

The Purpose of Baptism

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A Review of **I Want to Be Baptised**, by Eric Lane

Introduction

In 2003 I was in friendly contact with a family of Baptists in Watertown, New York who are congenial, morally upright, and dedicated to their religion. We discussed a little concerning our religious differences, and they brought me by a copy of a book they like to give people on the subject of baptism, entitled **I Want to be Baptised** written by Eric Lane, a British evangelical. The point of the book is to encourage people to be baptized but from an evangelical perspective. The book gives the evangelical position and argumentation on most New Testament passages that deal with baptism. I read the book and wrote a review of it for that family. Because Eric Lane is British, and his book was published in England, he uses British spelling throughout. Thus, my quotes from Eric Lane are not misspelled; they are British spelling.

Importance of Study

Before I begin the review of Mr. Lane's position, I need to emphasize the importance of the study. Acceptable baptism is obedience "from the heart" (Romans 6:17). This not only means sincerity (Ephesians 6:6) but also understanding (Matthew 13:15). If understanding is unimportant to proper baptism, anyone who goes swimming for recreation should enjoy the benefits of baptism.

I agree with my Baptist friends on several facts about New Testament baptism: it is immersion in water of penitent believers. We disagree on its purpose and necessity for salvation. Baptists believe "Baptism is not a saving ordinance. It should never be administered to any except to those who are already saved" (Bogard. 9). I believe and affirm, "Baptism to a penitent believer is for (in order to) the remission of sins."

Eric Lane, the author of the book, stated, "If we could agree on baptism, this would do more to promote unity than any other single factor" (24). I believe he is right, and thus, I write this review in ardent hope it will help lead us to the "unity of the Spirit."

There are a number of assumptions made in the book that are based on Reformed (Protestant) theology. I am neither a Protestant nor a Catholic but simply a Christian (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13). I insist that the Bible is our complete, sufficient spiritual guide (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and that we must accept what it teaches regardless of the philosophies of men (Colossians 2:8-10; Romans 3:3-4; 1 Corinthians 1:18 – 2:16). I try always to determine and describe my position on any spiritual or religious issue by what the Scriptures plainly teach rather than by reference to theological schools of thought (1 Peter 4:11). I strongly believe there are errors on both sides in the debate between Protestant and Catholic theology. However, in this review I plan to limit my comments to those issues that directly pertain to the purpose of baptism.

Points of Agreement

Mr. Lane states, "Paul says there is only one baptism" (18). This is certainly true (Ephesians 4:5).

He declares, “The one baptism, therefore is the baptism instituted by the one Lord, in Matthew 28:18-20” (21). Amen! This is highly significant, because in this very passage the Lord Jesus claimed, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (verse 18). Thus, we must do everything “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17), i.e., by His authority (Vine. 3:100; cf. Acts 4:18). We dare not act without that authority (2 Timothy 1:13; 2 John 9). Thus, whatever baptism we submit to must be the one authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The author adds, “The apostle Paul spoke most definitely about one baptism,, meaning that what Christ instituted prior to his ascension was to replace all previous and existing forms of baptising” (106-7). I agree that this is implied in Ephesians 4:5. Thus, the only baptism pleasing to God is the one baptism commanded by the Lord. Certainly, if the baptism of John, which was from God but is no longer valid (Luke 7:29-30; Acts 19:1-5), will not do, then no baptism that originated with mere men is acceptable to God.

However, Mr. Lane appears to be inconsistent on this point. He comments, “But since the only reference to re-baptism of John’s disciples is of certain ones at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-5), it seems unlikely that there was a general re-baptizing” (42).

This is mere human reason in direct contradiction to what the passage plainly teaches. The approved example of Acts 19:1-5 teaches that, though they had received a baptism which formerly was approved of God, they needed to be “baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (verse 5). The reason the apostle Paul stated that they should “be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” was that “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus” (verse 4).

Why did this apply to the men at Ephesus but not to others? How many times must the Lord teach something for it to be true? Certainly, anyone today who has only received a baptism of human origin needs to receive the one baptism that is by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. Lane also teaches:

This means there is only one mode (or form) of baptism, only one right way to carry out the practice. It means that there is only one meaning (or significance) for baptism.... It also means that one class of persons is qualified to be baptized (19).

I strongly agree that immersion is the only scriptural “mode” of baptism. In fact, according to the definition of the word “baptism,” sprinkling and pouring are not even baptism, much less scripturally authorized “modes” of baptism. I also agree that penitent believers constitute the only class of people qualified for baptism.

Points of Disagreement

However, as Mr. Lane further explains the significance of baptism, a crucial difference arises. We

disagree on the purpose of baptism. Mr. Lane writes, “It is therefore not baptism that makes people Christians but the preaching of the gospel and the response of faith” (50). I shall seek to prove that it is at the point of baptism that penitent believers become Christians and that baptism, rather than being in contrast to “the response of faith,” is a primary, essential response of faith.

Thus, Mr. Lane denies baptism is a condition of salvation (Ibid). He affirms, “... baptism symbolises salvation...” (11). He further writes, “If we ask about the grace of which baptism is the means.... It is not the grace of salvation, for that is assumed to be present in those who come to baptism” (119).

I shall seek to prove that baptism is a condition of and essential to salvation from sin.

The other area of disagreement is the substance of baptism. In effect, Mr. Lane teaches we should receive two baptisms, baptism in water and baptism with the Holy Spirit. He recognizes these are not one and the same baptism and that one can be received without the other. He writes, “... it is still true to be baptised by a Christian minister in water is far less important than to be baptised in the Holy Spirit.”

Holy Spirit Baptism or Water Baptism

When Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus from prison in Rome between 60 and 64 AD, he affirmed there is “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5). If Holy Spirit baptism is still administered by Christ from heaven, we must not administer water baptism. If we are to administer water baptism, then Holy Spirit baptism, as the baptism of John the Baptist, has served its purpose and ceased.

Remember, the one baptism now in effect is in the name of the Lord. Baptism in the name of the Lord is a command we must obey (Acts 10:48). But Holy Spirit baptism was a promise to be received (Acts 1:4-5). Surely we understand the difference between a promise and a command. If I commanded one of my sons to mow the lawn, it was his duty to obey. If I promised him he could take the car, it was his privilege to receive. A promise and a command are not the same. Holy Spirit baptism could not be the one baptism in the name of the Lord.

Further, Holy Spirit baptism was administered directly by the Lord Himself (Matthew 3:11), whereas the one baptism is administered by men in the name of the Lord (Matthew 28:19). Holy Spirit baptism is not the one New Testament baptism.

Baptism in the name of the Lord, the one baptism, is water baptism. After the household of Cornelius had also received the Holy Spirit as a witness to the Jewish disciples that uncircumcised Gentiles were to be accepted in Christ on an equality with Jews (Acts 10:44-45; 11:15-18; 15:7-9), Peter inquired, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10:47) The baptism Peter referred to was water baptism. “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48). Baptism “in the name of the Lord” is water baptism. And Mr. Lane and I agree that there is only

one baptism in effect today with divine approval, and it is “in the name of the Lord.”

In response to the preaching of Christ, the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:36) Before Philip baptized him, “both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water” (Acts 8:38). After the baptism, “they came up out of the water” (Acts 8:39). Now what substance was the eunuch baptized in?

The only people who were ever promised baptism in the Holy Spirit were the apostles of Christ (Acts 1:1-5). To be an apostle, one had to be an eye witness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21-26). Paul was the last witness of all (1 Corinthians 15:8). Why should we think people today are to receive Holy Spirit baptism?

There are only two examples of baptism with the Holy Spirit: the apostles on Pentecost (Acts 2) and the household of Cornelius (Acts 11:15-17). In both cases those who received the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues (Acts 2:1-11; 10:45-47). Are there any members of Grace Baptist Church in Watertown, New York who speak in tongues? Has not the gift of tongues ceased? (1 Corinthians 13:8-13)

The author of the book argues:

So Peter went on to say (in Acts 2:38 – KS) to his hearers that if they repented of their sins, especially of the rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah, they would be forgiven their sins and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Although he did not use the same word (which, after all, is only a metaphor not a doctrine), he was clearly promising them what Christ had promised him and his fellow apostles – to be baptised by the Holy Spirit (15).

