

Christian to consider one more point before I end.

“And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.’ And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them” (Mk 10:13-16).

Here, we may suppose, the parents brought their beloved little ones to Jesus, because they witnessed his miracles and had faith in him. Because, also, before this time, Jesus had taken a little child, and placed him in the midst of his disciples, as a pattern of blameless purity (Mt 18:2). Because they knew that all virtue came from Jesus, and undoubtedly had reason to believe that the blessing and the touch of him, who was both God and man, must be of vital importance to the future of their children. Why did the disciples rebuke these parents? It must have been because of the children’s infancy. For looking at Jesus as a teacher and their teacher, how could little children and infants, become disciples along with them? How could children have faith in Jesus? How could they repent? Who could know if when they grew up they might disgrace the blessing? Of what service could it be that Jesus would touch them? They were too young to understand the blessing that they received, and the good that it would do for their souls.

And then, “he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me, do not hinder them.’” Can little ones not come to him now? Is there anything in the state of a little child, different today from what it was then? “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today and forever’ (Heb 12:8).

“For to such belongs the kingdom of God.” The kingdom of God is the Church on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven. There is a three-fold qualification of all infants that they should come to Jesus; Christ died for them, they have immortal souls, and are free from actual guilt. Jesus said that we should come to him as little children. Here the childlike character of the faith that receives the baptism of our Lord is plainly laid

out. The word “as” manifestly implies situation and character, and not merely docility.

“And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.” Jesus took up little ones who were unconscious of the act, its purpose and meaning and laid his hands upon them, laid the hands of his sinless humanity, and blessed them. He poured words of benediction upon their souls, which their ears heard, yet did not understand.

All the arguments against bringing infants to be touched and blessed by Jesus fall by the wayside in light of the words of Jesus to “Let the children come to me.”

Would the anti-pædobaptists of today have forbidden Jesus’ benediction of the children? I ask, therefore of those who doubt or deny the efficacy of infant baptism to consider the position of the disciples, and the arguments that must have led them, and to think of the fact that Jesus, our Redeemer, was “indignant”, and that they themselves, by forbidding them whom he has not forbidden, may be incurring the displeasure of their Lord!

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Pamphlet 237

Pædobaptism: A Scriptural Defense

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I come to you, not for the sake of controversy, but as a teacher of truth, with the Bible in my hand. The baptism of infants and small children is scriptural. It is according to the letter, tenor, and the spirit of the Gospel, that those in childhood (pædo) should be baptized. I ask that all who hold the Scriptures as their guide in doctrine, as most of those who do, who doubt or deny the doctrine of Infant Baptism, consider the evidence that I am about to present.

In days past there was a dispute as to whether Jesus died for all persons or only for a certain elect? This concept of a limited atonement is not found in Scripture, on the contrary, the fact that Christ died for all is scripturally clear: “For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers” (1 Timothy 4:10). And again: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men (Titus 2:11)

As certain persons would limit the atonement, some also limit baptism, entrance to the Christian covenant, to believers only. But when we come to find what this word “believers” means, it not only implies the belief of the parties, it implies something more; that they can declare their faith by an oral declaration of submission to Christ. In effect they actually say that they shall permit no one to be baptized except those who have reached a certain age and understanding. This is the reason they exclude infants from the covenant. Babies cannot speak; they are *infantes*, “*incapable of speech*”.

By denying baptism to infants we limit, because of physical limitations rather than spiritual, the covenant of our Lord Jesus. The truth is that no circumstance merely personal and physical such as nationality, race, sex, infancy, or age, speaking or non-speaking are disqualifications for an alliance and a covenant between the ever-living spirit of any human being, and the all-pure, Father in heaven. To

limit the covenant by denying baptism to infants, who have immortal souls and are free from any actual sin, is to inflict a grievous wrong against these innocents. These little ones are unconscious of the injury inflicted, and yet must suffer because of it.

There are only two sides to the question: The first is that baptism of infants is according to the letter, tenor, and spirit of the Gospel. The second is that it is contrary to the letter, tenor, and spirit of the Gospel. It does not matter how many advocates there are on either side of the question, there is no escape, no indifference, and no third point. The question of infant baptism is vital and fundamental, of the utmost importance.

Now, let's look at the consequences of the alternative I have set forth. If Infant Baptism is contrary to Scripture, what is it in itself and its effects? The answer is that it is and must be the most serious of all the corruptions of Christianity, a perversion of the covenant, a mockery of our Lord Jesus by the introduction into his covenant of those who are by his word forbidden to be introduced, and who are unsuited for it by the principles of the Gospel, who may never have faith in him and yet are made members of his Church.

