

outcome of this disposition to trail the standard of truth in the dust, the swelling of a tide of general skepticism which is in danger of sweeping over the land.

In view of all this, and of much more which might be noticed, there is great danger that our people, many of whom we fear are not aware of the vital and precious truth which is peculiar to us, may be confused by the various sounds and cries, and be drawn away from their steadfastness. It is very needful, therefore, to exhibit our distinctive principles in all their far-reaching influence and consequent importance, so that our people may feel that they have a broad and firm basis for their denominational life—a basis which God and the world requires to be maintained,—that they have a precious heritage to guard and transmit to coming generations,—a heritage which they have received from noble sires,—a heritage in which they should seek earnestly to make all sharers,—a heritage which is too valuable to be bartered away for any fictitious unity in error which God himself is pledged to dash in pieces,—a heritage which God himself has committed to us to possess, prize, and defend, not indeed in the spirit of sectarianism, but through a loving desire that all may be blessed by sharing it.

In defining the distinctive doctrines of Baptists, it will be necessary to refer to the beliefs of brethren of other denominations. When this is done, the recognized standards of these bodies will be quoted, with the utterances of representative men. However, therefore, individual members of these denominations may differ from the creed statements to which reference may be made, they cannot accuse us of misrepresenting the general belief of the body. The distinctive principles of Baptists can be grouped under three heads. I. Those which relate to the Scriptures. II. Those which relate to the ordinances. III. Those which relate to the church.

I. Baptists have ever held respecting the Scriptures that Christians must be guided and restricted both in faith and