This statement has several important errors. Christ did not promise to baptize the apostles by the Holy Spirit but with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). They were baptized by Christ Jesus Himself (Matthew 3:11). But, in contrast with water as a substance of baptism, the substance in which they were baptized (metaphorically, we are agreed) was the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5). Thus, if Holy Spirit baptism is still in effect, there are either two baptisms, or water baptism is not in effect with God’s approval.

The promise Peter refers to (Acts 2:39), the promise of “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (verse 38), is not baptism with the Holy Spirit. Why go all the way back to Acts 1:4-5 to identify the promise of Acts 2:39, when Peter is developing a text (Joel 2:18-32; Acts 2:17-21) that contained two promises: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and salvation for those who call on the name of the Lord? That is the promise of Acts 2:39. In Acts 2:38 Peter tells the people how to call on the name of the Lord, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,” and then promises they also could receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as promised by Joel. Later examples show that disciples received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the apostles, hands (Acts 8:12-19; 19:1-7). The Holy Spirit dwells in Christians today through His inspired word (Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16).

Purpose of Water Baptism

Mr. Lane comments on the baptism of John:

He could only baptise with water but they needed more – to be baptised with the Holy Spirit. Sin does not lie on the surface where the water falls, but in the heart which only the Spirit can wash. The Holy Spirit cleans the inner nature (35).

No, water cannot cleanse the heart, and the washing of dirt from the body is not the significance of baptism (1 Peter 3:21). But John's baptism, just as New Testament baptism, was "for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38). No amount of rhetoric will change this fact. When we are baptized in water the Holy Spirit cleanses our hearts of the stain of sin (John 3:5; Titus 3:4-7).

The author adds, "... baptism is compulsory and obligatory, just as the Lord's Supper is" (46). That is certainly true! The word "compulsory" means "demanded, directed, or designated by authority" (Webster, 468). "Obligatory" means "demanded or required by existing obligations esp. of a moral or legal nature" (Ibid, 1556). How can one fail to obey what God commands and be saved? (Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9)

Mark 16:16

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

On this passage, Mr. Lane argues:

And although salvation may appear to be made dependent on baptism as well as belief (he who believes and is baptized shall be saved,) this is clearly not an absolute condition, since it is he who does not believe, who is condemned, not he who is not baptised (50).

Either the Lord Jesus made baptism a condition of salvation or He did not. If the Lord Jesus Christ made baptism a condition of salvation, it is an "absolute condition" of salvation (Hebrews 5:8-9). In Mark 16:16, where did the Lord put baptism, before salvation or after? He put it before salvation and linked it to "believe" with the coordinate conjunction "and," which joins words, phrases and clauses of equal and like rank. He placed "be baptized" as coordinate to, equal to, "believe" as a condition of salvation.

Does the fact He didn't say, "He who is not baptized shall be condemned," eliminate the necessity of water baptism for salvation? Why not believe and obey what the Lord did say, instead of constructing an argument on what He didn't say? I certainly don't want to stake my hope of heaven on what Jesus didn't say.

Suppose a health teacher informed her class, "He who eats and digests his food will live; but he who does not eat will die." Would that mean digestion is not an absolute condition of living? No, the teacher would simply be dividing the people into two categories: those who eat and those who don't eat. One can't digest food if he doesn't eat food.

In Mark 16:16 Jesus divided people into two categories, not three. It's not believers, baptized believers, and unbelievers. It's baptized believers and unbelievers. One who doesn't have enough faith in Jesus to be baptized is classified as an unbeliever by the Lord. There is no such thing as a sincere, penitent believer who will not be baptized (Mark 16:16).

If a car dealer promised, "He who believes and is baptized shall receive a new car, but he who does not believe shall not," how many folks would refuse baptism? If we can see it for a car, why not for eternal life? The saved believer is the baptized believer. Baptism is the response of faith that results in salvation.

I stated earlier that I believed both Protestants and Catholics are wrong on how to be saved. This is a prime example of the point. Catholics teach, "He who is baptized is saved and should believe." Protestants teach, "He who believes is saved and should be baptized." Jesus declared, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." I hope you will join me in rejecting both Protestant and Catholic doctrine and accepting the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11).

Acts 2:38

"Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

On Acts 2:38, Mr. Lane teaches:

When they inquired what they must do (verse 37) Peter's reply was: Repent and be baptised, (verse 38). Both these terms are important and both are necessary.... Obviously the command to baptise is secondary to and dependent on the command to repent. Even so Peter demands it in his call for a response (62-63).

If baptism is "necessary," how can it be unnecessary to salvation? Which is it? It can't be both. "But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No" (2 Corinthians 1:13).

Yes, baptism is dependent on repentance. It would be a waste of time and a blasphemous fraud for an impenitent sinner to be baptized in the name of the Lord. But why does this make baptism subordinate to (less important than) repentance? Faith is dependent on hearing (Romans 10:17). Is faith subordinate to (less important than) hearing? The Pharisees ranked God's commands in order of importance, loosing some and binding others. This made their worship vain (Matthew 15:1-9). Jesus taught we must keep all God's commands (Matthew 23:23; 28:19-20).

The command to "be baptized" is connected to "repent" by the coordinate conjunction "and." Rather than being subordinate to (less important than) "repent," "be baptized" is coordinate (equal or like in rank) with "repent." Both are joined to "the remission of sins" by the preposition "for." Whatever repentance is for, baptism is for. If repentance is unto and necessary to forgiveness of sins, so is baptism.

The prepositional phrase "for the remission of sins" is precisely equivalent, both in English and

Greek, to the same phrase in Matthew 26:28. Jesus there declared, “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Did Jesus shed His blood on the cross to show our sins had already been remitted or unto the remission of our sins? Baptism is for the same purpose.

Mr. Lane adds concerning the 3000 on Pentecost, “Although the whole process took only a short time, the marks of discipleship were plainly present before baptism was administered” (64). What marks of discipleship? Before Peter preached to them they were devout Jews (verse 5). After Peter proved to them Jesus was Lord, “they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (verse 37) It is truly implied that they believed Peter’s message and thus did indeed believe that Jesus is “both Lord and Christ (verse 36). But were they at that point saved and disciples? Were they saved disciples by faith alone? They had not yet repented, for, in answer to their inquiry, “what shall we do?”, Peter commanded them to repent (verse 38). Were they saved disciples before and without repentance? (Romans 2:5)

Peter also commanded them to “be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Were they saved disciples before their sins were remitted?

Luke further records, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (verse 40). All who “gladly received his word were baptized.” Were they saved disciples before they “gladly received his word”?

Only the baptized “were added to them.” To what were they added? “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47b). All the saved were added by the Lord to the church. Were they disciples before they were saved? Saul of Tarsus persecuted “the church” (Acts 8:1). But the people Saul persecuted were “the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1). According to the inspired account, to be disciples of the Lord, to receive the remission of sins, to gladly receive the word, and to be added by the Lord to the church, people must “be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Those who have not been “baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” are not “disciples of the Lord.”

Mr. Lane’s own words imply this truth:

In verse 41 we are told that those baptized were added, which can only mean what the same term means in verse 47 – that they were received into the church, that is, the whole invisible body of Christ in general and the Jerusalem church (the only local church yet in existence) in particular (65).

This is precisely correct. But the people Jesus saves are those who compose His spiritual body, the church (Ephesians 5:23; 1:22-23). Only the baptized are members of that body; thus, only the baptized are saved.

The Samaritans **Acts 8:12-13**

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.”

Turning to the conversion of the Samaritans, recorded in Acts 8:5-24, Mr. Lane teaches:

The incident in Samaria is interesting and important for the additional factor of the exposure of Simon as an unregenerate man even after he had “believed,” and had been baptized. This makes it clear that not all professions of faith are genuine and that baptism in and of itself does not give divine grace (68).

Why does Mr. Lane have “believed” in quotation marks? Is it not because he doesn’t think Simon really believed? The passage says not one word about a “profession of faith” by Simon. The writer, inspired by the Spirit of God, states that Simon “believed” and “was baptized” (Acts 8:13). Mr. Lane simply denies a plain statement of Scripture. Why? Because this example plainly contradicts his theory that a saved person cannot so sin as to be lost.

