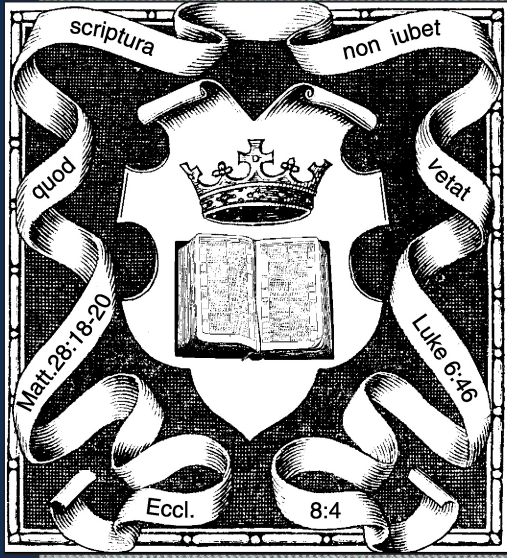


The Baptist Distinctives Series
Number 11



Ecclesiology

A Study of the Churches

Edwin Dargan



Quod scriptura, non iubet velat

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

On the Cover: Baptists rejoice to hold in common with other evangelicals the main principles of the orthodox Christian faith. However, there are points of difference and these differences are significant. In fact, because these differences arise out of God’s revealed will, they are of vital importance. Hence, the barriers of separation between Baptists and others can hardly be considered a trifling matter. To suppose that Baptists are kept apart solely by their views on Baptism or the Lord’s Supper is a regrettable misunderstanding. Baptists hold views which distinguish them from Catholics, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Pentecostals, and Presbyterians, and the differences are so great as not only to justify, but to demand, the separate denominational existence of Baptists. Some people think Baptists ought not teach and emphasize their differences but as E.J. Forrester stated in 1893, “Any denomination that has views which justify its separate existence, is bound to promulgate those views. If those views are of sufficient importance to justify a separate existence, they are important enough to create a duty for their promulgation ... the very same reasons which justify the separate existence of any denomination make it the duty of that denomination to teach the distinctive doctrines upon which its separate existence rests.” If Baptists have a right to a separate denominational life, it is their duty to propagate their distinctive principles, without which their separate life cannot be justified or maintained.

Many among today’s professing Baptists have an agenda to revise the Baptist distinctives and redefine what it means to be a Baptist. Others don’t understand why it even matters. The books being reproduced in the *Baptist Distinctives Series* are republished in order that Baptists from the past may state, explain and defend the primary Baptist distinctives as they understood them. It is hoped that this Series will provide a more thorough historical perspective on what it means to be distinctively Baptist.

The Lord Jesus Christ asked, “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46). The immediate context surrounding this question explains what it means to be a true disciple of Christ. Addressing the same issue, Christ’s question is meant to show that a confession of discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ is inconsistent and untrue if it is not accompanied with a corresponding submission to His authoritative commands. Christ’s question teaches us that a true recognition of His authority as Lord inevitably includes a submission to the authority of His Word. Hence, with this question Christ has made it forever impossible to separate His authority as King from the authority of His Word. These two principles—the authority of Christ as King and the authority of His Word—are the two most fundamental Baptist distinctives. The first gives rise to the second and out of these two all the other Baptist distinctives emanate. As F.M. Jans wrote in 1894, “Loyalty to Christ as King, manifesting itself in a constant and unswerving obedience to His will as revealed in His written Word, is the real source of all the Baptist distinctives:’ In the search for the *primary* Baptist distinctive many have settled on the Lordship of Christ as the most basic distinctive. Strangely, in doing this, some have attempted to separate Christ’s Lordship from the authority of Scripture, as if you could embrace Christ’s authority without submitting to what He commanded. However, while Christ’s Lordship and Kingly authority can be isolated and considered essentially for discussion’s sake, we see from Christ’s own words in Luke 6:46 that His Lordship is really inseparable from His Word and, with regard to real Christian discipleship, there can be no practical submission to the one without a practical submission to the other.

In the symbol above the Kingly Crown and the Open Bible represent the inseparable truths of Christ’s Kingly and Biblical authority. The Crown and Bible graphics are supplemented by three Bible verses (Ecclesiastes 8:4, Matthew 28:18-20, and Luke 6:46) that reiterate and reinforce the inextricable connection between the authority of Christ as King and the authority of His Word. The truths symbolized by these components are further emphasized by the Latin quotation - *quod scriptura, non iubet vetat*— *i.e.*, “What is not commanded in scripture, is forbidden:’ This Latin quote has been considered historically as a summary statement of the regulative principle of Scripture. Together these various symbolic components converge to exhibit the two most foundational Baptist Distinctives out of which all the other Baptist Distinctives arise. Consequently, we have chosen this composite symbol as a logo to represent the primary truths set forth in the *Baptist Distinctives Series*.

