

JAMES MADISON PENDLETON'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Theology

by

James E. Hill, Jr.

April 1958

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The study of James M. Anderson's theology of
 baptism is the subject of a conversation with Doctor Ward
 of the Southern Baptist Convention, which took place in the
 fall of 1977. The writer expressed a desire to study the
 theology of some individual, preferably a Baptist, of a past
 generation. The names of several men were mentioned. Anderson
 was the name of James M. Anderson which seemed
 most familiar to the writer. After some preliminary
 research, the writer decided to make a study of the theo-
 logical thought of James M. Anderson.

PREFACE

It is evident that a number of Baptists of the past have
 been presented accurately in a study of this nature. It was
 decided that the study should be limited to the Baptist of the
 Anderson's theological thought, and the development of
 his thought.

The study was a long process, involving many hours of
 research and study. The writer has also been most grateful to the
 writer who takes the time to read the personal information
 to Doctor Ward for his interest and counsel during this
 study. A special word of appreciation is due the masters
 of the Sulphur Spring Baptist Church, Franklin, Kentucky,
 who have granted their pastor the privilege of pursuing this

PREFACE

The study of James Madison Pendleton's theology of baptism is the result of a conversation with Doctor Wayne Ward. During this conversation, which took place in the Fall of 1957, the writer expressed a desire to study the theology of some individual, preferably a Baptist of a past generation. The names of several men were mentioned. Among them was the name of James Madison Pendleton which at this time was unfamiliar to the writer. After some preliminary research, the writer decided to make a study of the theological thought of J. M. Pendleton. Later, when it became evident that even a survey of Pendleton's theology could not be presented adequately in a study of this nature, it was decided that the study should be limited to one aspect of Pendleton's theological thought, namely, his theology of baptism.

The study has been rigorous, requiring many hours of research and study, but has also been most rewarding to this writer who wishes to acknowledge his personal indebtedness to Doctor Ward for his interest and counsel during this study. A special word of appreciation is due the members of the Sulphur Spring Baptist Church, Franklin, Kentucky, who have granted their pastor the privilege of pursuing this

study oftentimes at the expense of his pastoral duties.

James E. Hill, Jr.

Louisville, Kentucky

April, 1958

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Material in the Western Recorder (Louisville),
March 12, 1891.

Joseph H. Brown, High School, Jackson, Miss.
Editorial: The Western Recorder, Louisville, Ky.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

James Madison Pendleton has been described as one of "the brightest lights of our denomination."¹ For more than a half century he exerted tremendous influence upon Baptist thought through his tireless efforts as an outstanding preacher, theologian, author and teacher.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study has been (1) to survey the life and work of James Madison Pendleton, (2) to present in summary fashion his theology of baptism, and (3) to show its effects upon Pedobaptists and within the Landmark Movement.

II. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

J. M. Pendleton was a prolific writer--the author of numerous books and countless articles for denominational papers. It was said of him in 1880 that "he has written, in the past forty years, more for our religious denominational papers, than any other man."² Therefore, from the beginning

¹Editorial in the Western Recorder [Louisville], March 12, 1891.

²Joseph H. Borum, Biographical Sketches of Tennessee Baptist Ministers (Memphis: Rogers and Co., 1880), pp. 512-13.

of this study it was obvious that his interests were far too broad and the subjects covered in his writings were far too numerous to be presented comprehensively in a single study of this nature. For this reason it was decided to limit this study to a single subject. Since the subject of baptism occupied more space, occurred most frequently, and was the foundation of much of Pendleton's writings on other subjects, it seemed natural to limit this study to the subject of baptism.

III. REVIEW OF THE MATERIALS USED IN THIS STUDY

The materials used in this study consisted primarily of denominational papers and the published works of James Madison Pendleton. Chief among the denominational papers used were the Tennessee Baptist, Nashville, Tennessee, and the Western Recorder, Louisville, Kentucky. However, the greatest asset in determining and evaluating Pendleton's thought and theology on the subject of baptism was his books. A careful study and a thorough understanding of the following were essential: Three Reasons Why I Am a Baptist, Distinctive Principles of Baptists, Church Manual, Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology and Reminiscences of a Long Life.

IV. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THIS THESIS

The remainder of this thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter Two deals with the life and work of James Madison Pendleton. In this chapter the major events in Pendleton's life are presented with particular emphasis upon his work as a preacher, professor and author.

Chapter Three is an attempt to summarize the basic tenets of J. M. Pendleton's theology of baptism. A thorough discussion of his basic presuppositions pertaining to the proper authority and administrator for valid baptism, his emphasis on believers as the sole subjects of baptism, and immersion as the only act of baptism are presented in this chapter.

The next two chapters show the effects of Pendleton's theology of baptism. Chapter Four presents a discussion of his rejection of Infant Baptism and the grounds on which he based this rejection.

Chapter Five discusses a second major effect of Pendleton's theology of baptism--an emphasis on pulpit non-affiliation between Baptist and Pedobaptist ministers. The influence of J. R. Graves as reflected in this emphasis, the bases for this emphasis and the effects of this emphasis are set forth in this chapter.

Chapter Six is a summary of this study with an attempt

to evaluate the contribution which James Madison Pendleton's life and writings have made to the proper understanding of the biblical doctrine of baptism.

James Madison Pendleton, son of John and Frances Pendleton, was born at "Huguenot Square," Spotsylvania County, Virginia, on November 20, 1811, during the presidency of James Madison, for whom he was named. His paternal grandfather was Henry Pendleton who had presided over the important meeting of Federalists in Culpeper (Va.) in 1794.

CHAPTER II

LIFE AND WORK OF JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

Very early in life, Pendleton was the life of his grandfather, John Pendleton, who was a man with many qualifications. Unlike his grandfather who was a farmer, he received a liberal education. He enrolled at the College of William and Mary and later taught school himself. While at the college he met Miss Frances C. Thompson and married her in 1836. Sometime after their marriage, Pendleton abandoned teaching and became engaged in the mercantile business in which profession he was engaged at the time of the birth of James Madison Pendleton in 1811. When successful as a merchant, he decided to sell his

CHAPTER II

LIFE AND WORK OF JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

I. EARLY YEARS

James Madison Pendleton, the third child of John and Frances Pendleton, was born at "Twyman's Store," Spottsylvania County, Virginia, on November 20, 1811, during the presidency of James Madison, for whom he was named. His paternal grandfather was Henry Pendleton who had presided over the important meeting of freeholders in Culpeper (Culpepper) County, Virginia, on July 7, 1774, at which there was manifested a decided anti-slavery feeling and the preview of an attitude which was to gather momentum and was ultimately to affect greatly the life of his grandson. His father, John Pendleton, was a man with literary aspirations and, unlike his brothers who were farmers, resolved to acquire an education. He enrolled as a pupil of the celebrated Andrew Broadus and later taught school himself. While engaged as a teacher he met Miss Frances J. Thompson who became his wife in 1806. Sometime after their marriage, John Pendleton abandoned teaching and became engaged in the mercantile business in which profession he was engaged at the time of the birth of James Madison Pendleton in 1811. Although successful as a merchant, he decided to sell his

stock of goods and "to seek his fortune in the new State of Kentucky."¹ In the Autumn of 1812 the Pendleton family which now included three children left Virginia by wagon "never to return" and "after a wearisome journey the travelers reached their new home in Christian County, Kentucky."² There on a three hundred acre farm near Pembroke, James Madison Pendleton spent his childhood attending the best schools which the community afforded and having his formal education supplemented by "the judicious teaching of his excellent parents."³ He has been described by his biographer as "not a very strong boy, having frequently to take doses of 'nauseous medicine'" but "fond of play and fun" and "a leader of the boys in their sports."⁴

Pendleton's first serious thoughts on the subject of religion came at the age of fifteen after a conversation with a boyhood companion who told him that "he wished to be a Christian." However, an experience of conversion was not

¹J. M. Pendleton, Reminiscences of a Long Life (Louisville: Press Baptist Book Concern, 1891), pp. 1-8.

