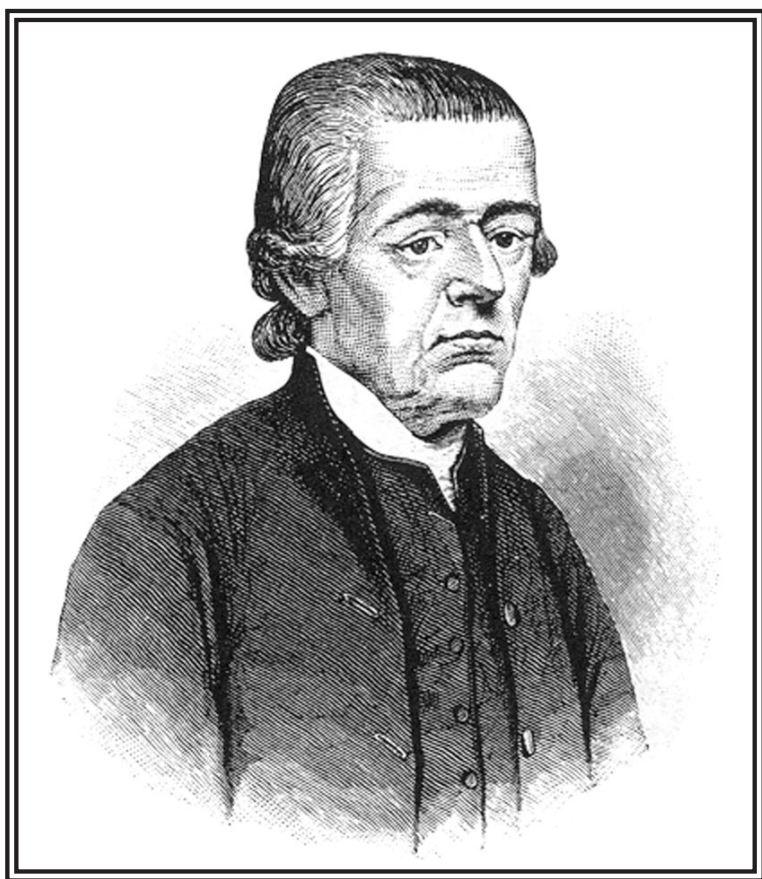
On the Cover: Baptists rejoice to hold in common with other evangelicals the main principles of the orthodox Christian faith. However, there are points of difference and these differences are significant. In fact, because these differences arise out of God’s revealed will, they are of vital importance. 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. 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
DEFENSE
FOR
THE BAPTISTS**



ABRAHAM BOOTH
1734-1806

A
DEFENSE
FOR
THE BAPTISTS

BEING A
DECLARATION AND A VINDICATION OF
THREE HISTORICALLY DISCINCTIVE BAPTIST PRINCIPLES
COMPILED AND SET FORTH
IN THE REPUBLISHING OF THE FOLLOWING THREE BOOKS:



AN APOLOGY FOR THE BAPTISTS, LONDON, 1778
AN ESSAY ON THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST, LONDON, 1788
PASTORAL CAUTIONS, LONDON, 1805



BY ABRAHAM BOOTH



WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR BY
JOHN FRANKLIN JONES



The 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.
— *Psalms 60:4*

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THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM

lux lucet in tenebris

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

ISBN# 1579783678

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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD¹

The following book is a compilation of three books by Abraham Booth. Together they form a positive statement with regard to those views wherein Baptists differ from Protestant Pædobaptists, and we have several reasons for republishing them at this time. First, the reader should notice that the first book in this compilation of reprints addresses the age-old controversy of infant-baptism. The republication of this book does not mark a *public renewal* of that controversy, but, rather, a *public response* to the renewal of that controversy. While we recognize that a clear, definitive statement of Baptist beliefs regarding the nature of the New Testament Church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper has always sparked the charge of bigotry, sectarianism and narrow-mindedness, we also recognize that denunciation is oftentimes the last resort of a defeated opponent. We make no apology for publishing this work. We had rather bear the brunt of the unjustifiable charge of bigotry and enjoy the felicity of a cleared conscience, than bear the burden of the justifiable charge of apathy and suffer the misery of a seared conscience. Abraham Booth addresses himself in the first book to that unjustifiable charge of bigotry so often cast in our teeth. We exhort both friend and foe to prayerfully and seriously consider his answer.

Second, it should also be noted that, in all honesty, we would not make a brother "an offender for a word" (Isa. 29:21). We desire to "walk together" (Amos 3:3) "in truth" (III John 4)

¹ ©1985. "Publisher's Foreword" to Abraham Booth's – *A Defense for the Baptists*. (Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., 1985).

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with “all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity” (Eph. 6:24), who “rejoiceth in the truth” (I Cor. 13:6), and who have determined in their hearts to “prove all things” and only “hold fast that which is good” (I Thess. 5:21). On the other hand, we can call no man master. We hold no man’s “person in admiration because of advantage” (Jude 16). We seek not “honor from men” nor “one of another” (John 5:41, 44). If we know anything of ourselves, we desire “truth in the inward parts” (Ps. 51:6). Therefore, regarding this infant-baptism controversy (or any other controversy), God being our helper, we shall not purchase peace at the expense of the truth.

Third, the reader should also note that we realize there is probably no subject in Christianity about which such difference of opinion exists as baptism. The very word recalls to one’s mind an endless list of strifes, disputes, divisions and controversies, regarding which J. C. Ryle said, “It is impossible to handle this question without coming into direct collision with the opinions of others. But I hope it is possible to handle it in a kindly and temperate spirit. At any rate it is no use to avoid discussion for fear of offending. Disputed points in theology are never likely to be settled unless men on both sides will say out plainly what they think, and give their reasons for their opinions. To avoid the subject, because it is a controversial one, is neither honest nor wise.” *Knots Untied*, Chap. 5, p. 75. We are not vain enough to suppose that we can throw any NEW light on a controversy which so many able men have handled before. However, we do desire to uncover OLD light on this controversy about which most in this generation might not be aware. There is no need for us to spend ourselves producing NEW rebuttals to the errors of infant-baptism, when the Pædobaptists have never really answered our OLD rebuttals. Let the Pædobaptists first answer these, line for line, then we will consider what they have to say—not before. Where is their complete refutation to Abraham Booth’s *Pædobaptism Examined*, Revised 3rd Edition with Replies to Dr. Williams and Peter Edwards, 3 vols. 1829? Where is their definitive answer to Alexander Carson’s *Baptism in Its Mode and Subjects*, Edinburgh, 1831? Where is their complete answer to John Gale’s *Reflections on Dr. Wall’s*

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History of Infant-Baptism, London, 1820? Where is their irrefutable reply to John Gill's *The Divine Right of Infant-Baptism Examined and Disproved*, Boston, 1746, or any of the other essays Dr. Gill wrote against infant-baptism? Until works like these be refuted, we see no benefit whatsoever in a ceaseless round of questions and of the vain and endless charges and counter-charges.

Fourth, in the republication of these books by Abraham Booth, we wish to strengthen the hands of those with whom we agree, to gather materials upon which future generations of younger Baptists can build, and to show them that we, as Baptists, have no reason to be ashamed of our opinions. Also, we desire to expose some of the Pædobaptists to some things they have, perhaps, never considered and to show the more credulous among the liberal Baptists and Pædobaptists of this generation that the Scriptural arguments in this matter are not, as they suppose, on their side. "To everything there is a season... a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." (Eccl. 3:1, 7). The time for silence has passed. The time to speak has come.

There are times when peculiar circumstances arise which draw special attention to specific doctrines of Christianity. The attacks by those who oppose the truth often make it necessary for Baptists to explain and emphasize some of their particular doctrinal views more than they normally would. The plausible assertion of some falsehood sometimes requires to be met by more than ordinary carefulness. Such are the times and circumstances in which we live with regard to the renewal of the infant-baptism controversy through the disproportionate publication of materials espousing Pædobaptist theology and vilifying and maligning Baptist theology and history. This recurring upsurge in publications emphasizing infant-baptism is neither surprising to us nor new for Protestants. After the Reformation (but prior to the founding of the American Republic, with full constitutional religious liberty), the Protestant Pædobaptists were usually in the majority and in control of the printing presses, through their connection with the political governments (except, of course, when everything was dominated by Roman Catholicism). Every time the

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Pædobaptists felt their Baptist opponents were growing too much, or, when they sensed a doctrinal weakening of the Baptists, or, when they became over-confident in their own doctrinal position, or, when they became aware of any restless uncertainty among their own ranks, they repeatedly began to shore-up their Dagon by a renewed emphasis on infant-baptism and their aberrant views of the Abrahamic Covenant. What is surprising and new about the current situation of the infant-baptism controversy is some of the NEW arguments the Pædobaptists have adopted to attempt to defend their position. What we mean by NEW is, negatively, not just new in the sense of “what” they are saying, but new, positively, in “how” they are saying it. Regarding the mode of baptism, for example, there have always been Pædobaptists who espoused sprinkling and pouring as “acceptable” modes of baptism, but now some Pædobaptists are declaring them to be the ONLY acceptable modes; so what for 450 years they confessed were, at best, plausible, expedient, optional modes (sprinkling and pouring) have now become positively the ONLY Scriptural modes—at least this is what some of them have dogmatically, but inconsistently, stated in recent publications like:

- ♦ Adams, Jay E. - *The Meaning & Mode of Baptism*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1975).
- ♦ Jordan, James B., ed, - *The Failure of the American Baptist Culture*. (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School, 1982.)
- ♦ Spencer, Duane - *Holy Baptism*. (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School, 1984).

Now this is new and, frankly, quite surprising, for so many men depended upon for their honesty and reputed for scholarship and historic orthodoxy. These new-age Pædobaptists claim to be followers of their Pædobaptist forefathers’ confessions, their forefathers’ catechisms, their forefathers’ creeds, and their forefathers’ practices, yet they have *departed* from their forefathers’ honesty and their forefathers’ words. How, you ask, have they *departed* from their forefathers’ honesty and words? We state: They are not

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honest to admit what their forefathers admitted about the basic, primary mode of baptism. What do we mean? Did not the Reformers practice infant-baptism via sprinkling and pouring? Did not the English Puritans and the Scottish Presbyterians practice the same? Does not the *Westminster Confession* read, "Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person." Chap. 28, III, p. 115? How then, you ask, have these modern Pædobaptists *departed* from their forefathers' honesty and their forefathers' words with regard to the mode of baptism? To follow the example of Christ, we answer your question with a question: What exactly did their forefathers admit about the basic, primary mode of baptism that the new Pædobaptists are not honest enough to admit? For brevity, let us examine what some of their forefathers have said. We will review: (1) some of the major Reformers, (2) some of the most well-known Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians, and (3) the Westminster Assembly of Divines. The following quotes are certainly not all that these individuals stated about the mode of baptism, but relative to what these modern Pædobaptists are saying, their honest confessions make enlightening reading. Consider:

Reformers on the basic, primary mode of baptism:

Theodore Beza — "Christ commanded us to be baptized, by which word it is certain immersion is signified." — Annotations on Matt. 7:4; "To be baptized in water signifies no other than to be immersed in water; which is the external ceremony of baptism." — Annotations on Acts 19:3; "Ye have put on Christ — this phrase seems to proceed from the ancient custom of plunging the adult in baptism." — Annotations on Gal. 3:27; *Annotations ad Novum Testamentum*, Geneva, 1582;

John Calvin — "The word baptize signifies to immerse and it is clear that the rite of immersion was observed by the ancient Church." *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, Chap. 15, Section 19; "From these words (John 3:23) it may be inferred that baptism was administered by John and Christ, by plunging the whole body under the water." *Commentary on John 3*, p. 130; "Here we perceive (Acts 8:38) how baptism was

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administered among the ancients, for they immersed the whole body into the water.” *Commentary on Acts 8*, p. 364;

Martin Luther — “The term baptism is Greek; in Latin it may be translated *immersio*; since we immerse anything into water that the whole may be covered with the water. And though that custom be quite abolished among the generality, (for neither do they entirely dip children, but only sprinkle them with a little water), nevertheless they ought to be wholly immersed and immediately to be drawn out again, for the etymology of the word seems to require it.” *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 74, Wittenberg Edition;

Philip Melancthon — “When we are immersed in the water, this signifies that the old Adam and sin in us are dead. When we are drawn out of the water, this means that we are now washed.” *Loci Communes*, 1555, Chap. 20, p. 206; “Baptism is immersion into water, which is performed with this accompanying [sic] benediction of admiration: I baptize thee.” etc.; “Plunging signifies ablution from sin and immersion into the death of Christ.” *Catechesis De Sacramentis, Opera Omnia*, Vol. I, p. 25;

Ulric Zwingli — “‘Baptized into his death’. . . When ye were immersed into the water of baptism, ye were engrafted into the death of Christ; that is, the immersion of your body into water was a sign, that ye ought to be engrafted into Christ and his death, that as Christ died and was buried, ye also may be dead to the flesh.” Annotations on Romans 6:3, *Opera*, Vol. VI, p. 420, Zurich, 1828.