The Lord promised, “He who believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Luke records that “both men and women” of Samaria, hearing Philip preach “Christ” (Acts 8:5), “the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12) “believed” and “were baptized” (Ibid). No one denies the genuineness of their faith or the reality of their salvation. But “Simon himself also believed” (not professed faith but “believed”) and was “baptized” (verse 13). By what rule of logic, grammar, or exegesis would one come to the conclusion that Simon was at this point “unregenerate”?

In fact, more is said of Simon’s faithfulness than of the other Samaritans. He “continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done” (Ibid). The word translated “continued” is the same Greek term rendered “continued steadfastly” in Acts 2:42 as a description of the faithfulness of the disciples in Jerusalem. They “continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine,” and Simon “continued with Philip,” an inspired evangelist. Only unreasonable adherence to a humanly conceived theory would blind one to the incontrovertible fact that Simon was saved because he believed and was baptized but afterward fell from grace through sin (Acts 8:14-24).

The Ethiopian Eunuch

Mr. Lane denies the genuineness of Acts 8:37 and comments:

It would be tempting to think that Philip, after his experience with Simon in Samaria, decided to examine his candidate for baptism and obtain a confession of faith from him. But it is more likely that this kind of examination came in after the apostolic age, accounting for its appearance in the writings of the fathers –

Ireneaus, Cyprian, etc (71).

It is most certainly true that the so-called “Apostolic Creed” that mainline denominations require comes from the traditions of the “fathers” rather than the apostles (cf. Matthew 15:9). It is also true that the practice of requiring the recitation of an “experience of grace” and a vote by a local church before baptism is a much later human tradition. What church voted on the eunuch when he was baptized in the wilderness on the road “from Jerusalem to Gaza”? (Acts 8:26)

But, even if Acts 8:37 is left out of consideration, the truth it teaches is implied in this and other passages. The treasurer asked Philip, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:36) Would unbelief hinder his being baptized? How would Philip know whether or not he believed? How can we determine whether or not a person requesting baptism is a believer? We must confess with the mouth our faith in Jesus Christ in order to be saved (Romans 10:8-10).

Without reference to Acts 8:37, what should we confess before baptism and in order to be saved? Simon Peter confessed, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16), and the Lord blessed him as the result (verse 17). Paul taught “that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Philippians 2:11). Obviously the exact wording may vary, but to be saved and to be baptized in the name of the Lord, one must confess his faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord.

After Philip baptized the eunuch, “the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39). Here Mr. Lane comments:

The commission of Christ is binding, but is not to be applied rigidly. Because the Ethiopian could not be received into a church or along with others formed into a church did not prevent him receiving baptism. Baptism is normally the rite of initiation into the church – but exceptions must be allowed for (71).

Mr. Lane is confused and confusing in his usage of the word “church.” We are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27), into His body (1 Corinthians 12:13), the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). This is the universal body of the saved (Ephesians 5:23), and there is but one (Ephesians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 12:20). We join a local church (Acts 9:26-28), a local group of disciples (1 Corinthians 1:2). When the inspired writer turns his attention away from the eunuch, he is a member of the universal body of the saved, the one church belonging to Christ, but he has not joined a local church. The text does not say what he did afterward, and, in respect for the silence of the Scriptures, we must not speculate (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Saul of Tarsus

Of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, Mr. Lane writes, “Here we have a case even more extraordinary than the last one, for there is a complete absence of the preaching of the gospel and of any response of faith and acceptance of discipleship (71-72).

Once again, the only reason Mr. Lane reaches such a conclusion is the blinding effect of a human theory, salvation by faith alone. Saul's case is indeed unique, in that Jesus appeared to Saul after the Lord's ascension into heaven (Acts 9:1-6). Mr. Lane correctly states the significance of this special, miraculous event. "Here we have a unique situation – the only man to be called to the apostleship directly by Christ himself since his ascension to heaven. It is this that explains the unusual features of this case" (72).

This is precisely correct, for Jesus appeared to Saul, not to save him, but to call him to and qualify him to be an apostle (Acts 26:15-16; cf. Acts 1:21-25; 10:40-42) .

Saul was not saved until three days after this miracle, and his salvation was due to his response of faith as the result of hearing the word. When, at the time of the miraculous vision, Saul urgently inquired, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6), Jesus would not tell him. Saul had to be saved the same way all people must be saved, by hearing the gospel (Romans 1:16-17; 10:17).

The Lord directed him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:6). Notice, Jesus didn't say, "should do" or "could do." He said, "must do." What Saul would be told to do was essential to his salvation.

He waited three days in physical blindness and in prayer, too anxious to eat or drink (Acts 9:8-11). If he was saved, he was certainly a miserably anxious saved man.

When Ananias came to Saul, he commanded him, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Baptism for salvation is certainly a part of the gospel message (Mark 16:15-16). Thus, Ananias preached the gospel to Saul. When Saul was baptized (Acts 9:18), his sins were washed away by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:22; 9:13-14), and he was saved (Mark 16:16). His baptism was his response of faith (Galatians 3:26-27).

Acts 22:16

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

The author comments on Acts 22:16:

Baptism of itself could no more wash away sins than could the blood of animal sacrifices under the law (Hebrews 10:4). Only the blood of Christ could achieve this (Hebrews 10:10,22).... But baptism in water signifies this Spirit-baptism and therefore submitting to it in the name of Christ is a confession of the faith through which the polluted nature is washed clean (see Acts 15:9) (72-73).

No, baptism "of itself" cannot wash away sins. Yes, only the blood of Christ can cleanse us from sin. But, when "our bodies" are "washed in pure water" (in contrast with the water, scarlet wool and hyssop of the law), "our hearts" are "sprinkled from an evil conscience" by the blood of

Christ (Hebrews 10:22). It's not a choice of blood or water. We reach the blood through the water. There is not one passage in the entire Bible that even remotely hints that water baptism "signifies Spirit-baptism." Once again, his evangelical theology blinds Mr. Lane to clear statements of Scripture. Acts 22:16 is so clear and simple it takes the help of a theologian to misunderstand it. The order is "Arise," "be baptized," "wash away your sins," "calling on the name of the Lord." Evangelical theology teaches, Call on the name of the Lord, your sins will be washed away, you should (not must) then be baptized, and then arise. Evangelical theology is precisely backward to the Scriptures. Water won't wash away sins, but the blood of Christ won't cleanse your soul of the stain of sin until you are baptized.

The Household of Cornelius

Concerning this case of conversion, Mr. Lane comments, "Further, there is unmistakable evidence that they not only heard the word, but were brought to repentance and faith through the work of the Holy Spirit" (75).

Of course they were brought to repentance and faith by the work of the Holy Spirit. But how does the Holy Spirit bring people to repentance and faith? Evangelicals assert that faith is given directly by a miraculous act of the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer. Thus, they teach sinners to pray for faith. But without faith our prayers are vain (James 1:5-6). Thus, evangelical theology places sinners in the unfortunate circumstance of a vicious cycle. Sinners must pray for faith, but unless they already have faith their prayers are vain. Such is the vanity of human philosophy.

The simple truth is that the Holy Spirit revealed the Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:12-13; Ephesians 3:1-7). When this word is preached, those who are noble of heart are led to believe and repent (Acts 17:10-12). The Word of God revealed by the Spirit of God has divine power to save the soul (Romans 1:16-17; James 1:18,21; 1 Peter 1:22-25).

There is no evidence whatsoever that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit led Cornelius and his household to faith and repentance. Rather, Peter later explained of this very case, "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe" (Acts 15:7).

As Mr. Lane recognizes, as the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the household of Cornelius spoke in tongues (Acts 10:46). Unless one is willing to teach that all saved people should speak in tongues as evidence of their salvation, he should not use this as an example of how to be saved. Rather, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentile household of Cornelius as divine proof that God accepts Gentiles on an equal basis with Jews (Acts 11:15-18; 15:7-9). This was a unique, non-repeatable event.

Cornelius and his household were saved in the same way all people must be saved: they heard Peter preach the gospel (Acts 10:36-43; 15:7), believed (Acts 15:7-9), repented (Acts 11:18), and were baptized (Acts 10:47-48). Cornelius and his family were saved, not by the outpouring of the

Holy Spirit but by hearing the Word of God (Acts 11:13-14).

