

The Piety of Baptism – An Identifying Mark of the One True Church

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The post-modern attitude of “live and let live” rarely (if at all) places religious demands upon individuals. Such has not been the attitude toward God in times past. Debates regarding exactly what those religious demands entailed were commonplace in former times. Popular attitudes toward contemporary religious obligation are primarily limited to some kind of concern for the poor. Many consider everything else optional. Even characterizing such attitudes as “religious” is passé. Instead, people prefer to moniker themselves as “spiritual.” In such a religious environment the ancient and biblical concept of piety – doing religious things simply because that is what God desires – has been replaced with one’s self interests, but that is exactly what Christianity calls individuals to sacrifice ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).



Baptism and Piety Go Hand in Hand.

In times past, questions about baptism surrounded its purpose (whether it was for the remission of sins or not), necessity for salvation (whether one needed it to go to be saved), and/or mode (whether it was sprinkling, pouring, or immersion). Some suggested that the only purpose of baptism was to become a member of the local congregation. The Lord’s church has stood strong in these discussions pointing to the necessity of baptism (immersion) for the remission of sins. This is, after all, what the Bible simply teaches in such passages as [Matthew 28:18-20](#), [Mark 16:16](#), [Acts 2:38](#), [Acts 8:36-39](#), [Acts 22:16](#), [Romans 6:1-11](#), [Galatians 3:27](#), [Colossians 2:11-13](#), and [1 Peter 3:21](#). More and more, however, individuals are just ignorant of what baptism even is. I remember one person coming into the church building, pointing to the baptistery, and saying, “What is that?”

As the religious culture around us changes, the need to stay true to the Bible's teaching on baptism becomes even more important. While in the past, teaching what the Bible clearly says about baptism has distinguished the churches of Christ from other religious groups who practice some form of baptism, today, teaching what the Bible has to say about Baptism distinguishes the church from the masses of religious/spiritual groups who know nothing of the practice. In contradistinction to the self-serving nature of popular religion today, Christian baptism calls the individual to a selfless submission to Christ and His will. It is a true reflection of the sacrifice Christ made on the cross for the sins of mankind ([Romans 6:1-11](#)). In that regard, it is a preeminent act of personal piety.

In this issue of the Christian Worker, we look at the topic of baptism. It is our purpose to address typical objections from religiously minded individuals, but also to simply teach what the scriptures simply reveal on the issue. With that in mind some key passages that discuss baptism have been selected and our writers have been asked to comment on those verses. The issue concludes with the very important question, "Why should I be baptized?" It is our hope and prayer that everyone who comes to read this issue will take the topic of baptism as an act of personal piety seriously. In so doing, we will also consider serious the mode, purpose, and necessity of baptism as well.