



Baptism

by

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In introduction, there are several things to emphasize as we begin this study.

1. We do not believe in Baptismal Regeneration. Let me remind you that it was over the question of the sacraments that Calvin and Luther differed during the Reformation Period. To Calvin, and those who have followed him, the important thing is the individual's coming directly to Christ for salvation. In regard to baptism, we who are Presbyterians, are interested primarily not in the water baptism but in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which takes place when the individual accepts Christ as his personal Savior.

Our Confession of Faith, Chapter 28, Section 5, makes it very clear that our subordinate standards do not teach Baptismal Regeneration:

"Although it be a great sin to condemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated."

Let us again say then, once for all, we do not believe in Baptismal Regeneration.

2. Further, in introduction, let us remind you that no one has to accept our view of baptism to join our churches. The door to membership in these local visible churches rests upon the individual's credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.
3. Historically, Presbyterians have not made an issue over baptism. However, if we never teach or preach it, people forget the Biblical facts upon which our view of baptism rests. We should not ride our view of baptism as a hobby any more than any other teaching, it is not the center of our theology, but neither should we fail to teach it in its proper place.
4. At times people say that they believe in our view of baptism but do not practice it because of the abuse of the Roman Catholic Church. If this is good reasoning, then let us give up all use of the Lord's Supper, for the heart of classical Roman Catholic error has been its teaching concerning the Mass.

Further, let me remind you that the Cambellites, "the Christian Church" who practice immersion and adult baptism, are as in error concerning the teaching of Baptismal Regeneration as is the Roman Catholic Church. Hence, on this reasoning, those who are Baptist should give up immersion and adult baptism.

Further again, there are many outstanding modernists who are Baptists. Thus it is that the abuse of baptism by various parties proves nothing either way.

5. Finally, in introduction, let me remind you that we have good fellowship with our Baptist brethren. We all realize that a Christian's view of baptism should not be the determining factor of such fellowship. Even further, those who are Baptist are welcome to the Lord's Table in our church, and I praise God that we are welcome at the Lord's Table in many of the churches of our Baptist brethren, This is as it should be. However, this does not mean that we are lukewarm in our view of baptism. We believe that our view is Biblical, and that the position of baptism by immersion only, or for adults only, is a mistake.