²Ibid., pp. 12-13.

³William Cathcart, The Baptist Encyclopedia (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), II, 898.

⁴The first annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society was held in Campbellsville, Kentucky, on June 14, 1904. At this meeting Dr. T. T. Eaton, pastor of the Walnut Street Baptist Church, read a paper on the life and character of "James Madison Pendleton, D. D."

immediate for either of the boys but did come to Pendleton about two years later, after reading a sermon by Rev. Samuel Davies based on I Corinthians 1:22-24: "For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." Subsequently he made a public profession of faith before the Bethel Church and was baptized in a nearby creek on April 14, 1829, by Rev. John S. Willson (Wilson).⁵ To his astonishment within a year (February, 1830) he was licensed to preach, becoming the first licentiate ever sent forth by the Bethel Church.⁶

II. AS A PREACHER AND PASTOR

Pendleton's first attempt at preaching came in September, 1831, at the West Union Church about ten miles west of Hopkinsville. The text was Acts 17:30, 31:

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained.

Of this attempt Pendleton has written, "To call what I said a 'sermon' would be a flagrant injustice to that term." Nevertheless he continued to preach periodically, "feeling

⁵Pendleton, op. cit., pp. 24-29.

⁶Cathcart, loc. cit.

utterly incompetent to preach, and compelled to give up my hope in Christ if I did not."⁷

In 1833 he assumed his first pastorate as pastor of the church in Hopkinsville and of Bethel Church which has previously been mentioned. This pastorate extended over a period of four years during which time he was also enrolled in the Christian County Seminary pursuing a course of instruction in the Latin and Greek classics.⁸ It was also during this pastorate that Pendleton's ordination was requested by the church in Hopkinsville. Concerning his preaching during this period we read:

I knew hardly anything about the construction of sermons. I did not know there was such a word as "Homiletics" and my expositions of Scripture were sadly superficial.⁹

When Pendleton began his next pastorate at Bowling Green in 1833 at the theretofore unheard of salary of four hundred dollars a year, he became "the first man in Southern Kentucky who abjured all secular avocations."¹⁰ It was while serving in this pastorate that we read the following excerpt in the Tennessee Baptist soon after a revival which Doctor Pendleton preached at the First Baptist Church in Nashville:

⁷Pendleton, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

⁸Cathcart, loc. cit.

⁹Pendleton, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 35.

. . . We never knew a man who excels Bro. Pendleton in unaffected ardent piety, or who equals him in that greatest and rarest excellency, INTENSE YET AFFECTIONATE EARNESTNESS. Several of his sermons and exhortations were absolutely fearful in awful solemnity and melting appeal. The cheeks of wicked men paled with fear, and tears flowed from eyes unaccustomed to weep, and sinners bowed who never yielded before.

We seemed to listen not to a man, but to an ambassador direct from the throne, who knowing the terrors of its violated law, persuaded men with an intensity of interest and emotion equal to his mission.

He has won a name that can never die, and awakened love in the bosom of all Christians here, that death cannot quench.¹¹

From Bowling Green Pendleton went to Murfreesboro in 1857 where he remained as pastor of the church and professor at Union University until 1862 when he went north to Hamilton, Ohio--a move necessitated by his views on the slavery question.. Although not a strict abolitionist, he was "in favor of doing away with slavery gradually, according to State Constitution and law."¹² The pastorate in Hamilton was never regarded by Pendleton as a success.¹³ As a consequence he resigned in April, 1865, and soon afterward became pastor at Upland, Pennsylvania, where he remained until his retirement in October, 1883, after spending more than fifty years as a minister of the gospel.

¹¹"First Baptist Church of Nashville," Tennessee Baptist [Nashville], May 11, 1854.

¹²Pendleton, op. cit., p. 112.

¹³Ibid., p. 134.

Summarizing his life as a preacher, Eaton has said,

As a preacher, he was clear, strong and impressive. Never impassioned, he was always logical and tender. The hearer was sure the preacher knew what he was talking about, and even felt that he had great reserved power behind all that he said. . . . While he never dazed or dazzled a congregation, he never failed to edify and uplift them. His preaching never wore out. It was always fresh and nourishing. . . . His hearers seldom thought to ask whether he was a great preacher or not, so completely did he hide himself behind the great truths he held forth. He was always accurate, yet never dry; always logical, yet never heavy; always strong, yet never dull. Every sermon was complete, and so easy to remember. . . . His style was simple, clear, and strong, and he made no failures.¹⁴

Concerning this ability as a preacher only one further word seems necessary.

As a preacher, Dr. Pendleton had an analytical mind, was clear in his statements, forcible in his thinking, was methodical, always following a prearranged, well-defined plan; was a model sermonizer. He was distinctly and eminently a doctrinal preacher and a teacher of the Word of God.¹⁵

III. AS A PROFESSOR AND THEOLOGIAN

When the Trustees of Union University decided to establish a Theological Department in 1857, they appointed James Madison Pendleton as professor. Feeling incompetent Pendleton declined the appointment on the grounds that he knew "nothing of theology except what he had learned from the

¹⁴Eaton, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

¹⁵J. J. Burnett, Sketches of Tennessee's Pioneer Baptist Preachers (Nashville: Marshall and Bruce, 1919), p. 404.

Bible."¹⁶ Since the Trustees wanted a man who had learned his Theology from the Bible and had arranged for him to continue his pastoral ministry in Murfreesboro, Pendleton finally consented to accept the position as Professor of Theology. This position he held until April, 1861, when the college suspended its classes because of the war.

In reference to these days as a professor we read,

I had to teach many things of which I knew absolutely nothing; except what I had learned myself without the aid of anyone. I had, therefore, to go ahead of the classes, and it is a wonder to me to this day how I was able to conceal my ignorance so as to avoid the ignominy of its exposure. In the Theological Department, the text-books I used were Horne's Introduction, Ripley's Sacred Rhetoric, and Dagg's and Dick's Theology.¹⁷

Perhaps Pendleton's greatest contribution in the field of theology was his book, Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology, which was published in 1878 and has been described by its author as his "best and most important book." Intended as a book "suitable to the comprehension of colored ministers in the South and at the same time acceptable to other classes of readers," it is characterized by simplicity of style and has been used as "a text-book in most of the colored Theological Institutes in the South."¹⁸ The volume dealt concisely but clearly with thirty of the most

¹⁶Pendleton, op. cit., p. 108.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 109-10.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 152-53.

important doctrines of the Christian faith.

IV. AS A WRITER AND AUTHOR

As has previously been stated J. M. Pendleton was a prolific writer. During the years (1853-1861) in which he served as either Correspondent or Editor of the Tennessee Baptist, he wrote for this one paper alone no less than eight hundred articles.¹⁹ At the same time he was contributing regularly to other denominational and local papers. The editor of the Religious Herald made this comment shortly after Pendleton's death, "No initials have been more familiar to Herald readers than 'J.M.P.'"²⁰ Spencer has said:

From 1838, to the present time [1885], he has probably written more for the periodical press than any other man who has regularly filled the pastoral office; and, yet, he has never published an article that did not evince calm thought and mature deliberation.²¹

In addition to his articles which appeared in denominational and local papers, Pendleton wrote a number of books, tracts and pamphlets. Included among his published works are: Three Reasons Why I Am a Baptist, Sermons on Important Subjects, Church Manual, The Atonement of Christ, An Old

¹⁹J. M. Pendleton, "A Few Parting Words," Tennessee Baptist [Nashville], July 13, 1861.

²⁰"Death of Rev. J. M. Pendleton, D.D.," Religious Herald [Richmond], March 12, 1891.

²¹J. H. Spencer, A History of Kentucky Baptists (Cincinnati: J. R. Baumes, 1885), II, 524.

Landmark Re-set, Thoughts on Christian Duty, Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology, Distinctive Principles of Baptists, Brief Notes on the New Testament and Reminiscences of a Long Life.