Whatever else may be said about these Reformers and their teachings or their inconsistencies, they at least admitted the basic, primary meaning of the word *baptizo*, and they honestly confessed the practice of the Apostolic Church. Notice also, there is not the slightest hint that they considered sprinkling and pouring as the ONLY acceptable modes of baptism. Wherever Jay Adams, James Jordan, Duane Spencer, etc., got their idea that sprinkling and pouring are the ONLY acceptable modes, they did not get it from these Reformers.

Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians on the basic, primary mode of baptism:

Richard Baxter — “It is commonly confessed by us to the Anabaptists that in the Apostles’ times the baptized were dipped over head in water, and that this signified their profession, both of believing in the burial and resurrection of Christ; and of their own present renouncing the world and the flesh, or dying to sin and living to Christ, as the Apostle expoundeth in the forecited text of Col. 2 and Rom. 6.” *Disputation of the Right to Sacraments*, p. 58, London, 1658;

Thomas Boston — “The unlawfulness of dipping is not to be pretended since it is not improbable that it was used by John the Baptist, Matt. 3:6, and Philip, Acts 8:38; but seems to have been used in the ancient church.” *Works*, Vol. II, p. 475;

Thomas Goodwin — “The eminent thing signified and represented in baptism is not simply the blood of Christ as it washeth us from sin; but there is a farther representation therein of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection, in the baptized’s being first buried under the water and then rising out of it. . . Therefore, it is said ‘We are buried with him in baptism. . . wherein you are risen with him’. . . Upon the party himself who is baptized, is personally, particularly, and apparently reinacted the same part again in his baptism.” *Works*, Vol. IV, Chap. 7, pp. 41-42;

John Lightfoot — “The baptism of John was immersion of the body. . . he baptized in the Jordan and in Enon, because there was much water; and that Christ being baptized came up out of the water; to which, that seems to be parallel in Acts 8:38, Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water.” *Whole Works*, Vol. XI, Comments on Matt. 3:6, p. 63;

Thomas Manton — “We are buried with him in baptism.” The like expression you have in Col. 2:12, ‘Buried with him in baptism.’ The putting the baptized person into the water denoteth and proclaimeth the burial of Christ and we by submitting to it are baptized.” *Complete Works*, Vol. XI, p. 171;

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Whatever else may be said about these Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians and their teachings, they plainly admitted the basic, primary meaning of the word *baptizo*, and they honestly confessed the practice of John the Baptist, Christ, the Apostles, and the Apostolic Church. There was not the slightest hint that these men considered sprinkling and pouring as the ONLY proper modes of baptism. Wherever Jay Adams, James Jordan, Duane Spencer, etc., got their idea that sprinkling and pouring are the ONLY acceptable modes, they did not get it from these Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians.

The Westminster Assembly on the basic, primary mode of baptism:

In the *Westminster Confession*, regarding baptism, Chap. 28, III, p. 115, we read: "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person." Notice, not one word states that sprinkling or pouring are the ONLY proper modes; rather, it was the Assembly's opinion that immersion was not absolutely necessary, and that baptism could be rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling. It is evident that the Assembly had no thought of hiding or denying the basic, primary meaning of the word *baptizo*, thereby denying the basic, primary mode of baptism. Instead, it was their voted decision to recognize immersion as an acceptable mode, but one that was not absolutely necessary, while at the same time espousing pouring or sprinkling as acceptable modes. Notice, there was no vote to deny immersion, nor to espouse sprinkling or pouring as the ONLY proper modes. Notice this was not the only thing the Westminster Assembly said about the mode of baptism. In their *Westminster Annotation upon all the books of the Old and New Testaments*, London, 1657, they stated: "In this phrase (Col. 2:12) the Apostle seemeth to allude to the ancient manner of baptism, which was to dip the parties baptized, and, as it were, to bury them under the water for a while, and then to draw them out of it, and lift them up, to represent the burial of our old man, and our resurrection to newness of life." (See also their statements on Matt. 3:6 and Rom. 6:4).

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It is especially enlightening and extremely important to know how the doctrinal statements of the Presbyterians came to favor sprinkling and pouring over immersion as the preferred mode of baptism. When the Westminster Assembly met to frame a creed and government for the Presbyterian denomination, there arose quite a controversy over the mode of baptism. Dr. John Lightfoot was the presiding officer at the Assembly sessions and relates in his journal what happened at that session: "Wednesday, August 7, 1644, then fell we upon the work of the day, which was about baptizing. . .whether to dip. . .or to sprinkle. . .after a long dispute, it was at last put to the question and it was voted so indifferently, that we were glad to count names twice for so many were unwilling to have dipping excluded. . .and there arose a great heat upon it." *Lightfoot's Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 300-301. History goes on to relate that finally the issue passed, 25 to 24, Dr. Lightfoot casting the deciding vote. It is apparent that the Assembly just barely agreed for Presbyterianism to prefer sprinkling and pouring over immersion, and that by only one vote. See: D. Neal's *History of the Puritans*, Vol. 2, p. 295.

Whatever else may be said about the Westminster Assembly, they at least honestly admitted the meaning of the word *baptizo*, and confessed that immersion was the practice of the ancient church. They did not in any sense, as is evident from their actions and their statements, deny immersion as valid baptism, nor did they declare sprinkling and pouring to be the ONLY proper modes of baptism. Wherever Jay Adams, James Jordan, Duane Spencer, and company got their idea that sprinkling and pouring are the ONLY acceptable modes, they did not get it from the Westminster Assembly or the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

Now, we appeal to the conscience of our readers: Did not some of the major Reformers, some of the most well-known Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians and the Westminster Assembly recognize and honestly concede that the basic, primary meaning of *baptizo* is to "dip, plunge and immerse," and that the practice of John the Baptist, Christ, the Apostles and the ancient churches was to baptize by dipping, immersing and plunging under water? Did they declare sprinkling or pouring

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to be absolutely the ONLY proper mode of baptism? We think not. The honest statements and concessions of the Pædobaptists' forefathers speak for themselves.

The admissions and confessions of the three groups of older Pædobaptists given above are worlds apart from what the new-age Pædobaptists like Jay Adams of Westminster Theological Seminary, Escondido, California, and James B. Jordan of the Geneva Divinity School, Tyler, Texas, and Duane Spencer (now deceased), formerly of the Grace Bible Church, San Antonio, Texas, have recently stated.

For example, **Jay Adams**, speaking of the mode of baptism, said: "It is not true that the word (*baptize*) means immerse and only immerse . . . it is significant that Biblical baptism, in its origin, was performed by sprinkling and not by immersion . . . immersion is not only foreign to the New Testament but, on the contrary, the mode was exclusively sprinkling or pouring. . . baptizing by immersion — has no Bible precedent — it must be rejected." *The Meaning & Mode of Baptism*, pp. 2, 11, 43, 44.

While we could not disagree more with these statements by Mr. Adams, we are profoundly thankful for the true things he admits in his book, as they have needed to be admitted for a long time by the Pædobaptists. He makes statements that clear away all the confusion, all the areas of murky gray, which have made it well-nigh impossible for people to see some of the basic issues involved in this controversy. Mr. Adams admits the position that Baptists have held all along. Listen to what he says: "Contrary to the opinion of those who maintain that the mode is of little significance, I believe it to be of real significance. The immersionists are correct in making something of the mode. This latter conclusion I base upon two facts. First of all, all things that pertain to the Word of God are important. But this is especially true of the only two sacraments our Lord left His Church. Obviously, unless the Apostles used BOTH immersion and pouring (or sprinkling), one or the other was the proper method. If it was pouring, we ought to pour; if immersion, we ought to immerse. . . Secondly, mode cannot be separated from meaning. The sacraments are

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symbolic. If so, then “mode” and “symbol” are one and the same. . . The symbol in the sacrament is either disclosed or destroyed by a true or false mode of observing the sacrament. Mode and symbol and, therefore, mode and meaning, cannot be divorced.” *The Meaning & Mode of Baptism*, Intro., p. vi. Again, Adams says, “Correct meaning can be communicated only by the correct mode of baptism,” Ibid., p. vii. And again he says, “The words ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism,’ (Eph. 4:5) clearly indicate that just as there could be only one Christian faith, only one Lord, so there is only one baptism. As a consequence, the meaning is single, and the mode is single.” Ibid., p. vii.

Please consider carefully a summary of what Jay Adams has said in these statements:

1. The immersionists are correct in making something of the mode.
2. The mode cannot be separated from meaning.
3. The sacraments are symbolic. If so, then mode and symbol are one and the same.
4. Mode and symbol and, therefore, mode and meaning, cannot be divorced.

These statements are true and Biblical. Historically, this has been the consensus opinion among Baptists. If you alter the mode, you pervert the symbol, and, therefore, you pervert the meaning. If you change the mode, you distort the central truth that baptism symbolizes. Ephesians 4:5 is plain. We totally agree with Mr. Adams on *these* points. You can no more have two Christian baptisms than you can have two Christian faiths or two Almighty Lords. It is impossible. Therefore, Baptists and Pædobaptists cannot both be right. It is either baptism by immersion or by sprinkling or pouring. There is no such thing as an optional mode. One is right, the other is wrong. But in striking contrast to the truthful statements Mr. Adams made above, he also erroneously said, “Immersion is not only foreign to the New Testament but, on the contrary, the mode was EXCLUSIVELY sprinkling or pouring.” Ibid.,

Chap. 7, p. 43. This is plainly false and an obvious departure from what his Pædobaptist forefathers said.

For another example of what the new-age Pædobaptists are saying, **James B. Jordan**, writing the introduction to Duane Spencer's book *Holy Baptism*, states: "Spencer does not argue that sprinkling or pouring are acceptable modes of baptism; rather he argues that baptism is only properly administered when the water falls from above, and that immersion is simply wrong." Again, Jordan himself states, "Reformed and Presbyterian theologians seem content to argue that sprinkling is permissible. They want to allow for immersion. In fact, however, immersion as a mode grossly obscures the meaning of baptism." *Holy Baptism*, Introduction, p. x.

Duane Spencer provides another example of what the new-age Pædobaptists are saying about immersion. Spencer declared: "Only the untaught, or those blinded by denominational prejudice, still cling to the old notion that to baptize is to immerse." *Holy Baptism*, Chap. 7, p. 65.

We appeal again to the conscience of our readers: Are these men saying the same thing their forefathers said? Admittedly they are not. Jay Adams states in his book that he disagrees with anyone who asserts that "the original Christian method (of baptizing) was immersion." And then he says, "I believe them entirely wrong." *Meaning & Mode of Baptism*, Introduction, pp. v-vi. Take special note of Mr. Jordan's admittance of his deviation from the standard Pædobaptist opinion that we have already quoted. Jordan said, "Reformed and Presbyterian theologians seem content to argue that sprinkling is permissible. They want to allow for immersion." He goes on to say, however, that in his opinion, "Immersion grossly obscures the meaning of baptism." *Holy Baptism*, Introduction, p. x. Surely, we see how these new-age Pædobaptists have departed from their forefathers' honesty and their forefathers' words. There is a great difference. How drastically different! How obviously dishonest! How clearly wrong, either intentionally or ignorantly. Such statements, like the last one by Duane Spencer, that: "Only the untaught, or those blinded by denominational prejudice still cling to the

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old notion that to baptize is to immerse,” are almost unbelievable! Untaught men are the only ones who believe that *baptizo* means to immerse? Does he mean untaught men like Beza, Calvin, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Baxter, Boston, Goodwin, Lightfoot, Manton, Owen, and members of the Westminster Assembly? Untaught men, indeed! He said only men “blinded by denominational prejudice” believe that *baptizo* means to immerse? Does he mean prejudiced men like the major Reformers, Puritans, Scottish Presbyterians, and the Westminster Assembly? The denominational prejudice of all these men gave them every reason to hide the truth, but their scholarship and honesty before God made them admit the truth. We cannot say the same for the new-age Pædobaptists like Jay Adams, James B. Jordan, and Duane Spencer. Again we say, these modern Pædobaptists have *departed* from their forefathers’ honesty, for they conceal what their forefathers admitted; and they have *departed* from their forefathers’ words, for they most emphatically are not saying what their forefathers said.

