

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

"DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU THINK"

BY B. G. ECHOLS

I am not a fan of bumper-sticker philosophy, but when I read the above on a student's car it struck me as exceedingly good advice. How many decisions do we make simply on this basis, "I think this is a good thing"? It is easy to think something is good when we want it. Our desire can easily blind us to facts that negate what we think. Many sins which are plainly condemned by God are justified in the mind of the guilty by, "I just think that it is right for me." "Don't believe everything you think!"

So many say, "I think one church is just as good as another." Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Mt. 16:18). If one church is as good as another, then a church started by the local nudist is just as good as the one Jesus built. Do you believe that? Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for His church (Acts 20:28). Anyone can start a church. It is not hard to get followers. Hundreds of men and women have. If you decided to start a church, would it be as good as the one purchased by the blood of Christ? You could use the Bible in "your" church, but would that make it as good as the Lord's church? Regardless of what man thinks, Christ built but one church (Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4). There is not another church on earth as good as His just as there is not another Savior as good as Jesus. "Don't believe everything you think!"

The New Testament clearly teaches that baptism is immersion. The Greek word "baptisma" was not translated, but transliterated. The word is defined "consisting of the process of immersion, submersion and emergence (from 'bapto', to dip)..." (Vine). If the translators had been honest, it would have been translated "immersion." Immersion is clearly indicated in various verses in the New Testament. "John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there" (Jn. 3:23). It doesn't take much water to sprinkle it on someone. "They both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38). Why both in the water? Neither would have gone into

the water if baptism were by sprinkling. "I think that sprinkling is just as good as immersion." "I think that a person's heart is more important than whether or not he was immersed or had water sprinkled on him." If a person has not been immersed, he has not been baptized into Christ. "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3,4). Believe what God says. "Don't believe everything you think!"

Our thinking in religious matters must be guided by God's word. God warns about trusting in our own thoughts. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). Our opinions are not only worthless but dangerous, when they do not agree with God's message. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah" (Isa. 55:8). Saul of Tarsus persecuted Christians thinking he was doing God's will. "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). We must listen to and believe what God says. "The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7). True religion is not based on, "I think," but on what God says. "Don't believe everything you think!"

"And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

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