Of this case, Mr. Lane asserts, “Not that baptism brought them salvation – it hardly needed to, since they were already saved” (75). But then he recognizes, “To refuse baptism is to refuse a command of Christ” (Ibid). You mean one can be saved while refusing a command of Christ? (Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9; 1 Peter 2:7-8)

The Philippian Jailer

Acts 16:30-34

And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word off the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

Mr. Lane reasons:

The gospel was proclaimed to the gaoler and his household (verse 32). But we notice that Paul only did this after he had called on him to believe and given him the assurance this was sufficient for salvation (verse 31). Is this not putting the cart before the horse? Does it not even imply that man is saved by his own act? (79)

He adds, “We may be sure the gaoler and his household were in a state of salvation when Paul proceeded to baptise them” (80).

As before, the writer’s theology causes him to bring confusion into a clear passage. Certainly we must do something to be saved. “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, Be saved from this perverse generation” (Acts 2:40). Why exhort people to be saved if there’s nothing they can do to be saved? If our salvation is entirely up to God, and there’s nothing we can do to be saved, why isn’t it God’s fault if we’re lost? In fact, faith itself is a work we must do (John 6:28-29).

Of course, if the jailer and his household were saved at the point of faith, it was “putting the cart before the horse” to speak the Word of the Lord to them after having already called on them to believe. But the problem is with Mr. Lane’s theology, not the Scriptures.

The jailer urgently asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30) In reply, Paul and Silas told him, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (verse 31). Now, that certainly proves that faith is essential to salvation.

But why would his household be saved as the result of his believing? The fact is, they have not

finished answering his question. In further reply, “they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house” (verse 32).

What did they tell them to do? It doesn't say. How can we know what Paul and Silas told him to do? Look at what they did in response to the word of the Lord spoken by Paul and Silas.

And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household (verses 33-34).

He and all his household were baptized. That's how all his family were saved.

Only after his baptism did he rejoice in his salvation. Only after they were baptized is it said they believed. The saved believer is the baptized believer.

The Ephesians

Acts 19:1-7

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' So they said to him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.' And he said to them, 'Into what then what then were you baptized?' So they said, 'Into John's baptism.' Then Paul said, 'John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.' When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all.'

Mr. Lane entitles this section “The baptising of certain Christians in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7)” (83). He assumes without proof that they were Christians before Paul baptized them (Although in a footnote on page 84 he acknowledges the possibility they were unsaved due to deficiency of faith). Mr. Lane comments on this case:

He had to administer Christian baptism to them (verse 5). The fact that they were already believers and had received a form of baptism was not sufficient for Paul.... John's baptism was not Christian baptism. Whether all John's disciples became baptised in the name of the Trinity cannot be established, but it was done in this case lest there be any confusion in these men's minds on these matters (85).

Mr. Lane contradicts himself in these comments. This is the only passage in the New Testament which teaches whether or not people who have received a baptism other than that in the name of the Lord (by His authority – Colossians 3:17; Acts 4:18) need to be baptized in the name of the Lord. These people needed to be and “were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:5).

Mr. Lane recognizes this and then turns around and questions whether this is always so. He allows human reason to negate the only divine teaching on the subject. The simple truth is anyone who has not received the one New Testament baptism, the one authorized by Jesus Christ, needs to receive it, even if he has been baptized a dozen times with baptisms authorized by mere men.

More good can be said about the baptism of John than about any denominational baptism. The baptism of John was authorized of God (Luke 7:30), was administered to responsible people upon their repentance (Luke 3:1-14) and was immersion in water for the remission of sins (Matthew 3:5-6; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:16).

But John taught them to believe in a Christ who was yet to come (Acts 19:3; Matthew 3:11-12; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:15-17). Thus, one who knew only John's baptism did not believe Christ had died, been buried, and raised from the dead the third day. Can anyone be saved in this age without believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ? (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

Paul first asked these men, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (verse 1) When the Ephesian men professed no knowledge of the Holy Spirit, Paul inquired, "Into what then were you baptized?" (verse 3) Paul obviously equates being a believer with having been baptized. Once again, the saved believer is the baptized believer.

Even though they had to be baptized to become saved believers, the Ephesians were saved by grace through faith rather than by boastful works (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Paul thought these men were already believers in Christ, yet he asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit (verse 1). Why ask such a question if every believer receives the Holy Spirit directly and supernaturally?

In order for them to receive the Holy Spirit, Paul, an apostle of Christ, had to lay his hands on them (verse 7). They evidenced the reception of the Holy Spirit by speaking in tongues and prophesying (Ibid). Mr. Lane recognizes "He had to confer on them the gifts of the Holy Spirit by laying hands on them (verse 6)" (Ibid). Thus, it would take the laying on of hands by an apostle of Christ for one to receive the Holy Spirit directly and supernaturally, and the evidence of such a reception would be miraculous, spiritual gifts. Those things were for a time when divine revelation was incomplete, and no one today receives the Holy Spirit directly and supernaturally (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).

The Apostle's Theology Of Baptism

After studying the examples of baptism in Acts, the book contains a section entitled "The apostles, theology of baptism." In the introduction to this section the author asserts, "Baptism is not the gospel, but only an ordinance of the gospel; it is not a work of grace, only a means of grace; it is not the way of salvation, only a representation of it" (89).

The gospel the Lord Jesus Christ commanded His apostles to preach in all the world is, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). Is baptism part of the gospel of Christ? The Ephesians were saved by grace through faith, but they had to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Ephesians 2:8-10; Acts 19:1-5). Jesus is the way of salvation (John 14:6), but we must be baptized into Him (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27).

Mr. Lane then comments, “For while it is true that our main motive in being baptised must be obedience to Christ, God has never demanded blind obedience.” God demanded blind obedience of Abraham. He commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the son of promise, though He did not tell Him why (Genesis 22:1-2), and Abraham through faith obeyed though he did not understand why God made such a demand (Genesis 22:3-12; Hebrews 11:17-19). Our main motive in being baptized is to be saved (Mark 16:16), that is, to receive the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). And we cannot be saved apart from obedience to Christ (Hebrews 5:8-9).

A summary of the meaning of baptism

1 Peter 3:17-22

For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

Mr. Lane then proceeds to a discussion of 1 Peter 3:17-22 as a summary of the meaning of water baptism. He teaches:

Baptism is a figure, or illustration of salvation. As such, it is like, the flood which was an old Testament figure of salvation. The word literally is anti-type,. The Old Testament contains a number of types, that is, illustrations or foreshadowings of the saving work that was to be performed by Christ. The fulfillment of one of these in the New Testament is called the anti-type,. Baptism thus teaches us about salvation, especially when viewed in the light of the flood, for they have a common feature, namely, water (90-91).

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” (1 Peter 3:21, **King James Version**).

The apostle Peter by inspiration taught, “baptism doth also now save us.” Mr. Lane claims, “Baptism thus teaches us about salvation.” Whom will you believe? Peter states, “baptism doth also now save us.” Mr. Lane would have us believe, “baptism doth also not save us.” Whom will you believe?

The author of the book contradicts himself. He has baptism being both the figure (type) and the “like figure” (“anti-type”). It can’t be both. The Old Testament contains the figures (types) which illustrate the spiritual principles of the New Testament, whereas the New Testament contains the fulfillments (“anti-types”) of those figures (Hebrews 8:1-5). Noah’s salvation by water is the figure (type) (1 Peter 3:17-20). Our salvation by water baptism is the fulfillment (anti-type) (1 Peter 3:21-22).

What a beautiful parallel there is between Noah’s salvation and ours! Noah was in danger of death (Genesis 6:13,17), and so were we (Romans 3:23; 6:23). God saved Noah (Genesis 7:16), and He saves us (Titus 3:4-5). Noah was saved by grace (Genesis 6:8), and we are too (Ephesians 2:8-9). Noah’s salvation was by faith (Hebrews 11:7), and so is ours (Romans 1:16). Noah had to obey God to be saved (Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:22; 7:5), and so do we (Hebrews 5:8-9). Noah was saved by water (1 Peter 3:20), and we are saved by water baptism (1 Peter 3:21). As the result Noah was saved (1 Peter 3:20; Hebrews 11:7) and righteous (Genesis 7:1; Hebrews 11:7), and so are we (1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:17-18).

The author further claims:

For every believer is in Christ who bore the judgment of God and rose to life to bring his people to safety. This is what Peter means by saved through water, – it is through their faith-union with Christ who submitted to the judgment of God for them that believers rise with Christ to eternal security (92).

