

ANY THING TO BE DIFFERENT

Liberalism and disdain for the authority of the New Testament continue to infect brethren, and apostasy, the natural consequence of such, likewise continues to increase. A leading symptom of this phenomenon is the employment of terminology, which is ambiguous at best and anti-Biblical at worst. Some brethren are apparently trying to out-do one another in saying things so as to avoid the language employed by the Holy Spirit in His inspired Word.

We see an example of the foregoing in the following quote from the preacher of a large Metroplex (Dallas-Fort Worth, TX, area) congregation. His church bulletin note on activities in their assembly the previous Sunday stated: "Old natures were transformed into new, as eight precious souls sealed their decision for Christ with baptism." Come again? Baptism is a "seal" of one's "decision for Christ"? From whence such terminology came I am unsure, but I am rather certain that it was not from the New Testament.

Just what does this say about baptism? It is difficult to tell for sure. This may be a case of contrived ambiguity, of which we have heard more and more in recent years from men who have lost their Scriptural moorings. To me it smacks of the common sectarian description of baptism that assigns to it the function of being merely "an outward sign of an inward grace." Who knows?

To such pulpiteers it is not good enough anymore to report that eight souls were baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). It is unthinkable to state that eight souls were baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). It is too "traditional" and dogmatic to declare that eight souls were baptized in order to receive remission of sins (Acts 2:38). No, they will have none of those old worn out phrases. After all, what did Peter, Paul, and the Lord Himself know about that which is accomplished in baptism?

Why, if these contemporary fellows used those descriptions, someone might even get the idea that one is lost in sin until he has been Scripturally baptized. They cannot afford for that to happen. This might offend some of their denominational preacher-peers who believe that baptism is optional, and they might not be nearly so friendly at the next meeting of the ministerial alliance. They might even cease to be interested in those proposed pulpit swaps.

For sure, such indistinct terminology concerning baptism is not characteristic of God's Word. We cannot resist the suspicion that a rejection of Biblical terminology is a signal of the rejection of Biblical teaching. Novel, unbiblical doctrine has always demanded novel, unbiblical nomenclature. Many men who now preach and many who now teach in schools begun by brethren have drunk too long, too well, and too greedily from denominational wells. Their

speech (such as that with which we began these observations) and much, much more the last few decades betrays them.

We hereby renew the appeal to “call Bible things by Bible names,” or at least employ terms that represent Scriptural concepts. Mark it well: New Testament doctrine will not long be faithfully taught when one comes to despise New Testament terminology. *Anything to be different* seems to be the agenda of a very large coterie of brethren.

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