ECCLESIOLOGY
A STUDY OF THE CHURCHES



EDWIN CHARLES DARGAN
1852-1930

ECCLESIOLOGY

A STUDY OF THE CHURCHES

SECOND AND CAREFULLY REVISED EDITION

By

EDWIN CHARLES DARGAN, D.D., LL.D.

Professor of Homiletics and Ecclesiology in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Author of A HISTORY OF PREACHING, THE DOCTRINES OF OUR FAITH, Etc.

With a Biographical Sketch of the Author by John Franklin Jones

LOUISVILLE, KY.
CHARLES T. DEARING,
1905



The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc.

NUMBER ONE IRON OAKS DRIVE • PARIS, ARKANSAS 72855

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

-- Psalm 60:4

Reprinted 2006

by

THE BAPTIST STANDARD BEARER, INC.

No. 1 Iron Oaks Drive
Paris, Arkansas 72855
(479) 963-3831



THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM

lux lucet in tenebris

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

ISBN# 1579784380

PREFACE.

The first edition of this work appeared in 1897. It was prepared primarily as a text-book for the author's own use with his class in Ecclesiology, and has been so used continuously since then. Constant employment in the class room, as well as the valued criticism of friends, has pointed out many minor errors both in statement and style. The first edition was prepared hastily (by dictation to a stenographer) from the author's lecture notes, and it bore the marks of that method of composition.

The present edition has been most carefully revised, in fact almost rewritten; and while the author has not seen reason to alter his opinions on any essential points, there has been some modification of language here and there in the interest of clearer statement and more careful expression. A few chapters have been added, a few omitted, all has been condensed; so that the bulk of the present edition is not so great as that of the former.

In its improved form the author again submits his work to the judgment of his brethren, and to the use of his students, in the hope that it may prove useful to the cause of truth, and serve the best interests of the Kingdom of God.

The two following paragraphs are quoted from the preface to the first edition:

“The bibliography at the end of the book will show

the principal sources from which help has been derived. Originality in this field is impossible, and any claim to it must be absurd. I have studied many books and parts of books in preparing these chapters, but I have honestly tried to form my own opinions, and to express them in my own way. Where I have consciously and directly borrowed either thought or language, I have made acknowledgment in the text or notes; but it may easily be that, here and there, either from inadvertence or lapse of memory, I have failed to do so."

"It is my earnest hope and prayer that the book may do good. While necessarily controversial, it carries no ill-will toward those who do not hold the Baptist faith; and members of other denominations, who may chance to read it are respectfully invited to give candid consideration to this restatement of views commonly held among Baptists. To my Baptist brethren I trust the book may be of some service in promoting the great work of the churches of our own faith and order."

E. C. D.

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Sept., 1905.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Preface.....	5
Introduction.....	11

PART I. POLITY OF THE CHURCHES.

CHAPTER I.

Some Preliminary Considerations.....	17
--------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER II.

Church Polity in the New Testament—The word <i>Ecclesia</i> .	37
---	----

CHAPTER III.

Church Polity in the New Testament—Character and Functions of the Churches.....	55
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

Church Polity in the New Testament—Officers of the Churches.....	70
--	----

CHAPTER V.

Church Polity in the New Testament—Officers of the Churches (Continued).....	84
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

Church Polity in the New Testament—Light from Outside Sources.....	98
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

Church Polity in History—Developments to the Reformation.....	116
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

Church Polity in History—Developments since the Reformation133

CHAPTER IX.

Church Polity in History—Progress of Baptist Principles.150

CHAPTER X.

The Baptist Churches of To-day—Their Conformity to the New Testament.....166

CHAPTER XI.

The Baptist Churches of To-day—Their Organization...186

CHAPTER XII.

The Baptist Churches of To-day—Advisory Councils....204

CHAPTER XIII.

The Baptist Churches of To-day—Their Mutual Relations..... 218

CHAPTER XIV.

The Baptist Churches of To-day—Their Position as to Christian Union.....232

CHAPTER XV.

