

# BAPTISM,

As Held By Baptists.

Professor A. T. Robertson, D.D.



# COMMUNION,

The Baptist Position as to Restricted  
Communion.

President E. Y. Mullins, D.D.



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# BAPTISM.

## AS HELD BY BAPTISTS—LIGHT FROM ALL SOURCES.

PROF. A. T. ROBERTSON, D.D.

It would seem superfluous for anything more to be said on the subject of immersion. The Baptist contention on this point is as nearly universally accepted as anything in Scripture is likely to be. English and American Baptists have made a marked impress upon the world by their distinctive doctrines. The power of the truth witnessed by Baptists is felt in all Protestant countries.

### THREE VIEWS AS TO IMMERSION.

In the modern world there are three attitudes assumed towards immersion in the Scriptures. One is that immersion alone is meant by the word baptize; the second is that the word means either immersion, pouring or sprinkling; the third denies that immersion is scriptural. It is not often that genuine scholars now go to the extreme of saying that immersion is not baptism. Dr. Shedd, in his Commentary on Romans, endeavors to show that Paul, in Rom. 6:4, did not connect baptism and burial. But this species of exegetical gymnastics is so rare as not to be taken seriously by the student of Scripture. There is a much larger number of writers who freely admit that immersion is the proper meaning of baptize, but who

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insist that another meaning is permissible also in special cases. Hence, it is argued, one cannot properly insist on immersion alone as baptism. Something else will do as well, or almost as well. Dr. A. Plummer is a fine example of this type of scholars who wish to find some scriptural justification for modern practices in Christian worship. Writing in the new *Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible*, he says: "The mode of using it was commonly immersion. The symbolism of the ordinance required this. It was an act of purification; and hence the need of water. A death to sin was expressed by a plunge beneath the water, and a rising again to a life of righteousness by the return of light and air; and hence the appropriateness of immersion." That would seem conclusive, if he had not added: "But immersion was a desirable symbol, rather than an essential," mentioning the stock objections about household baptisms. The Baptists are by no means alone in claiming that nothing but immersion is taught in the Scriptures. In fact, the overwhelming bulk of modern scholarship is with the Baptist contention on this point. The trouble is not so much here, as in the conclusion from this fact. The Romanist will say: "Yes, but the church had the right to change the mode of the ordinance." He falls behind the doctrine of an infallible church. The appeal to Scripture does not reach him. The Lutherans, and many other Paedobaptists, admit it freely, but affirm that the form is a matter of indifference, and claim that pouring and sprinkling are more convenient, and more suitable to modern conditions and customs. It is denied by them that the form is essential to obedience to this command.

This is the position of the majority of Paedobaptists. The wise line of argument with those who hold this view is to show that the form is essential to the symbol, that the very idea of baptism is destroyed when the form is broken, that an ordinance is meant in the nature of the case to be unchangeable; in a word to make it clear, that one who loves the Bible must follow the Bible teaching. It is just at this point that most of the irritation arises in the discussion of this subject. In our view we assume that no one is baptized at all who is not immersed on a profession of faith. This is considered arrogance by many who differ from us, and it is frequently said that we make immersion essential to salvation. If we expect to reach those who disagree with us, we must take pains to be understood, and to make it clear that our stress on immersion is not because we consider it essential to salvation, but essential to the ordinance. Baptism is not essential to salvation, but we insist that, when one is baptized, he should be really baptized. Baptists also feel very strongly the beauty of the symbolism of baptism as a death and resurrection. We are unwilling to see the pictured truth of the ordinance destroyed by the substitution of some other act. Besides, we contend that the command of Jesus cannot be obeyed unless the thing commanded by Him is done.

