

THE W. C. TAYLOR LETTERS  
Letter No. 36  
Box 1504, Louisville, Ky.

# **JAMES MADISON PENDLETON:**

## **World Landmark of Baptist Devotion To Truth And Loyalty To New Testament Churches**



I. J. M. Pendleton was a major gift of the grace and providence of God to Kentucky Baptists. His father, John Pendleton, was a pupil of Andrew Broaddus. After being a teacher and merchant in Virginia, he moved in 1812 to Kentucky, with his three children. The baby had been born a year before at Twymar's Store, Nov. 20, 1811 and named for President Madison. These emigrants to Kentucky both locked the wheels of their wagons and fastened branches to them, to make the descent safely down

our mountain slopes. They brought three slaves with them. Our hero was knocked down by a dog's wagging tail at their first home, in Christian County. Andrew Broaddus visited them, was elected Principal of the Academy in Hopkinsville, but refused to leave Virginia. But while there he declared himself proud of a church "spun and woven and made at home". He came down out of the pulpit and shook hands all around.

Father Pendleton taught school in a log school house with a dirt floor. Henry Clay called him "the mill boy of the slashes". Our hero was so bashful he would go out of his way to keep from meeting someone. He spent his childhood in that section of Todd Co., which gave to the South Jefferson Davis, Roger Q. Mills, J. M. Pendleton and J. B. Moody. His own children thought "he was never a boy". Solemn times! He kept the sheep. His first purchase was a Bible, at 14 years of age. The historian declares that he was converted and did not know it. He said later: "I was amazed at my peace of mind." Assurance came to Pendleton by conversing with John S. Willson, who baptized him, as pastor William Tandy was weak. This same John S. Willson was the first full time pastor of the First Baptist Church of Louisville, located at Fifth and Green streets, now the Walnut Street Baptist Church. Pendleton became a member of Bethel Church, which later divided into the churches of Pembroke and Fairview. "There was no protracted meetings in those days". (The reader of these letters will recall that my grandfather, Alfred Taylor, began the habit of "protracting the meeting" instead of just preaching one night in some pioneer home and going on to the house of someone else further on, the next night. "Alfred Taylor baptized over six hundred converts within six months in such meetings", says Dr. Masters' History, p. 272.) Our hero taught school in 1831 and came home with \$3.00 at the end of the three months school. He studied in Russellville that year and subsequently taught there in a female academy. He studied with various teachers later. He went to the new Kentucky Baptist Convention with Willson in 1832 and helped Willson promote that so badly needed cooperation of the infant churches. On that trip he saw two marvels: Henry Clay, candidate for the Presidency of our nation, and the Horse Car Railway. He was ordained in Nov., 1833. He helped promote the cooperation of the churches through the Kentucky Baptist Convention during its brief life and attended also the Western Baptist Convention, which had one of its two meetings in Cincinnati and then died. The cooperation of the churches was a Pendleton doctrine and concern from his early Baptist life, even before his ordination, which took place in Nov. 1833, Reuben Ross, W. C. Warfield and others taking part. He worked for that cooperation, in both the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the General Association, and for Georgetown College.

Pendleton became pastor in Bowling Green in 1837, at the unheard of salary of \$400.00 a year. "He was the first in Southern Kentucky to abjure all secular work." After the death of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, which was unpopular because the word "convention", in the popular mind, was associated more with political conventions, he also cooperated in the organization, in Louisville, of the Kentucky General Association and was one of its of-

ficers. It was on the way to one of its meetings, that he met the marvelous woman who became his wife, Catherine Stockton Garnett. One of the Garnett ancestors had been imprisoned in Virginia for preaching the gospel, without "Episcopal orders".

Pendleton proclaimed here the favorite doctrine later of Dr. J. B. Gambrell, namely the doctrine of "sanctified common sense", saying that it was shown in a great meeting led by J. L. Burrows, who first "prepared the church for a revival". By the way, Pendleton said a meeting should not be called a REVIVAL unless, and until, it was one. 60 converts were baptized in Barren River.