A careful study of five of these works was essential to this study but due to the limitations of space only a brief statement about them could be included in this thesis.

Three Reasons Why I Am a Baptist was Pendleton's first book. Written in 1853, it was an expansion of a Dedication Sermon preached in Liberty Church, Logan County, Kentucky.²² It dealt with baptism and church government.

Distinctive Principles of Baptists is an enlargement of the above mentioned book.

The object of this book is to show wherein Baptists differ from other religious denominations and to demonstrate that their principles are identical with those of the New Testament.²³

Pendleton's Church Manual as the name implies is a manual of church polity and practice. Written in 1867 it has been translated into German.

Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology has already been mentioned.

His last work, Reminiscences of a Long Life, is an autobiography written at the special request of his son,

²²Pendleton, op. cit., p. 103.

²³Ibid., p. 154.

Garnett, and completed shortly before his death. It has been quoted repeatedly throughout this chapter.

In concluding this section a few words concerning Pendleton's writing style are in order.

As a writer, he took strong hold of the reader. His style was clear and strong in writing as in preaching. He never wrote anything a second time, holding that this habit fostered carelessness in the writing. He first knew what he wished to say, and then wrote it carefully and let it stand.²⁴

V. CLOSING YEARS

From the time of his retirement in 1883 until shortly before his death in 1891, Pendleton remained active making his home alternately with his four children. During this period there are two events which are worthy of notation.

In October, 1887, he attended the Jubilee Meeting of the General Association of Baptists which met in Louisville. As one of six survivors who had been present at the first meeting of the General Association fifty years earlier, he was invited to be the guest of the Association for this Jubilee celebration. At this Jubilee meeting Pendleton read a paper which he had been requested to prepare on "The Condition of the Baptist Cause in Kentucky in 1837."²⁵

²⁴Eaton, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

²⁵Pendleton, op. cit., p. 170. The original manuscript is to be found in the Southern Seminary Library and has been read by this writer with great interest.

March 13, 1888 marked the Golden Wedding Anniversary of James Madison Pendleton and Catherine S. Garnett and was commemorated in the church in Bowling Green by their many friends. On this day in 1838 they had been united in marriage by Elder Jacob Locke at Glasgow. Into their home had come five children, three girls and two boys, four of whom survived at the time of the celebration. A fifth child, John Malcom, had been killed in the Civil War while serving in the Confederate Army.²⁶

The long, active and influential life of James Madison Pendleton came to an end on March 4, 1891. The following paragraph appeared on the front page of the Baptist and Reflector:

Rev. James M. Pendleton, D.D., so widely known as a great and good man, died of capillary bronchitis, at noon on March 4th, at the home of his son-in-law, Mr. B. F. Proctor, in Bowling Green, Ky.²⁷

Funeral services were conducted on March 6, 1891 at the church in Bowling Green by Doctor T. T. Eaton, editor of the Western Recorder. He was assisted by Doctor William Whittsitt (Whitsitt), one of Pendleton's former students, Rev. A. M. Boone and Rev. M. M. Riley. The burial was in Fairview Cemetery just outside of Bowling Green.²⁸

²⁶Ibid., pp. 67-68.

²⁷"Funeral of Dr. J. M. Pendleton," Baptist and Reflector [Nashville], March 12, 1891.

²⁸Pendleton, op. cit., pp. 196-202.

CHAPTER III

A SURVEY OF PENDLETON'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM

One of the purposes of this chapter is to summarize the basic tenets of James William Pendleton's theology of baptism. The source of this information has been gleaned primarily from a careful study of four of Pendleton's published works. These books spanned a period of approximately thirty years, yet they reveal the same basic thought on the subject of baptism which Mr. Pendleton had an obvious similarity of material in all of them. The following information in this

1. J. W. Pendleton, Christian Baptism: A Compendium of Theology (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1878), pp. 322-37. 2. J. W. Pendleton, Church Manual (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1880), pp. 52-60. 3. J. W. Pendleton, Distinctive Principles of Baptists (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1927), pp. 11-13. 4. J. W. Pendleton, Three Essays, One in the History (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1931), pp. 11-13.

CHAPTER III

A SURVEY OF PENDLETON'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the basic tenets of James Madison Pendleton's theology of baptism. The source of this information has been gleaned primarily from a careful study of four of Pendleton's published works.¹ These books spanned a period of approximately thirty years yet they revealed the same basic thoughts on the subject of baptism with no contradictions and an obvious similarity of material in all of them. Much of the information in this chapter could be documented in any one of these books. However, Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology is usually cited as the reference except in a few instances where supplementary information is found elsewhere. The reasons which prompted this apparent partiality to Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology as the primary reference are two. First, it was one of Pendleton's later books and, therefore, revealed the full maturity of his theological

¹J. M. Pendleton, Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1878), pp. 342-57; J. M. Pendleton, Church Manual (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1867), pp. 64-89; J. M. Pendleton, Distinctive Principles of Baptists (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1882), pp. 11-158; J. M. Pendleton, Three Reasons Why I Am a Baptist (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1853), pp. 5-131.

thought and study on the subject of baptism. Secondly, it was his attempt at setting forth systematically his theology of the scriptural doctrine of baptism.

I. BASIC PRESUPPOSITIONS

Definition of baptism. According to J. M. Pendleton, "Baptism is the immersion in water, by a proper administrator of a believer in Christ, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."²

Church ordinance. Pendleton believed that the ordinance of baptism was a church ordinance by which he meant that the ordinance pertained to the churches, not to the world, and was committed to the care of the churches who were responsible for its preservation in its original purity and integrity. It could be considered as a "gospel ordinance" or "ministerial ordinance" only in the sense that it was administered by ministers of the gospel. Ministers, he pointed out, received this authority to administer the ordinance of baptism "from Christ, through the churches."³

Proper administrator. A proper administrator, according to Pendleton, was one who had received authority to

²Christian Doctrines, p. 342.

³Church Manual, pp. 64-65.

baptize from a scriptural church. Without this church authority it seemed incredible to Pendleton that baptism should be valid and to maintain that the authority to baptize was conferred by Christ independently of his churches rather than through his churches was to set aside the order of the gospel.⁴

Definition of a church.

A church is a congregation of Christ's baptized disciples, acknowledging him as their Head, relying on his atoning sacrifice for justification before God, depending on the Holy Spirit for sanctification, uniting in the belief of the gospel, agreeing to maintain its ordinances and obey its precepts, meeting together for worship, and co-operating for the extension of Christ's kingdom in the world.⁵

II. THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM

Who are the scriptural subjects of baptism? Pendleton maintained that the only answer to this question was a believer in Christ. In fact, "a believer in Christ is so exclusively the subject of baptism that without such a subject there is no baptism."⁶ The basis for this Pendleton found in the commission of Christ which he believed to be the supreme authority for the administration of baptism and

⁴Ibid., p. 66.

⁵Christian Doctrines, p. 330.

⁶Ibid., p. 342.

apart from which there was no authority to baptize. The circumstances concerning the giving of this commission he described as being "replete with interest." The Saviour had finished the work which he had come from heaven to accomplish. He was about ready to ascend to the Father when he said to the disciples:

All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20).

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16).

Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-47).⁷

Concerning this commission upon which he based his insistence that believers are the sole subjects of baptism, Pendleton wrote,

Surely the language of this commission is plain. Matthew informs us that making disciples (for the word translated "teach" means to make disciples) is to precede baptism; Mark establishes the priority of faith to baptism; and Luke connects repentance and remission of sins with the execution of the commission. No man can, in obedience to this commission, baptize an unbeliever or an unconscious infant. The unbeliever is not a penitent disciple, and it is clearly impossible for the

⁷Ibid., pp. 351-52.

infant to repent and believe the gospel.⁸

To Pendleton, the commission of Christ demanded not only that discipleship precede baptism, making believers the proper subjects of baptism, but it also excluded the baptism of any who were not believers. He maintained that it was a principle of common sense as well as a maxim of law--"the expression of one thing is the exclusion of another"--that "a commission to do a thing authorizes only the doing of the thing specified." For example, when God commanded Noah to build an ark of gopher wood, the use of every other kind of wood was forbidden. In like manner, "the commission of Christ in enjoining the baptism of disciples, believers, forbids in effect the baptism of all others."⁹

Summarizing this insistence on the baptism of believers and of believers only as scriptural subjects of baptism, we read,

. . . The commission of Christ, as understood and exemplified in the apostolic age, requires the baptism of believers, disciples; and the baptism of all others, whether unbelievers or unconscious infants, is utterly unwarranted.¹⁰

⁸Ibid., p. 352.

⁹Ibid., pp. 352-53.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 356-57.

III. THE ACT OF BAPTISM

J. M. Pendleton believed that "immersion is so exclusively the baptismal act that without it there is no baptism."¹¹ The aim of this section is to present in summary fashion the arguments upon which he based his belief that immersion alone is the baptismal act.

Argument from Greek lexicons. Pendleton pointed out that King James's third instruction to his translators forbade the translation of "old ecclesiastical words." These words are therefore anglicized but not translated in the "Common Version of the Scriptures." This practice of anglicization rather than translation, Pendleton insisted, necessitated an examination of the Greek lexicons in ascertaining their meaning. He readily admitted that lexicons do not constitute the ultimate authority as to the meaning of a word; neither would he let their value be minimized. The result of the examination of the Greek word, baptizo, in the available Greek lexicons revealed to Pendleton "a remarkable unanimity among them in representing immerse, or its equivalent, as the primary and ordinary meaning of the word."¹²

¹¹Ibid., p. 342.

¹²Ibid., pp. 342-45.

Argument from distinguished Pedobaptist theologians.

In supporting his assertion that immersion is the only act of valid baptism, Pendleton next appealed to the testimony of certain distinguished Pedobaptist theologians who conceded that the word, baptizo, meant to immerse. Among the distinguished Pedobaptist theologians making the concession that baptizo means or signifies to immerse are John Calvin, Doctor George Campbell and Doctor Thomas Chalmers. Pendleton's books substantiate this argument with direct quotations from the works of the above mentioned distinguished Pedobaptist theologians. To Pendleton a concession or testimony that condemned one's own practice was evidently "compelled by the force of truth" and should be considered as furnishing the foundation for a strong argument.¹³

Argument from classical usage. The ultimate authority for ascertaining the meaning of a word was usage according to Pendleton. This argument is based then on the meaning of baptizo as used in the writings of classical Greek authors. From the birth of Pindar (sixth century B.C.) until the death of Lucian, a period of seven hundred years, the testimony of usage showed that baptizo meant to immerse. Since most of the classical Greek writers lived before the institution of

¹³Ibid., pp. 345-47.

baptism as a religious ordinance and those living after its institution cared nothing for it, there was no controversy as to the meaning of baptizo during this period and no motive to induce them to use the word in any but its authorized meaning which obviously was to immerse.¹⁴

Argument from the symbolic import of baptism. Pendleton believed the symbolic import of baptism provided "a conclusive argument in favor of immersion" as the only scriptural act of baptism. He maintained that baptism represented the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, expressed emblematically the believer's death to sin and resurrection to newness of life, was a symbol of remission of sins and moral purification, and anticipated the believer's resurrection from the dead.¹⁵

He concluded this argument in the following way:

Now, if these views of the symbolic import of baptism are correct, it follows inevitably that the immersion in water of a believer in Christ is essential to baptism --so essential that there can be no baptism without it. If baptism represents the burial and resurrection of Christ, it must be immersion. If it sets forth in emblem the believer's death to sin and resurrection to a new life, it must be immersion. If it in symbol remits and washes away the sins which Christ has really washed away in his blood, still it must be immersion. If it anticipates the resurrection, nothing but immersion justifies the anticipation. We are "buried by baptism"--that is,

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 347-48.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 348-50.

by means of baptism. When the baptismal process takes place there is certainly a burial. The two are inseparable, and therefore where there is no burial there is no baptism.¹⁶

Argument from places and circumstances. The fifth argument used by Pendleton to support immersion as the only act of baptism is based upon the places selected and the circumstances attending the administration of baptism. The places described as being the scenes where baptism was administered were in themselves an argument in favor of immersion. He cited John 3:23, "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim because there was much water there," as an example and called attention to the fact that of the many acts popularly called baptism only one, immersion, required much water. The circumstances attending the administration of baptism, Pendleton contended, also supported immersion. To him the words in Acts 8:38, "and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch," furnished strong circumstantial proof of immersion.¹⁷

Argument from history. Pendleton's final argument is derived from history. Quoting from the writings of such learned historians as Mosheim and Neander, such well known

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 350-51.

¹⁷Distinctive Principles, pp. 121-35.

preachers as Richard Baxter and John Wesley, and such celebrated theologians as Calvin and Augustine, Pendleton contended that history bore testimony that, except in cases of sickness and urgent necessity, baptism was by immersion for more than thirteen hundred years.¹⁸

. . . What, then, is to be said of those Pedobaptists who assert that "it cannot be proved that immersion was practised before the sixteenth century"? They should study church history, and from it they would learn that until the last few hundred years immersion was the general rule, and aspersion the exception. They would learn that at one period the validity of a copious pouring of water on the entire persons of the sick on their beds, instead of baptism, was seriously called in question, and by some positively denied. They would ascertain that many more infants had been immersed in water than ever had water sprinkled or poured on them. The man who denies this fact knows very little about ecclesiastical history.¹⁹

In concluding this chapter the following words provide a brief but accurate summary of James Madison Pendleton's theology of baptism:

. . . There is, as Paul has written in the Epistle to the Ephesians, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The one Lord is the object of the one faith, the one faith embraces the one Lord, and the one baptism is a profession of the one faith in the one Lord.

The baptism is one in the action involved, and one in the subjects of the action. I can see it in no other light.²⁰

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 135-46.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 146.

²⁰Christian Doctrines, p. 357.

THE EFFECT OF PENDLETON'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM--

THE REJECTION OF INFANT BAPTISM

The material for this chapter was taken from the above mentioned book although the same is not to be found in another of Pendleton's books, Distinctive Principles of Baptists. His position is that there is no scriptural authority for infant baptism.

CHAPTER IV

THE EFFECT OF PENDLETON'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM--

THE REJECTION OF INFANT BAPTISM

The material for this chapter was taken from the above mentioned book although the same is not to be found in another of Pendleton's books, Distinctive Principles of Baptists.

1. ABSENCE OF NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORITY

To Pendleton baptism was a New Testament ordinance, and he maintained that the New Testament should settle every question relative to baptism. He contended, however, that

1. H. Pendleton, Three Lessons for I. A. S. Part II (Louisville: Baptist, 1911), p. 11-12.

2. H. M. Pendleton, Distinctive Principles of Baptists (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1911), pp. 11-12.

CHAPTER IV

THE EFFECT OF PENDLETON'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM-- THE REJECTION OF INFANT BAPTISM

The theology of baptism summarized in the preceding chapter early led to Pendleton's rejection of infant baptism. His position on this subject was clearly set forth in his first book, Three Reasons Why I Am a Baptist. "My position is that there is no Scriptural authority for infant baptism. Neither precept for, nor example of it in the Sacred Writings."¹ The aim of this chapter is to present the reasons on which Pendleton based his rejection of infant baptism. The material for this chapter was taken primarily from the above mentioned book although the same reasons are to be found in another of Pendleton's books, Distinctive Principles of Baptists.²

I. ABSENCE OF NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORITY

To Pendleton baptism was a New Testament ordinance, so he maintained that the New Testament should settle every question relative to baptism. He contended, however, that

¹J. M. Pendleton, Three Reasons Why I Am a Baptist (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1853), p. 6.

