

## WHO ARE THE LANDMARKERS?

By

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In 1854 J. M. Pendleton wrote an article for *The Tennessee Baptist* at J.R. Graves' request. This article Graves then published as a tract. He gave it the title *An Old Landmark Reset*. It had an immense circulation. Those who reviewed this article referred to those who accepted these conclusions as *Old Landmarkers* [OL. Xii]. The name was given by opponents but adopted by Landmarkers. In this article we seek to answer the question, Who are the Landmarkers?

That there are certain minimum standards of the Faith for a Scriptural church, few would be willing to deny. But when it comes to defining what these are, there is considerable diversity. Yet, almost every evangelical denomination of Christians has had their own list of such principles, whether strict or liberal, defining what a true church of Christ is. Landmark Baptists also have such minimum standards as to what constitutes a scriptural church. To this end we will consider 1. Who were the leaders of this movement? 2. What are their leading doctrines? 3. The Whitsitt controversy.

### I. LEADERS OF THE LANDMARK MOVEMENT

There were three men who were the original and undisputed leaders of the Landmark movement in the 1800s. They were J.R. Graves, J.M. Pendleton and A.C. Dayton. They have been described as the *triumvirate* of Landmarkism. Barnes called Graves the Warrior, Pendleton, the prophet, and Dayton the sword bearer. [Barnes. SBC 103. Cf. TN Baptist History Journal. Fall 2005].

#### J.R. Graves

J.R. Graves was born in 1820 and died in 1893. He became the editor of *The Baptist* in 1846 and continued his editorial labors until his death. [Wardin. 246]. Graves' ministry was intense, vast, varied and influential. As a writer, revivalist and debater he excelled. Even his enemies and

detractors begrudgingly admit this. But because of his Landmarkism he was hated and suffered for it. [OL. Xiv].

Graves is the whipping boy of numbers of SBC writers. If J.R. Graves were the culprit these writers assert he is (Cf. Tull; Torbet, Patterson to mention a few), then he must be in the same category as Jesse James or Joe Smith! These authors set their teeth on edge when they speak of Graves and Landmarkism.

For example. Tull says of Graves:

Besides these tenets, The Seven Dispensations revealed Graves to have been, perhaps, with respect to his theological opinions, the greatest heretic ever produced by Southern Baptists. [Tull. 520].

Torbet says:

He assumed that the apostolic Christians were Baptists, hence everyone who was not a Baptist could not rightly be considered Christian. [Torbet. Hist. Bap. 281].

Is this true? These men pride themselves for accuracy and objectivity! We let Graves respond:

We believe there are many precious Christians in the Pedobaptist sects, though in great error. We have no bitterness—nothing but love in our heart toward them, and this leads us to pray for them, and to endeavor to convince them of their error... [Trilemma. 116].

Again:

1. Old Landmarkism is not the denial of spiritual regeneration to those with whom we decline to associate ministerially or ecclesiastically. [OL. 132].

Once more:

I may unchurch an organization, i.e., deny that they possess the scriptural characteristics of a gospel church and not thereby unchristianize its members. If my opponent should attempt to make the impression upon you that I deny that you are Christians because I deny your society is a church, he will pursue a course both unwarranted and unprincipled. [Graves. *GCD*. 927].

These quotes by Graves indicate Torbet's assertions are wide of the mark. T.A. Patterson, father of Paige Patterson, is more objective:

... a study of Dr. Graves' influence upon Southern Baptist life would be a 'total history of the Southern Baptist Convention.' ... This paper (TN Baptist) along with his books were in part the explanation of why he turned the Southern Baptist Convention around... There is good reason to believe that if it had not been for Graves, Southern Baptists would today be where American Baptists (formerly the Northern Baptist Convention) are—small in number and lacking in deep theological conviction. [Quoted by Cross. *Landmarkism: An Update*. 5, 6].

Graves was described *a flaming wheel on a burning axle!* [Hailey. 73].

