

A FRATERNAL STATEMENT TO SOUTHERN BAPTISTS.

Dear Brethren: We, the undersigned Baptists, for the sake of peace and good-fellowship, and in the hope of glorifying God by promoting the best interests of our denomination, address the following statement to our brethren in the South:

1. We call on all Baptists to join us in daily prayer for the peace and prosperity of our Zion. We have faith in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to guard and guide us as a people. In these days of hurtful contention, let us avoid intemperate discussion and cease the introduction of resolutions provoking controversies in associations and conventions, and let us betake ourselves to daily prayer, as one man, that the sovereign Spirit may restore peace according to the Divine wisdom.

2. We regard Dr. Whitsitt as a competent historian, but we would not, in this statement, shield him from any fair criticism for his opinion that the English Anabaptists first adopted immersion for baptism in or about the year 1641; and we protest that it is unbaptistic to criticize him *as a Baptist* for this opinion. For, if we accept said opinion as a test of Dr. Whitsitt's orthodoxy, we thereby make a new test of orthodoxy and surrender the time-honored Baptist principle of the Bible and the Bible *alone*, our only guide in all matters of faith and practice. And as we depart from this old landmark into this new test, we come to the violation of another honored Baptist principle—freedom of speech. For Dr. Whitsitt is avowedly in "heartly accord with his Baptist brethren in every distinctive principle which they hold." He has not uttered one word contrary to the Bible or Baptist faith; he has simply expressed his opinion about a matter of history. If then, he be displaced for his opinion, it will not be Dr. Whitsitt who is sacrificed, but our old Baptist principle of freedom of speech. We do not intend to argue the merits of the case, or to express any preference for Dr. Whitsitt, but to call the attention of our brethren to the

fact that these two great Baptist principles of appeal to the Bible only, and freedom of speech, are in danger of being lost to us by this attack upon the President of our Seminary, if it be successful.

It would be a calamitous error to condition faith and fellowship among Baptists upon post-apostolic history or tradition rather than upon the pure Word of God, and to restrict freedom of speech by the commandments of men. We are aware that many brethren, honestly grieved at Dr. Whitsitt's utterances, are proceeding against him in all good faith, and do not intend an attack upon these two ancient Baptist principles. We deeply sympathize with their earnest spirit, but we deplore the fact that their actions will reach beyond their intentions, and if they strike down Dr. Whitsitt, for the causes alleged, they will also strike down these two old landmarks. What is true with reference to the history of English Baptists in 1641 will soon be brought to light, if it be possible to get at the real facts. We would accord brethren on either side of this discussion full freedom of speech; but we are opposed to either side making their opinions a test of Baptist faith and fellowship; we deprecate the passage of such resolutions by our associations and conventions as tend to establish this test of fellowship; and we call on our brethren to stand with us as we stand by these old landmarks.

3. We do not take up Dr. Whitsitt's opinion to the prejudice of any brother or set of brethren, nor will we adopt *their* opinion to the prejudice of Dr. Whitsitt. Neither he nor they cease to be our brethren in full, loyal fellowship because of what they respectively believe about the introduction of immersion into England in 1641. We invoke all parties on both sides to realize afresh that we are *brethren*. In his statement to the Trustees, published in the Convention Minutes, Dr. Whitsitt says: "In regard to the articles written as editorials for the Independent, I have long felt that it was a mistake." As to the Johnson Encyclopedia article, he says, "It will be very pleasing to me if I can honorably procure the elimination from it of whatsoever is offensive to any of my brethren." Again: "Regarding the charge that I expressed a conviction that a kinswoman of mine ought to follow her husband into a Paedo-Baptist Church, it was never my intention to indicate a belief that the family

outranks the Church of God. I believe that obedience to God's command is above every other human duty, and that people in every relation of life ought to obey God rather than man." Again, in his book on "A Question in Baptist History," he says: "Immersion as a religious rite was practiced by John the Baptist about the year 30 of our era, and was solemnly enjoined by our Savior upon all his ministers to the end of time. No other observance was in use for Baptism in New Testament times. The practice, though sometimes greatly perverted, has been continued from the Apostolic age down to our own. As I understand the Scriptures, immersion is essential to Christian baptism." These explanations, together with the statement that he would correct, as soon as he could, all that was offensive in his expressions, seems to us to challenge the full, hearty, and complete acceptance of the most exacting of his brethren. We deeply sympathize with those who have been wounded or prejudiced by these controversies, on whichever side they may be, but, for the sake of the Lord and his cause, let them "seek peace and pursue it." The masses of our people, who are not involved in these unfortunate personalities, can easily and promptly respond to this appeal.

