It is interesting to note that some words in the Bible, which are of great importance, are seemingly most likely to be misunderstood, ignored and even perverted by a great many people.

A splendid example of the above is the word “love,” which in its most used form (Gr. agape) is found more than two hundred fifty times in the New Testament. It is defined as that which has the well being of others, even all men, at heart, and works no evil...is most often used incorrectly to mean toleration, compromise, speaking only the positive, and never speaking critically of error. When the word is used correctly, it is shown by doing God’s will, by upholding His word, and helping those in error and the untaught to see the right way of God.

There is another Greek word (phileo) used in the New Testament and translated “love.” It is used about 25 times, and represents “tender affection” between close friends, family, etc. We are not commanded to have this love for all men. It appears that many people confuse this word for love with the higher form of love which is most often used in the New Testament.

Scriptural Baptism, An Integral Part Of Every True Conversion, Is Misunderstood, Ignored, And Perverted By Many People

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A splendid example of the above is the word “love,” which in its most used form (Gr. agape) is found more than two hundred fifty times in the New Testament. It is defined as that which has the well being of others, even all men, at heart, and works no ill toward any. It is manifested in doing the will of God. John said, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” (1 Jno. 4:3). Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him” (John 14:23). Love is most often used incorrectly to mean toleration, compromise, speaking only the positive, and never speaking critically of error. When the word is used correctly, it is shown by doing God’s will, by upholding His word, and helping those in error and the untaught to see the right way of God.

There is another Greek word (phileo) used in the New Testament and translated “love.” It is used about 25 times, and represents “tender affection” between close friends, family, etc. We are not commanded to have this love for all men. It appears that many people confuse this word for love with the higher form of love which is most often used in the New Testament.

The word “faith,” is another misunderstood word. It is often used in religious circles to mean a simple assent of the mind. But “faith” in the sense by which we are justified, is a faith which “worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6). James said, after giving the example of the faith of Abraham, “Ye see then
how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24). James goes on to say that “faith without works is dead also,” just as a body without the spirit is dead. It is essential to salvation, so is a misunderstanding, ignored and perverted is the word “baptism.” Just as an understanding of the words “love” and “faith” are essential to salvation, so is a misunderstanding, ignored and perverted is the word “baptism.” Just as an understanding of the words “love” and “faith” How that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24). James goes on to say that “faith without works is dead also,” just as a body without the spirit is dead. It is essential to salvation, so is a misunderstanding, ignored and perverted is the word “baptism.” Just as an understanding of the words “love” and “faith” are essential to salvation, so is a misunderstanding, ignored and perverted is the word “baptism.” Just as an understanding of the words “love” and “faith” are essential to salvation, so is a misunderstanding, ignored and perverted is the word “baptism.” As we continue our discussion we shall give attention the following main topic, along with some sub-topics.

THE ESSENTIALITY OF SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM

John’s baptism. The first reference to baptism in the New Testament is in Matthew 3:6. Matthew is discussing “John the Baptist” when he says, “Then Jesus came out of Galilee, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jor-dan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” John also baptized Jesus. “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him” (Matt. 3:16).
Growing Pains At NWFSBS

The Milestone church is on the move. This giving church reached way down deep and built a new facility for church and school. Her pro-activity for giving financially is equally matched in a willingness to work and give time as well. Elders, deacons and scores of members step up and show up whether it be door Knocking or grass pulling. We are having sure 'uff' gospel meetings designed to convert sinners. Hours each week folks in the area are able to view, via cable, sermons preached in the Milestone pulpit. This church puts its money where its mouth is in the matter of “visiting” the fatherless and widows, and “doing good unto all men” when “opportunity” arises. We are teaching and bap- tizing people: seven in the past few months; we are restoring people; our attendance is growth: a recent P.M. high of 95. Little wonder then that the Northwest Florida School of Bib-lical Studies, Milestone’s work, is caught up in this positive aura. The school is on the move. We have a bumper crop of students and pros- pects in the wings. We guarantee solid, sound, and balanced training for these men. This is a rare opportunity for men to “call time out” on life for two years, that they might devote them- selves to intensive study and practical training. Doing their part, they will be great assets to the brotherhood.