Such a muddled misinterpretation of such a clear passage. Is every believer in Christ? As Jesus spoke in the temple, “many believed in Him” (John 8:30). But Jesus denounced these believers, “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do” (John 8:44). Were they in Christ? John also records:

Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:42-43).

Are believers who refuse to confess Christ because they prefer the praise of men to the praise of God in Christ? Even the demons believe in Christ (James 2:19). Are they in Christ? We obtain a “faith-union” with Christ when we are baptized into Him (Galatians 3:26-27). The saved believer is the baptized believer.

Mr. Lane further vainly attempts to explain 1 Peter 3:21:

He might be misinterpreted as preaching baptismal regeneration, – the idea that it is by being baptised and by that alone that we are saved. But Peter denies this – it is not the water that cleanses us, for then only our flesh would be clean (the

putting away of the filth of the flesh,). The water of baptism cannot reach our inward being and it is this that needs cleansing. It is our conscience that is defiled and water cannot touch that (92).

I do not disagree with one thing the author here teaches, but it is all irrelevant to the issue whether or not water baptism is essential to salvation. No, baptism by itself will not save. Baptism is valid only as it is the obedience of faith (Mark 16:16; Romans 1:5). No water cannot touch the inward man, and there is no saving power in the water. The blood of Jesus cleanses the conscience from sin (Hebrews 9:13-14), but the sin cleansing power of that blood is applied to the conscience when our bodies are washed in water (Hebrews 10:21-22).

The author proceeds:

What then is the place of baptism here? Baptism is intended as a sign and outward confession of faith in Christ as the one whose death and resurrection are enough to save the soul. This confession is itself part of the faith through which salvation is received, according to Romans 10:9-10.... To be baptized is to say, I have believed on him. I have come as a sinner and cast myself upon him., One who is in this position has already cleansed his conscience (Hebrews 9:14) (92).

Baptism is in a sense a confession, but Romans 10:9-10 certainly doesn't teach it. The confession of that passage is "with your mouth" (verse 9) and "unto salvation" (verse 10). Now, if baptism were this confession, it certainly would be "unto salvation."

Is it not apparent Mr. Lane is not very careful in his use of Scripture? Is he not twisting the Scriptures to his own destruction and the destruction of those who follow him? (2 Peter 3:16)

The blood of Christ does indeed cleanse us (Hebrews 9:14), but it is when our bodies are washed in water (Hebrews 10:21-22). The death and resurrection of Christ are certainly sufficient for our salvation (Romans 5:9-10), but we are baptized into His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). The only reason for Mr. Lane's faulty reasoning and twisting of Scripture here is his blind adherence to the false doctrine of salvation by faith alone (James 2:24).

The author concludes on 1 Peter 3:21:

This is exactly what Peter is saying here – baptism is an acknowledgement of the fact that through faith Christ has already cleansed the conscience.... The word for answer, used here has the sense of a response to a demand,. The demand is by the crucified Christ to come to him in faith and then go out and confess him in baptism (93).

Mr. Lane says "answer" means "a response to a demand." The definition of a word may be substituted for that word without changing the meaning of a sentence. So, let's substitute "response to a demand" for "answer" in 1 Peter 3:21:

There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth

of the flesh, but the response to a demand, of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (New King James Version).

Doesn't make sense does it? Nor does it change the fact that Peter plainly teaches that water baptism does save us.

What does the word "answer" refer to? The **New American Standard Version** makes it clear: "And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Corresponding to Noah's salvation by water, baptism saves us. It's not that there's any soul cleansing power in the water, and it's not because it removes dirt from the body. It's because, by doing what the Lord says to do to be saved, we are appealing to Him to cleanse our conscience from sin. He does this by giving us the benefit of the blood of Christ. The power is in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, by which He was declared to be the Son of God and enabled to minister His own blood as our High Priest. Thus, in water baptism we call on the name of the Lord, and He forgives our sins (Acts 2:21, 37-38).

After all the rhetoric Mr. Lane cleverly employs, the inspired apostle still says, "baptism doth also now save us." Mr. Lane claims, "Baptism thus teaches us about salvation." The apostle still teaches, "baptism doth also now save us." Mr. Lane would have us believe, "baptism doth also not save us." And you must make up your mind whether to believe Holy Scripture or evangelical doctrine.

Baptism and our justification in Christ Romans 6:3-4

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

On Romans 6:3-4 Mr. Lane writes:

Not all would agree that the apostle here makes reference to the subject of water-baptism, for some think he is talking only of Spirit-baptism. There is no question that his main reference is to a spiritual operation, for he is clearly speaking of being baptized into Christ. But why should this exclude any reference to water-baptism? Why must it be a case of either-or, and not rather of both-and? The real position surely is that, while he is speaking particularly of spiritual baptism into Christ, he is doing so through the use of the picture of water-baptism. It is almost always the case in the epistles that baptism means Spirit-baptism, with the word baptism, being used pictorially. This is hardly surprising in view of the stress placed on Spirit-baptism by our Lord in his farewell discourses. He described it as the promise of the Father, (Acts 1:4-5), telling his apostles that after he had departed they should remain in Jerusalem and await the fulfillment of the promise (93-94).

The promise of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to the apostles alone (Acts 1:1-5). This baptism of the Holy Spirit was evidenced by speaking in tongues (Acts 2:1-4) and led them into all truth (John 16:13-15). If that's what puts us into Christ, all believers should know all truth and speak in tongues.

Baptism in the name of the Lord, the baptism we must receive for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), is water baptism (Acts 10:45-48). And there is just one divinely authorized baptism in effect today (Ephesians 4:5). The truth is, there is not a single reference to baptism with the Holy Spirit in any of the New Testament epistles. It is a case of "either-or." There is only one New Testament baptism, not two. And the same word cannot have two meanings in one usage.

Indeed water baptism does picture something - not our salvation, but the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Jesus died on the cross, was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and was raised the third day. We die to the love and practice of sin, are buried in water (Thus, baptism is immersion), and are raised to a new life.

Yes, baptism is "into Christ." "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3) The "death of Christ" and the "blood of Christ" are used synonymously (Romans 5:9-10). Jesus shed His blood in His death. The "shedding of blood" is a reference to death. We are saved by His blood (Matthew 26:28) in that His blood refers to His death in our behalf. But how do we get into His death, that is, reach the benefits of His blood? By being baptized into Him (Romans 6:3). And that baptism is water baptism, the beautiful picture of His death, burial, and resurrection.

This is the reason water baptism is in a sense a confession. As we go through a likeness of His death, burial and resurrection, we are confessing that we are putting our trust in that death, burial, and resurrection for our salvation. By this simple act of faith we get into Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27), that is, we get into His death, we receive the benefits of His blood.

The author adds:

So when Peter comes to preach the gospel and to call on his hearers to repent and be baptised, he not only assures them of the remission of sins, but also of the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). In support of this he adds: for the promise is unto you and to your children..., (Verse 39). The promise had been declared to them by Christ and they had been commissioned to declare it to others (94).

It is certain that the "gift of the Holy Spirit" is not baptism with the Holy Spirit, else we have two baptisms in effect. But Mr. Lane is indeed confused. He has sinners saved by Spirit baptism and then confessing their salvation by water baptism. But Peter makes water baptism a condition of receiving the "gift of the Holy Spirit." "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift

of the Holy Spirit”(Acts 2:38). Mr. Lane puts Spirit baptism before water baptism and equates “the gift of the Holy Spirit” with baptism with the Spirit. Peter places water baptism before the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter certainly doesn’t support Mr. Lane’s contention.

Next the author adds, “The word baptise, in relation to Christ’s gift of the Spirit is a metaphor for water-baptism” (94).

Now Mr. Lane truly is confused (and confusing). First he had, without proof, water baptism as a metaphor for Spirit baptism. Now he has Spirit baptism as a metaphor for water baptism. Which is it? This is as circular as a dog chasing his tail and no more logical. Above all, there’s not one word of Scripture to support it.

Next Mr. Lane goes into a theological discussion:

Indeed, this is the main way in which we learn the theological meaning of baptism from the epistles – from passages dealing with Spirit-baptism. The experience of salvation is spoken of metaphorically by reference to water-baptism. This preserves a very sound evangelical view of the sacraments and is the best safeguard against mechanical views of these institutions. They must not be exalted above the work of salvation itself (which unfortunately happens outside Roman Catholicism as well as inside it). Paul never speaks explicitly about baptism in his epistles and only once about the Lord’s Supper. But this does not mean these ordinances are to be undervalued or neglected, for they are used as illustrations of salvation (96).