²J. M. Pendleton, Distinctive Principles of Baptists (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1882), pp. 11-89.

no authority for infant baptism was to be found in the New Testament³ and proceeded to explain each of the proposed New Testament arguments for infant baptism.

The baptism of John. Turning to the ministry of John as recorded in the third chapter of Matthew, Pendleton pointed out that John's message was a message of repentance and those whom he baptized had first confessed their sins. Calling attention to the Apostle Paul's words in Acts 19:4, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus," Pendleton supported his contention that repentance and faith were requisites to the baptism of John and maintained that "there is not the remotest allusion to the baptism of any who either did not or could not repent and believe in Christ."⁴

The baptism of Christ's disciples. In John 4:1-2 it is recorded that "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples)." The order in this reference was important, according to Pendleton. Discipleship preceded baptism and the inability of infants to be disciples also made them ineligible to be

³Three Reasons, loc. cit.

⁴Ibid., pp. 6-7.

baptized.⁵

The commission of Christ. Here again Pendleton maintained that discipleship preceded baptism in Matthew's version of the commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and called attention to the priority of faith to baptism in Mark's account of Christ's commission (Mark 16:15-16). For this reason Pendleton contended that an infant should not be baptized since it was impossible for the infant to repent and believe the gospel.⁶

The day of Pentecost. Pendleton next proceeded to show that on the day of Pentecost there was no instance of infant baptism. He reminded his readers that Peter's words were "Repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). He maintained that the command, "Repent," was not applicable to infants and, therefore, the words, "be baptized," had no reference to them since the same persons were commanded to repent and be baptized. He further pointed out that those who were baptized were those who had "gladly received his [Peter's] word" (Acts 2:41). Infants, he insisted, were not in this number and to infer that they were baptized was gratuitous.⁷

⁵Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁶Ibid., pp. 10-18. Here we have the same argument on which Pendleton based believers' baptism used in connection with his rejection of infant baptism.

⁷Ibid., pp. 18-19.

Philip's labors in Samaria. Referring to Philip's labors in Samaria, Pendleton emphasized that the Samaritans believed before they were baptized and that those baptized were men and women (Acts 8:12). In this section he called attention also to the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch but stressed that the eunuch first professed faith in the Messiah and then Philip baptized him.⁸

Household baptisms in the New Testament. In order to support his rejection of infant baptism Pendleton had to examine every reference to household baptisms in the New Testament.⁹ His contention was that in each reference to a household baptism something was said which could not be said of unconscious infants¹⁰ and that in none of the household baptisms was there any deviation from the commission of Christ which required discipleship as a prerequisite to baptism.¹¹

Baptism in the apostolic epistles. Pendleton also based his rejection of infant baptism on the fact that many of the phrases used in reference to baptism would be

⁸Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁹Ibid., pp. 20-24.

¹⁰J. M. Pendleton, Church Manual (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1867), p. 86.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 87-88.

meaningless to infants. For example, such phrases as "dead in sin," "putting on Christ," and rising from the baptismal waters to "walk in newness of life," he insisted, would be destitute of meaning if they applied to unintelligent babes. He contended in this argument, also, that if infant baptism were practiced during apostolic times, it seemed strange that in urging obedience upon children no appeal was made to their "dedication to God in baptism."¹²

Specific verses. Pendleton dealt also with the interpretation of certain specific verses which were often quoted in support of the practice of infant baptism. Among these verses were Matthew 19:13 and I Corinthians 7:14. The former verse, he contended, did not justify infant baptism,¹³ and the latter verse, he insisted, has no reference to infant baptism.¹⁴

Having considered and answered the prominent New Testament arguments for infant baptism, Pendleton asked, "Now, if the New Testament does not sustain infant baptism, ought it not to be given up?"¹⁵ He went on to say, "But Pedobaptists, unable to prove infant baptism from the New,

¹²Three Reasons, pp. 24-25.

¹³Ibid., pp. 8-10.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 25-26.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 28.

go to the Old Testament, and try to sustain it by reasoning, analogy, inference."¹⁶

II. UNWARRANTED IDENTIFICATION OF THE JEWISH THEOCRACY
WITH THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The second reason on which Pendleton based his rejection of infant baptism was the unwarranted identification by Pedobaptists of the "Jewish Church" with the Christian Church. Pendleton stated the Pedobaptist view in the following words: "Pedobaptists assume the identity of what they call the 'Jewish Church,' with the Christian Church and on this ground insist on infant membership."¹⁷ He then went on to show that it was impossible to sustain this view.

Definition of a church. Admitting that the word ekklesia as used by the Greeks meant simply an assembly, Pendleton pointed out that when the term is used in the New Testament with reference to the followers of Christ, it refers to a particular congregation of saints or to the redeemed in the aggregate. The members of these particular congregations, he insisted, were separate from the world--a spiritual people--and in this sense there was no church before the gospel dispensation. The Jewish nation, according

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 29.

to Pendleton, was a politico-religious body but not a nation of saints and thus he refers to them as the Jewish theocracy or commonwealth rather than as the "Jewish Church."¹⁸

The establishment of a new kingdom. Quoting from the prophecies of Isaiah (11:2) and Daniel (2:44) Pendleton emphasized that after the Jewish organization had been in existence for centuries, the prophets predicted the establishment of a new kingdom. To this new kingdom John the Baptist and Jesus bore witness and proclaimed that it was at hand.¹⁹

Requisites to membership in the Christian Church.

Pendleton next called attention to the fact that membership in the Christian Church must be preceded by repentance, faith, regeneration and baptism. Although the Jews were members of the "Jewish Church," John the Baptist called upon them to repent and believe in preparation for baptism and "Jesus did not regard any of them as qualified for baptism until they became his disciples." Obviously, the Jewish commonwealth and the Christian Church were not identical, as the requirements set forth by John and Jesus would have been unnecessary since the Jews would already have been in the Christian Church.²⁰

¹⁸Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 32-34.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 34-36.

The covenants of the Jewish theocracy and the Christian Church. Contrary to the teaching of certain Pedobaptists, Pendleton insisted that the covenants of the "Jewish Church" and the Christian Church were not the same. He called attention to the new covenant spoken of in Jeremiah 31 and showed that there were points of difference between the old and new covenant. He emphasized that "while the old 'Jewish Church' was supplied with its members by generation, the Church of Christ is furnished with its members by regeneration."²¹

Absurdities and impossibilities. Pendleton's final reason for rejecting the unwarranted identification of the Jewish commonwealth and the Christian Church was based on certain absurdities and impossibilities which this proposed identification created. For example, if the Jews were members of the church, why did they crucify the Head of the church? Also if this identification were warranted, were not the three thousand added to the church on the day of Pentecost already members of the church? Likewise, was it not also strange that Saul persecuted the church and when he was converted became a member of the church to which he already belonged?²²

²¹Ibid., pp. 36-45.

²²Ibid., pp. 45-47.

Pendleton concluded this section by saying,

. . . The truth is, it is as easy for a camel to go through the eye of a needle as for the identity of the "Jewish Church" and the Christian Church to be maintained. If there is no identity, infant membership in the Jewish commonwealth is no authority for infant membership in the gospel church; and it is perfectly gratuitous to insist that baptism has come in the place of circumcision. Still the advocates of infant baptism argue that circumcision is superseded by baptism, and that as infants were circumcised under the old, they should be baptized under the new dispensation.²³

III. UNWARRANTED SUBSTITUTION OF BAPTISM FOR CIRCUMCISION

Pendleton's third reason for rejecting infant baptism was based on his rejection of the Pedobaptist teaching that baptism had come in the place of circumcision and, therefore, since infants were circumcised under the old dispensation, they should be baptized under the new dispensation.