The Baptist Churches of To-day—Their Relation to Civil Government 252

PART II.

ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCHES.

CHAPTER I.

The Christian Ordinances.....272

CHAPTER II.

The Obligation of Baptism.....284

CHAPTER III.

The Act of Baptism—Argument from the Meaning of the Word.....293

CHAPTER IV.

The Act of Baptism—Argument from History.....308

CHAPTER V.

The Act of Baptism—Argument from Concession.....331

CHAPTER VI.

The Act of Baptism—Objections to Immersion.....344

CHAPTER VII.

The Agent in Baptism—Scripture and History.....360

CHAPTER VIII.

The Agent in Baptism—The Baptist Problem.....380

CHAPTER IX.

The Recipients of Baptism—The Teaching of Scripture..396

CHAPTER X.

The Recipients of Baptism—Historical Sketch411

CHAPTER XI.

The Recipients of Baptism—Arguments for and against Infant Baptism.....435

CHAPTER XII.

The Significance of Baptism465

CHAPTER XIII.

The Lord's Supper in Scripture.....484

CHAPTER XIV.

The Lord's Supper in History.....501

CHAPTER XV.

The Lord's Supper in the Churches.....519

PART III.

WORK AND WORSHIP OF THE CHURCHES.

CHAPTER I.

The Church as a Working Force in Society and the Kingdom535

CHAPTER II.

The Church Working for Itself551

CHAPTER III.

The Evangelistic Work of the Church—Soul Winning and Missions.....571

CHAPTER IV.

The Humanitarian Work of the Church—Education—Charity—Reform.....585

CHAPTER V.

Worship of the Churches—Scripture Teaching.....617

CHAPTER VI.

Worship of the Churches—Historical Sketch.....637

CHAPTER VII.

Worship of the Churches—Its Place in Modern Church Life.....661

Conclusion.....677

Bibliography

Scripture Index.....

General Index.....

INTRODUCTION.

1. Ecclesiology is the doctrine, or study, of the church in its constitution, ordinances and activities, the last including both work and worship. The relation of the study to the other branches of Theological Discipline is vital. Ecclesiology may be regarded as a topic under the general subject of Systematic Theology, and is often so treated. But it has equally manifest and important relations to Biblical (or Exegetical) Theology, to Historical Theology (Church History, History of Doctrine), and to Practical Theology (Homiletics, Pastoral Duties). The breadth and importance of the subject, however, justify, if they do not require, separate treatment and a fuller discussion than could be given to it in treatises on the more general subjects under which it would fall only as a topic.

2. The subject of Ecclesiology is one of surpassing interest and moment. The great debates that have been and still are going on in the world on the questions of the constitution and ordinances of the church demand consideration from the well-informed theologian. The remarkable and apparently increasing attention that is paid in our times to activity in all the varied methods of church work, together with the vast interest of the age in social problems, makes it necessary that the pastor and preacher should give careful study to church work in all its phases and relations; nor should the

weighty matter of worship escape his thoughtful and reverential notice. Neglect of the worship of God, even on the part of professing Christian people, is a painful phenomenon of our times. The earnest pastor of today faces no more momentous question than that of restoring worship to its rightful place in the thought and life of his people.

3. The proper method of study for Ecclesiology is a combination of the scriptural, historical and practical. (a) The teachings of the Scriptures, as being both originative and authoritative, should be carefully investigated and clearly and unflinchingly set forth. As far as possible both the developments of history and existing institutions should be left out of the account, and the Biblical data, with inferences from these, should be exclusively used in discovering and presenting just what the Scriptures themselves teach as to the church and its various elements of life and action. (b) Proceeding from this scriptural basis the student should pursue the development of church organization and life through the history of Christianity, bearing well in mind the constant changes both in ecclesiastical customs and in the significance of ecclesiastical terms. (c) At last when the present time is reached the student should know how to criticise and compare existing institutions in the light both of their scriptural origin and their historic evolution, and thus be able to determine for himself how far the church constitutions with which he is familiar accord with the teachings of the Bible—or, to speak more definitely, with the intentions of the divine Founder of Christianity.