S. H. Ford knew Graves intimately and said of him:

.. into that great burning heart of his, into that intense and fearless soul, we cannot pierce. His sorrows and his joys, his hopes and his fears, his knowledge of his defeats and mistakes, and above all the shining into that soul of the supernal light and strengthening power of God's grace; the tried and trusting spirit that never showed fear of mortal man, and never a momentary wavering in his grasp on vital truth and grapple with deadly errors—in that depth we cannot look. But to all outward seeming his was the soul of heroic, true, godly man. No wonder, as we shall see, he influenced his generation.

But one constant must be kept before us. No man can understand or properly evaluate the history of the SBC nor the history of the Baptists of the south without looking objectively at the life and works of J.R. Graves. Many who have written about Graves had a hawk-eye for his errors (and he had these) but were bat-blind as far as any good! Much of this critical agenda was produced by the liberal element of the SBC and anything conservative is to them as the shepherd was to the Egyptians in Joseph's day.

A man does not have to agree with everything Graves taught to recognize his teaching had a powerful curing effect on Baptists and this influence continues to permeate and preserve although largely unrecognized, disclaimed and now waning. Graves held fast to the principles of the Word of God and he never hesitated to publish and defend what he believed. By the grace of God he put iron into Baptist blood. No error escaped his attention. He never furled the flag in the face of the enemy! He had these words as the motto of his paper for many years:

Desiring the whole truth

Daring to oppose any error,

Fearing no man:

Christ I my Judge!

### **J. M. Pendleton.**

Pendleton was born in 1811 and died in 1991. He was converted when he was seventeen and became a Baptist. He was called to preach and was soon licensed. His strides in learning were remarkable and he became a professor. He read the NT through in Greek twenty seven times and more than once in Latin and French.

Pendleton and his wife had seven children. One son was killed while serving in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. He was co-editor of *The Baptist* with Graves for several years and co-editor with Graves of *The Southern Baptist Review* for six years.

Pendleton differed with Graves over slavery and left the south over his position in 1862 and took a church in Ohio and then later in PA. He had many conversions in his church in PA. At one time baptizing 200 and at another 40. Pendleton wrote several books. He was a strong Landmark Baptist but he did not agree with Graves on communion.

His dying testimony was: "It is grace, grace, from first to last. My hope is just what it was sixty years ago, and I go into eternity with the one hope and plea, that Jesus Christ died in the place of sinners."

## **A.C. Dayton.**

Amos Cooper Dayton was born in 1813 and died in 1865. His parents were Presbyterians. He had health problems early on but was able to graduate from medical school in NY as a dentist when twenty two. After his marriage to Miss Lucie Harrison they moved to the south for his health, living in FL, MS, and Ga.

Through study of the Scriptures in 1852 Dayton became a Baptist and was baptized into the fellowship of the Shelbyville Baptist Church Shelbyville, Tennessee.

His conversion to Baptist principles came about in this manner. In 1852 while attending a Presbyterian meeting he stayed in a Baptist home. The lady of the house put a book in his room. That book was Carson's *Baptism: Its Mode and Subjects*. Dayton said he learned he had never been baptized. His wife did not then become a Baptist. Two years later he was ordained by this church and soon moved to Nashville.

In Nashville he met J.R. Graves and became co-editor of *The Baptist* with Graves. His *Theodosia Ernest* was very successful as well as his *The Infidel's Daughter*. The royalties would have been considerable but due to unscrupulous men, they were able to publish his books without paying the royalties. I have two sets of *Theodosia Ernest* neither set has his name anywhere.

In 1863 Dayton moved his family to Perry, Ga. To escape the ravages of the war.

In Nov. 1864 his wife Lucy united with the Perry Baptist Church by baptism. Here he died of TB June 11, 1865 in his forty second year. He left behind his invalid wife and eight children when he died.

## **II. LEADING DOCTRINES OF LANDMARK BAPTISTS**

## LANDMARKISM DEFINED

Landmarkism teaches there are two essentials of a true church. *One*, it must preach the true gospel and *two*, it must practice the ordinances properly.

