

ANYTHING TO BE DIFFERENT

Liberalism and disdain for the authority of the New Testament continue to infect brethren, and apostasy is occurring before our eyes. 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.

An example is seen in the following quote from the preacher of a large Metroplex congregation. His church bulletin note on the accomplishments of 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"?

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 baptism?

Why, if these contemporary fellows used those descriptions, someone might even get the idea that baptism is necessary for one to be saved. They cannot afford for

that to happen. This might offend some of their denominational preacher–buddies who believe that baptism is optional, and they might not be nearly so friendly at the next meeting of the ministerial alliance or 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**. We hereby renew the appeal to “call Bible things by Bible names.” 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 many among us now.

—Dub McClish

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