4. We invite our brethren to a continued confidence in the Board of Trustees of the Seminary. At the meeting of the Board in Wilmington last May, after a full and free conference with Dr. Whitsitt, a satisfactory settlement of the trouble was effected with practical unanimity, and the following statement was made to the convention: (See minutes.)

(1) "That we account this a fitting occasion to reaffirm our cordial and thorough adherence to the fundamental articles adopted at the time when the Seminary was established, and to assure those on whose behalf we hold in trust and administer the affairs of this institution of our steadfast purpose to require hereafter, as we have in the past, that the fundamental laws and scriptural doctrines embodied in those articles shall be faithfully upheld by those occupying chairs as teachers.

(2) "That we can not undertake to sit in judgment on questions in Baptist history which do not imperil any of those principles concerning which all Baptists are agreed, but concerning which serious, conscientious, and scholarly

students are not agreed. We can confidently leave to continued research and discussion the satisfactory solution of these questions.

(3) "That believing the Seminary to hold an important relation to the prosperity and usefulness of Southern Baptists, we consider it our duty, while demanding of those in charge of the department of instruction the utmost patience in research, and the greatest discretion in utterance, to foster rather than repress the spirit of earnest and reverent investigation.

(4) "That being fully assured that the tender affection which we cherish for this institution, founded by our fathers and bequeathed by them to us, is shared by the Baptists of the South, we can safely trust them as we ask them to trust us, to guard its honor, promote its usefulness, and pray for its prosperity."

Let us believe that these Trustees, men in high repute for wisdom, piety, and soundness in the faith, will promptly and faithfully discharge the obligations set forth in the above statement. Brethren, let us believe in our brethren. The manner in which their report was received by the Southern Baptist Convention led most of the Trustees to suppose that the matter was settled; and this belief was shared by the denomination generally. We deplore the reopening of the question, and beseech our brethren to leave the final adjustment of it in the hands of these Trustees, who are sound and courageous Baptists, and who will do the right thing in the right place.

5. We prayerfully exhort our brethren to join us in support of the Seminary. It has done and it will yet do a great work for us. We have positive knowledge that Dr. Whitsitt believes and teaches every item of Baptist faith as set forth in the fundamental laws of the Seminary and the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. In this connection, as Dr. Whitsitt has been greatly misrepresented in various publications on all the points at issue, we respectfully ask for the careful consideration of the accompanying paper from him, prepared at the request of this Conference. In deep love and affection, without a harsh thought or an unkind word for any Baptist in this broad land, we beseech all our brethren to join us in prayer, sympathy, and support for the Seminary. We feel assured that if this policy is adopted, it will soon bring all that every honest, loving heart longs for.

At the suggestion of brethren Northen and Hawthorne, the undersigned met in Nashville, September 29, 1897, and adopted the foregoing paper.

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C. S. GARDNER, S. C.	JOSHUA LEVERING, Md.
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A. J. HARRIS, Tenn.	R. R. ACREE, Tenn.
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DR. WHITSITT'S PAPER.

Certain expressions employed by me in my articles for the Independent in the year 1880 are claimed to indicate that I hold and teach that one may be a Baptist without practicing immersion or even believing in it. If I have conveyed that kind of an impression, I was very unfortunate, for I steadfastly maintain that immersion was commanded by our Lord, observed without exception by his apostles, and that no man can claim to be a Baptist who has not been immersed upon a profession of his faith. I was speaking in the Independent of a period of transition, and it is difficult in circumstances of that sort to select terms that may not be misunderstood and misinterpreted. The Anabaptists first gained numerous converts among people of purely English blood in the early years of the seventeenth century, and these English Anabaptists, like great numbers of the Continental Anabaptists, while strenuously insisting on regenerated church membership, used sprinkling and pouring for baptism. They were called Anabaptists because they rejected infant baptism and baptized again upon profession of faith. In the year 1641, however, light broke forth upon them out of the Word of God, so that through the guidance of the Holy Spirit they were enabled to understand that sprinkling and pouring were no baptism at all, and to return to the practice clearly enjoined in the New Testament.