In this definition Landmark Baptists agree with other denominations. Because Landmarkers believe immersion alone is scriptural baptism and that scriptural baptism is essential to church membership, they believe those who are not scripturally baptized are not members of a Scriptural church.

Churches composed of those who are not scripturally baptized are not in gospel order and are not true churches and therefore cannot give scriptural baptism, regardless of the mode. Nor can they execute properly any gospel act any more than a society not in legal order can organize a posse, pass legislation or appoint an ambassador. [LUF. 10-11 ].

The statement is often made that Landmarkism originated with Graves, Pendleton and Dayton and that it was unknown before they began their work. This seems to be an unfounded proposition. Hogue in his dissertation *The Antecedents of Landmarkism* demonstrates the ideas of Graves, Pendleton, Dayton, and others were not new but had a foundation in Baptist History and were the natural outgrowth of Baptist thought and practice long before these men began their work.

In fact Hogue wrote his dissertation in response to Tull's assertion the Landmark movement was:

... a minority, alien, heterodox element in the domination. [Hogue. iv].

Hogue then states his theme:

Basically, the intent has been to indicate the sources in Baptist life from which Landmarkism sprang and to show, by reference to these antecedents, that Landmarkism represented, at every major point, simply the logical extension of practices and beliefs

widely held among Baptist in the one hundred year period preceding the rise of the movement. In the view of this writer, there are many elements in Baptist history which bear an obvious and direct relationship to the tenets of the Landmark system and which clearly demonstrate that the architects of the movement, “the Great Triumvirate,” were building on a foundation in Baptist life which was already laid. [ Hogue. v ].

The account of Kiffin who started a new church because he did not believe an unbaptized preacher should be allowed to preach in a dipped pulpit is an example that goes back even further. So also that of John Clarke who did not believe the non Baptist churches of New England were true churches [Asher. 100]. Jesse Mercer among others took the same position. [ Mallary. Addendum 4]. These cases are multiplied when we look through the centuries back to Christ.

### **LANDMARKISM AND SUCCESSION**

The Scripture teaches the origin and succession of Christ’s church (Mt. 16:18; 28:18-20; Eph. 3:21 etc.). But the question is raised: By what means is this succession?

There are those today who claim Landmarkism teaches the *Essential Mother Daughter Authority* (EMDA), that is that a group in gospel order (Saved and baptized) must have the authority of a mother church to constitute. They appeal to Graves to prove it. They teach the medium of succession is EMDA! They claim that the Holy Spirit was given only once (Acts 2) and ever after it was communicated only by a mother church granting EMDA! [SCO. 81]. Thus the only way a church can get *church-hood* or *church-life* is by a birth. Some actually say that when a new church is *born* Christ and the mother- church have a new baby girl! [SCO.52]. Is this Landmarkism? Is it an essential of it? Is this what Graves taught?

It is very sad thing when men maintain the foundation of Landmarkism is a doctrine which was totally rejected by the early Landmarkers and Baptists as well—but that is the case!

### **GRAVES AND THE MEDIUM OF SUCCESSION**

What did Graves believe the *medium of succession* to be?

Graves expressly denied the *begetting* or EMDA of one church by another. A few quotes from his works will forever settle this issue.

Christ said, where two or three are gathered in my name [authority], there am I in the midst of them. [ *NGIW*. 135. The bracketed word is Graves' ].

...the kingdom which he set up 'in the days of John the Baptist' has had an unbroken continuity until now. I say kingdom, instead of succession of churches, for the sake of perspicacity. [OL. 121-2].

Wherever there are three or more baptized members of a regular Baptist church or churches covenanted together to hold and teach, and are governed by the New Testament,...there is a Church of Christ...= [Jarrel. 1].

Jarrel goes on in this same place to quote Graves:

...even though there was not a presbytery of ministers in a thousand miles of them to organize them into a church. There is not the slightest need of a council of presbyters to organize a Baptist church. [Jarrel. 1].

