

**'Raccoon' John Smith on . . .**

## **Infant Baptism**

Pioneer preacher 'Raccoon' John Smith (1784-1868) openly preached simple New Testament Christianity through his life. This excerpt from his biography teaches an important lesson . . .

Soon after this he went out on Slate Creek and began to preach the ancient gospel among the Methodist and Baptist of that region. An itinerant of the Methodist church was already on the grounds and the attention of the people was soon divided between the two . . .

One day a mother brought her infant into the Methodists that he might receive baptism at the hands of the preacher . . . no regard being paid to the cries and struggles of the child that with all its strength resisted the ordinance.

On the next day Smith, in the presence of all the people, led ten persons, one by one, into the water, and immersed them for the remission of sins. Seeing the Methodist preacher in the crowd, Smith walked up from the stream . . . seizing the preacher by the arm he pulled him gently but firmly along toward the water. Resistance would have been in vain, for 'the Dipper', as the people now began to call him, was a man of powerful muscle.

"What are you going to do, Mr. Smith?" said the man. "I am going to baptize you, sir!" said Smith. "But I do not wish to be baptized," said the man, trying to smile at what he deemed to be a rather untimely jest, If, indeed, it was a jest at all.

"Do you not believe?" said Smith. "Certainly I do," said the preacher. "Then come along sir" said 'the Dipper' pulling him nearer the water. "Believers must be baptized!"

"But" said the man, now uneasy at the thought that possibly it might not be a joke at all, "I'm not willing to go. It certainly would do me no good to be baptized against my will."

Smith raised his voice so all the multitude could hear, "Did you not yesterday baptize a helpless babe against its will, though it shrunk from your touch, and kicked against your baptism? Did you get its' consent, sir? Come a long with me for you must be baptized!"

The preacher loudly and earnestly protested and 'the Dipper' released his hold . . . "You think, sir, that it is all right to baptize others by violence, when you have the physical power to do it; but when you yourself are made the unwilling subject, you say it is wrong and will do no good. You may go for the present; but, brethren and friends, let me know if he ever again baptizes others without their full consent; for you yourselves have heard him declare that such a baptism can not possibly do any good."

- from *The Life of Elder John Smith*  
by **John Augustus Williams**

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## **A Beauty Contest**

It is obvious from America's beauty contests with swimsuit and evening wear competitions that most people think of beauty in terms of shape and size. If there is a talent competition the winner is the one who is the most entertaining.

So, it really interested me to hear recently of the "Miss Senegal" contest in Africa. It was decided not to have a swimsuit competition because such dress was immodest. And the talent competition required each contestant to demonstrate some agricultural skill! Several of the entrants showed their ability at plucking chickens. And the woman who won did so by killing and skinning and butchering a goat!

What do you think makes a woman beautiful? Surely it is more than just physical appearance. Haven't you at sometime suddenly forgotten how pretty a woman was when she started talking? It is like the Proverb, "As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion." (11:22, NASV)

But perhaps you agree more with the conclusion of a long section about a woman's beauty found in Proverbs 31..."Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord she shall be praised"! (31:30)

The apostle Peter speaks of those women who are good examples (1 Pt. 3:1-6). Paul talks about women being respectful (Eph. 5:22-33). He says the women who are loving and kind bring honor to the word of God (Titus 2:3-5). Those who work and are not idle (1 Tim. 5: 11-15) give the enemy no occasion for reproach.

You can tell what will make a young woman beautiful by seeing what is admired in an older woman ... "a reputation for good works, has brought up children, shown hospitality to strangers, washed the saints' feet, assisted those in distress, devoted herself to every good work. .. " (1 Tim. 5:10)

God's woman knows that real beauty has to do with how she lives. And godly men everywhere admire that beauty above all.

- by **Robert Hines**

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### ***"Who's On First?"***

Abbott and Costello, the famous comedy team of the previous generation, are most remembered for their hilarious routine about baseball. It was a classic example of the confusion that results when people aren't communicating "on the same wave-length." It's not uncommon, even today, to hear people remark "who's on first?" – an allusion to that comedy duo - when confronted with a confusing situation.

This brings to mind some lessons we need to learn - lessons concerning our efforts to teach the Bible to lost people. It is very possible that we will begin teaching folks at a level they are not prepared to receive. We ought to be careful about assuming that a student knows certain fundamentals. If we start with a faulty foundation of knowledge, we are certain to run into difficulty as we try to move our students on to the things that are *"hard to be understood"* (2 Peter 3:10). We should follow the example of Philip, who determined his student's level of understanding and *"began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus"* (Acts 8:35).

We need to be sure that we are 'using Bible words in Bible ways'. If we are careless in this matter, we are opening the door to unsound conclusions. For instance, if we talk about the birth of a baby and refer to it as a 'miracle', we may later be confronted by the argument that all the true Bible miracles can be dismissed with a natural explanation. A birth is, in fact, a marvelous thing, but it is not a miracle in the Biblical sense. (Only the virgin birth of Jesus would be accurately proclaimed a miracle.) So, again, we must learn to be careful with terminology.

Finally, we should be cautious about using phrases and jargon that are very familiar to us, but may

leave a student in utter confusion. It would be a shame to waste a good teaching opportunity simply because we weren't careful about analyzing our student's ability to comprehend the message. There is a *"time when ye ought to be teachers"* (Hebrews 5:12). And good teachers *KNOW* their students.

Pray that God will help us find the good and honest hearts, and that He will give us wisdom to use every opportunity to the fullest.

- by **Greg Gwin**