That change was so marked that in a brief season the parties concerned began to lose the name Anabaptist and to assume a new name that had never before been applied to a religious denomination in England. In the year 1644 the name Baptist was applied to them, and they shortly were glad to disclaim the name Anabaptist. The Baptists who now proclaimed and practiced immersion were the very same organized body who a few years previously, under the name Anabaptist, had practiced and proclaimed sprinkling and pouring for baptism. Some of the brethren, indeed, are said to have submitted to three baptisms: first the baptism that had been bestowed in infancy when they were christened in the Church of England; secondly, the sprinkling or pouring which they had received when they withdrew from the Church of England and united with the Anabaptists, and lastly, the immersion that they submitted to when they renounced the pouring and sprinkling of English Anabaptists and finally became Baptists.

Nothing could be more natural than to say that Baptists who only recently adopted immersion had formerly practiced sprinkling and pouring, and nothing could have been farther from my design than to suggest that pouring and sprinkling were valid baptism. All that I intended was to affirm that these Baptists had been Anabaptists up to the year 1641.

The use of the word Baptist, which has been so much condemned in me, is well established among the best writers on Baptist history. An early instance of the adoption of this fashion is in connection with the well-known Bampfield Document, otherwise designated as No. 18 in what is known as the Crosby Collection of Manuscripts. The title of the aforesaid No. 18 is as follows:

“An Account of ye Methods taken by ye Baptists to obtain a proper Administrator of Baptism by Immersion, when that practice had been so long disused, yt there was no one who had been so baptized to be found.” (Lofton, *Review of the Question*, Nashville, 1897, p. 232.)

In the above extract, people who had no immersion whatever, and were striving to find a proper administrator so that they might obtain immersion, are distinctly spoken of as Baptists. Let it be borne in mind that it was a period of transition. These parties were, strictly speaking, Anabap-

tists, but inasmuch as they shortly became Baptists, they are here spoken of as Baptists.

A second instance may be found in Crosby's History of the English Baptists, Vol. I, p. 100 :

"The two other methods that I mentioned were indeed both taken by the *Baptists* at their revival of *immersion* in England, as I find it acknowledged and justified in their writings.

"The former of these was to send over to the foreign *Anabaptists*, who descended from the ancient *Waldenses*, in *France* or *Germany*, so that one or more receiving *baptism* from them, might become proper administrators of it to others."

Here the English people who had not yet revived immersion, but were making arrangements to send to foreign countries to obtain it, are deliberately described as Baptists by our first Baptist historian. Nothing in my articles for the Independent could be more objectionable than this, and yet I have never heard that Crosby was criticised as being disloyal to the Baptists.

A third instance occurs in the same volume of Crosby, p. 103 :

"But the greatest number of the *English Baptists*, and the more judicious, looked upon all this as needless trouble, and what proceeded from the old *Popish Doctrine of right to administer sacraments by an uninterrupted succession*, which neither the Church of *Rome*, nor the Church of *England*, much less the modern *Dissenters*, could prove to be with them. They affirmed, therefore, and practiced accordingly, that after a general corruption of *baptism*, an unbaptized person might warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation."

Parties are here asserted to be English Baptists who had no immersion whatever, and who declined to send abroad to obtain it. On the contrary, they began their reformation by providing that an unbaptized person of their own number should administer immersion to his associates.

Robinson, one of the most important English Baptist writers, in his history of Baptism, published in 1790, p. 547, takes a stand at the side of Crosby in respect to this usage. He says :

"The Dutch Baptists reject infant baptism, and administer the ordinance only to such as profess faith and repentance ; but they baptize by pouring."