Before leaving these particular assessments of the new-age Pædobaptists, we would make three observations in passing:

(1) We would **point out** to our readers that the new Pædobaptists are at least consistent in one thing: while they have departed from their forefathers’ honesty and words, they have not completely departed from their forefathers’ *ways*. They, like their forefathers, “say, and do not” (Matt. 23:3). Their forefathers honestly admitted that the basic, primary meaning of *baptizo* was immerse, dip, plunge or submerge under the water. Their forefathers also confessed that immersion was the practice of John the Baptist, Christ, the Apostles, and the ancient churches regarding the mode of baptizing. However, their forefathers refused to follow the ancient practice, adopting instead that part and pillar of Popery, infant-baptism. In a similar inconsistency, these modern Pædobaptists (Jay Adams, James B. Jordan, Duane Spencer, etc.) say they are followers of their forefathers’ writings, yet in striking contrast to what their forefathers plainly wrote regarding the meaning and the mode of baptism, they advocate sprinkling and pouring as the ONLY proper

mode of baptism. Their forefathers advocated no such thing! Therefore, with regard to how well they follow their forefathers, we say that these new Pædobaptists “say, and do not.” (Matt. 23:3).

(2) We would **warn** our readers to beware of the Protestant-Reformed teaching relative to “liberty of conscience” and the “separation of Church and State” found in such books as *The Failure of the American Baptist Culture* edited by James B. Jordan. While we recognize today’s tendency toward anarchy, under the guise of Biblical liberty of conscience (“Every man doing that which is right in his own eyes.” — Judges 21:25), we also recognize the unbiblical thinking of some Baptists about Church and State, which results in unbiblical pietism and/or political activism. Nevertheless, at the same time, we recognize a Biblical liberty of conscience (“Let every man be persuaded in his own mind.” — Rom. 14:5), a Biblical private judgment (“Prove all things” — I Thess. 5:21), a Biblical dichotomy between the Church and the State (“My kingdom is not of this world” — Jn. 18:36 and “Render therefore, unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s and unto God the things which are God’s”— Matt. 22:21). Therefore, we warn again about the “Protestant-Reformed” teaching about the relationship between Church and State and liberty of conscience, found in books like Mr. Jordan’s. This type of Protestant thinking finds its roots in the teachings of: the National Mosaic Laws of Judaism, the canonized doctors of the Roman Catholics, *i.e.*, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, Pope Innocent III of the Spanish Inquisition, and Pope Gregory XIII of the St. Bartholomew Massacre, and all the major Reformers, *i.e.*, Calvin, Luther, Bucer, Bullinger, Zwingli, Farel, Beza, Melancthon, and the Westminster Assembly. Why should you **beware**? Because Mr. Jordan and company, like the major Reformers and the Westminster Assembly, profess toleration and liberty of conscience when expedient, but are decidedly against true toleration and scriptural liberty of conscience. Their Pædobaptist forefathers, especially their Anglican and Presbyterian forefathers, whenever possible, propagated coerced uniformity, suppression, and persecution against all whose views differed from theirs. (See: Daniel

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Neal's *The History of the Puritans*, London, 1837, Vol. 2, pp. 378-394, 436; pp. 505-506; Phillip Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 7, pp. 25-42; Vol. 8, pp. 320-330; 358-361; and W. K. Jordan's *The Development of Religious Toleration in England*, Harvard University Press, 1932-1940). All false religion seeks the aid of political government to suppress, persecute, and destroy all other faiths it deems heretical. Instead of relying upon the power of truth to propagate its views, false religion relies upon the power of the political sword, which, in itself, is a witness of its falsehood.

(3) We would **remind** our readers to be cognizant of the fact that, in reality, behind the religious veneer and philosophical jargon of James B. Jordan's Symposium, *The Failure of the American Baptist Culture*, lies the devilish, persecuting principle that motivated the likes of the sinister Archbishop William Laud, James II, John Graham of Claverhouse, and Robert Grierson of Lag, as well as the attempted, politically-enforced, absolute religious uniformity of "The Killing Times." See: J.C. Ryle's *Light From Old Times*, Chap. 10, pp. 258-302; J.D. Douglas' *Light From the North*, Chap. 10, pp. 153-167; Alexander Smellie's *Men of the Covenant*, Chap. 30, pp. 384-400; Jock Purves's *Fair Sunshine*, Banner of Truth, 1968; Perry Miller's *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts 1630-1650*, Boston, 1961; and Charles F. James' *Documentary History of the Struggle for Religious Liberty in Virginia*, J. P. Bell Co., 1900.

Now let us return to discuss the "peculiar circumstances" (mentioned earlier on page 3) which have once again drawn our attention to the infant-baptism controversy. Briefly and generally speaking, the times and circumstances (the demise of the testimony for and practice of Baptist ecclesiology and the vocal testimony against Pædobaptist ecclesiology) are these. Since the early 1800's the Baptist people in America, for the most part, have departed from the Bible-based Calvinistic theology and Baptist ecclesiology of their Baptist forefathers. We emphasize that the "majority" of professed Baptists have done this — certainly not all Baptists, for there is "at this present time also. . . a remnant." (Rom. 11:5). In their sincere desire to fulfill the Great Commission, the New School Baptists have plunged deeper and deeper into the labyrinth of

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Arminianism and Pragmatism. Watered-down and corrupted by streams of modified Calvinism running from the Congregational New England Divinity movement, the Presbyterian New Measures movement, Andrew Fuller's unscriptural views of Imputation, Substitutionary Atonement, the natural abilities of fallen man, etc., and influenced by their own compassionate but erroneous evangelistic zeal, New School Baptists like Robert Hall, Jr., John Sutcliff, John Mason Peck, Luther Rice, Jonathan Maxy, W. B. Johnson, and a countless army of others, have been influenced to establish, without Biblical warrant, vast institutions (*i.e.*, conventions, annuities, foundations, seminaries, etc.) of tremendous wealth and prestige which have (in the public mind) usurped the identity, authority, and responsibility of the Lord's New Testament Churches. Hence, the New School Baptists have departed further and further from the ancient theology and ecclesiology their forefathers had observed. Even while professing and preaching an ecclesiology that demanded a separation between the regenerate and unregenerate, between the New Testament Church and the World, the New School Baptists devised and implemented nation-wide and world-wide pragmatic practices in evangelism and missions which guaranteed the very opposite. Ultimately, however, these vast institutions and new pragmatic practices have proven themselves to be nothing but huge engines of destruction tearing the heart out of the churches, devouring everything Bible and Baptist for the sake of growth and the accumulation of wealth and influence. In disdain for, and opposition to, their more numerous and popular New School counterparts, the Old School Baptists have recoiled more and more into criticism, Antinomianism, and Old-Line Conditionalism. Consequently, today both groups find themselves in a deplorable and disastrously effete condition doctrinally and practically, and at a loss with regard to defending their distinct identity in controversy. Even worse, in most cases both groups find that the historic Calvinistic theology and Baptist ecclesiology of their forefathers is often completely rejected in their congregations.

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On the other hand, since the late 1950's and early 1960's, there has been an upsurge of interest in and publication of Puritan theology, for most of which, we might add, we are extremely grateful. But with the exposure to Puritan theology, there has also been an exposure to Puritan-Protestant-Pædobaptist ecclesiology, which basically is the same as Catholic ecclesiology, *i.e.*, both being without Biblical basis. With this upsurge in Puritan-Protestant-Pædobaptist publications, the Protestants have been strengthened, renewed, and emboldened. The circumstances with the Baptists have been far otherwise. With the passing of time, the death of the older defenders of the Baptist faith, the liberalizing of the Baptist schools, the decline in availability of the writings of the older Baptist authors upon the public bookshelves and the negligence in republishing the same, the almost complete turnover to Arminianism, the emphasizing of pragmatic methodology and glorification of the American goddess of size and success, the ancient theological and ecclesiological distinctives of the Baptist faith have all but disappeared from public memory. In this situation of the weakening and well-nigh silencing of the witness of Baptist ecclesiology, the Protestant Pædobaptists have renewed the ancient controversy between themselves and the Baptists. This is nothing new or strange, for as John Gill pointed out, "The Pædobaptists are ever restless and uneasy, always endeavoring to maintain and support, if possible, their unscriptural practice of infant-baptism; though it is no other than a pillar of Popery." *Infant Baptism, A Part and Pillar of Popery*, Boston, 1766. Consequently, strengthened by the multiplicity of Protestant Pædobaptist publications during the last 25 years (1960-1985) and emboldened by the timidity and inadequacy of the present-day Baptist rebuttal, the Protestant Pædobaptists have thrust forward their champions, who, assuming their invincibility like Goliath of old, hurl forth slander and reproach, while the Baptists, like the army of Israel, cower down fearfully in their trenches. Little wonder then, that multitudes of young men studying for the ministry and many members of Baptist churches have renounced their Baptist affiliations and joined Pædobaptist congregations. It appears to those who are ignorant of the issues that this

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Baptist vs. Pædobaptist controversy is just a matter of disagreement about the amount of water used in baptism. This is far from the major issues involved. As far as the Publisher is concerned, in Protestant Pædobaptist ecclesiology there are at least the following Biblical errors and inconsistencies:

- ♦ A *Violation* of the basic laws of hermeneutics and the fundamental principle of *Sola Scriptura*;
- ♦ A *Defamation* of the Goodness and Wisdom of the Divine character;
- ♦ A *Confusion* of the Everlasting Covenant of Grace with the Abrahamic Covenant of Circumcision;
- ♦ A *Nullification* of the doctrines of original sin, total depravity, and inability;
- ♦ An *Abrogation* of the true nature and evidence of Sovereign saving grace and the doctrines of Regeneration and Conversion;
- ♦ An *Obliteration* and *Perversion* of the proper authority, subject, mode, and purpose of New Testament Baptism;
- ♦ A *Destruction* of the scripturally-required spiritual nature of Christ's New Testament Church (John 3:5-7; 15:19; 18:36; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18), because there is an amalgamation of the world with the saints, the lost with the saved, the believers with unbelievers, and the regenerate with the unregenerate by means of infant-baptism;
- ♦ An *Association* and *Integration* of the spiritual church with the political government, completely unjustified by the New Testament;
- ♦ A *Renunciation* and *Opposition* to true individual liberty of conscience and private judgment;
- ♦ A subtle *Repudiation* of the New Testament as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice, that is, of the New Testament as the Regulative Principle in all worship and, therefore,

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♦ An *Invasion* and *Usurpation* of the crown rights and sole prerogatives of Christ as the only King and Lawgiver of the New Testament Church.

Therefore, as we see it, the practice of infant-baptism annuls the basic theological foundations of Christianity. In a word—"grace is no more grace." (Rom. 11:6).

Such obvious errors must be opposed. The differences between Baptists and Pædobaptists are no minor differences. No one, consequently, can ever properly understand this infant-baptism controversy without being aware of the opposing theologies behind it. In order for anyone to prepare adequately to deal with this controversy, we believe it is necessary that they become aware of following things about controversy in general, and this controversy in particular:

- I. THE ANTIPATHY AND TIMIDITY TOWARD CONTROVERSY
- II. THE INEVITABILITY OF THIS CONTROVERSY
- III. THE THEOLOGY BEHIND THIS CONTROVERSY
- IV. THE NECESSITY FOR THIS CONTROVERSY

I. THE TIMIDITY AND ANTIPATHY TOWARD CONTROVERSY

Why are the professed Christians of this generation so repulsed at the idea of religious controversy? What has brought about this timidity toward conflict in religious matters? What has begotten this timidity in Baptist people toward the baptism controversies? As a partial answer we propose three things:

First, the **dislike** of our natural heart toward exertion, especially in religious matters — By nature we all seek rest, comfort, and ease. Basically everything temporal is toward that goal. Anything that calls forth exertion, sacrifice, painstaking effort, the loss of time, goods, income, and especially reputation, the natural heart opposes. Anything that unsettles our lives, anything that searches our hearts or

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exposes our false hopes, we vehemently dislike. Controversy, especially religious controversy, is so un-nerving because we judge it so unnecessary.

Secondly, the **desire** of our natural heart for acceptance — By nature we like the praise of others; we shrink from collision and conflict. We love to be thought charitable. We all have a secret desire for the world's smile, approval, and applause. We greatly fear the world's frown, laughter, ridicule, and blame. We all have a secret wish to do as others in the world do, and not run to extremes. Controversial issues often convict us of not having gone far enough. Controversial issues most often mean we lose the world's approval and applause.