#### THE SUBSTITUTION OF SPRINKLING FOR IMMERSION.

It is a commonplace among scholars that the council of Ravenna in 1311 was the first council to put sprinkling on a par with immersion. This permission to use sprinkling, says the Schaff-Herzog Cyclopædia of Religious Knowledge, "was favored by the

growing rarity of adult baptism." Up to this time sprinkling was only allowed in case of the sick, and gradually for infants. It was the doctrine of baptismal regeneration that led both to infant baptism and sprinkling. The belief that only the baptized were saved caused something to be done that would answer for baptism to insure salvation. Luther took the side of immersion and tried to stem the tide towards sprinkling, but he failed. Calvin considered it a matter of indifference. Roman Catholics stand by the council of Ravenna. The Continental Anabaptists were divided as to immersion. Modern advocates of sprinkling stand for a rite that gained its triumph at the close of the Middle Ages.

#### THE GREEK CHURCH.

The Greek Christians did not accept the decision of Ravenna, and did not cease the practice of immersion. This is a very striking testimony to the meaning of baptize, since the Greeks are credited with knowing the meaning of words in their own language. It is true, they practice trine immersion, but this fact has no bearing on the question of immersion or sprinkling.

#### THE EARLY FATHERS.

There is such a wealth of testimony here that one hesitates what to use. I have before me, as I write, the Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Period from B. C. 140 to 1100 A. D., by Prof. E. A. Sophocles, himself a native Greek. This book is the standard authority for this period of the Greek language, and is invaluable in the study of ecclesiastical terms. He, in accordance with all Greek lexicons, gives dip, immerse, plunge, as the meaning of the

word. He refers to Barnabas, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Ireneus, Origen, Cyril, Gregory, Epiphanius, etc., to prove the mode. Moreover, Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas both speak of "going down into the water" and "coming up out of the water." Tertullian uses the Latin word *mergito*, to plunge.

When the Teaching of the Twelve came to light, there was much ado made because this document of the Second Century permitted pouring when immersion could not be done. This is true. Already the doctrine of baptismal regeneration had arisen, and so much stress was laid upon baptism that when there was not enough water for immersion, pouring was allowed. But this is not the Scripture teaching. No such emphasis is laid upon baptism by the New Testament. Moreover, in the Teaching of the Twelve, when pouring is allowed a different word is used from *baptizo*. The word used for pour is *ekcheo*, a word never used in the New Testament in connection with baptism. Now the fact that *ekcheo* is here used for pouring, as distinguished from *baptizo*, proves that *baptizo* does not mean pour.

#### ANCIENT GREEK.

*Baptizo* is not used as often as *bapto*, from which it is derived. But each means to dip, to plunge. Both words are used in figurative expressions also, as all words are. One can be plunged in grief, immersed in cares, etc. Liddell and Scott's Standard Greek Lexicon (seventh edition) gives not a single example that permits pouring or sprinkling. What the precise difference is between *bapto* and *baptizo* has not been determined. In practical usage no real distinction can

be observed, save *baptizo* is more common in later Greek; *bapto* in the earlier idiom. We have the same situation concerning *raino* and *rantizo*, to sprinkle. The ancient Greek uses *raino*, the later Greek uses its derivative, *rantizo*, but with no real difference in sense.

#### CONTEMPORARY GREEK.

The Biblical Greek is based on the Universal Dialect, which was occasioned by the spread of the Macedonized Attic by the conquests of Alexander the Great. Plutarch, Dio Cassius, Lucian, Philo, Josephus, Polybius, Diodorus, Strabo, all use *baptizo*, and all use it in the sense of dip. These writers wrote in the language which lay immediately behind Biblical Greek, and were in a sense contemporaries of Biblical Greek. Plutarch speaks of one dipping (*baptizo*) himself into the lake. Josephus (*Antiquities* XV., 3, 3) tells of young Aristobulus, brother of Mariamne, who went swimming with some of Herod's servants. At the proper time, in the dark of the evening, they "dipped him as he was swimming," and so he was drowned. The word *baptizo* is here used for "dipped."

#### THE SEPTUAGINT.

Both *bapto* and *baptizo* are used in the Septuagint translation in literal and figurative senses, but always with the sense of dip. In II. Kings 5:14, we read of Naaman: "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan." There the Septuagint uses *baptizo* for "dipped."