If this notion is true, that infant baptism is unscriptural; such an act of the part of the baptizer and the baptized is, when we consider it in respect of God, a delusion involving the most destructive consequences.

Now let's look at the other side. If infant baptism is in accordance with Scripture then to exclude them from it, must be a cruelty of the worst kind that could be done to innocent babies. If there is any benefit to those within the covenant more than to those without it, from the Almighty Father, it is to unjustly deprive them of these benefits. It is during the period of life when the soul most needs the indwelling of the Spirit of God. To cut off from the baby, the child, or the growing youth, graces, which though unseen, the heart of faith views as most precious is unconscionable. If grace, the sanctifying and purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, is promised at baptism, and conferred upon those who are in covenant with God's Church, it is cruel to cut them off from it. It is to forbid the little child to come to

Jesus, and thus deserves the rebuke of our Lord. By shutting out the infant from the covenant; to leave him to all the influences of unregenerated human nature; to keep him in the world when he might be in the Church; and leave him to the Prince of this world, when he might be a subject of Christ and guided by the influences of heaven is evil.

We shall take the Scripture as it lies, in the plain sense in which any unprejudiced man of piety and common sense must be forced to take the words. We must take the Bible in its literal sense and cast aside false interpretations, of the traditions of sect or group, and take the Word of God just as it stands.

In consulting the Bible, how do we pose the question? The anti-pædobaptist says, "Bring me a command from the Bible to baptize infants" This I shall not do, although there is ample scriptural evidence that entire households, which logically must have included children were baptized (Acts 16:15; 16:33; 1 Cor 1:16). We baptize infants not in respect of their age, as infants, any more than they propose to baptize full grown men and women in respect of their being adults. To demand from the Bible the express command *to baptize infants* is therefore just as unfair as to require a command *to baptize adults* only. We baptize infants not because of their qualifications, but because they are immortal souls for whom Jesus died. Therefore we count them most worthy to be included in the covenant of God through Christ and the Sacrament of Baptism.

It is only necessary that the subjects of baptism be human beings. Would an anti-pædobaptist baptize an infant if he knew that the infant had faith, although the child had no way to express that faith? Of course he would. But you might say, how could an infant have faith?

Did not John the Baptizer leap in his mother's womb at the presence of the Holy Virgin, bearing his unborn Savior? How could he rejoice in him without believing in some way, although mysterious to us? The same infant John, who was "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Lk 1:15), how could he so sanctified if he had not faith of some kind, in some degree? The conclusion is that to make a physical and bodily matter a qualification or a disqualification for a spiritual covenant is an

absurdity. God is not a respecter of persons; that age, sex, race, etc., mean nothing to him in respect to entrance into the kingdom.

For those who make infancy or non-speaking a disqualification for baptism is to show that God intends that these souls, whom his Son redeemed, are to be excluded from his covenant simply because they are infants. Where is this found in Scripture? If our Lord intended to exclude any class of person from his covenant, we would expect to find it clearly stated. In "The Great Commission" as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20, yet, the command is general and unlimited.

From the time of Jesus to the Protestant revolt the entire Church unanimously and universally baptized infants. Were all these in error? "Yes," say the anti-pædobaptists. It is obvious to anyone willing to examine the evidence that the anti-pædobaptists are *reformers* fighting against a reliable history of infant baptism.

Suppose for a moment that the anti-pædobaptists are correct. Surely there must be Scriptural evidence to support their position. The first step ought to be to show, if they can, that the Scripture forbids the practice against which they cry out. If they cannot prove this to be so, most likely they are innovators rather than reformers. The fundamental question is this: "Is infant Baptism forbidden in the Scriptures? The obvious answer is unequivocally, "No." There is not one verse that forbids this practice in the entire New Testament from the first word in the Gospel of Matthew to the last word in the Book of Revelation.

How then can anti-pædobaptist, while claiming Scripture as their rule of faith and practice, arrive at the conclusion that only those who have reached the age of reason should be baptized? They say that it is inferred and can be deduced. Now, inference is of two kinds, verbal and doctrinal. In either case, there is no inference from the Bible that prohibits babies from being baptized. The direct command to baptize enjoins the baptism of infants, since the exception, which the anti-pædobaptists make, is not made in the Scriptures, but *made solely by them*.

In fact the inference from the Gospel, verbal and real, are in accordance with that direct command, instead of against it. I ask the plain common-sense