Before passing, let us consider that both the dislikes and the desires of the natural heart enter into this infant-baptism controversy. Jesus said that God had hidden some things "from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Matt. 11:25). John the Baptist said, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from Heaven." (John 3:27). If we know anything in the infant-baptism controversy that the Pædobaptists absolutely do not know, it is because of grace (I Cor. 4:7), and there is no cause for boasting with us. We honestly believe many of the Pædobaptists do not see the inconsistency of infant-baptism with free grace. However, we firmly believe that some of the more knowledgeable Pædobaptists reject believer's baptism and do everything they can to shore-up infant-baptism, not because they do not have enough information, but because they cannot face the implication. It is a case of not being willing to carry out this truth in its practical aspects that is the great hindrance to their understanding it; "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (John 7:17). Some of the Pædobaptists understand the logical implications and the practical ramifications of admitting the invalidity of infant-baptism and accepting the solitary validity of believer's immersion. As an illustration consider the following:

"The Odious Ecclesiastical Consequences of the Immersionist Dogma. . . All parties are agreed that baptism is the initiatory rite which gives membership

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in the visible church of Christ. The great commission was: Go ye, and disciple all nations, baptizing them into the Trinity. Baptism recognizes and constitutes the outward discipleship. Least of all, can any immersionist dispute this ground. Now, if all other forms of baptism than immersion are not only irregular, but null and void, all unimmersed persons are out of the visible church. But if each and every member of a Pædobaptist visible church is thus unchurched, of course, the whole body is unchurched. All Pædobaptist societies, then, are guilty of an intrusive error, when they pretend to the character of a visible church of Christ. Consequently, they can have no ministry; and this for several reasons. Surely no valid office can exist in an association whose claim to be an ecclesiastical commonwealth is utterly invalid. When the temple is non-existent, there can be no actual pillars to that temple. How can an unauthorized herd of unbaptized persons, to whom Christ concedes no church authority, confer any valid office? Again: it is preposterous that a man should receive and hold office in a commonwealth where he himself has no citizenship; but this unimmersed Pædobaptist minister, so-called, is no member of any visible Church. There are no real ministers in the world, except the Immersionist preachers! The pretensions of all others, therefore, to act as ministers, and to administer the sacraments, are sinful intrusions. It is hard to see how any intelligent and conscientious Immersionist can do any act which countenances or sanctions this profane intrusion. They should not allow any weak inclinations of fraternity and peace to sway their consciences in this point of high principle. They are bound, then, not only to practice close communion, but to refuse all ministerial recognition and communion to these intruders. The sacraments cannot go beyond the pale of the visible Church. Hence, the same stern denunciations ought to be hurled at the Lord's Supper in Pædobaptist societies, and at all their prayers and

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preachings in public, as at the iniquity of ‘baby-sprinkling.’ The enlightened immersionist should treat all these societies just as he does that ‘Synagogue of Satan,’ the Papal church: there may be many good, misguided believers in them; but no church character, ministry, nor sacraments whatever.” R.L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Lecture 64, pp.774-775.

Mr. Dabney, with his clear perception and forthright bravery, saw to the bottom of the practical ramifications. He saw that the Baptist position meant the loss of reputation, salaries, professorships, and positions along with the reorganization of churches, the new ordination of ministers, etc.. Therefore, he vigorously denounced the believer’s immersion position. We believe other Pædobaptists see the implications also, but for whatever reasons, the dislikes and desires of their natural hearts keep them from admitting the truth. This is not our opinion alone. Consider: “We believe that it is their (Pædobaptist) unwillingness to face up to the implications of the radical difference between the old and the new covenant (Heb. 8:7ff) that prevents them from accepting our (Baptist) position.” Erroll Hulse, *The Testimony of Baptism*, Carey Publications, Sussex, England, Foreword, p.5.

Thirdly, the **deception** of our natural heart about charity — *i.e.*, about the nature of true Biblical charity. This is another reason why people in general, and Baptists in particular, are so apathetic and timid toward controversy in religious matters. Now when we speak here of a deception about charity, we speak not of the natural “internal” deception which abides in the human heart described in Isaiah 44:20, “A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul,” and in Jer. 17:9, “The heart is deceitful above all things.” We speak rather about the “external” deception pawned off on many unsuspecting minds which is described in Romans 16:17-18, “Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and BY GOOD WORDS AND

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FAIR SPEECHES DECEIVE THE HEARTS OF THE SIMPLE."

This specious charity is foisted upon the vast majority of professing Christian people. J.C. Ryle said, "There is a spurious charity, I am afraid, which dislikes all strong statements in religion, — a charity which would have no one interfered with, — a charity which would have everyone let alone in his sins, — a charity which, without evidence, takes for granted that everybody is in a way to be saved, — a charity which never doubts that all people are going to heaven, and seems to deny the existence of such a place as hell. But such charity is not of the New Testament, and does not deserve the name. Give me the charity which tries and hopes nothing that is not sanctioned by the Word. Give me the charity which St. Paul describes to the Corinthians (I Cor. 13:1, etc.); the charity which is not blind, and deaf and stupid, but has eyes to see and senses to discern between him that feareth and him that feareth Him not. Such charity will rejoice in nothing but 'the truth,' (I Cor. 13:6)." *Old Paths*, Cambridge, James Clarke Co., Ltd., 1977, Chap. 3, pp. 86-87.

It appears that Christians everywhere, and especially Baptist people, are suffering from this deceptive concept of Biblical charity. While on the one hand most Baptists are not even aware of any distinctive, identifying Baptist doctrines and practices, some Baptists on the other hand, because they are deluded by a false view of charity, are intimidated, regretful, and apologetic because Baptists ever believed such things. This false charity mistakes stretching the conscience for broadening the mind. It tolerates worldliness, wickedness, false doctrine, and negligent practice under the guise of Christian love. Nothing could be farther from the truth. False charity has helped to spawn, and especially to support twin serpents in the area of theology:

First, it is a part of the basis of that vague, dim, misty, hazy kind of theology which is most painfully apparent in the present age. It begets that kind of theology where there is something about Christ, something about grace, something about faith, and something about holiness, but it is not the

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real thing. Neither you nor its adherents can make it match the theology in the Scriptures. It will not aid you in life, nor comfort you in death.

Second, this false idea of Christian love is part of the foundation of that extravagantly broad and liberal theology which is so much in vogue in all modern religions. It is thought grand and wise to condemn no opinion whatsoever, and to pronounce all sincere, earnest preachers and people to be trustworthy, however unorthodox, unscriptural, heterogeneous, and mutually-destructive their opinions may be. Everything is true and nothing is false! Everybody is right and nobody is wrong! Everybody is likely to be saved, and nobody is to be lost. We are all going to the same place. The tendency of this modern thinking and bogus charity, according to the way most young seminary graduates act, is to reject confessions, creeds, doctrine, dogma, and every kind of authority in religion and to abhor everything that appears dogmatic or controversial as nothing but sheer bigotry or unprofessional, simple-minded, incompetent folly. Again we say, nothing could be further from the truth! "Love doth not behave itself unseemly. . .rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." (I Cor. 13:5,6). Yea, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." (Ps. 97:10). Speak "the truth in love," (Eph. 4:15). True Christian love always stands connected with the truth and cannot be separated from the truth.

This false conception of Christian love has chained this generation of Baptists. It hinders many from "earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3). John the Baptist was not intimidated by specious charity, but was quick to point out to those that came to be baptized by him that their natural connection to Abraham did not qualify them for New Testament baptism (Matt. 3:7-10). They were the covenant nation, the covenant people, the covenant religion. They were the natural seed of believing Abraham, but this did not make them fit subjects for New Testament baptism. They certainly did not have a right to it by means of their connection to a believing parent. No, Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing." (John 6:63). The Apostle John wrote, "Not of blood," (John 1:13). John the

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Baptist said that circumcision entitles you to nothing. You must have a new heart. You must then give evidence of a new heart by the fruits of a new heart, *i.e.*, repentance and faith. These are the proper prerequisites to New Testament baptism. This is the same thing Paul said, "Circumcision is nothing," (I Cor. 7:19). "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." (Gal. 5:6; see Gal. 6:15).

The author of the following works, Abraham Booth, has made it evident that he did not labor under any present-day hallucination or deception about Christian love, nor was he hindered by any inclination toward worldly approval or any intimidation about religious controversy; rather, Abraham Booth has given definitive answers to the infant-baptism controversy. He is an exemplary illustration of true Christian candor, charity, and courage. May the Lord of the harvest send forth more laborers of his kind into the harvest.

II. THE INEVITABILITY OF THIS CONTROVERSY

That man has a very superficial understanding of saving grace and of Christianity altogether who does not see that wherever real Christianity goes, controversy follows. That man is very shallow and immature in his reading and comprehension who has not observed this repeated testimony given in the Scriptures. Whenever God regenerates one of His children and begins to lead him by the Holy Spirit to "the knowledge of the truth," conflict, turmoil, and controversy inevitably follow. The Bible attests this to be so both internally and externally. For example, inwardly, after regeneration, there exists a "warring" in our members (Rom. 7:23). Paul explained that warring as: "the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." (Gal. 5:17). Note that word, "contrary." The inward spiritual principle of grace implanted in us at regeneration, *i.e.*, the new man, here called "the spirit," is opposed to, contrary to, is an adversary to, "the flesh," the old natural, carnal man. The Amplified Bible renders this: ". . .these are antagonistic to each other — continually withstanding and in conflict with each other." (Gal. 5:17). It is not our purpose at this time to deal with the

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internal Spiritual warfare of the Christian, per se, but for those who are interested in this subject, we recommend, John Owen's "Mortification of Sin" *Works*, Vol.6, pp. 1-86; John Downname's *The Christian Warfare*, London, 1604; Christopher Love's *The Combat Between the Flesh and the Spirit*, London, 1650; and William Gurnall's *The Christian in Complete Armour*, London, Banner of Truth, 1974.

The real, born-again Christian has not only inward conflicts and internal controversy with his flesh, but he also has external conflict and controversy. He must "resist the devil" (James 4:7) for Satan is his "adversary" (I Pet. 5:8), and the whole world system "hateth" him (John 15:19). The "children of this world," the "children of the devil," (I John 3:10) are his implacable enemies. While we live after the world, we have peace with the world, but none with God. When we have peace with God, we have none with the world; "The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever, therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4; John 15:18-20). This has been true since the beginning. God put "enmity" between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed (Gen. 3:15). This enmity, *i.e.*, perpetual hatred (Ezek. 35:5), has always manifested itself between these two seeds in the form of controversy. Wicked men, ungodly men have fought against true Christians like the "world of the ungodly," (II Pet. 2:5) which ridiculed and opposed Noah. False religion, which is nothing but the world's religion, has continually given vent to this enmity by consistently being the greatest opponent of true Christianity through the ages. Samuel Ward said, "Religion is the greatest enemy to religion; the false to the true." *Sermons & Treatises of Samuel Ward*, London, 1636, p. 146. "He that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked." (Prov. 29:27). "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly." (Amos 5:10). For example, Cain, who brought an unacceptable offering, rose up and slew righteous Abel. Why? "Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you ..." (I John 3:12-13). Jannes and Jambres, sorcerers of Egypt, withstood Moses (II Tim.

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3:8). Balaam, the false prophet, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, withstood the progress of Israel (Num. 22:5 — 24:25). Hananiah, the false prophet, opposed Jeremiah (Jer. 28:1-17). Sanballat and Tobiah fought against the rebuilding work of Nehemiah (Neh. 2:10, 19, 20). The high priest, the Pharisees, the scribes and the doctors of law, all part of religious Judaism, constantly challenged and resisted John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ. The very existence of true Christianity is a witness against false religion. Therefore, we should not be surprised or shocked to find controversy just as much a part of the Christian life today as it has always been and always will be (Acts 14:22; John 16:33). Did not the Lord Jesus say: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay: but rather division." (Luke 12:51-53); and, "I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother." (Matt. 10:35-36)? Does not the Scripture say: "There was a division among the people because of him." (John 7:43)? And did not the Apostle Paul state: "Persecutions, afflictions ... came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra... yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:11-12)? Why were the Jews always stirring up the people and the political rulers against Paul? Why have false religions always worked hand-in-hand with political governments? Obviously, to suppress any and every view that differed from theirs (John 11:40-48) in order to preserve their worldly situations. Why have false religions always opposed and persecuted true Christians? "As then he that was born after the flesh [Ishmael] persecuted him that was born after the Spirit [Isaac], even so it is now." (Gal. 4:29). Conflict, turmoil, and controversy will inevitably be a way of life for Christians. We, as Baptists, certainly need not be surprised, then, when controversy rages around us and our distinctive Baptist doctrines, nor when old enemies like the Pædobaptists renew old controversy. The infant-baptism controversy with Pædobaptists is inevitable for true Baptists because our principles of ecclesiology are diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive. The Pædobaptists realize that they cannot let us alone. The false religionists of Jesus' day said, "If we let him alone, all men will believe him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

(John 11:48). Similarly, the Pædobaptists see that if the Baptists are left alone, the teaching and practices of the Baptists would be spread abroad, many would believe and be immersed becoming Baptists, and the Pædobaptists would lose “their place.” Our controversy with the Pædobaptists over infant-baptism is inevitable unless we are unfaithful to our principles. They cannot let us alone. Therefore, what we need to do is prepare for the inevitable, and there can probably be no better preparation than the book by Abraham Booth, now in the reader’s hand. This inevitable conflict between principles leads to the discussion of our next point: What are the principles involved in the infant-baptism controversy?