Long and short of it is: NWFSBS is in the middle of a “good” problem—growth. And boy, do we ever need more friends to help us spread the pain. Two (We will be happy to add your name. Thanks.

READERS’ RESPONSE

“Cloe Jordan recently let me read a copy of Banner of Truth. As an elder in the Lord’s church at West Side in Searcy, I have tried to keep abreast of what is happening in the church and in our world. Please add me to your list of read- ers and send Banner of Truth when published” — Alan Robinson, AR. (We commend you for keeping abreast of what is happening in the church and in our schools. Elders can do so much to keep things the way they should be.)

“I’m sending you some material which I trust will be helpful. The NIV is a dangerous version but many brethren are using it.” — Editor.

“Thank you so much for Banner of Truth. I have a cousin (member of the Lord’s church) which used to get your paper but doesn’t anymore... They asked me to order it for them. They really appreciate it. God bless you in your work for the truth” — Wanda Thompson. (Some times people don’t send their change of address, and we delete them from our mailing list. Some times we get two or three returns from the same address because the post office doesn’t return them to us until much later – Editor.)

“Thanks for your article exposing what is happening at Lipscomb. My wife and I are graduates of Lipscomb (40 years ago) and sent all three of our children there, but we would not recommend it to anyone now. I believe the liber- alism at Lipscomb began long before Harold Hazelip be- came president, but it certainly gained momentum under him. We have had reports of some getting out of sorts about the article. Some do not like to face reality and the facts – Editor.)

“I receive Banner of Truth every now and then. Someone brought them along. I truly enjoy reading them very much. It has great scriptural teaching and keeps one up to date on what is happening in the Lord’s church. I’d like to say thank you very much for Banner of Truth. You have a great minis- try in sending these books around the world. Keep the good work.” — Alan A. Horton, AL. (We commend you for keeping abreast of what is happening in the church and in our schools. Elders can do so much to keep things the way they should be.)

“In view of the above, the idea that baptism in- volves only a little water “poured” or “sprinkled” on a person, does not make any sense at all. There would have been no need for “much water” or the need to go into or come up out of the water, if only a cup of water was needed to baptized a per- son, as many erroneously believe.

In addition to the mention of water above, bapt- ism is referred to as a “burial.” Paul says, “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized in Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him in baptism into death...” (Rom. 6:3-4). To the Colossians Paul wrote, “Bur- ied with him in baptism, wherein ye are risen with him...” (Col. 2:12). In no sense of the term is sprinkling and pouring a burial.

In addition to the above, and fully conclusive, is the meaning of the word “baptize.” The Greek word baptismo or baptizo is the word used in the English translations for “baptize.” It means to “dip, immerse, plunge, submerge,” according to Greek lexicons. It is never used to mean “sprinkle” or “pour.” There is a Greek word for that. Immersion was practiced for centuries after the first cen- tury. God’s will has not changed but the practice of men has changed.

What is the purpose of baptism?” First, it is for the “remission of sins.” On the day of Pente- cost, as recorded in Acts 2, the Jews, after being told they were guilty in the crucifixion of Christ, were pricked in their heart, “said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Note the answer given by Peter, bearing in mind that he was speaking “as the Spirit” directed him. He could not be wrong in his answer, as follows: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Ac. 2:38).

When the Lord appeared to Saul, he was di- rected to go into the city to be told what he “must do” (Ac. 9:6). Saul, having arrived in the city as directed, was met by one Ananias, who said to him, “And why tarriest thou? Arise, and be bap- tized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Ac. 22:16). It was at the act of baptism that God would “wash away” his sins. If Saul was “saved” before he...
was baptized, he was saved while still in his sins. According to Mark's account of the Great Commission, Christ said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” (Mk. 16:15). In order for one to be saved there must be the remission or forgiveness of sins.

To get into Christ. Let us consider the great importance of being “in Christ.” In Him there is re-deption. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...” (Eph. 1:7). Salvation is “in Christ.” “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory...” (2 Tim. 2:10). These several blessings are “in Christ.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

How to get “in Christ.” From the above we can see the importance of being “in Christ” where there is forgiveness of sins, salvation, and all spiritual blessings. Therefore, it is extremely important as to how one gets in Christ. Paul said, “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death” (Rom. 6:3). Paul again answers the question of how to get into Christ. “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). Here we have the inspired answer to that important question of how to get into Christ — baptism.