Here Dr. Robinson calls Dutch Anabaptists who practiced pouring by the name of Baptists. Instances of a similar practice may be found among leading Baptist writers of our own time.

In my late volume, entitled "A Question in Baptist History," I have given attention to this distinction between Anabaptists and Baptists, during the period of transition, striving as far as I could to avoid any reproaches that had previously fallen upon me for omitting to lay emphasis upon that point. The question was stated in such terms that it could not easily be misunderstood, the following language being employed :

"The issue before us is far different, namely : Whether the immersion of adult believers was practiced in England by the Anabaptists before the year 1641? Whether those English people first adopted immersion for baptism and thus became Baptists in or about the year 1641?" (Question in Baptist History, page 5.)

Since it seems so difficult to avoid misapprehension, I purpose to observe in future this distinction laid down in my book.

In my article on the Baptists in Johnson's Cyclopedia, objection has also been raised against the following statement :

"*The earliest organized Baptist Church* belongs to the year 1610 or 1611."

Here I was speaking of English Baptists, and had their history exclusively in mind.

The period of transition referred to above began in 1610 and closed in 1641, at which latter date the English people, who had begun to organize in 1610, first adopted immersion, and so became Baptists in the strict sense of the word. These people were spoken of as an organized Baptist Church in 1610 merely because they were the same who, in 1641, became Baptists in the modern sense.

The usage in this instance might be defended, as in the case of the Independent article, by the authority of good writers on Baptist history. The citations set forth above are sufficient to indicate that divers of our best scholars, men who were entirely aware of the fact that immersion was not

found among the Anabaptists of England before the year 1641, do not consider it amiss to designate these people as Baptists from the moment when they established the organization, which, in 1641, became a Baptist Church; but since this custom has created misapprehension, I expect to modify the phraseology used above in my article for Johnson's Cyclopedia so as to obviate any confusion on this point. In general, whatever may appear in my previous writings to be out of harmony with the positions assumed in my "Question in Baptist History," I desire to be understood in accordance with that work.

Turning next to the volume entitled "A Question in Baptist History," it has been asserted that I have exhibited unfairness as a historian and bitterness toward the Baptists. It is affirmed that I have suppressed the testimony of Mr. William Kiffin, as found on page 11 of his Brief Remonstrance of the Reasons and Grounds of Anabaptists for their Separation, that was published in 1645. Mr. Kiffin's words are as follows:

"It is well known to many, and especially to ourselves, that our congregations were erected and framed according to the rule of Christ before we heard of any Reformation, even at the time when Episcopacie was at the height of its vanishing glory."

The reformation mentioned is the Puritan Reformation in England, which began with the "yeare of Jubilee" in 1641. Anabaptist congregations had been erected and framed some years before that time. The language is so general that no reference to immersion can be demonstrated to occur in it. Mr. Kiffin's allusion is merely to the constitution of such bodies as these Anabaptist congregations.

A quotation drawn by Ivimey from Edwards' Gangræna is presented as a second proof of the suppression of testimony. Dr. J. B. Thomas, in a recent article on "Dr. Whitsitt's Question," says:

"It might be mentioned in passing that Edwards, the author of Gangræna (sic), a virulent assault upon the Baptists, is quoted by Ivimey as affirming that 'on the 12th of November last (1640) there met a matter of eighty Anabaptists (many of them belonging to the church of one Barber) in a great house in Bishopsgate street and had a love feast, where five new members *lately dipped* were present,' etc."

The *Gangræna* of Edwards was first published in 1646. When he speaks of "the 12th of November last," Edwards intends the 12th of November, 1645. The date, 1640, given above, is unauthorized, not being found in Edwards, but inserted by Ivimey in 1811. It moves the event backward five years from the time when it actually occurred, and confuses the facts of history.

Mr. Praisegod Barebone, in his Discourse tending to prove the "Baptisme," etc., published in 1642, says:

"The *Romanists* some of them and some of the poore ignorant Welch do use dipping. I think these will not say they learned this new truth of them, neither do I think they will hold their Baptisme ever the truer for their dipping; I hope when they have further considered this matter they may abate of the fierceness of their opinion, so as to think that Baptisme under or in the defection may be God's ordinance, so that there shall be no need of this new dipping.

