

## ***What Denominational Authorities Have Believed On Baptism***

***Highly respected theologians in the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodist churches have written, surprisingly, on the subject of Baptism:-***

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*Dr. William Wall (1647 - 1728), Oxford graduate, priest in the Church of England who was vicar of Shoreham, Kent. Wall wrote extensively on the doctrine of infant baptism, which he strongly defended. He wrote concerning practise in the Church of England "Pouring was the substitute for baptism which Calvin first adopted and his sprinkling was only the substitute of a substitute and was the most scandalous thing ever adopted for baptism." He also wrote in his 'History of Infant Baptism' in the introduction, page 1: "Among all the persons that are recorded as baptized by the Apostles, there is no express mention of any infant."*

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*Dr. Gilbert Burnett (1643-1715), who was bishop of New Sarum (Salisbury, near Stonehenge, England), a very prestigious position with the Anglican Church, wrote in his 'Exposition of the 39 Articles.' Article 27 (page 392) "By the first teaching or making disciples, that must go before baptism, is to be meant the Convincing the World, that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messiah, anointed of God." On page 401 Burnett writes "There is no express precept, or rule, given in the New Testament for the baptism of infants." Here Burnett whilst defending infant baptism alludes to the biblical pattern of teaching believers prior to baptism. Regarding the mode, Burnett writes on page 351 that it is "dipped or washed".*

*On page 353 Burnett writes "The doing all things to order and to Edifying, will authorise a church to all this; especially since the now universal practice of infant baptism makes this more necessary than it was in the first times, when chiefly the adults were baptised."*

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*John Wesley (1703-1791), Oxford graduate, Anglican minister and later, one of the founders of the Methodist Church. He wrote in 'Wesley's Notes'*

*on Romans 6, page 376, "We are buried with Him, alluding to the ancient manner of baptising by immersion."*

*John Charles Ryle, DD, (1816 - 1900) was educated at Eton and at Christ Church, Oxford. In 1880, at age 64, he became the first Anglican bishop of Liverpool, at the recommendation of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. In his book, 'Principles for Churchmen' 1884, page 223 "So long as water is used in the name of the Trinity, or in the name of Christ, the precise mode of administering the ordinance is left an open question. This is the view adopted by the Church of England. The baptismal service expressly sanctions "dipping" in the most plain term. To say, as many Baptists do, that the Church of England is opposed to baptism by immersion is a melancholy proof of the ignorance in which many dissenters live! Thousands, I am afraid, find fault with the Prayer-book without having ever examined its contents. If any one wishes to be baptised by "dipping" in the Church of England, let him understand that the parish clergyman is just as ready to dip him as the Baptist minister, and that "immersion" may be had in the Church as well as in Chapel."*

On page 229 Ryle writes "I begin by laying it down as a point almost undisputed, that all grown up converts at Missionary stations among the heathen ought to be baptised. As soon as they embrace the Gospel and make a creditable profession of repentance and faith in Christ, they ought at once to receive baptism. This is the doctrine and practice Episcopal, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Independent Missionaries, just as it is the doctrine of Baptists. Let there be no mistake on the point. To talk as some Baptists do, of "believers baptism," as if it was a kind of baptism peculiar to their own body, is simply nonsense. "Believers baptism" is known and practised in every successful Protestant Mission throughout the world."

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*His Eminence, Cardinal James Gibbons (1834 - 1921) was an American prelate who was the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore, from 1877 until his death. In his book 'The Faith of our fathers' he wrote concerning baptism (page 274-5, ninth edition) "Modes of baptising. The Baptists ere in asserting that baptism by immersion is the only valid mode. Baptism may be validly administered in either of three ways, viz: by immersion, or by plunging the candidate into the water; by infusion, or by pouring the water; and by aspersion, or sprinkling. As our Lord nowhere prescribes any special form of administering the Sacrament,*

*the church exercises her discretion in adopting the most convenient mode, according to the circumstances of time and place. For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity, Baptism was usually conferred by immersion; but since the twelfth century, the practice of baptising by infusion has prevailed in the Catholic Church, as this manner is attended with less inconvenience than baptism by immersion."*

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*Dr William Cave (1637 - 1713), educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, Anglican divine and theologian, was chaplain to Charles II, and in 1684 became a canon of Windsor, Berkshire, where he died. In his book as recorded by Henry D' anvers, (1675, Treatise on Baptism) D'anvers quote's Cave's book, (Primitive Christianity: or, the Religion of the ancient Christians in the first Ages of the Gospel, 2 volumes, 1672) the following, vol 1, p. 320, "That the party baptized was wholly immersed or put under water which was the almost constant and universal custom of those times whereby they did most notably and significantly express the great end and effects of baptism. For, as in immersing there are in a manner, three several acts, the putting the person into water, his abiding there for some time. And his rising up again, thereby representing Christ's death, burial and resurrection. And in conformity thereto, out dying unto sin, the destruction of its power, and our resurrection to a new course of life. By the person's being put into water, was lively represented the putting off the body of sins of the flesh and being washed from the filth and pollution of them. By his being under it, which is a kind of burial into water, his entering into a state of death or mortification, like as Christ remained for some time under the state or power of death. Therefore it is said, as many as are baptized into Christ, are baptized into his death, etc. And then by his emersion, or rising up out of the water, is signified his entering upon the new course of life, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we should walk in newness of life."*

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*The Rev. George Waddington, MA (1793-1869 ) Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and Prebendary of Ferring, in the Cathedral Church of Chichester. In 1835 he wrote 'A history of the church from the earliest ages to the reformation'. On page 27, Waddington writes "The sacraments of the primitive Church were two – those of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The ceremony of immersion (the oldest form of*

*baptism) was performed in the name of the three persons of the Trinity; it was believed to be attended by the remission of original sin, and the entire regeneration of the infant or convert, by the passage from the land of bondage into the kingdom of salvation. A great proportion of those baptised in the first ages were, of course, adults, and since the Church was then scrupulous to admit none among its members, excepting those whose sincere repentance gave promise of a holy life, the administration of that sacrament was in some sense accompanied by the remission of sin, not only of sin from Adam, but of all sin that had previously committed by the proselyte – that is to say, such absolution was given to the repentance necessary for admission into Christ's Church.*

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**From the above, we can see that the idea of "Believers Baptism" by immersion is not so alien as many would have people believe!**