The “one body.” To be “in Christ” is to be in His body, the church. “And hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23). To the Colossians Paul wrote, “And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church...” (Col. 1:18). “There is one body, and one Sprit...” (Eph. 4:4). It is most important to be in the “one body” since Christ is “the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body” (Eph. 5:23). The only way into that “one body” is through baptism, as we have noted.

Saved without baptism? Contrary to the belief of millions that one can be saved without baptism, God’s word teaches otherwise. There is no lack of valid evidence from His word that such is the case. We have seen that baptism is for, or in order to, the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Saul was told to be baptized to “wash away” his sins (Acts 22:16). Christ said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mk. 16:16). Luke says, “But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him” (Lk. 7:30). This has reference to the baptism of John, which was also “for the remission of sins” (Mk. 1:4). Those who “gladly received his [Peter] word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Ac. 2:41). “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (v. 47).

The “doctrine of Christ” clearly sets forth the fact that baptism for remission of sins is essential to salvation. It should be a cause for serious concern on the part of those who have not obeyed the Lord in baptism, as we see in the words of Christ: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). I would hate to face the Lord in the Day of Judgment, having failed to obey his will with respect to baptism.

We shall move on in our discussion to another important matter relative to baptism, as we suggested in the title of this discussion.

The MANY INSTANCES OF MISUNDERSTANDING, IGNORING, AND PERVERTING THE TEACHING OF GOD’S WORD ON BAPTISM

Due to the lack of space we can only consider a few of the many examples of the above. It seems to me that there is as much error, if not more, on this subject than any other in the Bible. It is most difficult to understand why many people will accept the teaching of God’s word on such impor-

One such figure of speech is technically called syn-e crochet. This is a figure of speech where you use a part (like one representative of a group or category) of something to stand for the whole: like bread for food. Admittedly, the word synecdoche is not a part of common parlance; but, even if you just call it plain Fred, it is still a common figure of speech that we all regularly use.

If someone says, “Hey, let’s go get something to eat,” it doesn’t take literary analysis to understand that eat also includes drink. When the Scriptures say that “upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread” (Ac 20.7), it doesn’t take a professor to understand that “break bread” also includes drinking of that cup (I Cor 11.28).

Think of how our denominational friends “willingly forget” (2 Pet 3.5) this simple figure of speech. Denominational preachers will reel off dozens of passages that connect belief or faith with salvation (e.g., Jn 3.16; Rom 5.1; Eph 2.8). Since these passages do not mention other things, particularly baptism, they conclude that they are excluded, that sinners are saved at the point of faith: in other words, faith only. No, in all these passages “faith” is a part of what is necessary, and it is used to stand for the whole. Consider Acts 11:18 which says of “repent[ing] unto life.” There is no mention of faith here. So do we conclude that faith is not required? No. Repentance, like faith, is a part of what is necessary, but here it is used to stand for the whole. What about Romans 10:10 which says that “confession is made unto salvation”? It’s the same principle: the part for the whole. When the Bible says that “baptism doth also now save us” (I Pet 3.21), does this mean “baptism” without “faith, repentance, and confession”? Once again, this is the figure of speech where the part is used to stand for the whole.

It is a terrible thing to see people playing word games with themselves.

In the cool dawn of the morning, can people who excuse their disobedience with such sophistry really believe what they all too often gibbly say? Somehow the claim, “It’s a matter of interpretation,” rings hollow in view of the judgment to come. —AA
A friend and I were once discussing the Bible; unfortunately, we were in agreement on very few points. He finally made a statement that I could agree with: “It’s all just a matter of interpretation.” Although, I agree with the statement, I cannot agree with my friend’s application of it. He, like so many, views interpretation as a purely personal or subjective exercise; along the order of watching a movie and saying, “I like it,” or “I don’t like it.” I believe this matters calls for a bit more thought and analysis. Let’s look at this matter of “interpretation.”