Graves said in his Debate with Ditzler:

It is true that two or three baptized individuals can organize a Church, provided they adopt the apostolic model of government, and covenant to be governed by the sole authority of Jesus Christ. [Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*. 975].

Of course these statements are diametrically opposed to EMDA. Graves also contends churches are **independent of all other bodies** and that its authority is **divinely invested**:

Therefore, each assembly was a complete Church, and being complete in itself, it was independent of all other like bodies in other localities, and being each independent it was divinely invested with all the powers and prerogatives of a Church of Christ. [*NGIW*. 125].

He argues that what the church receives from Christ is delegated and that **no church can delegate what is delegated to it!**

This power, with all her [the church's—JC ] other prerogatives, is delegated to her, and it is her bounden duty to exercise it; she cannot delegate her prerogatives.

'Quod delegatur non delegatum est' is a legal maxim as old as the civil code. What is delegated can not be delegated. [*OL*. 48].

He also contended churches obtain their authority **directly from Christ!**

Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receiving its authority directly from Christ, it is accountable to him alone. [*GIW*. 552].

Graves also said that neither he nor any Landmarker known to him ever advocated the succession of any particular church or churches!

Nor have I, or any Landmarker known to me, ever advocated the succession of any particular church or churches; but my position is that Christ in the very 'days of John the Baptist,' did establish a visible kingdom on earth, and that this kingdom had never yet been 'broken in pieces'.... [*OL*. 122-123].

Is this not what EMDA brethren claim? Graves did not hold to this idea and said he never knew of a Landmarker who did! If not, then how did this become an essential of Landmarkism? Someone has moved this old Landmark! Can there be any doubt who changed?

Some are now claiming Graves believed EMDA and that if you do not believe EMDA you are a heretic! Some circulate a so-called link to link list of churches through non existing men and counterfeit places until they reach the first church in Jerusalem.

Set your self to find these names and places:

H. Roller

Aaron Arlington

Archer Flavin

Balcolao

Darethea

Pontafossi

Bing Joy, Africa

You will soon see this whole link-list is a fake and may have been put together by someone who wanted to spoof Baptists! [Mason. 110; LUF. 180]

What did Graves believe about succession? His statements before quoted denude that idea he believed in EMDA! It is my position he believed in a *succession of baptisms*.

To illustrate let me give you what I call the *Roger Williams rule*. Everyone knows Roger Williams had no authority to start his church. He did not obtain his baptism from any other church but began by se-baptism.

The Roger Williams rule will show what a man believed as to EMDA succession by how he treats that case. For example. Benedict approved of Williams' se baptism and self constitution hence he could not have believed EMDA. [ Benedict. 450].

When Graves deals with the Williams' case he says not one word about the fact that Williams and his group did not have EMDA! He says nothing about churches which might have come from this church having no authority. What he does say is that no church received its *baptism* from the Williams' church!

There is not a minister or member of any church on earth whose baptism is derived from Roger Williams. [GCD. 896 ].

A recent SBC writer finally got it right and said of Landmarkers:

Landmarkists held that an unbroken succession of immersion baptisms from the apostolic era, a necessary basis for the existence of true churches. If the chain was broken, there were no more baptisms and no more churches.

[[http://archives.sbts.edu/partner/Article\\_Display\\_Page/0,,PTID325566%7CCHID717900%7CCHID1978900,00.html](http://archives.sbts.edu/partner/Article_Display_Page/0,,PTID325566%7CCHID717900%7CCHID1978900,00.html) ]

Graves did not believe in *apostolic succession*. Ford

... insisted that neither Graves nor any of the early Landmarkers believed in "Baptist Apostolic succession." [[http://geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/8297/diss/dis-c31.htm#N\\_101\\_#N-101](http://geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/8297/diss/dis-c31.htm#N_101_#N-101)].

### **Pendleton on Succession.**

Pendleton, [according to Ford] said that "the ana-Baptist question [did they sprinkle] really has nothing to do with the landmark question; nor has the church succession question." Pendleton believed in a succession of "persons."