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The New Testament is based immediately upon the



Septuagint Greek, and both are based on the Universal Dialect. Prof. Sophocles (Lexicon for Roman and Byzantine Periods) says of *baptizo*: "There is no evidence that Luke and Paul and the other writers of the New Testament put upon this verb meanings not recognized by the Greeks." The word assumes a technical application to a special ordinance in the New Testament, but the act used as an ordinance is the original and persistent meaning of the word. The Jews had ablutions before John the Baptist introduced the ordinance of baptism. Some of those ablutions were immersions, but there is no evidence that the Jewish Proselyte baptism of later times (which was also immersion) existed before the time of Christ. In Luke 11:38 we are told that the Pharisee marveled at Jesus because "He had not first washed before dinner." The word for wash is *baptizo*, and refers to the Pharisaic scrupulosity about ceremonial defilements. To make sure of ceremonial purity, a whole bath was felt to be necessary. In Mark 7:4 we read that when they come "from market, except they wash, they eat not." There again *baptizo* is used for wash. Some ancient documents here read *rantizo*, sprinkle, showing clearly that *baptizo* and *rantizo* mean different things. See margin of Revised Version. The reading *rantizo* doubtless arose from the difficulty felt by those not Jews in thinking that everybody would go to the trouble of taking a bath after coming from the market before meals. In Luke 16:24 *bapto* is translated dip, "that he may dip the tip of his finger in water." *Baptizo* is used in figurative senses in the New Testament, but always in harmony with the original and literal meaning of the word.

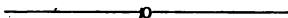
The baptism of death, of fire, of the cloud, of the Holy Spirit, all preserve the same imagery of the literal usage. The way to learn the real meaning of a word is not from the metaphor, but from the literal sense. We have seen from the use of the word *baptizo* in Greek writers of all ages, from the time of Homer till Modern Greek, that *bapto* and *baptizo* mean to dip. So then, the presumption is all in favor of this idea in the Bible, unless the connection makes it impossible, and renders a peculiar sense proper which does not elsewhere exist. We have seen that in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament *bapto* and *baptizo* mean to dip. We have seen also that in the New Testament, when the ordinance is not spoken of, both *bapto* and *baptizo* mean to dip or immerse in a literal or figurative sense. What, then, is the sense when *baptizo* is used for the ordinance of baptism? We observe at once that *rantizo*, to sprinkle, and *eccheo*, to pour, are both used in the New Testament, but never in connection with the ordinance of baptism. The word *baptizo* is consistently used throughout. We should expect *baptizo* to have one meaning, since we have observed this to be true of it elsewhere. This one meaning should run through all the figurative uses of the word also. We suggest that one use successively pour, sprinkle, immerse in every instance in the New Testament where the word baptize, or baptism, occurs. The result will completely remove pour and sprinkle from serious consideration. Dip or immerse will suit every time. The circumstances surrounding the ordinance of baptism naturally suggest immersion. Jesus went down into the water, and came up out of the water (Mark 1:10): So also

Philip and the Eunuch went down into and came up out of the water (Acts 8:38.). The baptism took place while down in the water. If the word *baptizo* elsewhere always means immerse, certainly there is nothing here to make it otherwise. The New Testament descriptions of various baptisms suggest an immersion. Moreover, Paul has drawn a picture of what baptism is like. In Rom. 6:4ff he tells us that baptism is like death, burial and resurrection. See also Col. 2:12. The very symbolism of baptism demands going down into and rising from the water. It is impossible to picture burial and resurrection by pouring or sprinkling. Immersion does do it, and nothing else does. The argument is complete, as complete as it is possible to make any argument. No real objections can be found in the Scriptures. The number baptized at Pentecost does not show immersion to be impossible. Baptist missionaries among the Telugus have duplicated that experience several times. The water was at hand also, for Jerusalem was well supplied with large pools, and always had plenty of water. The baptism of the jailer at Philippi is entirely possible. It is not stated when the baptism took place. Baptism by immersion is common in jails now. Water can be found in plenty when it is wanted. But, one may say, suppose water could not be found, what then? Do nothing. Baptism is not essential to salvation. A man in a desert can wait till he gets out of the desert, if he ever does. If we do not know that Jesus was immersed in the Jordan, we do not know anything in the Bible. It is impossible to understand language.