TYPICAL THINKING ABOUT THE BIBLE APPLIED TO OTHER AREAS OF LIFE

My Dad was a genius in the field of electronics and communications, but he was a terrible speller. He would often call home and ask the correct spelling for words he was using some time. He clearly recalled his asking one day if the word water had two Ts or one. I told him, “only one.” Now, suppose my Dad had responded by saying, “Oh, well, it’s all a matter of spelling.” It’s true: Whether w-a-t-e-r or w-a-t-t-e-r, in either case, you have surely “spelled.” So, it is a matter of spelling; but it doesn’t follow that any spelling will do. There is correct spelling, and there is incorrect spelling. So it is with interpretation; one can do correctly, that is in accordance with certain objective rules and principles, or one can do it incorrectly.

INTERPRETING INTERPRETATION

I used to spend a lot of time struggling with the inseparable twins: interpretation and translation and. I would translate things from Chinese to English, and from English to Chinese. Sometimes, it would come to mind that translating is a simple tit-for-tat, or this-for-that process; but it’s not quite that simple. Then there is also poor, sloppy, ambiguous, incorrect translation. Would it be reasonable to simply say, “Oh well, it’s all a matter of interpretation”?

To interpret something means, “to explain the meaning of.” The Greek New Testament uses the word “hermeneuo,” which is often translated into English as “interpret.” Our English word hermeneutics also comes from this Greek word. Hermeneutics is the formal science or field of interpretation, especially the interpretation of literature. Yes. Understanding the meaning of the Bible is a “matter of interpretation.” However, in interpreting the Bible, it doesn’t follow that we are free to attach to it just any meaning that pleases us. Are there not certain objective rules and procedures that must be followed in order to correctly interpret the Bible, or even the newspaper for that matter? Paul says that we must “rightly divide [handle aright, ASV] the word of truth” (2 Tim 2.15).

This common practice of saying whatever you might wish that the Bible said, and then trying to cover your tracks by saying, “Oh well, it’s all a matter of interpretation,” makes no sense at all. Why not try writing an overdraft on your checking account, and then tell the bank that it’s just a matter of arithmetic? Or, Get caught stealing and tell the judge that, after all, it’s just a matter of making a living.

INTERPRETING WITH AN AGENDA

In the aforementioned discussion between my friend and me, he mentioned, as an example, that Jesus said the “first and great commandment” is to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind” (Matt 22.37-38). He went on to triumphantly say, “See, he didn’t say anything about the church here.” My friend believes that one can love God and not have anything to do with the church. His principle of interpretation is this: When a statement in the Bible specifically mentions one obligation, and does not mention any others, we may conclude that the one obligation mentioned is all that is necessary. This is a commonly held, yet patently false notion of interpretation. It is derived from wishful thinking on the part of a persistent subject as: faith; repentance and confession of faith in Christ, to manifest a spirit of pure rebellion when it comes to the subject of baptism. Paul says we are not ignorant of the devil’s devices, and some have suggested that the refusal to accept God’s word on baptism is one of those devices.

Over the years I’ve received a few letters of criticism, relative to things I have written on the subject of baptism. A brief review of some of those criticisms reveals the tragic misunderstanding, ignoring, and downright criticism of the truth on this most important subject.

Our first example is that of the response of an elderly person to an article in my church bulletin entitled, “What About Infant Baptism.” I will note some excerpts from that letter, and will number them for the purpose of my response to them.

1. “In answer to your Reminder, Yes, I was baptized when a baby, and am mighty proud of it. My parents were good Christian people and they were so happy when the Good Lord gave them their children that they were happy to give them back to the Lord in baptism. The Bible doesn’t say what age & all; babies have sponsors that answer in their stead & remember them in their prayers.”

2. “I’ve been a Lutheran for 72 years…” “I’m just as proud to be a Lutheran as I am to be an American.”

3. “The Methodist and Catholics also baptize babies.”

4. “The Bible doesn’t say Jesus was put under water. It says he walked straightway into the water and straightway out. But you must remember that was the only way it could be done. As all rivers and creeks have banks. Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan because the pictures I have ever seen of the baptism of Jesus was Him standing in the water with John pouring water on his head.”

No. 1. We can understand how it would be easy for one to follow the religious tradition under which he has been reared, and feel content or happy. But when we consult the Bible we learn that feeling right is not the criteria by which one determines whether or not God is being pleased. Paul, before becoming a Christian, believed he should persecute Christians (Ac. 26:9), but he was wrong, dead wrong.