Mr. Lane is more concerned with “theological meaning” and an “evangelical view” than he is with obeying the Lord. Else he would not explain away such plain passages. Let us turn way from all human wisdom, whether Catholic or Evangelical, and accept the wisdom of God revealed in Scripture (1 Corinthians 1:18 – 2:13) .

The word “sacrament” is never found in the Bible, nor is the idea there. “Sacrament” is from the Latin “sacramentum,” meaning mystery. Of course the term “mystery” is found 27 times in the New Testament. It simply means “a hidden thing, secret” (Thayer, 420). God’s plan for human redemption was a mystery (secret) which is now revealed (made known) by the writings of the apostles (Ephesians 3:1-7). The Catholics have seven sacraments, and Protestants recognize two: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. But the word “mystery” is never applied in the New Testament to any outward act, whether baptism, the Lord’s Supper, or any other.

By “sacrament” Catholics mean “a visible sign instituted by Christ by which grace is conveyed to our souls” (Gibbons, 218). Protestants conceive of sacraments as “ordinances” or “institutions” which “are used as illustrations of salvation.” Both are wrong. God demands of us obedience to the faith (Romans 1:5; 16:25-27) in order to be saved (Hebrews 5:8-9).

It is true that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the only two outward acts we are taught to obey

that symbolize something, but neither of them symbolize our salvation. They symbolize what procured our salvation, the sacrifice of Christ for our sins (Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Neither are they properly “mechanical” acts that confer benefit in and of themselves. The sinner is baptized into Christ, into His death (Romans 6:3-4), if he obeys this command “from the heart” (Romans 6:17-18). In the Lord’s Supper Christians commune with the blood and body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16), as long as we remember what Christ did for us as we partake (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Otherwise we eat and drink condemnation to ourselves (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Forget about sacraments and obey the faith from the heart.

This matter of sacraments illustrates two problems of the Protestant Reformers. In one respect they over-reacted to the Catholic error of salvation by meritorious works (Romans 4:4-7) and went to the opposite error of salvation by faith only (James 2:24). On the other hand, because all the Reformers came out of Catholicism, they retained many Catholic superstitions. This included the belief in sacraments.

The author avers, “Paul never speaks explicitly about baptism in his epistles.” Only blind adherence to false doctrine could cause a man who has obviously studied the Scriptures extensively to make such a grossly false statement. What about 1 Corinthians 1:14-16? Is it an explicit reference to water baptism?

I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

By the way, the apostle makes it quite clear why he was glad he did not personally baptize more: “lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.” Paul plainly implies in the context that, to belong to Christ, one must be baptized in His name (verses 11-13). The truth is, there are eight passages in the epistles that explicitly refer to water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 1:13-17; 12:13; 15:29; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12; and 1 Peter 3:21).

Does it exalt faith “above the work of salvation itself” to teach that we gain the benefits of the death of Christ through faith? (Romans 3:21-26) Why does it exalt baptism “above the work of salvation itself” to recognize the scriptural truth that by faith we gain the benefits of the death of Christ when we are baptized into Him? (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27)

Then Mr. Lane teaches:

The second point is the way in which particular individuals come to enjoy what Christ had done once and for all. They do so by faith in him which, if it is true saving faith and not merely mental or historical, and temporary faith, unites them to Christ (97).

What is “true saving faith”? Faith alone is dead (James 2:17, 20, 26). Will a dead faith save? To

be perfected (made complete), faith must be coupled with works (James 2:22). A disobedient faith will not save (John 8:30, 44), but an obedient faith will (Hebrews 11:8). Faith only will not justify (James 2:24), but “faith working through love” will (Galatians 5:6).

Colossians 2:10-12

On this passage Mr. Lane simply reiterates the arguments previously made.

Please look at the passage.

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead (Colossians 2:11-12).

Verse eleven compares the forgiveness of sins available in Christ to the fleshly operation of circumcision. As in circumcision, in which the flesh was cut away, Christ performs an operation without hands on our hearts in putting off the body of sins.

Verse twelve explains when the operation takes place. We are buried with Him in baptism (once again demonstrating water baptism is immersion in likeness of His burial) and then raised with Him from that grave.

For this operation to be effective, we must have “faith in the working of God.” It’s not a mere mechanical act, but the obedience of faith.

Before baptism the body of sins envelopes our hearts. When we in faith are buried with Christ in baptism, He removes the body of sins from our hearts. Then we are raised with Him. To have the body of sins removed from our hearts by Christ, we must be buried with Him in baptism.

Baptism and our adoption by the Father

Galatians 3:26-27

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

Mr. Lane teaches extensive error on the biblical doctrine of imputation, but, since this does not directly pertain to the purpose of baptism, I will refrain from replying to it.

He does comment, “Justification comes about because of spiritual union with Christ” (101). That’s precisely correct. He explains this as being “a spiritual process of becoming joined to Christ in such a way that we share in the benefits of his death, burial and resurrection” (102). Amen! And when does that union take place? “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27) .

Of course, Mr. Lane tries to explain this away as just a metaphorical reference to baptism. He contends baptism is just a sign of the believer's adoption and justification. These dodges have already been repeatedly answered. The truth is, water baptism stands between the sinner and entrance into Christ, where we are justified and become God's children.

Baptism and Our Regeneration Through the Holy Spirit
Titus 3:5-6

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Mr. Lane comments, "Paul says here that God saved us not by our works but by the work of the Holy Spirit in regenerating us"(103).

No, Paul says we are not saved by our own "works of righteousness" or "works done in righteousness" (**American Standard Version**). Since, as Mr. Lane admits, the "washing of regeneration" in verse five is a reference to water baptism, and since Paul uses it in contrast with "works of righteousness," baptism is not a work of righteousness that will not save. There is nothing in baptism that merits or earns us salvation.

If we tried to earn the forgiveness of sins by doing good deeds for people or giving sacrifices to God (What do we have that God needs? – Psalm 50:7-14), we would be attempting to earn salvation by our own works of righteousness. But no amount of good deeds will make up for even one sin (Luke 17:10). Only the blood of Christ will take away our sins (Hebrews 9:13-14). Meritorious works is the fallacy of the Catholic penance system.

Obedience to divine terms of pardon does not earn salvation but demonstrates our faith. Noah was saved by grace through faith when he obeyed God and built the ark (Genesis 6:8,13-17,22; 7:1; Hebrews 11:7). Abraham was justified by faith when he obeyed God and left his home and kindred to go to Canaan (Hebrews 11:8). Israel was saved by grace through faith when they marched through the Red Sea on dry ground (Hebrews 11:29) and "were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). Israel received Jericho by grace through faith after they marched around the walls of the city thirteen times, the priests blew on the rams' horns, and the people shouted (Joshua 6; Hebrews 11:30). Naaman was cured of his leprosy by grace through faith after he dipped seven times in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:1-14). We are saved by water baptism (Mark 16:16), not as a "work of righteousness," but as the obedient act of faith that puts us into Christ where God's grace is given (Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 2:4-7). There is nothing meritorious about baptism. It's not an act of kindness toward men or of sacrifice to God. It is a simple act of faith that expresses our dependence on the blood sacrifice of Christ and by which we receive the benefits of that sacrifice (Romans 6:3-4). Salvation by water baptism nullifies neither

God's grace nor our faith but unites them.

The author appeals to 1 Corinthians 12:13 as a parallel to Titus 3:5 (Ibid). The passage reads: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." The **King James Version**, **New King James Version**, **New International Version**, and **New American Standard Version** all render the preposition before "one Spirit" as "by." The **American Standard Version** and **English Standard Version** translate it as "in." The Greek preposition translated either "by" or "in" is "ev." It also occurs in verses three and nine of this chapter, where it refers to the Holy Spirit as the instrument by which something occurs. The apostle is thus saying the Spirit is the one who leads us to be baptized. It is not that we are baptized "with the Spirit" to get into Christ but that the Spirit leads us to be baptized into Christ. The Holy Spirit leads us by the instrument of the word He revealed to be baptized (cf. 1 Peter 1:22-25) into Christ. This baptism, the one New Testament baptism, is water baptism.