But he was a land-marker in its strict sense...  
[[http://geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/8297/diss/dis-c31.htm#N\\_101\\_#N-101](http://geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/8297/diss/dis-c31.htm#N_101_#N-101)].

### **S.H. Ford on Succession.**

Ford was also a Landmark Baptist but differed with Graves on some points. He believed in church succession, but not a *linked* succession. In an essay entitled "The True Succession of Christ's Witnesses--What Is It?" he stated that

Succession is a misleading term; especially when applied to a church or to churches. A church is like a day, independent of any church that has preceded it, as any day is independent of every previous day. [[http://geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/8297/diss/dis-c31.htm#N\\_101\\_#N-101](http://geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/8297/diss/dis-c31.htm#N_101_#N-101)].

After more than fifty years of study, Ford stated, his position was that

... there has been A SACRED SUCCESSION--to use the words of William Hague of Rhode Island--of God's witnesses through the ages--torch bearers in the world's gloom--the earthen vessels of immortal principles. The principles and the vessels were divorced, often riven but never uprooted, and witnesses necessary to the continuance of the principles--a celestial chivalry, undying in their influence and triumphant even in their seeming defeats.[[http://geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/8297/diss/dis-c31.htm#N\\_105\\_#N-105](http://geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/8297/diss/dis-c31.htm#N_105_#N-105)].

Needless to say neither Ford or Pendleton would be welcome in any EMDA church! Yea! Graves himself could not be a member of one of their churches!

### **J. B. Gambrell's illustration of Succession**

... "I do not place much stress," he says, "on historical succession — but the New Testament reads as though things were started to go on. Let me illustrate my idea of succession: A man lost a gray horse. He finds some horse tracks step by step for a hundred miles. Then he comes upon the horse — but it is a black horse. That is historical succession. Tracks are not worth a cent. If, on the other hand, you find the gray horse, it does not make any difference if you do not find any tracks. The whole business lies in the identity; we have the horse hunted for. So, the man who takes the New Testament and

finds a church in his neighborhood or elsewhere like the one in the Book, has succession." [Burnett. 194].

## SUCCESSION-PERPETUITY-CONTINUITY

It has been asserted that these terms (Succession, perpetuity, continuity) are not synonyms but have divergent meanings. It is argued that *succession* is head and shoulders above *perpetuity*. One writer claims Graves and other Landmarkers in the 1800s **could not defend Succession in debate** and consequently had to retreat to the lesser *perpetuity* which they could defend! In this claim no reference was supplied. [GCC.131;142]. No distinction between the terms *succession*, *perpetuity*, *continuity* are found in Graves writings so far as I am able to detect. Such assertions are worthless and meaningless without documentation. Graves in his debate with Ditzler used the term *succession* [GCD. 842] which shows this claim is fictitious as far as Graves was concerned!

## III. THE WHITSITT CONTROVERSY

William Heth Whitsitt was the grandson of the famous James Whitsitt of Middle TN. When Whitsitt was ordained in 1862 one of the men on his ordination council was J.R. Graves.

William Heth Whitsitt was born in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1841. He was ordained a Baptist minister in 1862 and served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. A professor of Church history at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, between 1872 and 1895, he served as President of the seminary from 1895-1899. He finished his career as a professor of philosophy at Richmond College, now the University of Richmond, in Richmond, Virginia, from 1901 to 1910. Whitsitt died in 1911. [ <http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/bio/whitsitt/index.htm> ].

The Whitsitt controversy began officially in 1896, when he wrote an article on the Baptists for *Johnson's Encyclopedia*, in which he set forth his theory that the English Baptists did not begin to baptize by immersion until 1641, when a part of the Anabaptists, as they were then called, began immersion.

As it turned out, Whitsitt had also written several articles for the *Independent*, a Pedobaptist [Congregational], paper in 1880, from a Pedobaptist standpoint.