No. 2. We do not wish to speak unkindly toward those of the Lutheran denomination, or those of the hundreds of other denominations, but we do want to point out the fact that the world never heard of the Lutheran Church until the sixteenth century when Martin Luther came on the scene. Christ did not purchase the Lutheran Church with his blood. The only blood-purchased church was his own (Ac. 20:28).

No. 3. We must call attention to the way by which religious practices are authorized. Paul points out that faith comes by hearing God’s word (Rom. 10:17). In view of this fact, nothing can be done by faith on the basis that some religious denominations do those things. One may search the Bible from beginning to end and no authorizations for the Methodist or Catholic Church will be found. These religions came to be by the will of man, not by the will of God.

No. 4. When the Bible says Jesus was baptized, it meant he was immersed, for such is the meaning of the word “baptize.” Paul speaks of baptism as a “burial,” and that indeed is the meaning of the word. Our reader must know that there are no real pictures of Christ. Any painting depicting the pouring of water on one’s head, of Christ or babies.”
It is most likely that this critic would claim to believe in the Bible as God’s word, yet there is not a single verse given which upholds the practice of infant baptism. Those who “abide not in the doctrine of Christ” do not have the approval of the Father and the Son (2 Jno. 9).

Another critical response to scriptural baptism was from a Baptist preacher. A weekly newspaper article we ran in the local paper was entitled “Where Is Salvation Found?” In the article it was pointed out that salvation is “in Christ!” (2 Tim. 2:10). It was also pointed out that one must hear God’s word and believe it (Rom. 10:17), repent of sins (Acts 17:30), confess faith in Christ (Rom. 10:10). When one has reached this point it is then possible to get into Christ by obeying the Lord in the act of baptism.

In response to the above article, a “Deepest Sympathy” card was received from a Baptist preacher. The card’s message read:

“Dear Mr. Pigg, You are such a nice friendly man. I feel sorry for you and your people because you do not understand the truth. This card is to show you my sympathy – such fine people who are deceived. I saw your article in the paper. I’m sorry you do not believe faith is enough. Sincerely, John Bishop.”

It is strikingly strange that Mr. Bishop would “feel sorry for,” and show his “sympathy” to people for believing what God’s word clearly says, as in the above article. What has been said that is not true? What is there about it to indicate that we are “deceived”? Are we the ones who have “rejected the counsel of God?” The apostle that is not true? What is there about it to indicate

In a conversation with Mr. Bishop he unhesitatingly affirmed that one is “Saved at the very moment he believes in Christ.” Mr. Bishop also believes there are two baptisms now, spiritual baptism and water baptism. Yet Christ says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mk. 16:16), and Paul says there is “one baptism” (Eph. 4:5). Who fails to understand the truth in this instance? Mr. Bishop believes that faith alone (without any works) will save. Did James fail to understand when he said, “Ye see then how by works a man is justified, and not by faith only”? (Jas. 2:24).

Mr. Bishop also believes that when one is saved “the moment he believes,” that he will not want to sin. But, he says, if a man does sin God will kill him physically. If he sins and God does not kill him, he was not saved to begin with. Yet, he feels sorry for us that we are “deceived” and do not “understand the truth.”

The above is an example of one who does not respect God’s truth, but rather ignores it and ridicules those who do love and respect it.

Another example of error on baptism. The following is a letter from a critic of my teaching on the subject of infant baptism. I will number the paragraphs in order to respond.

#1. Dear Christian Brother, I am writing you in response to your statements regarding infant baptism. I hope you will receive these words in the spirit of Christian fellowship that they are given.

#2. You stated that because they are without sin and baptism is for the remission of sin, that they need not be baptized. Paul tells us in Romans 5:12, ‘that all have sinned through the sin of Adam.’

#3. How old is old enough to believe? Jesus warns in Matthew 18:6 ‘that anyone who leads astray any of these little ones who BELIEVE in me would be better off with a millstone,’ etc.

#4. There may be no specific mention of infants being baptized, likewise there is only one mention

11. This implies acceptance of their error on the subject of baptism, as well as other teachings. Denominational people do not teach the truth on the subject of baptism. And, when our brethren fellowship them they are implying one of two things: First, that denominational baptism is accepted by God; or second, salvation is available without scriptural baptism, just as F. LaGard Smith believes and hopes.