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

If Jesus was immersed, you wish to be immersed also. You ought not to be willing to do something else. If He went all the way from Nazareth to the Jordan to be immersed by John, we ought not to say anything about convenience now. It is not a question of what we would rather do. Jesus was immersed. Will you be content with doing something else for your own convenience, and offer that to Him for obedience? It is not a question of salvation, for we are not saved by baptism. But why do anything if you are not willing to do what Jesus did, and what He commands? He has commanded us to be immersed. He has nowhere commanded pouring or sprinkling.

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# COMMUNION.

## THE BAPTIST POSITION AS TO RESTRICTED COMMUNION.

PRESIDENT E. Y. MULLINS, D.D.

Things which may be taken for granted by every Baptist must often be restated in a discussion relating to Christians of other denominations. The supreme authority of Christ in all things is our fundamental Baptist pre-supposition. The Scriptures as the only sufficient and authoritative revelation of Christ's will claim also our unswerving allegiance. That the New Testament reveals a polity and order for the local churches which is of permanent utility and lasting obligation, we maintain with no less conviction. That the two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are the only outward forms which bear the divine sanction, as embraced in the order of the churches, Baptists hold today, as they have ever held. That the forms of these ordinances, as well as their significance, their connection with one another, their utility as means of grace, and their general position in the Christian system, bear a vital relation to the will of Christ, we strenuously maintain.

Now then, we come to the point. As Baptists we say account ought to be taken of the connection between the Lord's Supper and baptism; between the Lord's Supper and church-membership; between the Lord's Supper and spiritual character; between the

Lord's Supper and the truth which it symbolizes. All this is but another way of saying we should refer the ordinance in all respects to the will of Christ. If any think that we mar the symmetry of obedience by exalting an external form to a position of undue importance, we reply: The importance of a point which is an issue in a controversy is not necessarily the gauge of its importance as a member of a larger system of things. The surgeon does not commit himself to the position that the little finger is of greater importance to the body than the right foot, merely because the blood-poisoning which is beginning to invade the body by way of the little finger, requires him to bestow exclusive attention upon that member. Your doctrine of proportions can be applied normally only when conditions are normal.

#### PREREQUISITES.

The first prerequisite to the Lord's Supper which I name is spiritual character. Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, a heart regenerated by God's Spirit, these must precede a scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper. "Take, eat, this is my body." Matt. 26:26. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. Luke 22:20.

Again, we eat and drink unworthily when we eat and drink "not discerning the Lord's body." I. Cor. 11:29. Every passage of Scripture which deals with the subject shows that believers, and believers only, are permitted to partake. To take the opposite view and make a sacrament of the ordinance which imparts spiritual life, is to strike at the very roots of Christi-

anity, and alter its whole method of dealing with men, and inevitably empties it in due time of all spiritual power.

The next prerequisite to the observance of the supper is baptism. By baptism I mean immersion. It is not in keeping with the purpose of this article to dwell at length upon the proofs of the statement that the immersion of the body of the believer in water, and immersion only, is baptism. The meaning of the Greek word, the uniform New Testament practice, the symbolic significance of baptism as a burial and resurrection, the uniform testimony of Greek lexicons, the witness of innumerable scholars of all denominations, living and dead, all agree in the view that baptism by immersion was the uniform and invariable New Testament practice.

That baptism should precede the Lord's Supper is so universally admitted by all denominations as the Scriptural requirement, that it seems scarcely to need proof.

Baptism, with others of course, is held to be sprinkling or pouring, as well as immersion, but they are in perfect accord with Baptists as to the order in which the two ordinances stand to each other.

Some of the Scripture proofs that baptism should precede the supper are as follows: "Repent ye and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." Acts 2:38. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16:16. "They then that received his word were baptized." Acts 2:41. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." Gal. 3:27.