III. THE THEOLOGY BEHIND THIS CONTROVERSY

“Ideas in general do have consequences and theological ideas have tremendous consequences.” C. Gregg Singer, *A Theological Interpretation of American History*, Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1976, p. 1.

This is true because every man lives according to the way he thinks. The Scripture states, “As he thinketh in his heart so is he.” (Prov. 23:7). Whatever we think, our basic concepts, thoughts, ideas, philosophies, and theologies establish our values and determine the course we pursue in life. Theological ideas about God, the soul, salvation, judgment, heaven, and hell are some of the most deeply-rooted ideas in our naturally religious natures. Therefore, theological ideas are going to have a strong influence, a tremendous sway upon the behavior of men, and while religious controversy may appear to be nothing to most people but a strife about “words and names,” it is far otherwise. In reality, it is a conflict of souls about issues of eternal significance. Make no mistake, behind every religious controversy there are distinct ideas, concepts, and theologies grappling over the weightiest matters—the concerns of the soul. As we have pointed out before in this Foreword, the differences between the Baptists and Pædobaptists are no minor differences. Doctrine establishes practice, and practice confirms doctrine. Baptist ecclesiology is diametrically opposed to Pædobaptist ecclesiology. Therefore,

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understanding the theologies involved in this controversy means everything with regard to understanding the controversy itself. For example, there has always been opposition against those who consistently advocate the Baptist distinctives. There has been opposition, first by Judaism, then by Catholicism, then by Popery and Protestantism alike. Since the first century, the Baptist people have been that "sect that everywhere is spoken against." (Acts 28:22). The reason is not hard to find: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19). The Lord Jesus Christ stated emphatically, "My Kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36). In the light of these two Scriptures, it is no wonder that Popery and Protestantism unite against their common enemy, the Baptists, for they recognize that strict Baptist theology and ecclesiology, properly defined and defended, means the exposure and dissipation of their worldly religious empires. For what other reason would Protestantism unite with Popery against the Baptists when, outwardly, Protestantism is supposed to be so historically and theologically opposed to Catholicism? It is a good question. It demands an answer. We propose two:

First - Strict Baptist Ecclesiology Exposes the Similarity of the Protestant Pædobaptists to the Roman Catholics.

Jesus said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin." (John 15:22). The same thing is true regarding the Baptist view of the nature of saving grace and the nature of the New Testament Church. If it didn't exist, if it was never declared and exposed to view, Popery, Prelacy, and Presbytery alike would have a cloak for their errors. But by comparison with Baptist ecclesiology, it becomes clearly evident that Catholic ecclesiology and Protestant Pædobaptist ecclesiology are actually two arms of the same beast, two faces on the same head, two walls of the same prison. Strict Baptist ecclesiology exposes them both as built upon, and sustained by, the same

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unscriptural practice of infant-baptism—and therefore, at the root, based upon the same unscriptural principle, *i.e.*, salvation by works. Consider for a moment their similarity:

A. The **ROMAN CATHOLIC** belief in the saving efficacy of infant-baptism:

1. “Whoever shall affirm that baptism is indifferent, that is, not necessary to salvation; LET HIM BE ACCURSED. Whoever shall affirm that children are not to be reckoned among the faithful by the reception of baptism, because they do not actually believe; and therefore that they are to be re-baptized when they come to years of discretion; or that, since they cannot personally believe, it is better to omit their baptism, than that they should be baptized only in the faith of the church: LET HIM BE ACCURSED.” Decree No. 24, Session VII of the Council of Trent, March 3, 1547, John Dowling, *History of Romanism*, New York, 1846, Book 7, Chap. 4, p. 510.

2. “Infants, unless regenerated unto God through the grace of baptism. . .are born to eternal misery and perdition. Catechism of the Council of Trent, quoted by Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, Philadelphia, 1979, Chap. 8, p. 190.

3. “Baptism cleanses man from Original Sin and from all personal sins, gives him rebirth as a child of God, incorporates him into the Church, sanctifies him with gifts of the Holy Spirit, and, impressing [sic] on his soul an indelible character...” *Instructions in the Catholic Faith* by Parish Priests, p. 192, No. xl.

B. The **PROTESTANT PAEDOBAPTIST** belief in the saving efficacy of infant-baptism:

1. **James Bannerman** of the Free Church of Scotland, said, “In such a case of infants regenerated in infancy, the sign is meant to be connected with the thing signified that the moment of its baptism is the appointed moment of its regeneration too. . .when the infant carries with it to the tomb the sign of the covenant, administered in faith, shall we not say that with the sign, and mysteriously linked to it, there was

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also the thing signified; and that in such a case of a dying babe regenerated in infancy, the laver of Baptism was the laver of regeneration, too." *The Church of Christ*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1974, Vol. 2, pp. 119-120.

2. **R.L. Dabney**, an Old School Southern Presbyterian, said, "Many collateral advantages are gained by this minor citizenship of the baptized in the Church. They are retained under wholesome restraints. Their carnal opposition to the truth is greatly disarmed by early association. The numerical and pecuniary basis of the Church's operations is widened. And where the duties represented in the sacrament of baptism are properly followed up, the actual regeneration of children is the ordinary result." *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Lecture 66, pp. 798-799.

3. **Charles Hodge**, an Old School Northern Presbyterian, exhorting parents to fulfill their duty to have their children baptized, said: "Do let the little ones have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, even if afterwards they choose to erase them. Being thus enrolled may be the means of their salvation." Again, he said, "Baptism is an act in which and by which a man receives and appropriates the offered benefits of the redemption of Christ. . .it is a means in the hands of the Spirit of conveying to believers the benefits of redemption. . .Baptism signs, seals and actually conveys its benefits to all its subjects, whether infants or adults, who keep the covenant." *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, pp. 588, 589, and 590.

4. **Herman Hoeksema** of the Protestant Reformed Church, quoting Abraham Kuyper, said, "At the very moment when the minister administers the water of baptism, your Mediator and Saviour performs a work of grace in the soul of the baptized child." *Believers and Their Seed*, Chap. 3, p. 36.

5. **John Murray**, of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, said, "Baptized infants are to be received as the children of God and treated accordingly." *Christian Baptism*, Chap. 4, p. 56.

We freely admit that the quotes cited above are not all these men have said about baptism. But when a man has heard all that the Pædobaptists have to say about baptism, he is either

confused about what they believe, or convinced that they have confused the Abrahamic Covenant with the Everlasting Covenant of Grace, or convinced that they believe in grace being conveyed by baptism. From the multitude of testimonies given above, we feel clearly justified in saying that there is a clear similarity between Catholic Pædobaptists and the Protestant Pædobaptists. The existence and witness of a sound Baptist Ecclesiology will bring this similarity to the forefront along with the inconsistencies and errors of both. Little wonder all Pædobaptists oppose the Baptists and believer's baptism. The author of the following books, Abraham Booth, has shown himself fully competent in defending the Baptist position and exposing the inconsistencies of Pædobaptism. May the Great Shepherd of the sheep send more undershepherds of this kind into the sheepfolds. Let us now consider our next point.

Second – Strict Baptist Ecclesiology Exposes the Inconsistency of the Protestant Pædobaptists Toward the Catholics.

As we have already shown before in this Foreword, the Protestant Pædobaptists “say, and do not.” (Matt. 23:3), and little do people realize how much. Obviously, most of them do not see that while they promise “liberty, they themselves are slaves.” (II Peter 2:19). Protestantism was born as an avowed “protest” against the heresies and corruptions of Popery. The first reformers received their infant-baptism from Catholicism and never renounced it. John Gill said, “Infant-baptism is no other than a part & pillar of Popery. . .nor can there be a full separation of the church from the world, nor a thorough reformation in religion, until it is wholly removed.” *Infant-Baptism, A Part & Pillar of Popery*, Boston, 1746, p. 3. The great Protestant denominations separated from Roman Catholicism, but they still retain the Roman Catholic practice of infant-baptism. Hence, even though these great denominations have separated from Roman Catholicism—Roman Catholicism has not separated from them. This is a grave inconsistency.

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There are other great inconsistencies in Calvinistic Pædobaptism besides this renouncing of Catholicism's ways while espousing Catholicism's baptism. Let us now consider two of these grave inconsistencies, especially in connection with our infant-baptism controversy.

John Murray, in writing about the Reformation, stated: "It (the Reformation) might be summed up in the re-discovery of salvation by grace. . . *Sola Gratia* and *Sola Scriptura* were its fundamental principles. By one line of logical connection or another, all Reformation doctrine and practice are dependent upon, and traceable to, these two principles." *Collected Writings*, Vol. I, p. 292. *Sola Scriptura* means that the Scriptures are the only infallible guide of faith and practice. Everything Christians need doctrinally and practically is revealed in the Scriptures. Nothing they need is left out. Nothing with infallible authority exists beyond them in this world. The sufficiency, finality, and authority of the Scriptures are found in II Tim. 3:16, 17 and Isaiah 8:20. *Sola Gratia* means that salvation is solely by free grace, without any mixture of works whatsoever. Salvation begets works, but salvation is not because of works. Hence, we read: "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves," (Eph. 2:8). Salvation is "by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed;" (Rom. 4:16) and salvation is "according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (II Tim. 1:9). According to John Murray's testimony (and those of a multitude of others), *Sola Scriptura* and *Sola Gratis* are the two most basic Reformation, i.e., Protestant principles. In fact, R.C. Sproul said, "The Reformation principle of *Sola Scriptura* was given the status of the formal cause of the Reformation by Melancthon and his Lutheran followers." *The Foundation of Biblical Authority*, Chap. 4, p. 103.

We declare plainly that all Protestant Pædobaptists (Reformed, Presbyterian, etc.) inconsistently violate BOTH of these Reformation principles by their practice of infant-baptism. Consider:

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A. They profess *Sola Scriptura* and the absolute necessity for Scriptural warrant in all matters of faith and practice. They also admit the New Testament contains no Scriptural example of infant-baptism nor any command for practicing infant-baptism. Yet, in contradiction to what they profess on both these issues, they inconsistently practice infant-baptism anyway.

B. They profess *Sola Gratia* and denounce salvation by works as being totally without Scriptural warrant, yet they profess to believe and administer, inconsistently, sprinkling or pouring for baptism in order to “convey the benefits of redemption” to its subjects, whether infants or adults.

Where, you ask have they professed *Sola Scriptura* and admitted no Scriptural example or precept for infant-baptism, yet practiced it anyway? Where have they professed *Sola Gratia* and yet professed faith in the saving efficacy of baptism? Consider:

1. Pædobaptist Confessions of *Sola Scriptura* and the Absolute Necessity for Scripture Warrant in Matters of Faith and Practice:

Let us be perfectly clear, first, on what this concept is. **John L. Girardeau**, Old School Southern Presbyterian, Professor of Systematic Theology, Columbia Theological Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina, clarified this principle when he wrote, “A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence from their statements, is forbidden. . . This principle is deducible by logical inference from the great truth — confessed by Protestants — that the Scriptures are an infallible rule of faith and practice, and therefore supreme, perfect and sufficient for all the needs of the church. . . This truth operates positively to the inclusion of everything in the doctrine, government and worship of the church which is commanded, explicitly or implicitly in the Scriptures, and negatively to the exclusion of everything which is not so

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commanded.” *Instrumental Music*, Chap. 1, p. 9-10. Again he said, “We are not at liberty to use our own judgment and to act without a divine warrant in regard to things of God’s appointment.” Ibid., p. 19. Again he said, “It is not permissible to worship Him in any way not prescribed in the Scriptures.” Ibid., p. 129. Finally, he remarked, “Whatever others may think or do, Presbyterians cannot forsake this principle without guilt of defection from their own venerable standards,” Ibid., p. 25, 26. This principle professed by Pædobaptists is simply: “We must have precept and example from the Scriptures for everything we do in God’s worship and in faith and practice.” Let us now look at some of those “venerable standards” of the Protestant faith regarding this principle.

The Thesis of Berne (1528):

The Church of Christ makes no laws or commandments without God’s Word. Hence all human traditions, which are called ecclesiastical commandments, are binding upon us only insofar as they are based on and commanded by God’s Word (Sect. II).

The Geneva Confession (1536):

First we affirm that we desire to follow Scripture alone as a rule of faith and religion, without mixing with it any other things which might be devised by the opinion of men apart from the Word of God, and without wishing to accept for our spiritual government any other doctrine than what is conveyed to us by the same Word without addition or diminution, according to the command of our Lord (Sect. I).

The French Confession of Faith (1559):

We believe that the Word contained in these books has proceeded from God, and receives its authority from him alone, and not from men. And inasmuch as it is the rule of all truth, containing all that is necessary for the service of God and for our salvation, it is not lawful for men, nor even for angels, to add to it, to take away from it, or to change it. Whence it follows that no authority, whether of antiquity, or custom, or numbers, or human wisdom, or judgments, or proclamations,

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or edicts, or decrees, or councils, or visions, or miracles, should be opposed to these Holy Scriptures, but on the contrary, all things should be examined, regulated, and reformed according to them (Art. V).