Baptism of the circumcised. Pendleton reminded his opponents that multitudes of people who were circumcised were later baptized. He pointed out, also, that Timothy was circumcised after he was baptized. Thus in the New Testament could be found examples of baptism following circumcision and circumcision following baptism making baptism unnecessary in one case and circumcision unnecessary in the other case if baptism had come in the place of circumcision.²⁴

²³Ibid., p. 47.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 48-51.

Circumcision of one sex. Since circumcision was confined to one sex, Pendleton contended that baptism ought also to be confined to one sex if baptism had come in the place of circumcision.²⁵ His contention is well summarized in the following words:

. . . I maintain that if baptism came in the place of circumcision, it ought to be administered exclusively to males. But it is by divine authority administered to females; therefore it did not come in the place of circumcision. Pedobaptists must admit that, so far as females are concerned, baptism did not come in the place of circumcision; for circumcision occupied no place, and therefore could not be displaced by anything else. This, however, is so plain as to need no elaboration.²⁶

Baptism on the eighth day. Consistency, Pendleton said, required baptism to be administered to infants on the eighth day if baptism had come in the place of circumcision. The failure of Pedobaptists to baptize infants on the eighth day, he declared, "might, by the censorious, be construed into a want of confidence in the correctness of their sentiments."²⁷

Relationship of servants to their masters. Here Pendleton pointed out that the relationship which servants sustained to their master entitled them to circumcision and that their masters were obliged to perform the rite. He

²⁵Ibid., pp. 51-52.

²⁶Ibid., p. 52.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 52-53.

contended that if baptism had come in the place of circumcision, the same masters were obligated to baptize their male servants. This practice, he emphasized, was no more prevalent than the belief that baptism had come in the place of circumcision.²⁸

Council of apostles, elders and brethren at Jerusalem.

Concluding his argument that baptism did not come in the place of circumcision, Pendleton cited the action of the council recorded in Acts 15. The purpose of this council was to decide whether believing Gentiles ought to be baptized. The decision of the council was that circumcision was not necessary. However, if baptism had come in the place of circumcision, then a simple statement of the fact would have superseded all discussion. The council's decision was, according to Pendleton, "a virtual denial of the very thing for which Pedobaptists so strenuously contend."²⁹

Concluding this section Pendleton wrote:

I have now given a specimen, and but a specimen, of the considerations which show that baptism has not come in the place of circumcision. I might write a volume on this one point; but it is needless. He who will not be convinced by the five facts already presented, would not be convinced "though one should rise from the dead."³⁰

²⁸Ibid., pp. 53-54.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 54-55.

³⁰Ibid., p. 56.

IV. EXAMINATION OF HISTORY

Unable to find scriptural support of infant baptism, Pendleton pointed out that Pedobaptists sought to justify the practice of infant baptism from the records of church history. After examining the writings of some of the fathers and studying the actions of the councils, Pendleton concluded that infant baptism was not practiced before the second century and that it could not be conclusively proved that it was practiced before the third century. He readily admitted that infant baptism was practiced from the days of Cyprian but it was Pendleton's contention that the practice was based on human tradition and that God had always had a people who opposed infant baptism.³¹

Pendleton's feelings are preserved in these concluding words:

. . . The "Historical Argument" for infant baptism affords very little "aid and comfort" to Pedobaptists. But suppose it was a thousand times stronger. Suppose every writer from the death of the last apostle had expressed himself in favor of it; even then it would be nothing less than an act of will-worship, while the Scriptures are silent in reference to it. The perplexing question, "Who hath required this at your hands?" ought to confound its advocates. "The Bible, the Bible alone," said Chillingworth, "is the religion of Protestants." Arguments from antiquity, to be available, must penetrate the antiquity of the apostolic age, and rest on the

³¹Ibid., pp. 56-66.

teachings of the New Testament. All other arguments are worthless.³²

V. SPECIFIC OBJECTIONS

Pendleton's final reason for rejecting infant baptism was based on some specific objections to the practice.

Disagreement. Pendleton maintained that groups practicing infant baptism could not agree on any specific reason for the practice. Some baptized infants that they might be saved, others baptized infants because their parents were believers, while others practiced infant baptism because infants ought to be in the church. Sarcastically Pendleton suggested that a council ought to be called to decide just why infants ought to be baptized.³³

Tendency to unite the church and the world. The baptism of infants, Pendleton believed, would destroy the distinct line of demarcation between the church and the world which the Saviour had intended. The admission of members into the church by generation rather than by regeneration could only result in a worldly church.³⁴

³²Ibid., pp. 65-66.

³³Ibid., pp. 66-67.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 67-69.

False illusion. The practice of infant baptism, Pendleton thought, would lead some children to consider themselves in a saved state. This false illusion, according to Pendleton, would present an obstacle in the way of their salvation. He insisted that the salvation of "baptized" children was improbable unless they disbelieved the dogmas inculcated in their baptism.³⁵

Interference with independent action. Pendleton next objected to the practice of infant baptism because he thought it interfered with independent action and frequently prevented baptism on a profession of faith. Although perplexed with doubts as to the validity of their baptism, many people would not be baptized on profession of their faith because it would reflect on the wisdom of their parents who had caused them to be baptized in infancy.³⁶

Banishment of believers' baptism. Pendleton contended that the practice of infant baptism would tend to supplant believers' baptism. If the practice of infant baptism continued and became more widespread, he maintained that believers' baptism could be banished from the world in one generation. Thus, an ordinance established by Christ, and

³⁵Ibid., pp. 69-71.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 71-72.

intended to be observed until the end of time would be abolished. This one reason, Pendleton insisted, was sufficient to justify a war of extermination against infant baptism.³⁷

In the light of the considerations presented in this chapter it is no wonder that Pendleton wrote:

. . . Baptists regard infant baptism as utterly destitute of scriptural support; and, in view of its many evils, they are most decided in their opposition to it. On the other hand, they are the earnest advocates of the baptism of believers in Christ; and of believers alone. In this opposition and in this advocacy may be seen one of the prominent DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES OF BAPTISTS.³⁸

³⁷Ibid., pp. 72-73.

³⁸Distinctive Principles, p. 89.

CHAPTER V

THE EFFECT OF PENDLETON'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM--
AN EMPHASIS ON PULPIT NONAFFILIATION

William Wright, *The Southern Baptist Convention*, 1911, p. 10.

Wm. W. Pendleton, *Some aspects of a long life*, (Louisville: Press of the Book Concern, 1911), p. 11.

CHAPTER V

THE EFFECT OF PENDLETON'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM-- AN EMPHASIS ON PULPIT NONAFFILIATION

A second major effect of James Madison Pendleton's theology of baptism was his emphasis on pulpit nonaffiliation between Baptist and Pedobaptist ministers. It was this emphasis on nonaffiliation in the pulpit ministry which became the slogan of Landmarkism.¹ The aim of this chapter is (1) to show the influence of James Robinson Graves as it is reflected in Pendleton's emphasis on pulpit nonaffiliation, (2) to present the bases for Pendleton's emphasis on pulpit nonaffiliation, and (3) to indicate the effects of Pendleton's emphasis on pulpit nonaffiliation.

I. THE INFLUENCE OF JAMES ROBINSON GRAVES

In February, 1852, J. R. Graves went to Bowling Green at Pendleton's invitation to hold a meeting in the Baptist Church.² Until that time Pendleton and Graves had not met although they were acquainted through their writings and

¹William Wright Barnes, The Southern Baptist Convention 1845-1953 (Nashville: Broadman, 1954), p. 104.

²J. M. Pendleton, Reminiscences of a Long Life (Louisville: Press Baptist Book Concern, 1891), p. 101.