## PRINCIPLE OF OBEDIENCE.

All of these passages show that baptism is the initial act of the believer's Christian career. It was clearly the practice in New Testament times. Not a single exception to the rule can be found. Then, too, it is the ordinance which symbolizes the beginning of spiritual life, and of necessity belongs at the outset. It follows, therefore, that the supper must follow baptism. If immersion alone is baptism, then the unimmersed should not be invited to the supper. In view, then, of the agreement between Baptists and others on the point that baptism should precede communion, and in view of the overwhelming proof that immersion only is scriptural baptism, it is clear that Baptists break with their brethren of other denominations, not in restricting the Lord's table to the baptized, but in restricting baptism to the immersed.

A third qualification for the Lord's supper is membership in a local church of Christ. This of course involves also an orderly walk. The orderly walk of the Christian pertains to obedience in externals, in the polity and order which Christ has appointed; and also worthy conduct in daily living. Church membership ought to constitute a pledge of both these forms of obedience.

Now we find that the baptized were added to the churches in New Testament times, and that the supper was observed by the churches as such. Indeed, the ordinances were committed to the churches, and apart from them there is no organization or body of people on earth authorized to observe them. See Acts 2:37-47; I. Cor. 11:17-34.



Now in restricting the supper to converted people, and baptized people, and members of New Testament churches, we are simply making a thorough-going application of our principle of obedience. If we are warranted in departing from "good order" at this point, why not depart at other points? Our conception of the importance of the point which we maintain as to the supper we derive not from a comparison of this ordinance with commands of other kinds, but from the fact that Christ regarded it as of sufficient importance to enjoin it. In declining to invite the unbaptized to the supper, we rob them of no spiritual right, but only of a ceremonial privilege. The ordinance in our view is both more and less important than in theirs. Less important as being an outward symbol only, and not a sacramental means of grace; more important as being an explicit New Testament arrangement and command, and not a matter of indifference. If our withholding of the ordinance seems to be a vital matter, it is because they attach an unwarranted significance to an external appointment. If, like the word of the gospel through the Holy Spirit's power, the supper were designed to regenerate and impart mystically divine grace, we would convey it to all alike, as we seek to preach the gospel to all. Our estimate of what we thus withhold from other Christians is to be seen only in our estimate of the ordinances. This estimate is that they are of no importance as sacraments, but of very great importance as symbolic representations, and as expressions of the divine will, which requires complete obedience as in all things else, so in this also.

It is unwise to consider any appointment of Christ

apart from its connections. Christianity is a system. It is also an external order. More important still, it is a group of teachings or doctrines. Highest of all, it is a life. Any one part of it, therefore, is related to every other part. Its separate features, its distinct parts, are to be understood in the light of their connections. The smallest part may be vitally related to the rest. A capillary or rootlet cut away and detached from the roots of a tree is an insignificant thread of organic matter, which withers and dies at once. But this tiny thing, growing in its own place, is a mouth by which the tree feeds itself from the surrounding soil with the bread of its very life. In similar manner, the Lord's Supper is to be viewed in the light of its connections. The most important of these is the will of Christ. Life flows to us from Christ in the degree which marks our conformity to His will. The supper is also related to baptism. The latter is a ceremony, as is the former. But it is a ceremony appointed as a qualification for another ceremony. Surely, there is nothing inconsistent in contending for a ceremonial qualification for another ceremony, if it is a divinely prescribed qualification. But baptism and the supper are not merely ceremonies, they are symbols of spiritual truth setting forth vividly in external forms the central doctrines of the gospel. Hence, as thus connected with each other, they also relate themselves vitally to a much larger scheme of things, namely, the spiritual truths and forces lying at the heart of the Christian revelation. Here again we touch the will of Christ, the Revealer of life, and once more all things must be gathered up in Him, and the small things interpreted in the light of His

appointment and will.