The Belgic Confession (1561):

We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and confirmation of our faith; believing, without any doubt, all things contained in them, not so much because the church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Ghost witnessed in our hearts that they are from God, whereof they carry the evidence in themselves (Art. V).

Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule (Art. VII).

Second Helvetic Confession (1566):

Therefore, we do not admit any other judge than Christ himself, who proclaims by the Holy Scriptures what is true, what is false, what is to be followed, or what is to be avoided (Chap. II).

(All the above quoted from *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century*, A.C. Cochrance, editor, Philadelphia, 1966.)

Westminster Confession (1646):

“The Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.” Chap. 1, Sect. 8, p. 23.

“The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all degrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.” Chap. 1, Sect. 10, p. 24.

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"God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith and worship." Chap. 20, Sect. 8, p. 23.

"The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture." Chap. 21, Sect. 1, pp. 90, 91.

(Quoted from *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Edinburgh, 1973 edition.)

In these confessions the Pædobaptists have very gallantly and clearly stated the principles of *Sola Scriptura* and the absolute necessity for Scriptural warrant. They speak for themselves. Individual statements from the Reformers, Puritans, and modern Pædobaptists by the score could now be presented espousing the same principle; for brevity we will only present two more, seeing we have already given John L. Girardeau's belief—then we will have our "two or three witnesses" (Deut. 19:15).

John Murray, Professor of Systematic Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, said: "We all believe the Bible to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice." *Collected Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 2. Again he said, speaking of *Sola Scriptura*, "If any other canon (rule) is permitted to regulate our polemic, then our witness has the seeds of compromise and of failure from the outset." *Collected Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 293. Even more clearly, he said, "For all modes and elements of worship there must be authorization from the Word of God. . . The Reformed principle is that the acceptable way of worshipping God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His revealed will, that He may not be worshipped in any other way than that prescribed in the Holy Scripture, that what is not commanded is forbidden. This is in contrast with the view that what is not forbidden is permitted. There are some texts in the New Testament that bear directly

on this question: Mark 7:7, 8; John 4:24; Col. 2:20-23; I Peter 2:5. In the Orthodox Presbyterian Church there is general agreement on this. But in application it is not observed." *Collected Writings*, Vol. I, p. 168.

Thomas Manton, scribe of the Westminster Assembly, said: "It (Scripture) containeth all things which are necessary for men to believe and do. . . Yea, it doth contain not only all the essential but also the integral parts of the Christian religion; and nothing can be any part of our religion which is not there. The direction of old was. . . (Isaiah 8:20), and everything must now be tried by the 'prophets and apostles' which is our foundation of faith, worship, and obedience (Eph. 2:20)." *Morning Exercises at Cripplegate*, Vol. 5, p. 603.

We appeal to our readers on the basis of the quotations given above. Do not the Pædobaptists have it as a historic principle that they **will not** believe or practice anything except what they find in precept and example in the Word of God? Let one of their own answer: "Nothing is lawful in the worship of God, but what we have precept or precedent for; which whoso denies, opens a door to all idolatry and superstition, and will-worship in the world." Mr. Copings, in *Jerubbal*, p. 487, quoted in *Pædobaptism Examined*, Vol. 1, Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 316. However, consider now what they admit about precept and example for infant-baptism:

2. Pædobaptist Admission about the Total Lack of Express Scriptural Precept or Plain Scriptural Example for Infant-Baptism:

Martin Luther — "It cannot be proved by sacred Scripture that infant-baptism was instituted by Christ or begun by the first Christians after the Apostles." *Vanity of Infant-Baptism*, Part 2, p. 8, quoted in *Pædobaptism Examined*, by Abraham Booth, Vol. 1, Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 303.

John Calvin — "As Christ enjoins them to teach before baptizing, and desires that none but believers shall be admitted to baptism, it would appear that baptism is not properly administered unless when preceded by faith." *Harmony of the Evangelists*, Vol. 3, p. 386.

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Herman Witsius — “We readily acknowledge that there is no express and special command of God, or of Christ, concerning infant-baptism.” *Economy of the Covenants*, Vol. 3, p. 385.

Richard Baxter — “I know of no one word in Scripture, that giveth us the least intimation that any man was baptized without the profession of saving faith.” *Disputation of the Right to Sacraments*, p. 149-151.

Thomas Boston — “There is no example of baptism recorded in the Scriptures, where any were baptized but such as appeared to have a saving interest in Christ, *i.e.*, repentance.” *Works*, Vol. 6, p. 127.

James Bannerman — “Nothing but the most violent injustice done to the language of Scripture by a bold and unscrupulous system of interpretation can suffice to get rid of the evidence which, in the case of the Baptism of converts mentioned in Scripture, connects the administration of the rite with a profession of faith in Christ on the part of the person who was the recipient of it. The association of the person's profession, faith, repentance, or believing, with Baptism, appears in a multitude of passages; while not one passage or example can be quoted in favor of the connection of Baptism with an absence of profession.” *The Church of Christ*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1974, Vol. 2, p. 64. See also William Cunningham's, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1967, Chap. 5, p. 263-265.

Even the new-age Pædobaptists like Jay Adams, James Jordan, etc., mentioned earlier, are willing to admit the same thing. Duane Spencer, in his book, *Holy Baptism*, Geneva Ministries, 1982, Chap. 16, p. 167, while trying to promote his new ideology that sprinkling or pouring are the ONLY proper modes of baptism confesses: “Admittedly there is no direct evidence, either in principle or in practice, that the New Testament Church administered Christian baptism to infants.” An abundance of further testimony upon this point may be found in Abraham Booth's *Pædobaptism Examined*, Vol. 1, Part 2, Chap. 1, pp. 303-367.

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We ask our readers — Is there not here a most glaring inconsistency? Pædobaptists, both old and new, admit there is no precept nor example in the Word of God for infant-baptism. At the same time they profess, as a standing principle, “Nothing is lawful in the worship of God, but what we have precept or precedent for.” But in spite of these two basic truths, they still administer sprinkling or pouring to unconsenting, unrepentant, and unbelieving infants in order to “convey the benefits of redemption” to their souls. If this is not inconsistency, we confess we do not know what it is. We close this point with Richard Baxter’s question: “What man dare go in a way which hath neither precept nor example to warrant it, from a way that hath a full current of both?” *Plain Scripture Proof*, p. 24.

We plainly declare again, that all Protestant Pædobaptists (Reformed, Presbyterian, Anglican, etc.) inconsistently violate BOTH of their own Reformation principles of *Sola Scriptura* and *Sola Gratia* by their practice of infant-baptism. We have now given proof of their violation of the former, *Sola Scriptura*. It only remains for us to prove their violation of the latter, *Sola Gratia*.

Because of lack of time and space, we will condense. We ask our readers to do some research. Check Phillip Schaff’s *The Creeds of Christendom*. Read for yourself and see if the Protestant Pædobaptists do not profess *Sola Gratia*. See if they do not, almost without exception, denounce salvation by works and decry man’s ability to save himself. They profess salvation by Christ alone, grace alone, and faith alone. Yet, inconsistently, they still administer sprinkling or pouring to unconsenting, unbelieving infants to “sign, seal and convey the benefits of redemption to their souls.” We have given their own confessions on this point before. See: Pages 30-31 — B. The **PROTESTANT PÆDOBAPTIST** belief in the saving efficacy of infant-baptism — Nos. 1-5. Considering these confessions, beyond a doubt, Pædobaptists “say, and do not.”

Plainly, there are glaring, obvious inconsistencies with the Pædobaptists’ theology surrounding infant-baptism. A thorough examination of Pædobaptist doctrine and practice in

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the light of strict Baptist ecclesiology makes the similarity between Catholics and Pædobaptist stand out in bold relief. Little wonder, then, that the Pædobaptists fight against the Baptists. Consistent Baptist ecclesiology is a witness against the Pædobaptists, Popish, and Protestant. When the fog is cleared from our eyes, we come to see that the controversy is between two religious groups who both profess *Sola Scriptura* and *Sola Gratia*. However, strict Baptists put both those principles into practice. Pædobaptists do not. If there was no one to implement those principles consistently, then the real character of Pædobaptism would be concealed, the authority of the Scriptures would be neglected, and the real nature and evidence of saving grace obscured. Surely there is a real necessity for this controversy, in order to maintain pure grace and the fact that "if of grace, then it is no more of works." (Rom. 11:6). The author of the following book, Abraham Booth, has shown himself to be a "father in Israel" in handling these issues.

IV. THE NECESSITY FOR THIS CONTROVERSY

C. H. Spurgeon said, "I need not say that conflict has done much mischief — undoubtedly it has; but I will rather say, that it has been fraught with incalculable usefulness; for it has thrust forward before the minds of Christians, precious truths, which but for it, might have been kept in the shade... I believe there is a needs-be for controversy in the finite character of the human mind, while the natural lethargy of the churches require a kind of healthy irritation to arouse their powers and stimulate them to exertion. . .I glory in that which at the present day is so much spoken against — sectarianism, for 'sectarianism' is the cant phrase which our enemies use for all firm religious belief. I find it applied to all sorts of Christians; no matter what views he may hold, if a man be earnest, he is a sectarian at once. Success to sectarianism; let it live and flourish. When that is done with, farewell to the power of godliness. When we cease, each of us, to maintain our own views of truth and to maintain those views firmly and strenuously, then truth shall fly out of the land, and error alone shall reign: this indeed, is the object of our foes: under

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the cover of attacking sects, they attack true religion, and would drive it, if they could, from off the face of the earth.” *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 8, Sermon #442, pp. 181-192.

Richard Baxter said, “The servants of God do mind the matter of religion more seriously than others do; and therefore their differences are made more observable to the world. They cannot make light of the smallest truth of God; and this may be some occasion of their differences; whereas the ungodly differ not about religion, because they have heartily no religion to differ about. Is this a unity and peace to be desired? I had rather have the discord of the saints than such a concord of the wicked.” *The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations*, Moody Press, 1975, p. 62.

John Milton said, “There is no learned man but will confess that he hath much profited by reading controversies — his senses awakened, his judgment sharpened, and the truth which he holds more firmly established. All controversy being permitted, falsehood will appear more false, and truth the more true.” *The Golden Treasury*, Ibid., p. 63.

I Cor. 11:19 states, “There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” Divisions, strife and heresies are but trials and opportunities for God’s people; yea, blessings to those who have the grace to be properly “exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:11). By controversy, falsehood appears more false, and truth more true. In Abraham Booth’s following presentation of Baptist ecclesiology and theology, that which is true will be made apparent because he was willing to face the infant-baptism controversy in his generation. Are we? Without doubt, our response to the heresies, conflicts, trials, etc., that confront us in life is indicative of the grace we profess to have, and it is always a manifestation of who is “approved among us.”

CONCLUSION:

We realize that the charges of bigotry, sectarianism, and narrow-mindedness will be leveled against us after this

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

publication becomes available to the public. Some will say we are mean, sour, vindictive, and hateful. No doubt we can be legitimately charged with many faults but consider — “Then came his disciples, and said unto him, knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, every plant, which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.” (Matt. 15:12, 13). — Christ's conduct here shows us that:

“We are not from fear of giving offence. . .to refrain from speaking the truth, especially with regard to doctrines and usages, unsanctioned by Divine authority, which men endeavor to impose as articles of faith and religious observances, and by which they cast into the shade doctrine plainly revealed, and substantially make void ordinances clearly appointed by the Lord. The ‘teaching for doctrine the commandments of men’ — the ‘making void God's commandment by men's traditions’ we must clearly expose and strongly condemn, undiverted from our course by the fear of shocking the prejudices of even those genuine Christians who have been entangled in the snares of any of those systems where man holds the place of God, however much we may love their persons, and value what is genuine in their Christian faith and character. This is kindness to them, as well as justice to truth. With regard to everything in the shape of religious doctrine, which we cannot find in the Bible — with regard to everything in the shape of religious institutions, unsanctioned by divine authority — we must lift up our voices like a trumpet, and proclaim, whosoever may be offended, ‘Every plant which our Heavenly Father hath not planted, should — must — shall be rooted up.’” John Brown, *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord*, Vol. 1, p. 499f.

So, in final analysis, this infant-baptism controversy is the age-old battle of truth versus error, the Word of God versus the will of man, consistency versus inconsistency, and grace versus works. It is a matter of our walk being consistent with our talk, our submission being consistent with our profession,

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and our practices being consistent with our principles. In the end, it is a matter of real, complete, consistent recognition and submission to Christ as King and only Lawgiver over the New Testament Church; whether we will obey His laws, or implement our own; or whether we will come finally under the indictment of Luke 6:46, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Regarding "whether or not" we should be involved in this age-old battle, we believe we shall always prefer the thoughtful, enthusiastic "shout of controversy" over the fearful, apathetic "silence of consent." Regarding "how" we should be involved, we believe that a Scriptural bravery is always to be chosen over a hypocritical charity, and a genuine manly honesty is always better than a polished, effeminate duplicity, even at the risk of the charge of bigotry! There is a time to keep silence and there is "a time to speak"! The author of the following book, as far as we can discern, believed exactly the same thing.