Pendleton and my grandfather were great friends. He later wrote this tribute to his intimate friend: "I had promised Rev. Alfred Taylor to aid him, as soon as I could, in a meeting at Green River Church, Ohio County. I therefore complied with my promise early in January of 1850. Brother Taylor and I had been on terms of intimate friendship for many years. I regarded him as one of the best men I ever knew. He was a sound evangelical preacher and great success attended his ministry. It is said that he baptized more preachers than any other minister in Kentucky . . . I cannot say certainly that I ever met Brother Taylor after this meeting. He died Oct. 9, 1855, leaving three sons in the ministry. Happy man, to go up to heaven with three lineal and spiritual representatives to plead the cause of Christ on earth." Alfred Taylor also helped in a meeting in Bowling Green in 1840 which is thus described: "Bro. Burrows did all the preaching and Bro. Taylor with the Pastor did the Mixing, Visiting and Instructions".

Pendleton was deep in the cooperative work of Kentucky Baptists and its promotion. He preached the ordination sermon of J. W. Warder and wrote for John L. Waller's "**Western Baptist Review**". One of his biographers says: "He learned to write so carefully that all his books were written only once." Pendleton gave an address on Bible Revision to the Bible Union, in New York, Oct., 1854. He worked for the organization of the General Association and was its clerk for five years, as he informs us in an address at its Jubilee meeting in Oct. 1887.

On his way to an association with John L. Waller, he stopped for the night at Richard Garnett's and met his daughter Catherine. "He was not favorably impressed at first". But in October he declared his love, but in response she said nothing. Near the close of the year she consented and in March, 1838, they were married. As a bridal tour, they rode to Louisville and back on horseback. "A more happily mated pair I never saw", said Dr. T. T. Eaton. At the Jubilee celebration of their marriage, Dr. Eaton was to speak and a special choir was to sing. But when Pendleton printed a kiss on the cheek of his blind wife, with deeply touching words of gratitude, the song of the choir died away in sobs and the ever self-possessed Eaton was unable to say a word. Only sobs

of reverence and joy filled the house. Mrs. Pendleton, though blind, taught on in the Edgefield Church, Nashville, for some years. His last four years he spent in four States with his four daughters, turn about. In the winter of 1884-5 he was in Austin, with the Leslie Waggeners. He was Pres. of the University of Texas and had been Pres. of Bethel College. Pendleton began to wear glasses in 1849 and never changed glasses in forty years.

In his life as a cooperating Kentucky Baptist, Pendleton went to the Triennial Convention in Philadelphia in 1844. He rode horseback to Louisville in 28 hours and then traveled in three steamers and a canal boat, through thirty locks, and continued the journey over the Alleghany mountains by rail on five levels. "450 messengers were present". Francis Wayland was President. The Home Mission Society debated the appointment of slave-holding missionaries. Ministers from slave-holding States were seated, by a vote of 131 to 62. Pendleton swapped appointments with James B. Taylor, of Richmond, and preached in a Presbyterian Church on Tenth Street.

Clay and Pendleton were friends, both of them emancipationists, favoring the freeing of the slaves, but paying their owners for the loss. Pendleton conferred with Clay and wrote an article for "**The Examiner**", signed "A Southern Emancipationist". This controversy influenced his leaving the South later on. First Russellville, then Bowling Green, became the Capital of the Confederate State of Kentucky. This indicates how strong were the sentiments contrary to those of Pendleton, as war came on. He taught on in Murfreesboro, Tenn. When the Clay campaign for President was on, the slogan of his partisans was:

"Get out of the way—you are all unlucky.

Clear the track for Old Kentucky."

Though this strong Confederate sentiment was virtually unanimous all around him, no one molested him. But he felt, when the school closed in Murfreesboro, in 1862, that he should go North. So he made his way peaceably to Ohio, stopping all along the way for visits. He took his mother with him. She died there. It is astonishing how some preachers can lie. See Simon Peter curse and swear that he did not even know Jesus. A preacher circulated the story that Pendleton had expressed a hope that his son who was in the Confederate army would be killed in the first battle in which he fought. As a matter of fact, Pendleton declared the issue never affected their loving relationship. He held that "history contains no account of any war more justifiable than that waged by the United States against the Confederacy". And he adds: "The flag of the United States is the flag of my heart's love". He speaks highly of the way many Kentucky slaveholders treated their slaves, evangelized them and lived in the same church with them, partaking of the Lord's Supper together. Pendleton himself owned a slave, hired her out and gave her the

pay for her work. The United States soldiers took Pendleton's crops and the rails of his fences. They were allowed to take "only the top rail". But they were valuable cedar rails. So "they obeyed, and took only the top rail till there was not a rail left." He left his Murfreesboro home August 31, 1862.