Whitsitt was very bold. He said:

It was not until the year 1644, three years after the invention of immersion that any Baptist confession prescribes "dipping or plunging the body in water as the way and manner of dispensing this ordinance" ("London Confession of 1644," Article 40). Independent, NY. September 9, 1880. [Vin. Chapter 1].

He even ventured to give the name of the man who introduced or invented immersion!

Happily for us, however, the above assertion is confirmed by the authority of Edward Barber, the founder of the rite of immersion among the Baptists. [Vin. 146].

When confronted with these articles his explanation was not good.

Doctor Whitsitt's explanation was that he "wrote from a Pedobaptist standpoint in order to provoke discussion and compel the Baptists to study their own history." This explanation might have stopped the controversy had not Doctor Whitsitt written a number of articles and a book, all written from a Baptist standpoint, to prove his *Independent* editorials which "were written from a Pedobaptist standpoint." It was this that stirred the Baptists to the depths, and not Doctor Whitsitt's "writing from a Pedobaptist standpoint." [Nowlin. 147].

Whitsitt's book *A Question in Baptist History* was published in 1896.

Whitsitt claimed immersion was **invented** in **1641!** This means no one immersed before this time in England or Holland! If this is true then there were no Baptists in the early 1600s, at least none in England or Holland! Whitsitt's theory is an argument from silence. Because there were no Baptist confession before 1641 specifying dipping, he falsely deduced, there was no dipping before then! Of course there were no confessions before 1643 because of the severe persecution of Baptists by the ruling powers. But as soon as they had liberty, we find many evidences of their churches before 1641. Christian, in reviewing Whitsitt, put the shoe on the other foot by asking, Where is the Confession or book where these "baptists" practiced sprinkling?

Not one example has been cited to show that any one Anabaptist practiced sprinkling in England before or since 1641. [Vin.Ch. 7].

We know Baptists were dipping in 1643. We have their confession to prove the fact. How many Baptist churches practiced dipping in 1643? Professor Jesse B. Thomas answers :

Neal distinctly affirms that there were at that date [1643] "54 congregations of English Baptists in England who confined baptism to dipping"; [Both Sides].

Thomas then reminds us of what the Whitsitt theory requires:

We are required then to believe, either that out of one congregation of "immersers," organized in 1641, there had grown this great company in two years, or that in the same time fifty or more existing Baptist congregations had simultaneously repudiated a custom to which they were traditionally attached, and which was in universal use, in behalf of another custom which nobody among them had ever practiced or even heard of: they, without any newly assigned or intelligible motive, suddenly ceased wholly to do what they had always and uniformly been accustomed to do, and began exclusively to do what they had never done at all. [ Both Sides].

Those who have had any experience in attempting to get new measures through a Baptist church know that such a major change through so many churches in the time allotted would demand miraculous gifts !

We know many of these anabaptists in the period referred to, were scholars. They knew Greek, Hebrew, Latin and other languages as well as English. They had lexicons. They were not ignorant of the terms of the Bible. To imagine none of them knew any thing of immersion from reading the Bible is incredulous. Furthermore they had grown up in an environment of immersion because it was universally taught and practiced in the Episcopal and was not foreign to the Roman Catholic Church. Sprinkling was the new kid on the block. It had only recently come into England from Calvin and Geneva via Scotland. These changes from one form to another take time. Look how long it took Mantz, Hubmaier and other Anabaptists to dump infant baptism for that of believers after they were convinced this was the teaching of Scripture! Thus to pretend that because there are few records of dipping before 1641 begs the question.

In other words, why is it that we have no records of these anti-dipper churches becoming pro-dipper churches? How could such a mighty transition, not of merely one or two churches but of dozens of congregations, scattered widely, transpire in the short time of two years, 1641 to 1643?