THE BAPTIST STANDARD BEARER, INC.

(Ps. 60:4-5; Is. 59:19; 62:10-12)

Stonehaven,

Paris, Arkansas

June 17, 1985



MEMOIR OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ABRAHAM BOOTH

Mr. Abraham Booth was born at Blackwall, in Derbyshire, on the 20th of May, 1734, Old Style. Before he was a year old, his parents removed to Annesley-wood House, a hamlet in Northamptonshire, for the purpose of occupying a farm under the Duke of Portland. Abraham was the eldest of a numerous family, and when able, he assisted his father in the farm, and continued thus employed till he was sixteen years old. At this period he had never spent six months at school: his father taught him to read, making it a daily practice to hear him say his lesson after dinner. He owed it almost entirely to his own industry that he acquired the art of writing, and a knowledge of arithmetic. To prosecute these studies, he cheerfully gave up his hours of recreation, and even of repose.

He was brought up in the church of England, but when about ten years of age, some General Baptist ministers visited the neighbourhood, and through the blessing of God upon their labours, his mind was awakened to a permanent concern about the salvation of his soul. When he was about the age of twenty-one, in the year 1755, he was baptized by one of these ministers, Mr. Francis Smith, of Barton, and became a member of the General Baptist Society.

When Mr. Booth left the farming business, he learned the trade of stocking weaving. At the age of twenty-four he married Miss Elizabeth Bowman, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, who proved a most excellent wife, and

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with whom, till within a few years of his own death, he enjoyed much domestic felicity.

To provide for an increasing family, they opened a school at Sutton Ashfield; Mrs. B. instructing the female scholars in useful branches of needle-work, and Mr. B. continuing to work at his loom, in connection with the school.

It was not long after his joining the society, that he was encouraged to preach, which he did as an itinerant, throughout the neighbouring districts. In 1760, the pious people at Kirkbywood House, having been formed into a church, Mr. Booth was appointed their minister. He laboured among them about six or seven years, but never became their regular pastor; the reason of this, doubtless, was the change which about this time took place in his theological sentiments. He had hitherto held the Armenian doctrine of universal redemption, and, as a strenuous advocate for the universality of divine grace, he printed a poem in reproach of the doctrines of personal election, and particular redemption. He was at this time twenty-six years of age. When he, about seven years afterwards, published his *Reign of Grace*, he thought it proper to make all the atonement in his power for having written in such a spirit, and for having published such errors. He thus speaks of his performance: "As a poem, if considered in a critical light, it is despicable; if in a theological view, detestable; as it is an impotent attack on the honour of divine grace, in respect to its glorious freeness, and a hold opposition to the sovereignty of God, and as such I renounce it." At a future period of his life, he thus alludes to these circumstances:—"The doctrine of sovereign and distinguishing grace, as commonly and justly stated by Calvinists, it must be acknowledged, is too generally exploded. This the writer of these pages knows by experience, to his grief and shame. Through the ignorance of his mind, the pride of his heart, and the prejudice of his education, he in his younger years often opposed it with much warmth, though with no small weakness; but after an impartial inquiry, and many prayers, he found reason to alter his judgment; he found it to be a doctrine of the Bible, and

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dictate of the unerring Spirit. Thus convinced, he received the obnoxious sentiment, under a full conviction of its being a divine truth."

Mr. Booth always acted upon the principle of integrity and uprightness, and therefore having fully made up his mind, he did not conceal his change of sentiments. This ultimately led to a separation from his people, and Mr. Booth preached his farewell sermon to the General Baptist congregation, from the parable of the unjust steward. In this he remarked, "that fraud and concealment, of various kinds, may obtain the favour of men;—that when favour is gained by such means, he who gains it, and they who grant it, are chargeable with injustice peculiarly censurable;—and that scripture, reason, and conscience, unite their authority in recommending universal fidelity to accountable creatures, and especially to the ministers and professors of religion, in the view of the great day of account, when they must all give up their stewardship."

He was for a short time silent as a minister, but having procured a room at Sutton Ashfield, called Bore's Hall, it was registered as a preaching house, and he recommenced his labours as a Calvinistic preacher of the gospel. It was during these five or six years of labour, that his invaluable treatise *The Reign of Grace*, the substance of which he delivered in a series of discourses to his small congregation, and afterwards at Nottingham and Chesterfield, at both of which places he was in the habit of preaching on alternate sabbaths, in connection with his charge at Sutton Ashfield.

When Mr. Booth had finished his manuscript, one of his friends, who had perused it, spewed it to the Rev. Henry Venn, an evangelical clergyman, the author of *The Complete Duty of Man*. After perusing it, this gentleman took a journey from Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, to Sutton Ashfield, to see and converse with the author, who was working at his stocking-loom. Mr. Venn strongly urged Mr. Booth to publish this work, which he accordingly did. "When I had got it printed," said Mr. B. to the writer, "my good friend, Mr.

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Venn, took as many copies as enabled me to pay the printer, leaving me the remaining copies for sale." This was said not long before his death, and with strong feelings of gratitude towards his clerical friend. It was the circumstance of this work being published, as before observed, that introduced Mr. Booth to the knowledge of the destitute church in Preston Street.

Thus furnished with a mature and disciplined judgment, and having given the most convincing proofs of an inflexibly honest mind, and uncompromising principles, Mr. Booth undertook, at the age of thirty-four years, the difficult and responsible station of pastor of that church, which the great Samuel Wilson had planted, and the good Samuel Burford had watered; and which it had pleased God by his blessing abundantly to increase.

Up to this period Mr. Booth's acquirements were confined, or nearly so, to a knowledge of the English grammar. He felt his deficiencies in this respect, and having a strong desire for acquiring a knowledge of the languages, he resolved to improve the opportunities afforded him for obtaining an acquaintance with the Latin and Greek. He accordingly put himself under the tuition of a Roman Catholic priest, who was an eminent classical scholar. This gentleman, of whose erudition Mr. Booth always spoke in very high terms, used to breakfast with his pupil; they retired together to his study to attend to business. With this exception, Mr. Booth might be considered as a self-taught scholar.

Having obtained a familiar acquaintance with Latin, he gained access to the writings of eminent foreign divines; such as Witsius, Turretine, Staplerus, Vitringe, and Venema. He was also intimately acquainted with the best writers on ecclesiastical history; viz. Dupont, Cave, Bingham, Venema, Spanheim, and the Magdeburg Centuriators. On the article of Jewish antiquities, he had read Lewis, Jennings, Reland, Spencer, Ikenius, Carpzovivus, and Fabricius of Hamburg. Among the English writers he preferred Dr. John Owen, whose evangelical and learned works he was very frequently

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quoted, and to whom he in various ways acknowledged his obligations.

Mr. Booth's attention to reading was subordinated to his work as a minister, and his duties as a pastor. He was generally at home and in his pulpit every Lord's day. To the writer of this, not long before his death, he remarked, "I have never left my people, since I first settled with them, more than two Lord's days at a time." He added, "Had I left them so much as some pastors have left theirs, I have no doubt my people would have left me as theirs have left them."

Notwithstanding the eminence of his learning, and the strength of his mental powers, **he at one period of his ministry felt greatly embarrassed in his preaching.** "I wondered much," said he, "that those persons who had heard me preach in the morning, should come again in the afternoon. I really thought for some time that I must have given up the ministry; and I felt more thankful then, than for any other temporal blessing, that I had a trade to which I could return for the support of my family."

When, about the year 1792, the subject of the African Slave Trade very greatly engaged the attention of the nation, and petitions from every part of the kingdom were presented to the legislature for its abolition, Mr. Booth took a very active and lively interest in promoting a petition to express his abhorrence, and that of his congregation, of that infernal traffic. He also preached a sermon, founded on Exodus XXI, 16: "And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." This was published at the request of the church, and extensively circulated. They also made a pecuniary collection towards the expenses which attended the application to parliament. This horrid trade was not suppressed till eight years afterwards, but there is no doubt that he essentially contributed towards it; at least, this is the opinion of the most competent judge on the subject, the celebrated antislavery advocate, Clarkson. In his work entitled, *The Abolition of the Slave Trade*, & c. that inestimable philanthropist has given a list of names of the

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principal benefactors, who by their writings, money, and influence, assisted in this enterprise of mercy; and among them, to his immortal honour, is found that of our never-to-be-forgotten, and still lamented, Abraham Booth.

It was the privilege of the writer to become acquainted with this excellent minister about a year and a half before he was called to his reward. He hopes never to forget his affectionate counsels, and he has a strong and lively recollection of the ardent piety he evinced, while he laboured under the violence of an asthmatic complaint. "I have never," said he, "thought so much of the words of Daniel to Belshazzar, as since I have been thus afflicted, The God in whose hand thy breath is! — The writer observed, "What a mercy, Sir, the last part of the sentence, "Thou halt not glorified," is not applicable to your character." He replied with great energy, "I hope it is not, in its most awful meaning; but in a very great degree it is true of me." He added, "And yet I trust I can say, to the honour of divine grace which has assisted me, that since I first professed religion, I have been so much preserved from every evil way, that if the secrets of my life were written by one who was not an enemy to me, there would be nothing to tell the world of which I should be ashamed to hear." His emphatic and devout aspirations in blessing God for the good hope through grace which he enjoyed, were most remarkable. His conversation was evidently in heaven, and his affections set supremely on things above. It was most edifying to hear his spiritual conversation and godly exhortations; he appeared

"Like a bird that's hampered,
Which struggles to get loose."

A few months before his death, Mr. Booth, on returning from a meeting of his ministering brethren in the city was taken suddenly ill, and from that time, in September 1805, was almost wholly laid aside from public labour, which now entirely devolved upon his esteemed and respectful assistant, the Rev. William Gray. He administered the Lord's supper on the first Lord's day in January, 1806, and, notwithstanding

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his extreme weakness, he attended the monthly meeting for sermon and prayer, held at his place on Thursday, the 23d of January. His brethren in the ministry present, who very highly revered his character, and others of his old friends, took an affectionate and last farewell of this good minister of Jesus Christ.

It was pleasing for those friends who visited him at this period, to find that the doctrines of reigning grace, which he had so fully stated, and so ably defended nearly forty years before, were now the support of his mind, and the consolation of his heart. To many anxious inquiries he would say, "I have no fears about my state, I now live upon what I have been teaching to others."

"The gospel bears my spirit up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope
In oaths, and promises, and blood."

On the Saturday preceding his death, January 25, 1806, he requested to see a much esteemed friend, that he might communicate to him his last instructions, and to whom, among other things, he said, "I am peaceful, but not elevated." On the next day, the son of his friend called at the house of Mr. Booth, and inquired after his health. After replying to his inquiry, he added, "Young man, think of your soul; if you lose that, you lose your all. Your father is my especial friend. Be not half a Christian. Some people have religion enough to make them miserable, but not enough to make them happy. The ways of religion are good ways; I have found them thus sixty years." This was on the Lord's day, during which he for some time was enabled to sit up in his study. Many of his friends, supposing his dissolution was at hand, called to see him; as they rightly conjectured, for the last time. Though scarcely able to converse, he spoke a few words to them, especially to some of his young friends, who were anxious to take their leave of him. To one of these he said, "But a little while, and I shall be with your dear father and mother." To another, "I have borne you on my heart

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before the Lord, you now need to pray for yourself." To a third, in reference to a Socinian minister, he said with deep solemnity, "Beware of _____'s sentiments." It should seem, that on this day he had no expectation that he should so soon die. Mr. Gutteridge, a deacon of the church, when he parted with him in the afternoon, said, "The Lord be with you, and if I do not see you again, I trust we shall meet in the better world." Mr. Booth replied, "I expect to see you again in this." He went to bed about nine o'clock. On the next morning he was speechless, though apparently in possession of his reason. About nine in the evening, his son-in-law, Mr. Granger, and his assistant, Mr. Gray, who were in the room, remarking they did not hear him breathe, drew near to the bed-side just in time to see him lie back on the pillow, when he almost instantly expired without a sigh or groan.

The leading traits of his character may be judged of from the following extracts from his last will and testament, written not long before his death:— "I, Abraham Booth, Protestant Dissenting Minister, in the parish of St. Mary's, Whitechapel, reflecting on the uncertainty of life, do make this my last Will and Testament, in manner following:

"Being firmly persuaded that the doctrines which have constituted my public ministry for a long course of years, are divine truths; being deeply sensible that all I have, and all I am, are the Lord's, and entirely at his disposal; and being completely satisfied that his dominion is perfectly wise and righteous; I, in the anticipation of my departing moment, cheerfully commend my departing spirit into his hands, in expectation of everlasting life, as the gift of sovereign grace, through the mediation of Jesus Christ; and my body I resign to the care of Providence in the silent grave, with the pleasing hope of its being raised again at the last day, in a state of perpetual vigour, beauty, and glory."