#### UNITY OF THE ORDINANCES.

I have said that the baptismal qualification for the supper, a ceremonial condition for observing a ceremony, is divinely appointed. A farther light is shed on this connection when we call to mind the symbolic significance of the two and the supplementary office which they perform for each other. Cleansing, death, burial, resurrection are set forth in baptism. The crucifixion, with its atoning blood and its flesh of Christ given to the world, are set forth in the supper. The facts symbolized in baptism thus grow out of the facts symbolized in the supper. The Christian and his regeneration on the one hand; Christ and His atonement on the other. These ordinances are companion pictures. Each is incomplete without the other. Each raises the expectation for, and demands the other. A painting representing a shipwreck at sea was accompanied by another showing the rescue of the passengers by another ship. The artist's idea demanded a two-fold representation for its completeness. So the Christian ordinances satisfy the two-fold thought of the mind of Christ, the world's shipwreck by sin, and its rescue by Himself. We see, then, that it is idle and foolish, as well as sinful, to sever the bond between baptism and the supper, and to disparage immersion, the one New Testament form of baptism, and then declare the right of any one to the Lord's table who has received sprinkling or pouring. Let us beware of breaking even a rootlet from its place on the great tree of Christianity.

There is still another aspect of the Lord's Supper

which we are in danger of overlooking, and which proves that it is not a mere rootlet, but something of greater importance and significance. It is a striking instance of *divine contrivance*. Some of the most convincing proofs of the existence of God are the evidences of contrivance in nature, the adaptation of means to ends. The Lord's Supper is written all over with the marks of the design of the Master. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come." "Do this in remembrance of me." The supper, then, has a symbolic and a typical significance. A symbol shadows forth a spiritual reality, an event or truth of the present or the past. A type anticipates and declares an event which is to come.

Now there is no dispute among Christians as to the admirable fitness of the ordinance of the supper to set forth the above great facts and truths. To remember Christ, and to anticipate Christ, is to reach back to Calvary and forward to His final coming in flaming epiphany. It is to unite in one act of thought the first moment of saving faith, and the final moment of glorification. Now Christian duty requires that we hold the ordinance to its true office and function. All the confusion over it as a means of communion and fellowship with *other Christians* is a result of the perversion of the ordinance on the part of some from its true uses. We may have spiritual fellowship with Christians of other denominations at every point of spiritual contact between them and ourselves. We may pray with them, or converse with them about a common hope. But we cannot have ceremonial or ritual fellowship except at points where there is cere-

monial or ritual agreement. The breach in ritual fellowship is at baptism. Every immersion is a protest against sprinkling. Here occurs the real breach of fellowship. And the position of Baptists is impregnable. We must restore the unity of the ordinances before we can restore unity with our Christian brethren of other names. To restore this unity of the ordinances it is necessary to return to unity with Christ by obedience to His commands on the part of all those who have transgressed them.

Or, to state the connection between baptism and the supper from the point of view not of doctrine, but of the stages in the Christian life: baptism symbolizes initiation, and the supper progress, baptism signifies life, the supper nourishment. The one regeneration, the other the process of sanctification. It is obvious that the rite which symbolizes the origin of the Christian life should precede that which symbolizes its continuance and nourishment. To mar the form and destroy the significance of the symbol, which speaks of origin, breaks its connection with the symbol of nourishment, and thus destroys the symbolic unity of Christ's ordinances.

#### SUMMARY.

So then, to sum up: Baptists restrict the Lord's Supper to believers, who have been immersed, and whose Christian walk is orderly, for the following reasons: First, because it is the command of Christ; second, because it was the uniform New Testament practice; third, because the doctrinal significance of the ordinances binds them together in the order which we maintain; fourth, because the spiritual significance attaching to baptism as a symbol of origin, and the

supper as a symbol of progress, demands that baptism shall precede the supper; fifth, because of the supplementary relation which the ordinances sustain to each other, the one raising the expectation for, and completing the other; sixth, because the design of the supper as commemorating the death, and predicting the coming of Christ, excludes any necessary reference to communion with other Christians, as its distinctive function; seventh, because to require a ceremonial qualification for another ceremony, is to adhere to the fitting arrangement and provision of Scripture, as well as to the dictates of common sense; eighth, because to detach the supper from its connection with baptism and the truth symbolized, is to mar its significance as an expression of the mind of Christ; and finally, to depart from the order which we maintain, in the interest of convenience, or preference, or even in the name of charity, is to reverse the principle of Bible Christianity, and place the will of Christ subordinate to some other interest.

All the elements of proof needed to establish any New Testament practice are thus seen to support the Baptist position as to the Lord's Supper.



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