If such did happen, then it must have been a mighty and gracious Pentecost-like thing! Surely such a Spirit-wrought wonder was chronicled as a powerful moving of that kind could not be hid! How is that we have no record of it? But this great change among so many congregations, within a year or two, without objections, without debates, without exceptions, and without one single congregation refusing to go along with this reform and giving their reasons, is incredible! We are asked to believe that fifty plus churches went from sprinkling to a method of baptism they had never heard of, never read about in the Bible, that is a dipping the candidate in water—we are asked to believe this was done in a matter of a few months— without even a ripple on the pond!

Of course all that is needed to prove the 1641 theory false is one single case of immersion before 1641. A single case of dipping before 1641 means *the invention* was not new at all and the theory false!

### **References to dipping before 1641**

I propose now to give some specific references to dipping before 1641. If even one case can be produced, then Whitsitt's proposition is false. Armitage says:

They have followed these terrible practices 'nere the place of my residence for more than twenty years.' He [Featly] wrote this Jan. 10, 1644. ....But he never accuses the English Baptists of substituting dipping for some other practice which they had previously followed. He gives not one hint that in England they had ever been any thing else but

'Dippers,' an unaccountable silence, if they had practiced some-thing else there within the previous fifty years. [Armitage. 458].

Armitage goes to some length to disprove the 1641 theory. Referring again to Featly the author of *the Dippers Dipt*, he says:

He conveys the idea that they had defiled the 'rivers with their impure washings,' in being 'dipt after *their manner*,' quite as long as they had defiled 'our pulpits' and 'presses,' and that near his own residence 'for more than **twenty years**.' To his knowledge, then, they had 'dipt' 'both sexes,' in the English 'rivers' from before A.D. 1624; his whole works treats of them as 'Dippers,' who in baptism always 'dipt,' and had he know that they had ever done any thing else, h would have been very happy to have charged them with now throwing aside the right method and with taking up the wrong. [Armitage. 441].

Burrage, who favors the Whitsitt theory, makes this concession on dipping before 1641:

Baptist.... *Baptisterium*, that vessel for sprinkling or washing, callad [called] a Font, wee read not of in Scripture, it being another of their inventions. And for the further information of the manner, note the word Baptizw, *immergo*, to plunge, dip, in, or overwhelm;... Thus in the command of Christ they forsake him the fountain, and hew to themselves a broken Cistern.... In the year 1635, ...I found one Baptist, who declared so much unto me, that I perceived in those tyrannical times there was a Church of Christ under his Ordinances according to Gospel manner... [William Britten. *Moderate Baptist*. pp. 65-67. 1654. Quoted by Burrage. *Early English Dissenters*. I. 378-379].

Burrage also appends this note:

This sentence without doubt means that this anonymous (English) Anabaptist in 1635 baptized his converts by immersion, or "dipping". [ I. 379].

Christian quotes Fox from a Latin book written in 1517:

The title of the book is *Reformatio Legun Ecclesiastuarum*, &c., A. D. 1517. In this book Fox says (in Latin which is given in full by Dr. Christian): "But while we are plunged into the waters and rise again out of them, the death of Christ first, and his burial is symbolized, and next his resuscitation, indeed and his return to life, &c." [Vind. 9].

There is also this account of the immersion of Samuel Eaton:

Similarly, the account given by John Taylor in 1641 of the immersion of Samuel Eaton, by John Spilsbury, shows the practice of immersion in England previous to 1641. For the court records show that Sam Eaton (and there can be no question about his being the same man) died Aug. 25th, 1639, and that he was constantly in prison from May 5th, 1636, till his death. Hence his immersion and his immersing others must have taken place before May 5th, 1636. [Vind. 10].

Dr. Joseph Angus of England said concerning dipping before 1641:

But there is another kind of evidence even more decisive showing that 'the immersion of believers' was the common faith and practice of our fathers. I refer to the books published by them and against them in the century to which 1641 belongs. I mention a few of the most important, giving the names in the briefest possible form. Most of them show clearly what the writers, or their opponents, the Baptists, were supposed to hold.

