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### Baptist Voices From The Past

A spiritual church membership lies at the foundation of all Baptist peculiarities. In harmony with this principle, Baptists maintain that only believers, or regenerated persons are proper subjects of baptism; that only immersion on a profession of faith is true baptism; that only baptized believers are entitled to the privileges of church membership; and consequently, that only church members should be admitted to the Lord's table.

**Jeremiah Jeter**

*It is ...impossible to explain the beliefs of Baptists, without more or less discussion on the questions on which they differ from other Christians*  
(Principles and Practices of the Baptists: p. i)

**Charles Williams**

No religious denomination has a moral right to a separate existence unless it differs essentially from others. Ecclesiastical differences ought always to spring from profound doctrinal differences. To divide Christians, except for reasons of gravest import, is criminal schism. Sects are justifiable only for matters of conscience growing out of clear scriptural precept or inevitable logical inference. Human speculation, tradition, authority of pope or council or synod or conference or legislature, is no proper basis for an organization of Christians. Nothing short of the truth of revelation, the authoritative force of God's word, rising above mere prejudice or passion or caprice, can justify a distinct church organization (Ancient Baptist Journal, Vol. I – Issue I, p. 89).

**Jabez Lamar Monroe Curry**

Mr. Judson resolved to examine it candidly and prayerfully, let the result be what it would. No one in the mission family knew the state of his mind, as they never conversed with any of us on the subject. I was very fearful he would become a Baptist, and frequently suggested the unhappy consequences if he should. He always answered that his duty compelled him to examine the subject, and he hoped he should have a disposition to embrace the truth, though he paid dear for it. I always took the Pedobaptists' side in reasoning with him, although I was as doubtful of the truth of their system as he. After we came to Calcutta, he devoted his whole time to reading on this subject, having obtained the best authors on both sides. After having examined and re-examined the subject in every way possible, and comparing the sentiments of both Baptists and Pedobaptists with the Scriptures, he was compelled, from a conviction of the truth, to embrace those of the former. I confined my attention almost entirely to the Scriptures, comparing the Old with the New Testament, and tried to find something to favor infant baptism, but was convinced it had no foundation there. I examined the covenant of circumcision and could see no reason that baptism should be administered to children because circumcision was. **Thus, my dear parents and sisters, we are both confirmed Baptists, not because we wish to be, but because truth compelled us to be.** A renunciation of our former sentiments has caused us more pain than anything which ever happened to us through our lives (Adoniram Judson, A Man of One Idea; ABJ article).

Ann Judson

**Curry said:** Baptists differ fundamentally from Pedobaptists in practically adhering to the New Testament as the sufficient, the exclusive, and the absolute rule of faith and practice (Ancient Baptist Journal, Vol. I – Issue I, p. 93).

**Charles Williams said:** The most distinguishing peculiarity of Baptists is their doctrine of Christian baptism. They hold that baptism is an ordinance designed by the Lord Jesus to be administered to none save His disciples, and to them on a profession of their discipleship; that baptism is, and can only be, the immersion in water of the person thus professing Christ (Principles and Practices of the Baptists, 1879: p. 15).