He directed in his will that not more than twenty pounds should be expended on his funeral, which was carefully attended to.

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The estimation in which Mr. Booth was held by the church, appears by an extract from a narrative entered in their records:

“He possessed a noble disinterestedness of spirit; he sought not ours but us; he was truly the servant of this church, for Jesus” sake. A pastor, in the language of Jeremiah, according to God’s heart; who fed his people with knowledge and understanding. There are, perhaps, but few instances in the church of Christ, of one who has better exemplified the character of a Christian bishop, as drawn by the apostle Paul, Tit. i. 7-9.

Mr. Booth was interred in the burying ground behind Maze-Pond meeting house, where a plain head-stone stands, to perpetuate the place which received, and, it is hoped, retains his mortal remains.

In the meeting-house where he had so long and so ably maintained the doctrines of grace; and the scriptural discipline of the church, a neat marble tablet is placed over the vestry door, with the following honourable inscription:

THIS TABLET

was erected by the Church in grateful Remembrance
of their beloved and venerable Pastor

ABRAHAM BOOTH:

who, with unremitted Fidelity, discharged his ministerial Labours
in this place, thirty-seven Years.

As a Man, and as a Christian, he was highly and deservedly esteemed:

As a Minister he was solemn and devout:

His addresses were perspicuous, energetic, and impressive:
they were directed to the Understanding, the Conscience, and the Heart.

Profound Knowledge, sound Wisdom, and unaffected Piety,
were strikingly exemplified

in the Conduct of this excellent Man.

In him, the poor have lost a generous and humane Benefactor;
the Afflicted and the Distressed, a sympathetic and wise Counsellor;
and this Church,

a disinterested, affectionate, and faithful Pastor:
nor will his name, or writings, be forgotten,

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while Evangelical Truth shall be revered, Genius admired,
or Integrity respected.

He departed this Life on the 27th January, 1806,
In the 73d year of his Age.

The following accurate description of Mr. Booth's character, was written and published soon after his death, by his friend, the Rev. Dr. Newman. All who knew the original will pronounce it a most finished full-length portrait.

“As a Christian, he was pre-eminent, facing the Lord above many. Called by divine grace when about twelve years of age, he experienced, no doubt, in the long course of threescore years, many changes of trials and temptations, many alternations of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow. Yet, with respect to his personal interest in the divine favour, he seems to have been carried on in an even tenor, without many remarkable elevations or depressions. His common conversation breathed much of a devotional spirit, and discovered the strong sense he had of his own sinfulness before God, and the simplicity of his dependence on the influences of the Holy Spirit. Firm in his attachment to his religious principles, he despised the popular cant about charity, and cultivated genuine candour; which is alike remote from the laxity of latitudinarians, and the censoriousness of bigots. He was conspicuous for self-denial, and contempt of the world; walking humbly with God. His moral character was pure and unblemished. Perhaps there never was a man of more stem, unbending integrity: he would have been admired and revered by Aristides the Just. Sincerity clear as crystal, consistency with himself, and unbroken uniformity of conduct, were always to be seen by the ten thousand eyes that were continually fixed upon him. He was temperate, even to abstemiousness: in fortitude bold as a lion.” Caution was interwoven with the texture of his mind; yet he would sometimes say, “We have need of caution against caution itself, lest we be over-cautious.” He once observed, that in morals, integrity holds the first place, benevolence the second, and prudence the third. Where the

first is not, the second cannot be; and where the third is not, the other two will often be brought into suspicion. In his attendance on public worship, he was remarkable for an exemplary punctuality. In the weekly meeting of ministers, and the monthly meeting of ministers and churches, if he were not with them precisely at the appointed hour (which very rarely happened), they did not expect him at all. His manners were simple, grave, and unaffected; frequently enlivened with an agreeable pleasantry. It was edifying and delightful to observe how he perpetually breathed after more conformity to Christ—more heavenly-mindedness. That man must either have been extremely wise or extremely foolish, who could spend an hour in his company without being made wiser and better.

“**As a divine**, he was a star of the first magnitude. A Protestant, and a Protestant Dissenter, on principle, and one of the brightest ornaments of the Baptist denomination, to which he belonged. A Calvinist, and in some particulars approaching what is called High Calvinism; but he has sometimes declared, as many other great men have done, that he never saw any human system, which he could fully and entirely adopt. From the pulpit, his sermons were plain and textual, not systematic; highly instructive, always savoury and acceptable to persons of evangelical taste; for, the glory, the government, and the grace of Christ, were his favourite themes. He aimed to counteract, with equal care, self-righteous legality on the one hand, and on the other, Antinomian licentiousness. Such was the excellence of his personal character, that he needed not the arts of the orator, and the graces of elocution, to gain attention. His audience listened with profound veneration, and hung upon his lips. He had the gift of prayer in a very high degree, and whoever heard him was powerfully impressed with the idea that he was a man who prayed much in secret. From the press, he appeared to the greatest advantage. Nor will it be denied by any, that his writings are very elaborate and exquisitely polished. No bagatelles, no airy speculations all solid and useful. His **Reign of Grace**, and, indeed, all his works, will

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continue to instruct and delight the Christian world till the end of time.

“As a Christian pastor, he shone with distinguished lustre. Every member of the church in which he presided, had a share in his affection. The poor were as welcome to his advice and assistance as the rich: and his faithful reproofs were given without partiality to either, as occasion required. It was justly remarked at his grave, that he has unintentionally drawn his own picture, in his sermon, entitled, *“Pastoral Cautions.”* He was not a lord over God’s heritage. It has been said, he appeared always willing to give up almost every thing to the decision of the church; and the consequence was, the church gave up almost every thing to his decision. His attention to the poor and the afflicted of his congregation, was highly exemplary. Nor did he content himself with saying, “Be ye warmed, and be ye filled,” but liberally contributed to the supply of their wants, according to his ability. The economical system he established at home, furnished him with a considerable fund for charitable uses abroad. His charity was never ostentatious—none but the omniscient eye knew the extent of it, and therefore it is impossible to say how many of the sons and daughters of affliction have lost, by his death, a most generous benefactor.

“As a literary man, he was generally acknowledged to belong to the first class among Protestant Dissenters. Without the advantages of a liberal education, he had cut his own way, by the force of a strong, keen mind, through rocks and deserts. His memory was amazingly tenacious; his reasoning powers acute; his apprehension quick; his deliberation cool and patient; his determination slow and decided. His application must have been very intense; to which his vigorous and robust constitution of body was happily subservient. Though he perused a prodigious multitude of books, and respected the opinions of wise and learned men, he ever maintained a sublime independence of mind, and thought for himself. His knowledge of languages was very considerable. Not many of the literati of this country have had so intimate an acquaintance with the grace

and force of words, or have written with such correctness and energy united. Yet he has been heard to say, that he had a wife and family before he knew anything of the theory of English grammar. He was not unacquainted with the Greek and Roman classics; they were, however, by no means his favourite authors. It would surprise the public to know what loads of ponderous Latin quartos he read, of French, Dutch, and German divines! The Greek Testament he went through nearly fifty times, by the simple expedient of reading one chapter every morning, the first thing, not so much for the purpose of criticism as of devotion. General science and literature claimed a share of his attention, and every one was astonished to observe the fund of information he possessed on all subjects: In history, civil and ecclesiastical—in antiquities, Jewish and Christian—in theological controversy, and the creeds of all denominations, he was equalled by few, and excelled by none. It is pleasing to recollect, that all his learning was solemnly consecrated to the cross of Christ; and that, while he was disgusted, as he often was, with the illiteracy and ignorance of books which he perceived even among educated preachers in many instances, he was very far from supposing human literature to be essential to the gospel ministry.

“As a universal friend and counsellor, he was exceedingly beloved. His extensive and diversified knowledge, his well-tryed integrity, his penetration, prudence, and benevolence, occasioned numberless applications for his counsel, not merely from the Baptists, but from Christians of almost all parties. Difficult texts of scripture, knotty points of controversy, disputes in churches, and private cases of conscience, were laid before him in abundance. Seldom was there an appeal made to the judgment of any other man. It was like faking counsel at Abel, and so they ended the matter.” Yet he was no dictator. When he had patiently heard the case, and candidly given his opinion, he would usually say, Consult other friends, and then judge for yourself.” Such a degree of majesty attended him, plain as he was in exterior, that if he sat down with you

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but a few minutes, you could not help feeling that you had a prince or a great man in the house. It would sometimes appear to strangers that he was deficient in that winning grace which accompanies softness and sweetness of manner; but those who were most intimately acquainted with him, are fully prepared to say, there was in general, the greatest delicacy of genuine politeness in his conduct. Many young ministers will long deplore their loss. Never surely can they forget how readily he granted them access to him at all times—how kindly he counselled them in their difficulties—how faithfully he warned them of their dangers! With a mournful pleasure they must often recollect his gentleness in correcting their mistakes—his tenderness in imploring the divine benediction upon them—his cordial congratulations when he witnessed their prosperity!”

Mr. Booth left five children; two sons and three daughters; and some small property to each of them.

In addition to *The Reign of Grace*, Mr. Booth published, after he came to London, the following works. In 1770, the *Death of Legal Hope, the Life of Evangelical Obedience*; or, an Essay upon Gal. ii. 19. In 1777, he reprinted a work, which had been translated from the French by Dr. James Abbadie, Dean of Killaloe, in Ireland, entitled, *The Deity of Christ essential to the Christian Religion*. In 1778, he published his work entitled, *An Apology for the Baptists*; in which they are vindicated from the imputation of laying an unwarrantable stress on the Ordinance of Baptism. In 1784, he published his *Pædobaptism Examined*, on the Principles, Concessions, and Reasonings of the most learned Pædobaptists. In the year 1787, a second and enlarged edition of this work was printed; and in 1792, *A Defence of Pædobaptism Examined*; or, Animadversions on Dr. Edward Williams” Antipædobaptism Examined. In 1788, he published his *Essay on the Kingdom of Christ*. In 1786, he published a work, entitled, *Glad Tidings to perishing Sinners*; or, *The Genuine Gospel* a complete Warrant for the Ungodly to believe in Jesus Christ. A second edition, much improved, was published in 1790. In this year he published a most valuable

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sermon, which he had preached at the Baptist monthly meeting, entitled, *The Amen to Social Prayer*, from the word Amen. In 1803, he published another monthly meeting sermon, entitled, *Divine Justice essential to the Divine Character*. In 1805, the last year of his life, he published a work entitled *Pastoral Cautions*; the substance of which, twenty years before, he delivered as a charge to Mr. Thomas Hopkins, when he was ordained as pastor over the church in Eagle Street.

Several of his addresses at funerals, and some funeral sermons, were also published. After his death two essays, which he had employed his last days in revising were published, entitled, *An Essay on the Love of God to his Chosen People*; and *On a Conduct and Character formed under the Influence of Evangelical Truth*. Some other of his manuscripts were not published.

It is not part of the writer's design to attempt a description of these excellent publications. It will be seen from their titles how deeply impressed was their author's mind with the most exalted views of the riches of divine grace in man's salvation; and of the constraining influence of grace, to produce the most exact regard to the divine law of God, in universal holiness of life. Mr. Booth was certainly one of the most eminent ministers who has belonged to the Particular Baptist denomination. To his exalted usefulness, in the formation of holy and benevolent purposes in the minds of people, the Baptist Fund owes its chief endowments; and the Academical Institution, at Stepney, its entire foundation. The Baptist Fund sent his publications, *On the Kingdom of Christ*, and *Pastoral Cautions*, in every grant of books made to young ministers. If they would resolve to do this also in regard to his *Pædobaptism Examined*, &c. it might lead to its republication. It is not to the credit of the denomination, that a work of so much labour and research should be out of print. It will be an evidence of great laxity, and want of evangelical zeal, when the Baptists overlook and forget the excellence of the works and character of Abraham Booth.

MEMOIR OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ABRAHAM BOOTH

***NOTE: This memoir taken from “A History of the English Baptists” by Joseph Ivimey, London, 1830; Volume 3; pp. 365.379.**

“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).

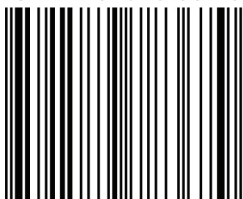
“There is something distinctive in the principles of Baptists. They differ from all other denominations; and the difference is so great as not only to justify, but to demand, their separate existence as a people . . . What distinctive mission have the Baptists, if this is not their mission? - to present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