AErnstelodamus Dissertation, *Contra Anabaptist* . . . . 1535

AErnstelodamus, *Baptimus Christianus* . . . . 1539

Ampsing, J.A. *Disputationes, Contra Anabaptist* . . . . 1619

Almsworth, H., *A seasonable Discourse on Anabaptism* . . . . 1623, 1644

Anabaptist, *Proclamations against* . . . . 1560

*Articles of Visitation* (Edward VI., and Elizabeth) . . . . 1559

*Apocalypsis on Anabaptists* . . . . 1640

*Articles of Visitation*, 1562, 1612

Barber, E.A., *A Treatise on Dipping* . . . . 1641

Dale, J., *A Declartion that He is not a Dipper* . . . . 1547

*Baptismi de Erroribus* . . . . 1592

Ballinger, *agt. Anabaptists* . . . . 1535-6

Ballinger, *Three Dialogues* . . . . 1551

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[[http://www.geocities.com/baptist\\_documents/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/baptist_documents/index.html)]

Burrage changed his position about the term *ducking over head and ears*, between vol. I and II. He says:

In Vol. I., p. 334, I speak of this mode of baptism by 'dipping' as having received about 1641 the nickname of 'ducking over head and ears'. This expression, however, seems to have been of much earlier origin, for in Stephen Denison's *The Doctrine of both the Sacraments*, London, 1621, p. 23, occur the following unexpected words:--"Be Baptized, the word translated baptizing doth most properly signifie dipping over head and eares,..." He also says, p. 11, that "by report" there were "not a few Anabaptists" about London in 1621, but gives no suggestion that they then practiced immersion. [Burrage. II. 303].

The universal claim that no one in all the realm practiced immersion before 1641 demands an omniscience not frequently granted without express proof! Why should it be so in this case? Thomas did not put it too strongly when he said:

Boldly, and as it appears to me incautiously, he has committed himself to the demonstration of a wide and drastic negative, viz: that there were never any Baptists whatever (i.e. anti-pedobaptist immersionists) either in England or Holland before the year 1641. [Thomas. Both Sides. 1].

We have other indications that this theory will not square with the facts. For example. Kiffin left the Jessey church and formed the Devonshire Baptist church about 1640. He left Jessey's church because he did not believe a sprinkled man should occupy a dipped pulpit! How could this be if immersion was not introduced until 1641?

These few facts prove the practice of dipping before 1641. Whitsitt's theory cannot overthrow these plain statements.

## CONCLUSION

As Landmark Baptists we know Christ set up His church in the days of his flesh.

We know the gates of Hades did not prevail against this church.

We may not be able to find the historical connection fully demonstrated by which His church was perpetuated in history. We may lose the trail time and again. We may search in vain for the line—but it is there none the less. It still exists. His Word cannot fail.

As Landmark Baptists we do not recognize as scriptural churches those which deny the essentials of a true church. We cannot place these in the position of true churches while they hold forth and contend for ordinances which are not commanded in the Word of God. Nor do we recognize proper ordinances as valid when given to subjects not designated in Scripture and which also attribute to these ordinances effects which are nothing more than Roman Catholicism wrapped up in a new package.

We do not mean to imply that those who compose unscriptural churches are unsaved. Landmarkers have never taught this. We believe they are deceived and therefore we cannot extend the hand of church fellowship to those who sprinkle water on the face of a baby and claim this makes him a child of God and a member of the church!

We cannot receive churches which teach that baptism is essential to salvation and that men contact the blood in the water. Nor do we embrace those as churches who teach that the elements of the Supper become the body and blood of Christ and convey grace to those who partake of them. Baptists hold to the ordinances as symbols of grace already given not as a means to obtain grace.

Who are the Landmark Baptists?

Landmark Baptists are those who believe,

The Commandments of Christ are as essential to the preservation of the truth of the gospel today as they were in AD 33!

That no man was a member of a church in AD 40 who did not profess to be saved.

That no one was a member of a church in AD 40 who was not scripturally immersed.

If these principles were right and proper then, why not now? If these rules are now changed, who changed them? By whose authority?

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