Pendleton's first child, Lettie, became the wife of Rev. James Waters, later of Denver, Colo. The second child was a son, John Malcomb, born in 1840, who became a student in Bethel College. This son founded a school near Brownsville, Tenn. His father took him North with him and he became a prominent Northern Baptist. In the days of this issue, with its many rumors about him, Dr. Pendleton had a vision one night. He stood in a circle of demons incarnate, who seemed ready to destroy him. But God seemed to say to them: "You can't touch him unless I permit it." After that vision, which he had out on his farm, his face was **shining**, though covered with sweat. All were amazed who saw him, as he came in.

II. J. M. Pendleton was a blessed gift of our risen Lord to the Baptists of Tennessee. Preaching, theological education, writing, editorship of newspapers, evangelism, religious debates and the cooperative life of the churches through associations and conventions were ever vital parts of his great Christian life. He was called to teach theology in Murfreesboro in 1857 and taught 45 or 50 ministers in all. He preached the funeral of J. H. Eaton, father of our great Walnut Street pastor. He ran a farm, was pastor of the church, and was editor of "**The Tennessee Baptist**", along with J. R. Graves and Dr. A. C. Dayton (M.D., not D.D.); also he wrote for "**The Southern Baptist Review**", with these same men.

He was not the constant debater that Graves became, but he defended the truth when necessary. He debated with Alexander Campbell on the priority of repentance to faith, in a Christian experience. He contended for "first things first" and cited as an example I Tim. 5:14, which contends that "young widows should marry and bear children." "Young widows should marry before bearing children!" He debated with a "Bishop" Smith of Kentucky, who said that the validity of gospel ordinances depends on their administrators having been Episcopally ordained men. He declared that he had rather be immersed by a pure, godly man on whose head the hands of Romish or British prelates were never laid, than to be "baptized by any Bishop under the heavens whose sacerdotal blood had run through ecclesiastical scoundrels ever since the flood which the fiery dragon issued out of his unsanctified mouth to drown the apostolic church in its early youth."

In a debate with Dr. T. O. Summers he made this reply to the Methodist contention that the Greek preposition EIS does not mean INTO when used about the water of baptism. "What a strange word this little **eis** is, if what the Pedobaptists say of it is true. It will take a man **into** a house, **into** a ship, in-

to a country, into a city, into heaven, into hell—into any place in the universe except the water! Poor word! afflicted, it seems, with hydrophobia.”

Much of his Tennessee activity was the continuation of the type of life and activity he had lived in Kentucky. And I shall give an example of his pastoral wisdom and his evangelistic fervor and efficiency, in subsequent eras of his history.

III. Dr. Pendleton became a wondrously wise pastor and pacifier of a Baptist church in Ohio. As he went slowly into the North, preaching on his way, he came to the city of Hamilton, Ohio, and there was eventually called to a pastorate which lasted from '62 to '65. The church was about evenly divided between two factions, and the lines were fiercely drawn. The new pastor was equally friendly with all and took no partisan attitude. When the time was right for the step, one Sunday morning he said to the church that he felt they now wanted to be rid of their divisions and factionalism. So he called for each faction to sit in the seats on one side of the church, which he indicated to them. Then he asked them to agree that they would go forth that morning from the church in unity, in regret for all the unjust and unforgiving words and deeds of the past. In demonstration of this attitude, they were to resume friendly relations then and there and never refer any more to the things that had divided them. The appeal was heeded, from the heart, and peace reigned.