"But inasmuch as this is a very new way, and the full growth of it, and settling is not yet known, if it be to themselves, yet not to me and others: I will forbear to say further to it."

Objection is taken to the fact that I omitted the words, "The *Romanists* some of them and some of the poore ignorant Welch do use dipping." The dipping used by some of the *Romanists* was the dipping of infants, which is said to be practiced even at the present day in the Cathedral of Milan. The dipping practiced by the "poore ignorant Welch" was likewise the dipping of infants. It has not been denied that sporadic instances of the dipping of infants may have survived in England as late as the year 1641. But that was something wholly different from the immersion of believers, which had been a lost art in England for more than a hundred years. The dipping of infants was so different from the immersion of believers that the one need not have suggested the other. Barebone distinctly says: "I think these will not say they learned this new truth of them." On the contrary, as I pointed out in my article for the Independent, immersion required to be found out anew in England in 1641 (or in other words invented) from the light of God's word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Though it had been established by John the Baptist in Judea about the year 30 of our era; though it had been enjoined by our

Lord and his apostles; though it was still in existence in other countries of Europe, believers' immersion had for a long season passed into disuse in England. Every kind of effort has been made, but hitherto entirely without success, to point out three cases of believers' immersion in England between 1509 and 1641. Inasmuch as the dipping used by some of the Romanists and some of the poor ignorant Welch was the dipping of infants, and inasmuch as the Baptists did not learn any thing from either of these parties, I concluded I was perfectly justifiable in omitting the words cited above as having no significance for the subject.

Another charge of garbling is brought against me for the accidental omission of certain words in quoting from the Preface of Edward Barber's Small Treatise of Baptisme or Dipping. The language of Mr. Barber is as follows :

“And that the Lord amongst some others should raise up mee, a poore Tradesman, to devulge this glorious Truth, to the World's censuring.”

The words “amongst some others” were by a slip of the pen left out. I was not aware of their omission until more than six months after the volume had left the press, when my attention was called to the fact by a brother in Mississippi. The omission was not intentional, as the words are given in my quotation from Barber as found in the Independent article for Oct. 7, 1880.

The charge that I have garbled the language of Dr. Featley can not be sustained. The language of Featley in reference to the fortieth article of the Baptist creed of 1644 is as follows: “ This Article is wholly sowed with the new leaven of Anabaptisme. I say the *new leaven*, for it cannot be proved that any of the ancient Anabaptists maintained any such position, (there being three ways of baptizing, either by dipping, or washing, or sprinkling, to which the Scripture alludeth in sundry places: the Sacrament is rightly administered by any of the three, and whatsoever is here alleadged for dipping, we approve of so far as it excludeth not the other two. Dipping may be and hath been used in some places, *trina immersio*, a threefold dipping: but there is no necessity of it). It is not essential to baptisme, neither doe the Texts in the margent conclude any such thing.”

In the above citation the words included in parenthesis were omitted by me because I considered they contain nothing that is material to the sense, being simply Featley's exposition of Scripture, which, by the way, is a mistaken one. I had a perfect right to omit them (provided the fact was plainly indicated) so as to avoid crowding the page with unnecessary matter. There is not a word in the parenthesis that contradicts any thing found in that which I included, and no violence has been done to the meaning of the author in any way. It is customary for writers everywhere to use their authorities in this way, provided, as is here the case, no injustice is done to the original.

In quoting this passage I followed my own copy taken in the British Museum. The spelling, capitalization, punctuation, etc., are slightly different from those of some other copies, but my copyist was instructed to follow exactly the text of the edition she had before her. It was a different edition from some others in circulation, and might have been set up differently by the printer. I have not misrepresented Dr. Featley either in the passage above cited or any other passage that I have drawn from his writings. He does call immersion "the *new leaven* of Anabaptisme," in 1644 when the first edition of his book appeared, and it is not possible to escape that conclusion. It was a splinter new practice in England at that time, if his authority passes for any thing.

