

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

May 13

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"3RD GRADE - SAVED & BAPTIZED"

Some time ago I read a publication titled *"Let Your Light Shine"*. I am not familiar with the publishers of this paper nor do I know of their religious affiliation, however upon reading the publication it is evident that they either do not know the scriptures or they ignore the things taught therein.

One item in particular caught my attention. Under the heading *"Children in Christ"* they have a drawing sent in by a young child which depicts a person (I assume it is intended to be the young child) with a light shining upon him and then the name of the child is given along with the statement which serves as the title of this article: *"3rd Grade - Saved & Baptized."* Several false doctrines and assumptions are contained in this statement.

First of all, to say that a small child (I would assume the child to be about 8 or 9 years old) has been saved implies that the child was lost before. However, Jesus said, *"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt. 18:3). Little children do not need to be saved, they are **SAFE**. If we must become *"as little children"* to enter into the kingdom of heaven then we must conclude that little children are free from sin since this is what we need to be in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Furthermore, the statement supports the false doctrine that salvation precedes baptism. Jesus said, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16). On the day of Pentecost, Peter, after he had convicted those Jews assembled on that occasion of the sin of crucifying the Son of God, told them to *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"* (Acts 2:38). In Acts 22:16 Paul, in giving an account of his conversion, said that Ananias told him *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"*. These, and many other passages, make it abundantly clear that faith, repentance and baptism precede salvation. The doctrine set forth in this publication is, as brother A. C. Grider used to say, "wrong on both ends and not right in the middle."

If one respects the teaching of God's word he will realize the need of convicting men and women (not little children) of their sins and will persuade them to obey the commandments of the Lord that He may become the author of their salvation (Heb. 5:8,9). This involves more than just knowing what the scriptures say. A little child can memorize Mark 16:16 or Acts 2:38 but not have an understanding of what sin really is or have genuine faith in Jesus. Little children sing of their love for Jesus and speak of their love for God but at that age their faith is really in their godly parents who are seeking to instill this love in their hearts. With such teaching and training the day will come when they will still sing of their love for Jesus and speak of their love for God, but it will not be just because their parents told them but because they are now able to study and understand the truth for themselves. I have known of parents who have encouraged their children to be baptized at a very early age. I wonder how many of these parents realize that they are teaching their children that they are guilty of sin and in need of salvation. Yes, as parents, we not only need to teach our children **WHAT** to believe but also **WHY** they should believe it. It is so encouraging and refreshing to see young children being brought up in the *"nurture and admonition of the Lord"* (Eph. 6:4), however we should not espouse a doctrine that

teaches little children are sinners in need of salvation. The time will come when they will be accountable and will sin. When that time comes they will need to become as they are now, little children free from sin. This will be accomplished by their being cleansed by the blood of Christ.

✍ *James Hahn*



SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT

When teachers of error are praised and teachers of truth are condemned something's not right. When compromisers of truth are commended for their "wonderful attitude" and defenders of truth are charged with self-righteousness something's not right. When false doctrine goes uncontested and truth proclaimed is called "traditionalism" something's not right.

Yes, all of these things are going on and something's not right. Men can verbally declare their soundness all they want but when they show more support for those who teach false doctrine and compromise the truth than they show for men who courageously proclaim and defend the truth something's not right.

✍ *James Hahn*



"OWNED, BUT NOT READ"

On a TV quiz show, a number of people were asked to name a book that nearly everyone owned but did not read. It came as no surprise to me when they revealed that the number one answer was the Bible. I believe it is a sad commentary on our nation when this condition is not only present, but is readily admitted by all.

I am sure that nearly every person reading this article has a copy of the Bible in your home. When was the last time you studied the

Bible? I am convinced that the great lack of knowledge most have of the Bible is the reason the majority of the people listen to "their" preachers without questioning what they teach. Many do not know enough about the word of God to raise any questions about anything they may hear.

It may come as a shock to many, but you need to realize that you have no hope of salvation if you have no knowledge of God's word. Jesus said, "*Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32). If the truth is that which will make us free from our sins then how can we even think of being saved if we have no knowledge of the truth.

Friends, we not only invite you to examine the things we teach in the light of God's word, we beg you to do so. This is the only way you can be sure that you are obeying the truth. Those who do not want you to question what they teach either do not have the truth or they are not worthy of the truth. Study the Bible; then submit your life in obedience to His will revealed therein. This is the only way you can be right and have the hope of heaven when this life is over.

✍ *James Hahn*

Belleville church of Christ

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www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

James Hahn (317) 745-1507