Pendleton had learned of Graves' ability as an evangelist.³
The meeting continued several weeks, resulted in about
seventy-five additions to the church, and was described by
Pendleton as "a time of refreshing from the presence of the
Lord."⁴

Concerning Graves' ability as an evangelist in the
Bowling Green meeting, Pendleton wrote:

I may say of Brother Graves that no man ever conducted
a meeting more judiciously. His sermons were able and
instructive, his exhortations were powerful, and his
advice to inquirers and young converts just what it
should be.⁵

The influence of J. R. Graves upon Pendleton during
and immediately following the above mentioned meeting was
tremendous. Prior to Graves' coming to Bowling Green,
Pendleton "was accustomed to receiving alien immersion" al-
though he had never made a thorough study of the matter. On
the other hand, Graves had studied the question of alien
immersion and was convinced that Baptists ought not to recog-
nize alien immersion. This difference of opinion on the
matter of alien immersion became apparent soon after Graves'
arrival in Bowling Green and led him to suggest that it would

³O. L. Hailey, J. R. Graves Life, Times and Teachings
(Nashville: [n.n.], 1929), p. 73.

⁴Pendleton, op. cit., p. 102.

⁵Ibid.

be better for Pendleton to hold his own revival so that there would be no conflict between the doctrines preached by the evangelist and those held by the pastor. However, Pendleton rejected Graves' suggestion, admitted that he had never made a thorough study of the question of alien immersion, and instructed Graves to preach the doctrine as he believed it. The result was that at the end of the meeting Pendleton announced that he agreed with Graves' view on alien immersion and thereupon was asked to voice his conviction on the subject.⁶

Graves' influence on Pendleton in this matter and a preview of Pendleton's emphasis on pulpit nonaffiliation are clearly seen in the following paragraph:

So they entered the meeting, which was a great success, and at the end of the meeting Dr. Pendleton announced that he wholly agreed with Dr. Graves' view on alien immersion. Thereupon, Dr. Graves said: "Dr. Pendleton, you are the very man I have been looking for--a man of ability who has gone through with this question and has reached his own satisfactory conclusions with respect to alien immersion, and that Baptists should not receive it. I, therefore, want you to write a tract that will set forth the differences between Baptists and Pedobaptists, showing why we cannot consistently fellowship with Pedobaptists as regular churches of Jesus Christ, nor receive their immersion, nor recognize their ministers as scripturally ordained ministers of the gospel."⁷

⁶Hailey, loc. cit.

⁷Ibid., pp. 73-74. The views expressed in Graves' request had previously been expressed by Graves in Cotton Grove, Tennessee, on June 24, 1851.

Pendleton's response to Graves' request took the form of four articles which appeared in the Tennessee Baptist in 1854. These articles dealt negatively with the question, "Ought Baptists to Recognize Pedobaptist Preachers as Gospel Ministers?" They were later published in pamphlet form under the title, An Old Landmark Re-set.⁸

II. THE BASES FOR PENDLETON'S EMPHASIS ON PULPIT NONAFFILIATION

Pendleton's emphasis on pulpit nonaffiliation first appeared in An Old Landmark Re-set. The bases for this emphasis are summarized in this section.

Rejection of Pedobaptist societies as churches of Christ. Availing himself of the testimony of Doctor Edward D. Griffin, a leading Pedobaptist, who admitted that "where there is no baptism, there are no visible churches," Pendleton contended that Pedobaptist societies were not gospel churches. The contention was supported by two reasons. First, according to Pendleton and the universal belief of Baptists, sprinkling was not valid baptism and the unwarranted substitution of sprinkling for baptism invalidated the claim

⁸Pendleton, op. cit., p. 103. Graves supplied the title, "An Old Landmark Re-set," maintaining that an old landmark had fallen and needed to be re-set.

of Pedobaptist societies to be considered as churches of Christ. Secondly, the practice of infant baptism by these societies and the element of infant membership in these societies subverted the foundation principles of New Testament church organization. For these reasons, Pendleton insisted that the majority of Pedobaptists had no baptism and, therefore, their societies could not be considered as gospel churches.⁹

Pendleton's argument is well summarized in the following paragraph:

If Pedobaptists fail to exemplify the precepts of the New Testament in reference to the subjects and the action of baptism, they have no churches among them. They have their organizations, but they are not gospel organizations. It will be said that there are good, pious men among Pedobaptists. This is cheerfully conceded, but it proves nothing as to the evangelical nature of those organizations. There are good, pious men in Masonic Lodges, Bible Societies, Temperance Societies, and Colonization Societies; but Masonic Lodges, Bible Societies, Temperance Societies and Colonization Societies are not churches of Christ. Nor are Pedobaptist Societies.¹⁰

Rejection of Pedobaptist preachers as ministers of Christ. Pendleton maintained that the scriptural authority to preach came through the churches. Apart from the authority

⁹J. M. Pendleton, An Old Landmark Re-set (third edition; Fulton, Kentucky: National Baptist Publishing House, 1899), pp. 9-13.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 12.

to preach which came through a gospel church, a minister had no authority to preach. Since Pedobaptists were not scripturally baptized, they did not belong to the church of Christ. Therefore, they had no authority from a gospel church to preach and should not be recognized as gospel ministers. Likewise, their official acts--ordinances--could not be recognized as valid by Baptists. If Pedobaptists were not in the visible kingdom of Christ, how could they induct others into it? Can one introduce others where they themselves have not gone?

However, the practice of inviting Pedobaptists to preach or exchange pulpits with them was a rather common practice among many Baptist ministers. Pendleton insisted that the practice in itself was a recognition of Pedobaptist preachers as ministers of Christ and was so understood by the people in the churches. Since these preachers held no membership in the church of Christ, Pendleton held that they ought not to preach or be recognized as ministers of Christ.

This rejection of Pedobaptist preachers as gospel ministers would also silence the charge of inconsistency directed toward Baptists. For, although Baptist ministers were guilty of inviting Pedobaptists to preach and of exchanging pulpits with them, they were unwilling to recognize them at the Lord's table. The result was the Pedobaptist charge of inconsistency which Pendleton readily acknowledged but

which he maintained would be heard no more when Baptist ministers ceased to recognize Pedobaptist preachers as gospel ministers by inviting them to preach.¹¹

III. THE EFFECT OF PENDLETON'S EMPHASIS ON PULPIT NONAFFILIATION

Pendleton's insistence on pulpit nonaffiliation was not without its effects. These effects are summarized in this section.

Objections. Pendleton realized that Pedobaptists would probably object to the view urged in An Old Landmark Re-set. Therefore, he devoted the concluding paragraphs of the work to a consideration of the objections which he thought would be precipitated by An Old Landmark Re-set and the view set forth in it.¹² However, the objections were not limited to Pedobaptists but several leading Baptists took issue with Pendleton's view¹³ declaring it capable of producing an "ill-timed or unnecessary controversy"¹⁴ and the views of one man

¹¹Ibid., pp. 13-16.

¹²Ibid., pp. 16-19.

¹³Pendleton, Reminiscences, p. 104.

¹⁴W. W. Everts, "The Old Landmark Discovered," The Christian Repository, IV (January, 1855), 20.

but "not the views of Baptists, past or present."¹⁵ Each of these objections was answered by Pendleton and attached as appendixes in later editions of the original pamphlet.¹⁶ Shortly before his death Pendleton wrote, "I still think that I refuted their arguments."¹⁷

Landmarkism. The seeds of Landmarkism were first sown by J. R. Graves in 1851 at Cotton Grove, Tennessee. The movement was apparently precipitated by an editorial in the Western Baptist Review in which J. L. Waller asserted the validity of a baptism (immersion) on a profession of faith in Christ but administered by a Pedobaptist minister who had not been immersed.¹⁸ Graves was opposed to Waller's view and in the Cotton Grove meeting submitted the following questions:

1st. Can Baptists consistently, with their principles or the scriptures, recognize those societies, not organized according to the pattern of the Jerusalem church, but possessing a different government, different officers, a different class of membership, different ordinances,

¹⁵J. L. Waller, "Baptist High-Churchism," Western Recorder [Louisville], September 20, 1854.

¹⁶Pendleton, An Old Landmark Re-set, Appendixes I-III, pp. 20-40.

¹⁷Pendleton, Reminiscences, p. 104.