Mr. Lane contends:

This statement is consistent with all the others which contain the idea of baptizing with the Spirit, for all refer to the work of regeneration which John the Baptist admitted he could not perform but which Christ could and did. Thus baptism is a sign of this aspect of salvation too (Ibid).

John the Baptist never said one word about the new birth (regeneration). He said Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16). Jesus specified this promise was to His apostles (Acts 1:1-5). It did not save them but enabled them to do their work as apostles (Acts 1:8).

The passage says nothing about baptism being a sign of anything. It teaches we are saved by two things: "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

Yes, "regeneration" is a reference to the new birth. What are we washed in? Jesus taught Nicodemus to be "born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5). The apostle taught we are saved "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). We are saved, born again, when the Holy Spirit, through the gospel, leads us to be baptized in water. What a beautiful parallel between Jesus' teaching and Paul's. Is it not obvious the washing is in water?

Is this not perfectly consistent with other passages that make our salvation dependent on a washing?

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27).

"... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from

an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

What part does the Holy Spirit play in our regeneration (new birth)?

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you (1 Peter 1:22-25).

The Holy Spirit revealed the word, the gospel, which is preached to us. When we are led by the gospel to be baptized in water for the remission of sins, we are “born of water and the Spirit.” This is the “washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

Sometimes, to get around the washing in water of John 3:5 and Titus 3:5, psuedo-scholars contend that the conjunction “and” should be translated “even,” making “water” a reference to the “Spirit.” The word is translated “and” rather than “even” in both Titus 3:5 and John 3:5 by the **King James Version, American Standard Version, Revised Standard Version, New American Standard Version, New King James Version, New International Version, English Standard Version, International Standard Version, and New Revised Standard Version.** Obviously, the scholarship of the English speaking world recognizes the word should be rendered “and.”

Some contend John 3:5 refers to two births. They contend that “water” refers to our physical birth and that “spirit” refers to our spiritual new birth. This would have Jesus telling us that, to be born again (spiritually), we first have to be born the first time (physically). Kids today would say, “Well, du-uh.” Surely the Lord wasn’t so shallow. In fact, when reference is made in John’s record of the life of Christ to physical birth, it is called a birth of “blood” (John 1:12-13). He even states this is not the birth connected with our salvation (Ibid).

Some appeal to John 7:38-39 as proof that water represents the Holy Spirit. We know water represents the Holy Spirit in this passage because the apostle John so states. But there is no such statement in either John 3:5 or Titus 3:5. Thus, the position that water in these passages represents the Holy Spirit is mere assumption and assertion devoid of scriptural proof.

Mr. Lane concludes on Titus 3:5:

The Holy Spirit is the water of life – without him we lie dead in trespasses and sins. But through him we are born again and receive a new life which is spiritual and eternal. Baptism symbolises this too, for the Holy Spirit is called not the water, but the bath, of regeneration (104-05).

The Holy Spirit gives life through the word He revealed (John 6:63). The passage doesn’t even hint that water represents the Holy Spirit. It identifies two elements in our salvation: “the washing

of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” When the Holy Spirit, through the word of the gospel, leads us to be baptized in water, we are born again and saved.

What is Christian Baptism?

In his concluding section, Mr. Lane attempts to define “Christian baptism.” He observes, “All the apostles, both in their practice and teaching, set baptism forth in the closest connection with the gospel they preached” (107). No, baptism is an essential part of the gospel they preached and that we must preach. Jesus directed them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Then He told them what the gospel message they were to preach was: “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (verse 16). Baptism is just as much a part of the gospel as faith.

Mr. Lane continues, “So close is the connection between the spiritual response (repentance and faith) and the outward confession of it in baptism that to be baptised becomes virtually the same as to repent and believe” (Ibid).

Being baptized is not virtually the same as having saving faith; it is the same. Those who came to Christ were not called believers until after they were baptized (Acts 16:30-34). The saved believer is the baptized believer.

The author adds, “Baptism is used as a metaphor to describe the spiritual process of union with Christ by faith and therefore to stand for the fruits of that union – justification, adoption and regeneration” (Ibid).

No, baptism is necessary in order to have union with Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). Thus, baptism is essential to justification (Romans 5:9-10; 6:3-4), adoption (Galatians 3:26-27) and regeneration (John 3:5; Titus 3:5).

Mr. Lane attempts to place baptism on a lofty plane by declaring, “It is exalted in the mind of Christ and his apostles to such a high position that it is almost made to represent the whole saving process” (Ibid). But this only makes baptism a sacrament, a symbol of the salvation which has already taken place, an idea unknown to Scripture. Baptism represents the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord (Romans 6:3-4). It is essential to salvation (Mark 16:16).

He concludes, “Nor is it ever spoken of theologically apart from the teaching of the doctrine of salvation” (Ibid).

True, but it is spoken of as before and in order to salvation (Mark 16:16).

What is required of those coming to baptism?

Mr. Lane teaches, “It is only disciples of Christ who have a right to be baptised” (108). Of course,

this means people are disciples before and without baptism. If people are disciples before baptism, they are disciples before they are saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21), born again (John 3:5), have their sins remitted (Acts 2:38), have their sins washed away (Acts 22:16), are in Christ (Romans 6:3-4), are free from sin (Romans 6:17-18), are in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), become children of God (Galatians 3:26-27), are sanctified and cleansed (Ephesians 5:26), have the body of sins put off (Colossians 2:11-12), or have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience (Hebrews 10:22). Baptism is the act by which penitent believers become disciples (Matthew 28:19).

Mr. Lane goes to the heart of his error on baptism, and his misunderstanding of the entire plan of salvation, when he observes:

Now it is usually said that the basic error of Roman Catholicism is not denial of parts of the word of God, (that is the heresy of Liberalism or Modernism) but adding to it – requiring not only faith but works also. It is the Galatian heresy – that while faith in the gospel is necessary for salvation, so also is circumcision (109).

Has Mr. Lane never read James 2:24? “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and warned them, “for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17). But Satan deceived Eve with the lie, “You will not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). That one word turned the truth of life into the lie of death. The inspired writer declares that justification is “not by faith only.” Protestants teach that justification “is by faith only.” That one dropped word turns the truth of life into the lie of death.

To understand justification, we must realize the different kinds of works mentioned in the New Testament: good and evil (Titus 2:14; 2 Timothy 4:18), of God and of darkness (John 6:28-29; Romans 13:12), of Christ and of iniquity (Philippians 2:30; Matthew 7:23), of the Lord and of the flesh (1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 5:19), befitting repentance and wicked (Acts 26:20; Colossians 1:21), righteous and hypocritical (Acts 10:35; Matthew 23:3,5), perfect and dead (James 1:4; Hebrews 9:14), of faith and of the law (also called boastful and of righteousness, i.e., earned righteousness) (1 Thessalonians 1:3; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:9; Titus 3:5). Some of these works will cause us to be lost (Galatians 5:19-21), some will not save (Galatians 2:16), but some are essential to salvation (John 6:28-29; Philippians 2:12; Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26). Judgment will be on the basis of our works (Romans 2:5-10). How can this be if works have nothing to do with our salvation?

Mr. Lane summarizes concerning who should be baptized thus:

It is not over-simplifying the situation to say that the question Who may and should be baptised?, is exactly the same as the question Who and what is a Christian?, If baptism is only for Christians, and for all Christians, then its requirements are precisely the same as those for becoming a Christian, or, to put it another way, for salvation itself (109-10).

Of course, this means one is saved and a Christian before he is baptized. But the Lord put baptism before salvation. “He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16). “Christian” is the proper name for a disciple of Christ (Acts 11:26). Remember, baptism is the act by which penitent believers become disciples.

To make the determination who should be baptized, Mr. Lane summarizes his position on the requirements for salvation. He concludes:

Faith is the response to the whole set of facts contained in the preaching of Christ.... It is believing that the things he did in his life, death, resurrection and ascension he did in order to make forgiveness and life available to those who hear and believe. Faith also has two elements:

i. an acceptance of the literal truth of the facts of the gospel, so that there is no doubt about any of them

ii. Coming personally to him with these sins and, because of what he did and offers, believing he takes them away from the sight of God and implants a new life by which they can be overcome.

What is important is that nothing else is required, either for salvation or baptism, other than these two things – no further instruction, spiritual guidance or even response (114-15).