4. The point of view occupied by the investigator is of prime moment. Few, if any, can take up the study of the church without biases and prepossessions which inevitably influence the judgment. (a) The influence of present-day conditions, modes of thought and use of terms is both subtle and powerful. For example, when we say "church" or 'bishop' we naturally and almost inevitably have first in mind the things which those terms stand for in the language of today rather than in that of whatever period we may at the time be studying. The best cure for this is a thorough knowledge of history and a constant use of the historic imagination. (b) Another strong bias is that of the sect or denomination. Very many students prosecute this study with their minds already made up in favor of the institutions of the church or sect to which they themselves belong, and their purpose is largely polemical or apologetic. It is amusing to observe how all are quite ready to see this in their opponents and are curiously unconscious of it in themselves. Now one should endeavor to keep from being unduly influenced by his previously formed and firmly held opinions, but it is utterly impossible and in great degree undesirable to lay them entirely aside in the study of any subject. It may be reasonably questioned if the absolutely impartial mind does or can exist. At the same time we must remember that some degree of partiality may be a stimulus to investigation, and so result in the discovery of truth rather than in the distortion of it. We must not commit the absurdity of claiming to be wholly free from a preference for our own denominational views, nor

at the same time must we allow these to hinder us from seeing and frankly acknowledging the truth from whatever quarter it may come with sufficient credentials. (c) Still another bias is that of historical or critical prepossession. A man may be as thoroughly sectarian, dogmatic and intolerant in favor of his theory as of his church. Unhappily neither scholars nor scientists are immune of prejudice, and in the sphere of ecclesiology as well as in others the "scientific" historian or critic has been known to hold the advocate's brief, instead of delivering the judge's opinion.

Recognizing the extreme difficulty, not to say impossibility, of escaping wholly from one or more of these biases or prepossessions we should be constantly on guard both toward ourselves and others. We must not claim to be infallible ourselves, and we cannot allow it in others. Let us be fair. Call it a balancing of accounts, one against the other, and let us seek earnestly to know the truth.

5. The plan of the present work is to study the church in the threefold light of Scripture, history and the conditions and needs of the present time. Each element of the life of the church is to be considered under these three heads, as far as may be necessary or appropriate in each case. It is held to be of the first importance to ascertain as clearly and present as fully as possible the teachings of God's word as to every department of the subject. But the historical development of church organization and life will receive careful attention; and the application of both Scripture doctrine and historic precedent to the church life and problems of the

present age will also have earnest consideration. In Part I. the Polity of the Church will be so studied; in Part II. the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and in Part III. the Activities of the Church, including both its Work in all phases, and its Worship.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

- I. Definitions and explanations.
 1. Church Polity defined.
 2. Various meanings of the word "church."
 3. "Polity" the preferable term.
- II. Various forms of Church Polity.
 1. The Baptist view.
 - (1) As to the nature of the church.
 - (2) As to the government of the church.
 2. The opposing views. As based on—
 - (1) Church authority.
 - (2) Expediency.
 - (3) Scripture.
- III. Value of the study of Church Polity.
 1. In general.
 - (1) A question of religious interest.
 - (2) A subject of historic debate.
 - (3) Important to know the mind of Christ.
 2. More particularly.
 - (1) Polity related to doctrine and life.
 - (2) Much ignorance on the subject.
 3. Especially for Baptists.
 - (1) In the light of their past.
 - (2) In the light of their present.
 - (3) In the light of their future.

“REASONS WHY BAPTISTS OUGHT TO TEACH THEIR DISTINCTIVE VIEWS . . . First, *it is a duty we owe to ourselves.* We must teach these views in order to be consistent in holding them. Because of these we stand apart from other Christians, in separate organizations. . . We have no right thus to stand apart unless the matters of difference have real importance; and if they are really important, we certainly ought to teach them.”

JOHN A. BROADUS

The Duty of Baptists To Teach Their Distinctive Views.
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1881).

“No religious denomination has a moral right to a separate existence unless it differs essentially from others. Ecclesiastical differences ought always to spring from profound doctrinal differences. *To divide Christians, except for reasons of gravest import, is criminal schism.* Separate religious denominations are justifiable only for matters of conscience growing out of clear scriptural precept.”

J. L. M. CURRY

A Baptist Church Radically Different From Paedobaptist Churches.
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1889).

“There is something distinctive in the principles of Baptists. They differ from all other denominations; and the difference is so great as not only to justify, but to demand, their separate existence as a people . . . What distinctive mission have the Baptists, if this is not their mission? - to present the truth in love on the matters wherein they differ from Pedobaptists. What is there but this that justifies their separate denominational existence and saves them from the reproach of being schismatics? *If they have a right to denominational life, it is their duty to propagate their distinctive principles, without which that life cannot be justified or maintained.*”

J. M. PENDLETON

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

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