¹⁸W. Morgan Patterson, "Landmarkism," Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists (Nashville: Broadman, 1958), II, 757.

doctrines and practices, as the Church of Christ?

2nd. Ought they to be called Gospel Churches or Churches in a religious sense?

3rd. Can we consistently recognize the ministers of such irregular and unscriptural bodies, as gospel ministers in their official capacity?

4th. Is it not virtually recognizing them by official ministers to invite them into our pulpits, or by any other act that would or could be construed into such a recognition?

5th. Can we consistently address as brethren those professing Christianity, who not only have not the doctrine of Christ and walk not according to his commandments, but are arrayed in direct and bitter opposition to them?¹⁹

Pendleton's tract, An Old Landmark Re-set, dealt generally with all of the above questions but specifically with the third and fourth questions. The effect of its emphasis on nonaffiliation in the pulpit ministry was strongly felt at the opening session of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1855.

After the organization, some one offered, as usual, a resolution inviting ministers of other denominations to sit with us and participate in our deliberations. This was at once sharply objected to, and there arose a debate that lasted a whole day. Presently the words "Old Landmark" were used; and some of us from distant portions of the South, upon asking what in the world that meant, were told that Rev. J. M. Pendleton, of Kentucky, had published in Nashville a tract entitled, "An Old Landmark Re-set". In this he is said to have maintained that it was a former custom of Baptists not to give any invitation or to take any action which might seem to recognize

¹⁹"Mass Meeting at Cotton Grove," Tennessee Baptist [Nashville], July 19, 1851.

ministers of other persuasions as in a just sense ministers. These were also the views of Rev. J. R. Graves, editor of the "Tennessee Baptist," published at Nashville. These honored brethren, and a number of others from that part of the country, maintained these "Landmark" views with great earnestness and ability. Those who held a different view appeared in many cases to be taken by surprise, through the novelty, as it seemed to them, of the "Old Landmark;" and they did not always agree among themselves, nor maintain any well-considered or very consistent position. After the day's discussion, it was proposed to end the matter by letting the resolution be withdrawn, upon the understanding that those who saw no objection to its passage would concede thus much to the views of their brethren who objected so strongly.²⁰

However, nonaffiliation was only one emphasis of the growing Landmark controversy. Other emphases are described in the following paragraph:

During the first half century of the Convention's history, there were four distinct controversies growing out of the fundamental tenet of Landmarkism--the primacy of the local church. Or, perhaps better said, this fundamental tenet manifested itself in four emphases as the life and work of the Convention progressed. Landmarkers claimed that the local church had ultimate authority over the proclamation of the gospel (nonpulpit affiliation); over the ordinances of the gospel (anti-alien immersion and church-communion); over the method of propagation of the gospel (anti-convention and anti-board). The fourth phase of the controversy expressed itself in the sphere of history. The taproot of high-churchism is historical continuity. If the local church could not be traced to the first century, then the very life of Landmarkism was endangered. The final phase of the struggle was, therefore, the most widespread and intense.²¹

²⁰John A. Broadus, Memoir of James P. Boyce (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893), pp. 98-99.

²¹Barnes, op. cit., pp. 105-6.

Lest, however, Pendleton be misinterpreted and falsely accused with reference to his participation in the Landmark Movement, the following paragraph is cited in concluding this chapter:

Dr. Pendleton, whose tract on pulpit affiliation suggested the name, endeavored to hold Landmarkism to that single practical application of the theory of the church. But he could not prevent the logic of his theory from developing according to its genius. He went North during the War Between the States, and upon his return years later, in 1883, he apparently could not affiliate with Dr. Graves' advancing rigid system.²²

²²Ibid., p. 105.

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER VI

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CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to set forth James Madison Pendleton's theology of baptism. The aim of this concluding chapter is to present a summary of this study and to evaluate the contribution of Pendleton's life and works to the proper understanding of the biblical doctrine of baptism.

I. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

James Madison Pendleton was born in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, but spent most of his childhood and adolescence on a farm in Christian County, Kentucky. Converted at the age of seventeen, he was licensed to preach the following year and in 1833 was ordained as a minister of the gospel. For fifty years he served as a pastor of Baptist churches in Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and Pennsylvania. While serving as a pastor in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Pendleton began to write articles for leading denominational papers and became the author of his first book, Three Reasons Why I Am a Baptist. His pastorate in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, was the most strenuous of his life. For, during this pastorate he served also as professor of Theology at Union University and as a co-editor of the Tennessee Baptist, a denominational

paper. Leaving the South during the Civil War because of his anti-slavery feelings, Pendleton went north where he served as a pastor in Hamilton, Ohio, and Upland, Pennsylvania. It was during this latter pastorate that Pendleton wrote his two most important books, Church Manual and Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology.

Throughout Pendleton's writings there was a strong emphasis on the doctrine of baptism which was due primarily to the baptismal controversy being waged between Baptist and Pedobaptist ministers. Pendleton joined the controversy through his writings and in them he maintained that believers in Christ were the sole subjects of baptism while immersion was the only act of valid baptism. The failure to comply with either of these requirements was sufficient to invalidate one's baptism, according to Pendleton.

Pendleton's theology of baptism produced two major effects. First, it led to an open rejection of Infant Baptism on the grounds that it was unscriptural--without example or commandment in the Scriptures. Although the records of Church History verified the practice of baptizing infants from the third century onward, Pendleton contended that they did not justify this practice which he believed to be in direct contradiction to the teachings of the New Testament on the subject of baptism. Secondly, Pendleton's theology of baptism became the foundation for a strong emphasis on

nonaffiliation in the pulpit ministry between Baptist and Pedobaptist ministers. Unwilling to recognize Pedobaptist societies as gospel churches because they perverted the proper act and subjects of baptism by the substitution of sprinkling and the baptism of infants, Pendleton was also unwilling to recognize their preachers as gospel ministers, contending that they had no authority from a gospel church to baptize. This latter effect reveals the influence of Pendleton's association with J. R. Graves and the Landmark Movement. However, although Pendleton was an exponent of Landmarkism in the earlier days of the movement, the years which Pendleton spent in the North and the increasing rigidity of the movement itself seemed to have produced a chasm between Pendleton and Landmarkism that was never bridged.

II. AN EVALUATION OF PENDLETON'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM

James Madison Pendleton's primary contribution to posterity took the form of two books, Church Manual and Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology. In these two volumes there were set forth the basic tenets of a theology of baptism which is unquestionably true to the Scriptures. Pendleton's contention that immersion is the only act of baptism recorded in the New Testament is irrefutable. His insistence that believers are the proper subjects of baptism

is exemplified repeatedly throughout the pages of the New Testament.

The primary weakness of Pendleton's theology of baptism is revealed in connection with the administration of the ordinance. Especially is this weakness evident in An Old Landmark Re-set where he apparently rejects all churches and all baptisms save those performed by Baptist ministers. In his later writings, however, his emphasis on proper administration is not nearly so rigid, and he defines a proper administrator simply as one who has received authority to baptize from a scriptural church.

Through the years James Madison Pendleton has spoken for Baptists on the subject of baptism. The basic tenets of his theology of baptism are considered consistent with what Baptists through the centuries have believed and practiced with reference to the ordinance of baptism. Truly countless scores of Baptist ministers have come to a proper understanding of the biblical doctrine of baptism through the writings of J. M. Pendleton.

In concluding this study, the following words, spoken by Pendleton a short time before his death, seem to be a fitting benediction to his life and labors:

I have very little to say of myself . . . I just expect to go into eternity, saying: Lord, here I am, a poor, weak, sinful creature, having no claim; and the only hope of being saved is that Jesus Christ died in the place of sinners. I know no other hope.
.....

My object has been to be an accomplished debater;
claiming nothing unjust, yielding to nothing unjust.
My grand supreme purpose has been the establishment of
the truth.¹

¹J. M. Pendleton, Reminiscences of a Long Life
(Louisville: Press Baptist Book Concern, 1891), pp. 189-91.

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