The gospel not only contains facts to believe, it also includes commands to obey (Romans 10:16).

There is more to preaching Christ than Mr. Lane realizes. Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5) and as the result they believed and were baptized (verses 12-13). He preached Jesus to the eunuch of Ethiopia (Acts 8:35), and as the result the eunuch asked to be baptized (verse 36). Preaching Christ includes preaching baptism.

There is more to saving faith than Mr. Lane recognizes. Saving faith is the basis of hope, is itself based on evidence and pertains to unseen things (Hebrews 11:1, 3). But saving faith also includes trust in God. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). We must trust God to reward us if we “diligently seek Him.”

How do we seek Him? Isaiah advised Israel: “Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6). We seek the Lord by calling on Him. How do we call on Him? Certainly not by praying (Matthew 7:21). The New Testament never teaches alien sinners to pray for salvation.

The prophet Joel promised and prophesied concerning the latter days: “And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Joel 2:32). On the day of Pentecost the apostle Peter quoted this passage and applied it to the events of that day (Acts 2:17-21). He informed them that the Lord on whom we are to call is Jesus of Nazareth, whom God has made “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:22-36). His audience, many of whom had participated in the

crucifixion of Jesus Christ, were cut to the heart and urgently inquired what to do (Acts 2:37). Peter replied, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). This was how these believers were to call on the name of the Lord.

Ananias was sent to Saul of Tarsus to tell him what he must do (Acts 9:1-17). Ananias’ command to Saul was, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

The apostle Paul reminded the Roman Christians of the “word of faith” by which they had been saved (Romans 10:8-17). That word promised, “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). But that word teaches, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). It promises:

But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:8-10).

Thus, to call on the name of the Lord, you must hear the gospel, believe in Christ Jesus, repent of your sins, confess your faith in Christ, and be baptized for the remission of sins.

What does baptism have to do with calling on the name of the Lord? “And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21, **New American Standard Version**).

Baptism is the means God has appointed for us to reach the blood of Christ (Romans 6:3-4), and when we obey the Lord in baptism we are calling on Him, appealing to Him, to cleanse our consciences of the guilt of sin.

What Blessings Are Experienced in Baptism?

Mr. Lane asserts, “The only means of publicly confessing an experience of conversion that we find in the New Testament is baptism” (117).

Not only is baptism never identified in the New Testament as “confessing an experience of conversion,” the whole idea of an “experience of conversion” is foreign to the New Testament. The Lord’s appearance to Saul of Tarsus is usually cited as just such an experience (Acts 9:1-6; 22:6-8; 26:13-18). As Mr. Lane recognizes, the Lord did not appear to Saul of Tarsus to convert him but to call him to be an apostle (Acts 26:16-18). It was three days later when Saul’s sins were washed away (Acts 22:16).

Furthermore, the wrong Person in the Godhead appeared to Saul to make this an evangelical conversion experience. Mr. Lane contends conversion is effected by Spirit baptism. Jesus Christ, not the Holy Spirit, appeared to Saul on the way. Three days later, when Ananias came to him, Saul still had not received the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17).

Baptism itself is the culmination of conversion. Being converted is turning to God (cf. Acts 3:19; 26:20). Conversion is the comprehensive word to describe the whole process by which the sinner returns to God (Acts 15:3). To be converted, the sinner's heart must be changed (Acts 16:14). This involves faith (Acts 15:9), but there is more to conversion than faith (Acts 11:21). There must also be a change in one's life (Matthew 18:1-4). This involves repentance (Matthew 12:41; cf. Jonah 3:10), but there is more to conversion than repentance (Acts 3:19). Conversion also involves a change of loyalty (1 Thessalonians 1:9). This involves confession of faith with one's mouth (Romans 10:10), but since confession is "unto" salvation, there is more to conversion than confession (Ibid). Conversion also involves a change of relationship, leaving Satan and becoming one with Christ (Colossians 1:13). This is accomplished in baptism (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27).

Mr. Lane continues:

If we ask about the grace of which baptism is the means, the answer must be: the grace of assurance. It is not the grace of salvation, for that is assumed to be present in those who come to baptism. What baptism is intended to do is to seal to the heart of the believer the benefits of Christ's work which he has already taken by faith (119).

He adds:

We easily doubt the reality of the invisible and spiritual. And even if we continue to believe in its reality we may doubt whether we have any part in it. So Christ gave sacraments or ordinances – simple, tangible and dramatic presentations of his work for and in us (120).

Remember, this whole idea of a sacrament is wholly foreign to the Scriptures and was borrowed by the Protestants from the corrupt system of Roman Catholicism.

The only benefit Mr. Lane sees in baptism is a mysterious assurance we have been saved. What a pathetic caricature of the Gospel teaching about baptism. When a penitent believer obeys the Lord from the heart in baptism, he becomes a disciple of Christ (Matthew 28:19), is saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21), is born again (John 3:5), has his sins remitted (Acts 2:38), i.e., washed away (Acts 22:16), gets into Christ (Romans 6:3-4), is freed from sin (Romans 6:17-18), gets into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), becomes a child of God (Galatians 3:26-27), is sanctified and cleansed (Ephesians 5:26), has the body of sins put off (Colossians 2:11-12), and has his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience (Hebrews 10:22). Now those are indeed important reasons to be baptized.

It is true that we receive assurance of our salvation as the result of baptism but not in some mysterious way. The apostle Paul assures us:

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together (Romans 8:16-17).

He doesn't say the Spirit bears witness to our spirits. Rather, He bears witness "with" our spirits.

The Holy Spirit, in the word, tells us how to be saved. If our spirits can testify we have done this, we have the witness of the two spirits, the Holy Spirit and our own spirits, to our salvation. The Holy Spirit informs us, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." If we know we have done this, we have the testimony of the two spirits to our salvation. The Spirit commands, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." If we can truthfully testify we have obeyed, we have dual testimony to the remission of our sins. The Spirit teaches, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." If we have the inward assurance we have complied, we have divine and human testimony that we are children of God.

Finally, the author teaches, "Baptism, in a sense, is our first act of obedience apart from the initial obedience of faith, by which we accepted the terms of the gospel and responded to them" (121).

Baptism is the act obedience by which we get into Christ and His death and receive the benefits of His blood (Romans 6:3-4,17-18). It is the obedience of faith by which we become sons of God (Galatians 3:26-27). It is a term of the Gospel by which we are saved (Mark 16:15-16).

Conclusion

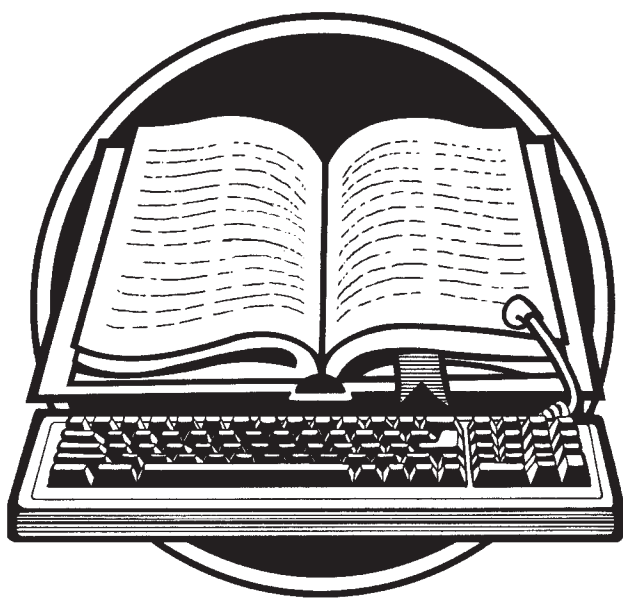
I honestly believe if you will study this review carefully and with an open mind, you will realize you need to be baptized for the remission of sins. Remember, as Mr. Lane correctly taught, there is only one baptism presently in effect with the approval of the Lord. If you have not received that baptism, you need to do so. That baptism is by the authority of Jesus Christ, immersion in water for penitent believers and is for (in order to) the remission of sins.

If you haven't received this baptism, it stands between you and becoming a disciple of Christ, being saved, being born again, having your sins remitted, i.e., being washed away, getting into Christ, being freed from sin, getting into the body of Christ, becoming a child of God, being sanctified and cleansed, having the body of sins put off, and having your heart sprinkled from an evil conscience.

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

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