The names of a few well known brethren are out front in the fellowship and encouragement of the denominations, but these are only the tip of the mountain of error which has infiltrated our ranks. Even right here in our own area there is the fellowshipping of denominations. Some of these people are not widely known, and from information I receive the same thing is happening all across our country.

Earlier we discussed the importance of being “in Christ,” where many blessings, including salvation are found. Yet, these denominational people are not even “in Christ,” because the only way to get “into Christ” is through baptism and they don’t believe in and practice true baptism. How can our brethren deny the distinctiveness of the Lord’s church, which he purchased with his own blood? But they are.

Apparently, some of our brethren have bought into such a far-fetched thing as that come from. No other unjustified criticisms, because we believed God’s word with regard to baptism.

...Smith believes and hopes.

In I Corinthians 14, worship services are discussed. That was during a time when spiritual gifts were in use, but that doesn’t change the principle which is set forth by Paul. He said, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (v. 40). Singing during the Lord’s supper is not, in my estimation, “in order.” Some times it appears that people do unusual things to call attention to themselves, not to please the Lord.

Several years ago some brethren were sitting in the floor in a circle, turning the lights down low, and feeling of each other. Where in the world did such a far-fetched thing as that come from. No doubt, it came from men out in left field, not from God’s instructions.

Singing During The Lord’s Supper?

I have received questions concerning a growing practice of congregational singing during the observing of the Lord’s supper. It used to be that it was innovations involving worship seldom occurred. In more recent times this has changed. Singing during the Lord’s supper is just one of them.

Some time ago this practiced was discussed with a member of the church where this was being practiced. This individual’s response to the practice was excellent, in my estimation. The response was: “I can’t take of the Lord’s supper and sing at the same time, and keep my mind on both as I should.” This makes sense.

Why do such practices start? It has been my observation that such is not done with the idea of pleasing the Lord, but rather as something that is new and/or different, and might appeal to the people. A year or so ago I was at a singing in our area. A young man got up to lead a song. He made several requests, such as: Only the soprano sing a stanza, then the tenor, alto, etc. I had the distinctive feeling that what he was doing was not with a view to please God by singing, but rather he was acting as a “show-off.”

In 1 Corinthians 14, worship services are discussed. That was during a time when spiritual gifts were in use, but that doesn’t change the principle which is set forth by Paul. He said, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (v. 40). Singing during the Lord’s supper is not, in my estimation, “in order.” Some times it appears that people do unusual things to call attention to themselves, not to please the Lord.
“But,” someone will ask, “suppose a person dies after coming to believe in Christ but before the time he is to be baptized. Does this mean he would not be saved?” As with every other question dealing with man’s salvation, only the God of all Judgment can answer that for us. I would be neither surprised nor disappointed if God were to save in this situation.” (Page 93).

Do faithful believers who were baptized only as infants stand in eternal jeopardy? Are those who have committed their lives in faithful service to Jesus Christ, but who have never been taught the need for water baptism, spiritually lost? Can it be that those who see baptism as a matter of obedience, but not of salvation, are risking God’s judgment? (Page 200).

None of us can presume to know about the eternal destiny of anyone, on the basis of any question of doctrine — be it predestination, charismatic gifts, the washing of feet, or even baptism. All we can do is give our best efforts to knowing God’s will, as revealed in His written Word. (Page 201).

Are unbaptized believers destined to hell? Are those who have received only infant baptism in eternal jeopardy? Only God knows.

Nevertheless, I would hope that God might apply the ‘common law marriage’ approach for those who have lived a lifetime of service in His name without having participated in the wedding ceremony of baptism. (Page 206).

Brethren, there you have it. This influential man, a teacher at David Lipscomb, would not be surprised or disappointed if God saves people who have not been baptized. Do those baptized as infants stand in eternal jeopardy, he asks. He continues, we can’t know about our actions during that time is outright absurd.

Who has the authority to make a law which says a person must be a certain age before they can obey the Lord in being baptized? This would be a “commandment of men.”