IV. Pendleton was a great Northern Baptist, as he had been a great Southern Baptist in two States and in the many phases of their general cooperative life and activity. He went on from Ohio to Upland, Pa., where he had an eighteen years' pastorate. He was one of the active managers of the Publication Society of Northern Baptists, and aided in the founding of Crozer Theological Seminary. At the end of fifty years of his ministry he read a paper on it to the Philadelphia Ministers' Conference and terminated his pastoral career. Dr. C. C. Warren was anticipated by Pendleton, in "the 30,000 movement", for the church sent out two missions while he was there.

Pendleton was a trustee of Crozer Seminary, on whose faculty Henry G. Weston and Howard Osgood were teachers. Pendleton wrote: "The members of the faculty are men of God, sound in faith, and apt to teach." While he was in his regular activity, there broke out a voluntary and spontaneous revival. It went on for weeks, every night but Saturdays. This is his account of the results: "Of the number baptized, 120 were over 20 years of age, 80 were over 30 years of age, 25 over 40, 12 over 50, 9 above 60 and 2 above 70. The remainder were between 10 and 20 years old, with the exception of one who was 9. 25 husbands and wives were baptized, 12 husbands whose wives were members before and 6 wives whose husbands were members before." In the first ten years of his pastorate the Crozers gave a million dollars to our Baptist institutions, \$100,000.00 a year.

Pendleton was one of three who read the MSS offered to the American Baptist Publication Society. He said: "I think I can safely say that I read 10,000 pages of MSS." Great was his heartache in resigning the Upland pastorate. He went to Nashville in June, 1883. There he baptized three granddaughters, saying: "My granddaughter in the flesh, but my sister in the Lord, I baptize thee . . ." He attended the Southern Baptist Convention in 1889 in Memphis. He was again and again at Crozer. His son taught a Bible class of 70. These latter years, he was very busy writing.

V. Furthermore, J. M. Pendleton, though led on to an extreme and partly erroneous statement of his views, by the insistence of J. R. Graves, a beloved associate and colleague, helped immeasurably to clarify the attitude of Southern Baptists to the ministry of other denominations, and save our denomination from the destructive evils of unionism. Just here Pendleton is being diligently and surreptitiously slandered by some of our teachers of church history. I earnestly appeal to all concerned that this slander stop, and, to that end, I hope every earnest Baptist will become informed on the subject. Here are the facts.

There are now, mainly in Arkansas and Texas, two new denominations that go by the name of Landmark Baptists. It is not truthful to identify the "Landmark" of Graves and Pendleton, of the long ago, with the name of two separate and separatist denominations that have long ago withdrawn from our fellowship. Denominational names take on acquired meanings. We repudiate the "Pentecostal" denominations, though we do not repudiate Pentecost or any Pentecostal doctrines and facts and abiding experience of the original, real Pentecost. We reject with horror "The Churches of Christ" (Hardshell Campbellites), as a modern apostasy from truth and from any knowledge of a real salvation, though we would be horrified at the thought of rejecting, or in any way objecting to, real **churches of Christ**. There can be a vast difference between the Bible meaning of a word and a denominational name that uses some Bible word. The idea that J. M. Pendleton was a "Landmarker", in the current denominational sense, is either woeful ignorance or a wilful lie. Wake up, church historian. Rub your eyes and clean your mouth. We are exhorted to glory not and lie not against the truth! There are a lot of lies being circulated against this truth. The impression is being made that Pendleton was against our cooperative work, was a modern "Landmarker", in the Arkansas separatist denominational sense, that Southern Baptist opposition to alien immersion and unionism sprang from the original Landmark movement of Pendleton, and that the vigorous Baptist position of the Southern Convention forces today is a fruit of the Landmarkism of Graves and Pendleton.