It has also been asserted that I have suppressed the testimony of Henry Bullinger, as found in his Decades. The following passage is cited in proof of the assertion:

"Again the reverend fathers of the fourth Council held at Toledo, do allow but one dipping in Baptism, and then add immediately this reason, And lest any should doubt of the mystery of the sacrament, why we allow but one dipping, he may see therein our death and resurrection. For the dipping into the water is as it were the going down into the grave, and the coming up again out of the water, is the rising again out of the grave."

It is not easy to see what bearing the above utterance by the divines of the Fourth Council of Toledo, which convened in Spain in the year 633, might have upon the condition of affairs in England more than a thousand years later. Certainly immersion was practiced in Spain in 633; but our question relates to what was practiced in England in 1641.

For the satisfaction of the reader it may not be undesirable to set down in this place the entire paragraph of which the above forms a portion. It is found in the Decades of Henry Bullinger, Minister of the Church of Zurich, translated by H. I. The Fifth Decade, Edited for the Parker Society, by the Rev. Thomas Harding, A. M., Cambridge, 1852, pages 364-5, and will show that Bullinger has been misrepresented, for he contends in unmistakable terms that sprinkling is as good as dipping. He can not be used as a defender of immersion:

“There is contention also about this, whether once or thrice he that is baptized ought to be dipped or sprinkled with water? Truly the Apostles have not curiously commanded anything in this behalf; so that it is free either to sprinkle or to dip. Sprinkling seemeth to have been used of the old fathers: for honesty and shamefacedness forbiddeth to uncover the body; and also the weak state of infants for the most part can not away with dipping, since sprinkling also doth as much as dipping. And it standeth in the choice of him that ministereth baptism to sprinkle him either once or thrice after the custom of the church whereof he is a minister. Tertullian, *contra Praxeam*, saith: ‘The Lord commanded to baptize into the Father, and into the Son, and into the Holy Ghost. Not into one: for we are baptized not once but thrice, at each name into each person.’ And Gregory, answering Leonard the bishop, saith: ‘A diverse custom hindereth nothing the holy church, so that it be done in one faith. We by thrice dipping do signify the mystery of Christ’s lying in the grave three days.’ (Again, the reverend fathers in the fourth Council held at Toledo allow but one dipping in baptism, and then add immediately this reason: ‘And lest any should doubt of the mystery of this sacrament, why we allow but one dipping, he may see therein our death and resurrection. For the dipping into the water is as it were the going down into the grave; and the coming up again out of the water is the rising again out of the grave.’)”

The words inclosed in parenthesis constitute that portion of the above extract which I have been charged with suppressing, but what should be said regarding the omission of the former portion of the same paragraph, in which Bullinger shows marked preference for sprinkling instead of immersion?

It is likewise affirmed that I have suppressed the following passage from *Master Rogers in his Treatise of Baptism*, the third edition of which was published in 1633:

“And this I so averre as thinking it exceeding material to the ordinance, yea which both antiquitie (though with some additions of a three-fold dipping for the preserving of the doctrine of the impunged Trinity entire) constantly and without exception of countries, hot or cold witnesseth unto; and especially the constant word of the Holy Ghost, first and last approveth, as a learned critique upon Matthew, chap. 3, verse 11, hath noted that the Greeke tongue wants not words to express any other act as well as dipping if the institution could bear it.”

As to Master Rogers' book, it was brought to light since this discussion began. I can not be charged with suppressing what I have never seen. It has not been claimed, I believe, as discussing any thing but infant immersion.

Likewise an attempt has been made to show that Baillie contradicts himself, and is therefore a worthless witness for either side. If access could be had to the original documents it might possibly be found that this charge is true; but the opposite might also be found true if one may conclude any thing from the use of original authorities in the case of Bullinger's Decades.

It is not necessary to discuss the other items in detail. The objection against my use of the Broadmead Records does not deserve a moment's notice. Those who, about a hundred years before, beyond the sea in Germany, held the truth of believers' baptism did not, except in a comparatively few instances, hold the truth of believers' immersion, and it is inappropriate to urge their case in this connection.

