

BATTLING BAPTIST BAPTISM

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Beneficial discussions about differences in religion today are often beset by the popular practice of political correctness. Political correctness ties into the prevailing position of pluralism in religion, where everyone is viewed as right even though opposite and conflicting points of principle are in place, which does not permit open discussion of differences. Be that as it may, the value of the souls of lost men and women are crying out for help out of the morass of religious error.

In Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* written in 1915, he tells of fictional characters residing in the silent halls of the local cemetery and imagines them to be speaking from their graves. One of them is J. Milton Miles. His true-to-life epitaph reads: "Whenever the Presbyterian bell was rung by itself, I knew it as the Presbyterian bell. But when its sound was mingled with the sound of the Methodist, the Christian, the Baptist and the Congregational, I could no longer distinguish it, nor any one from the others, or either of them. And as many voices called to me in life marvel not that I could not tell the true from the false, nor even, at last, the voice that I should have known." Miles' dilemma, as imagined by Masters, exists in reality among the multiplied millions asleep in the silent city.

Many choose no longer to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," but among the faithful few this noble demand of Christianity is still taken as a sacred trust (Jude 3). Through reproof, rebuke, and exhortation the minds of men are challenged to examine what they believe in light of the sacred standard of scripture (II Tim. 4:1-5).

"Battling Baptist Baptism" brings to light the basic error of the entire Baptist system of belief. In the "Baptist Faith and Message," as adopted June 14, 2000, by the 15 million member denomination, baptism is declared to be a "church ordinance" (Article VII), that is, baptism by the hands of one in the Baptist fellowship makes one a member of the Baptist Church. The "Baptist Faith and Message" says, "It is an act of obedience *symbolizing* the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus" (emphasis mine *GM*). "Symbol" from the Greek *symbolon* is literally a "token of identity." The Baptists do not believe that in baptism the believer actually becomes dead to sin, the old life is buried, and the newness of life begins. They teach that baptism only

symbolizes those things; those things are believed to have happened at the moment of belief. Evidence of this emerges in the Baptist confession made before baptism: “I believe that God for Christ’s sake has forgiven me of my sins.” Baptist people like to speak of baptism being “an outward sign of an inward grace.” Note the word “sign.” Baptists are correctly represented as believing and teaching that baptism is not essential to salvation or “baptism does not save us.”

The *symbol* of baptism, therefore, literally does only one thing for the candidate: it makes him or her a member of the Baptist Church (Article VII). Now, bear in mind what the New Testament says about baptism and see in corrupted contrast that which every Baptist must affirm in order to retain his position that “baptism does not save us.”

First, Christ is not there in the water, but the Bible says, “Buried with him by baptism” (Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12). And, “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27).

Second, baptism is not into the death of Christ, but the Bible says, “Buried with him by baptism into death” (Rom. 6:3).

Third, the cleansing power of the blood of Christ is not in the water, but the Bible says, “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water” (John 19:33-34). And, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Rom. 6:3-5). Further, “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth” (I John 5:6).

Fourth, the old man of sin is not crucified, but the Bible says, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him” (Rom. 6:6).

Fifth, the body of sin is destroyed prior to baptism, but the Bible says, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6).

Sixth, the person is not raised with Christ, but the Bible says, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him” (Col. 2:12).

Seventh, the person is not “raised to walk in newness of life,” but the Bible says, “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

Eighth, no “faith in the operation of God” is required in baptism, but the Bible says, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God” (Col. 2:12).

Ninth, sins are not forgiven in baptism, but the Bible says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). And, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). And further, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

Tenth, “baptism does not save us,” but the Bible says, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (I Pet. 3:21). And, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. 2:12-13).

Eleventh, candidates are made Baptists by a vote of the members and baptism by the hands of one in fellowship with the Baptist Church. The “Baptist Faith and Message” states, “Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes” (Article VI). But, the Bible says, “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

Twelfth, sins are forgiven at the point of belief before baptism, “the form of doctrine,” is obeyed, but the Bible says, “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18).

“Battling Baptist Baptism” may bring those who believe the Bible to the point where they understand baptism and become willing to follow the Bible, which is written by God, instead of following the “Baptist Faith and Message,” which is written by men. One thing is for sure, if those who know the truth about Bible baptism refuse to engage the battle against Baptist baptism, then millions upon millions of precious souls will one day enter the cemetery saddened by their eternal separation from the loving Savior Jesus Christ.