Pendleton was dead wrong in the fundamental contention of his "Ancient Landmark", and I do not know a Baptist on earth who agrees with him today. There say be some, but I never met one. Here is the Pendleton "Landmark": "If Pedobaptist Societies are not churches of Christ (Up to there he is right, W.C.T.), whence do their ministers derive their authority to preach? Is there any scriptural authority to preach which does not come through the church of Christ? And if Pedobaptist ministers are not in Christian churches, have they any right to preach? . . . It is perfectly evident to the writer that they do not." (Quoted from F. M. Master's "A History of Kentucky Baptists", p. 309.) In this he was dead wrong, tragically wrong, ignorantly disloyal to fundamental truth and unjust to thousands of God-called men. **The call to preach never came to any true preacher of the Word from any ecclesiastical source. THE CALL TO PREACH COMES SOLELY AND DIRECTLY, IN THE INTIMACY OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, AND FROM HIM ALONE.** Many non-Baptist preachers of the Word were Spirit-called. Who could doubt that Dwight L. Moody was called to preach? The Spirit never called any man to contradict the Word in any doctrine, nor does he so lead any of us. We are also not infallible in all our preaching. But the call to preach comes from the Spirit alone. How queer, for a Baptist, was Pendleton's "Landmark". It has had total rejection by our people. I think the idea either died almost at once, or was never dominant, in Pendleton's own mind and ministry. I find no traces of it in his life work after his separating from Graves, and I believe that I could find contrary teaching, in his numerous subsequent writings, if I had time to read them all. At any rate, that is his unbaptistic LANDMARK. Accursed be it! It is a lie! Southern Baptists, in rejecting this lie, kept a conclusion that went with its teaching by Pendleton, which is the truth. That truth is that no man whose official functions as pastor of a church came from an unbiblical organization, calling itself a church, has the right to exercise any OFFICIAL pastoral function for Baptist churches until he is biblically baptized and taken into the fellowship of a biblical (Baptist) church and, in that fellowship, ordained to a New Testament ministry among New Testament churches. This is what remains of the Pendleton Landmark and is largely the faith and practice of Southern Baptists today.

In conclusion, let me show the great change wrought in Southern Baptist thinking, from their primitive unionism, to their loyal doctrinal convictions of our times. Did you ever read through the Minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention? I have done that twice, from 1845 to the time I began to attend the Convention meetings and have its minutes

in my library. Here is the amazing statement of facts.

In 1845 and subsequent meetings, after organization, the Convention voted a resolution that "Ministering brethren be invited to participate in the deliberations of the meetings." In 1851, the meaning of that was clarified: "Resolved, that ministering brethren of our own and other denominations be invited to seats in this body"!!!! At Richmond, Va., in 1859, D. P. Beslor, of Ala., moved, "Resolved that the President tender to the preachers of other denominations of Christians the regard and respect of this Convention and invite them to seats upon this floor." It was moved by R. S. Hurt, of Va., that this motion be laid on the table. The motion was defeated by 190 to 128 votes. Much discussion resulted in the withdrawal of the resolution later on.

As to Pendleton's original "Landmark", denying the call to preach to all non-Baptist preachers, John L. Waller made this reply, having in mind the charge of "The Presbyterian Herald" that Baptists were High Churchmen: "Now, while we admire and love Brother Pendleton for his earnest piety, eminent usefulness, and profound varied scholarship, we insist and charge that . . . it is not honest—in our opponents to seize upon the views of one of our brethren, standing solitary and alone . . . and use them to bring odium and reproach upon the whole Baptist denomination. Our opponents well knew that the views of Brother Pendleton are not the views of Baptists, past or present. These views are something new under the sun . . . Brother Pendleton is a single and solitary advocate, of all our distinguished men, who has stepped forth in defense of such ultra sentiments", (Masters' "A History of Baptists in Kentucky", p. 310.) So much for this issue. Note well the truth as to what it was, and what it was not.

The other issue in which Pendleton figured, to our great benefit as a Convention, was the Convention's annual recognition of visiting ministers of all other denominations as entitled to seats in the Southern Baptist Convention. This passed again and again, as a very part of the formal organization of the Convention, from the opening year of 1845 on. The 1851 Convention voted definitely: "Resolved that ministering brethren of our own and other denominations be invited to seats in this body." Later this began to be an issue and cause debate. Can you imagine the Southern Baptist Convention now voting to extend its privileges to Episcopalian, Pedobaptist and Campbellite preachers, as a part of its organization process? At Louisville, Ky., that resolution, but not so clearly worded, was adopted. My grandfather, Alfred Taylor, J. R. Graves, A. C. Dayton, J. H. Eaton and J. M. Pendleton were all present and made no objection to the resolution, perhaps not sensing its full import. As late as 1891 the motion took the form of extending "the courtesies of the Convention to (among other groups named) . . . the pastors of the