Denominational fellowship and baptism. A matter which I never thought I would see is the widespread fellowshipping of the denominations by our brethren which is now occurring. To fellowship them is to bid them God speed (2 Jno. 9-10).

Just think how much encouragement the above will give to those who think they can be saved without submitting to God’s will in obedience. Talking about fueling the fire of disbelief in God’s word as the only way of salvation: This adds many chips to the fire. It is an affront to God to “hope” and “believe” that God will do other than what He has stated in his revealed will for man. If we believe and hope that God will overlook His will with regard to baptism, why wouldn’t we believe that He would also overlook His will in other areas? How do we know that He will not go back on His promise of eternal life in the world to come? The very idea of hoping and believing that God will not honor what He has said to man, cannot be of the Father. There is only one other source, men.

The age to qualify for baptism. Over the years I’ve heard of a great many things, some of them rather far-fetched. From more than one source recently I’ve heard of those among our brethren who have come up with a doctrine of an age requirement in order for one to be scripturally baptized. One group has set the age at twenty years. When I heard of this I thought of myself. When I was only sixteen I finished high school and went off to seek my fortune. I worked in the war effort, and when I became eighteen, I entered the Merchant Marines and traveled in many countries during World War II. That I was not responsible for my actions during that time is outright absurd.

Brethren, there you have it. This influential man, a teacher at David Lipscomb, would not be surprised or disappointed if God saves people who have not been baptized. Do those baptized as infants stand in eternal jeopardy, he asks. He continues, we can’t know about our actions during that time is outright absurd.

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with the Holy Ghost. If you believe infants are baptized with the Holy Ghost (or even adults for that matter) how do you account for Paul’s statement that there is “one baptism” (Eph. 4:5)? Do you believe in two baptisms today?

No. 6. We do not have a comparable situation today to that of John baptizing Jesus. John baptized others “for the remission of sins” (Mk. 1:4). That is the purpose for which accountable people are to be baptized today (Ac. 2:38; 22:16; Mk. 16:16). Mr. Mathena, it seems terribly strange that you refer to Romans 5:12 to show that infants are sinners and need to be baptized, and then turn right around and refer to the baptism of Jesus to show that sinless people need to be baptized. You are correct when you say children have no sin, but of course this removes the need for them to be “baptized for the remission of sins.” Is not this the reason for the absence of any command for infants to be baptized?

You suggest that baptism will prevent children from being overcome by sin. But where in God’s word is this taught? When an accountable person is baptized scripturally it is possible for that person to receive forgiveness of sins in the future by “walking in the light” (I Jno. 1:7-9), but it does not prevent one from committing sin. Being baptized did not prevent Simon from committing sin (Acts 8:13, 22). Ananias and Sapphira committed sin by lying and were put to death (Acts 5:1-11). Demas forsook Paul, “having loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10). It is sadly ironic that the article talks about baptism according to Baptist doctrine. Yet, the Baptists refuse scriptural baptism and require that people follow the “commandments of men” in order to be a member of their church.

We have touched upon only a few examples of error concerning baptism as clearly taught in the New Testament. But error concerning baptism is not found only among the people of the many denominations. Error is also found among us.

ERROR ON BAPTISM AMONG OUR OWN BRETHREN

For many years during my time our brethren have been criticized for their teaching that baptism is essential to salvation. Our brethren did emphasize the importance of baptism as a command to be obeyed, as clearly taught in God’s word. Perhaps, one reason it was emphasized as much as it was, was because of the rejection of God’s teaching on the subject by the denominations around us. Baptism is emphasized in the New Testament; there are many instances where it is authorized, and the end of every conversion in the book of Acts is the act of baptism. It is sad that many things have changed with a great many of our brethren, and that includes the teaching on baptism. Forty years ago, I would not have thought this would ever happen; but then, there are many warnings that men will turn away from the truth. So this should not be a great surprise to us.

F. LaGard Smith. This man is now a teacher at David Lipscomb University. This should tell us something about him. But he has been known for teaching error for several years. The tragic thing is that people are following him, and his influence is considerable.

A few years ago F. LaGard Smith came out with a book entitled, “Baptism: The Believer’s Wedding Ceremony.” We are noting a few excerpts from that book, which tell us something about his belief with regard to baptism.