

## ADD THOU NOT UNTO HIS WORDS

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The Bible says, “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. 30:6). The wise man cautioned against a perennial tendency of mankind to add to God’s words. An exposure of the creeds of men sometimes yields statements of denial of their existence from their perhaps unwitting adherents. While some preachers hoist high the catechism or the discipline, other preachers do not open their creed books and read from them before the congregation. They obviously wish to convey that the Bible alone is the standard rule of faith and practice. Certainly, the Bible should be just that as II Timothy 3:16-17 and other passages clearly teach, but distinctive doctrines consistently taught which are not found in the Bible suggest a common source. Many times that source is a creed book.

One example recently presented will serve as proof that a prominent Baptist preacher preaches right out of the Standard Baptist Manual and not the Bible. Again, he did not inform the membership that he was; he wanted to convey to them the idea that his material was from the Bible. Here is what Adrian Rogers from the Bellevue Baptist Church wrote: “Baptism isn’t necessary for salvation, but it is necessary for obedience” (“Inspiration’s View of Baptism” by Lennie Reagan, *The Messenger*, July 16, 2000, p. 3).

Now, here is what *The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches* by Edward T. Hiscox, D.D. says: “Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of ‘baptismal regeneration’; but it is essential to obedience, since Christ has commanded it” (pp. 20-21). Perhaps placing the abbreviated statements side by side will help to emphasize the point:

Rogers

Baptism isn't necessary for salvation,  
but it is necessary for obedience.

Baptist Manual

Baptism is not essential to salvation, .  
. .  
but it is essential to obedience. . . .

Many have been the times when Baptists have argued, “We do not use a manual. I have never heard of *The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*.” This example proves that their preachers have heard of it and, in fact, at least on occasion preach

right out of it. The manual itself states, “Members, on being received to fellowship, are not required to subscribe or pledge conformity to any creed-form, but are expected to yield substantial agreement to that which the church with which they unite has adopted” (p. 56). From where does the name “Baptist” and the particular practices unique to them come if not from the manual or those who know it so well they can recite it without ever acknowledging its existence? The new name that the mouth of the Lord would name is “Christian,” not “Baptist” (Isa. 62:2; Acts 11:26).

It takes the manual to evade the force of Jesus’ teaching on the essentiality of baptism for both salvation and obedience in Mark 16:16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Belief, number one, plus baptism, number two, yields salvation, number three. Why did Jesus say, “But he that believeth not shall be damned,” instead of, “But he that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned”? Because if a person does not believe in Christ, he is “condemned already” (John 3:18). The true believer will be baptized; the unbeliever will not be baptized.

The Bible has a timeless relevance, and all who heed it will be simply and only Christians. The Baptists do not believe this truth because of what the manual says on page 22: “It is most likely that in the Apostolic age when there was but ‘one Lord, one faith, and one baptism’ and no differing denominations existed, the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all the rights and privileges of full membership. In that sense baptism was the ‘door into the church.’ Now, it is different; and while the churches are desirous of receiving members, they are wary and cautious that they do not receive unworthy persons. The churches therefore have candidates come before them, make their statement, give their ‘experience,’ and then their reception is decided by a vote of the members.”

The church does not belong to the members; it belongs to Christ (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28). And, those who repent and are baptized for the remission of their sins are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:38, 47). Jesus Christ has the ability to search the hearts; men do not (Rev. 2:23).