different Christian churches of the city . . ." At Jefferson, Texas, when the Convention met there in 1874, John A. Broadus moved that "all Baptist ministers and members be tendered seats in the Convention". He made such a motion, some times without including the word "Baptist", but with that meaning understood, on several occasions. And the whole custom seems to have been discontinued before the close of the century.

The general effect of Pendleton's "Landmark", even though it was false in a detail of the language and held by him alone, aided in solving this problem of official Convention attitudes toward ministers of other denominations. I quote, in conclusion, from Masters' "A History of Baptists in Kentucky", p. 311. "An Old Landmark Reset" was put to the test in the Southern Baptist Convention at Montgomery, Alabama in 1855. Dr. John A. Broadus thus describes the scene: 'After the organization, (of the Convention) 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 which lasted a whole day. Presently the words 'Old Landmark' were used; and some of us from the 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 Reset'. In this he was 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 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. 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. Some present thought already that there was no such extreme difference of opinion among us as seemed to exist. The controversy in the next few years rose high, and in some quarters threatened division. But it has long been felt by most brethren that we could agree to disagree upon the matters involved, and that the great bulk of us were really not very far apart." May all our historians be as fair as Broadus.

At Dr. Pendleton's death, THE WESTERN RECORDER paid him this tribute: "J. M. Pendleton left a broad and bright mark upon his times. As a writer he stood in the front rank. He was alike good in greatness and great in goodness. He had convictions and the courage of them. He cared little for popularity, but everything for truth. His was a completed

life, going out in a glorious sunset. His work was done and well done; and gratitude for such a life and character swallows up the sorrow we feel for his death."

He gave to Baptists a vast and blessed heritage in his children, four daughters and two sons. I wish I had their history, but I do not. Their daughter, Lela, born in Russellville, was delicate in her childhood and a great sufferer. The calamities of the era made Pendleton unable to educate her at college, so he and his wife educated her themselves at home. She became the wife of the Hon. Ben Proctor, of Bowling Green, often mentioned as a possible candidate for the position of Governor of Kentucky. A Presbyterian preacher declared her to be the best Sunday School teacher he ever saw. Her greatness is a tribute to her parents as educators. Pendleton wrote much in her home, and the homes of his other daughters, composing his many books largely in the ripe maturity of his final years. Spurgeon said of his "Notes on Sermons": "These 'Notes' are sound, searching, savory. They instruct and interest, edify and stimulate."

So we may conclude: Pendleton was a great Southern Baptist, a tremendous and formative factor in our expanding cooperative program. He was a great Northern Baptist, mighty in pastorates, in theological education, in Publication Society administrative and critical services, and in varied cooperative life of the churches and their institutions. He became a great world Baptist, his works being translated in various countries of Europe and Spanish America, shaping the thought of generations of national Baptists in these lands. And I think we may well add that J. M. Pendleton is now a great celestial Baptist, a mighty personality in heaven, as he looks forward to a reward, at the judgment day, for one of the noblest and most far reaching ministries that the Holy Spirit of God ever gave to any preacher of the Word.

At a memorial service in Bowling Green, in which his picture was unveiled, J. N. Prestidge made the address, asking Mrs. Ben Proctor to do the unveiling. (Dr. Eaton published the address of Prestidge.) W. W. Hamilton led the audience in singing "In the Sweet Bye and Bye". Dr. Mullins led in the closing prayer. If any modern church historian will just look at those facts, I think he will be forced to agree that J. N. Prestidge, T. T. Eaton, W. W. Hamilton and E. Y. Mullins were not joined in any tribute to an Anti-Convention Landmarker, of the breed of our oppositionist denominations today in Arkansas. The idea is stupid ignorance. Let us be just to the facts.

WILLIAM CAREY TAYLOR  
41 years Southern Baptist  
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W. C. T.