

Why the Baptists Do Not Baptize Infants

As a fact, Baptists do not baptize their infants. If there be any benefits springing from Infant Baptism, the children of Baptists miss them. If Infant Baptism is necessary to the salvation of children, then the children of Baptists are lost.

The motive of the Baptists in refusing baptism to children is no secret. They hardly consider it necessary to say it is from no want of kindness or religious solicitude for their children. They expect many things to be said against them, and are ready to bear them, but can not believe that their worst enemies will seriously deny that they love their children and are concerned for their highest religious safety.

Nor does their refusal arise from an unwillingness to consecrate their children to the Lord. This, every sincere and intelligent Baptist does. Nor is it from any desire to be eccentric or singular; but a deep conviction of duty which they cannot but regard.

The Bible Does Not Teach It

The one sufficient reason the Baptists have for rejecting Infant Baptism is, that the Bible does not teach it. With some this is nothing. They follow priests, creeds, and churches. But to the Baptists, the Bible is the end of controversy. They confess its authority as supreme, and accept nothing as religious duty except that which it teaches. They do not find that it teaches Infant Baptism. But some say that the Bible does teach it.

It is there! Well, where? Dreamy fancies that it is taught somewhere in the Word of God are worth nothing. Give the chapter and the verse where, by law or example if taught. If your child's salvation depended on a passage in the Scriptures that taught this doctrine, which would you select?

Jesus Did Not Practice It

True, certain passages or incidents in the Bible are presented in support of Infant Baptism, but even the friends of the doctrine differ widely concerning them. Without attempting to notice all these texts, I will, as a matter of justice, select for notice those which are considered the strongest. Perhaps the most popular proof passage is found in Mark 10:14-16. This is to many a tower of strength - a refuge in weakness, and quoted on all occasions. What are the facts? Little children are brought to the Saviour and he takes them in his arms and blesses them. The surprise and displeasure of the disciples at the presentation of these children to Christ plainly indicated that the practice of Infant Baptism was not known to them. It was certainly a capital opportunity for instituting such an ordinance and explaining its object; but nothing of the kind was done. The silence of Jesus on the subject is itself a significant argument against it. The fact that he said nothing about Infant Baptism, and did something quite different from it, turns this passage into a strong proof-test against the practice.

Household Baptisms Do Not Prove It

But there are the Household Baptisms. It is claimed that if whole families were baptized, there must have been children among them. First in the list is the family of Crispus. Paul baptized that household. It is enough to say that it is expressly declared that Crispus "believed in the Lord with all his house," Acts 18:8.

Next is the house of Stephanas, I Cor. 1:13. Here Paul simply speaks of it as the baptism of a household. Must there not have been infants? Not unless it can be shown that there are no households without infants.

But observe that in I Cor. 16:15, Paul, in alluding to this family, calls them "the first fruits of Achaia," and says they "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." Manknight is candid enough to admit that there could have been no infants in the house of Stephanas.

Next is the household of the Philippian jailer. Acts 16:29-34. In reading the account, you observe that they spake the word of the Lord to all that were in the house of the jailer - that the jailer rejoiced, believed in God with all his house. That is unanswerably plain. Last in the list is the house of Lydia. Acts 16:14, 15-40. Before an argument in favor of Infant Baptism can be wrung from this case, several impossible propositions must be established: 1. That Lydia was married. 2. That she had children. 3. That any of these children were at that time infants. 4. That these infants were baptized. 5. That the term brethren in verse 40 is used independently of these children.

Circumcision Has Nothing To Do With It

There is also the argument from circumcisions. It is claimed that Infant Baptism is the substitute for

circumcision. That such is the case nowhere intimated in the Word of God. The Jews that had been

circumcised, when converted to Christ were baptized. Timothy was circumcised after he had been baptized.

If baptism is the substitute for circumcision, where is the fact stated?

Some who practise Infant Baptism do not claim clear Bible authority for it. They put it on the ground that it is a "form of consecration," - "can do no harm." That there is any wrong or injury in the simple act of sprinkling a child with water and praying for its salvation, no one would be foolish as to assert. But when this act is performed on the plea that it is commanded by the Word of God, it becomes an evil. It is to claim scriptural authority for what is not taught in the Word of God. Besides, the observance of this practice is a practical abolition of believer's baptism, which is clearly required by the law of Christ.

It is an injury to the child. It infringed his right of choice in the matter of baptism. It confuses his mind in regard to his relation to the Church. It leaves him in doubt as to his regeneration. It is calculated to foster in his mind false religious hopes.

It is an injury to the Church. The scriptural idea of the Church is that of a body of baptized believers. Only those who have been pardoned and regenerated are entitled to membership. Upon the preservation of this idea of a spiritual membership is dependent the purity of the churches.

This idea is assailed by Infant Baptism, and the universal triumph of that doctrine would be the introduction of all classes of persons within the ranks of some external church. The truth of this statement is abundantly proved by the condition of the Lutheran Church in Germany, and that of the Established Church of England.

If it be true that Infant Baptism is not taught in the Word of God—that it is injurious to those who are its subjects, and unfriendly to the New Testament idea of a Church, then the Baptists are amply justified in rejecting it.

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