I considered the argument in my book to be complete and sufficient before reaching the chapter inserted "For Good Measure," which gives such citations from Dr. Dexter as I had not seen elsewhere. It has been charged that in some instances Dr. Dexter has not correctly interpreted the authorities quoted from him in this chapter. I can not vouch for the correctness of quotations given by another author when I have not seen the original documents. In any case, those quotations do not affect the contention in my book. However, Dr. Dexter's reputation as a painstaking scholar should protect him from too careless treatment.

In turning away from this discussion I desire to enter a positive and unconditional denial of the charges of garbling testimony or suppressing evidence. I have done nothing of the kind.

I have been anxious to keep silent as far as possible in this controversy, for the reason that I believed that was the wisest course to pursue, as also did many of my friends, but I can not afford to rest quietly under such charges as garbling or suppressing testimony. I have spoken here because I am desirous to be clearly understood and fairly treated by my brethren.

It may be added that when I applied to the publishers for permission to make changes in my article for Johnson's Cyclopaedia, I was informed that they had just then issued a new edition, and was shown a copy of the first volume in which the article is printed. I confidently expect when a new edition shall be issued that the publishers will grant my request.

I desire to testify once more my unflinching devotion to the doctrines, practices, and interests of the Baptist denomination. I have spent the best part of my life in sustaining and promoting these, and they become dearer to my heart as the years advance. I beg leave to append a portion of the address delivered by me before the Faculty and Students of the Seminary at the opening of the session on the first of October, 1897:

“Our leading concern and industry in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is to give ourselves with devout reverence and with all our energy to the study of the Word of God. The Word of God is the man of our counsel. ‘The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Baptists.’ It was the chief book of our fathers; we rejoice that it is still the chief book of their descendants. May it be the chief book of our successors to the end of time. We place little dependence upon uninspired history and tradition. We ‘ask for the old paths, where is the good way,’ and strive to walk therein, avoiding every kind of innovation. In the Bible we find no other baptism than immersion of believers. Our blessed Lord Himself was immersed in the river Jordan about the year thirty of our era, and He enjoined immersion upon all who should afterward believe in His name. His apostles taught and practiced the immersion of believers upon a profession of their faith.

“The authority of the Lord and His apostles, as set forth in the New Testament, is sufficient for our purposes. We feel no apprehensions; the foundation stands firm beneath our feet. We have always advocated, and shall always advocate, the immersion of believers, because, as we understand the Scriptures, faith and immersion are both essential to baptism.

“Likewise we find in the Word of God that the independence of the local churches is clearly recognized and jealously guarded; also that Jesus Christ alone is Lord of the conscience. By consequence, our Baptist people and our Baptist Seminary have always been glad to urge these as cardinal points in our belief. We stand for the freedom of the churches; we stand for unlimited religious liberty. Baptists have never bowed to the behests of any Pope or council. They are bound by higher authority, and must obey God rather than man.

“The honored founders of our school have all passed away. We venerate their names and memories more and more. Nothing was more precious to them in connection with the Seminary than the right of free research and of reasonable freedom of teaching. We who companied with them daily for many years in the most intimate intercourse can remember nothing more distinctly concerning them than the pride they felt in these privileges. Freedom of research and freedom of teaching are universal Baptist treasures; they will always be defended by our Baptist people.

“As a school, we rejoice to stand upon the oldest and firmest foundations of the Baptists. The Seminary Confession of Faith has been wisely incorporated into our fundamental articles. It was laid down by Boyce and Broadus and Manly and Williams for their guidance and ours, and we delight to plant our feet upon it, and to hold it in the same sense in which it was understood and interpreted by them.

“While we stand upon our Seminary Confession of Faith, we also have great fondness for the venerable Philadelphia Confession, one of the most excellent standards of our Baptist doctrine. It has molded and influenced the religious opinions of a larger number of Baptists, perhaps, than any other Confession of Faith that was ever in use among us. But beneath these and all other Confessions of Faith is found ‘the Bible, the Bible alone, which is the religion of Baptists.’ We invite you every one to an earnest, devout, and humble study of the Word of God.”

WM. H. WHITSITT.