

already set apart to God by virtue of the covenant. The application of the sign and seal of the covenant is an act of faith and obedience on the part of the parent(s).

- (e) To the infant child of a believer, baptism is a sign and seal of his potential interest in the covenant. In the course of time, that child must ratify the covenant by faith for himself, at which time the ordinance becomes the sign and seal of his actual, real, personal interest in the covenant blessings.
- c. Arguments put forward in favor of believer's baptism only and in opposition to infant baptism

(1) Arguments in favor of believer's baptism only

- (a) Baptism requires a credible profession of faith on the part of the candidate. This requires the ability to make an intelligent confession of the saving truths of Christ's Person and saving work.
- (b) Baptism symbolizes entrance into Christ's discipleship. Only a person capable of grasping something of the implications of discipleship is a fit candidate for baptism.
- (c) Baptism presupposes regeneration in the candidate. Regeneration must precede, not follow baptism! Since regeneration is conditioned on the exercise of saving faith, then only a person capable of exercising faith is a fit subject for baptism.
- (d) Baptism symbolizes identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Such identification is possible only for a person capable of exercising faith in Christ's saving work.

(2) Arguments in opposition to infant baptism

- (a) The New Testament says "believe and be baptized." How can an infant believe?

Note: This command is manifestly addressed to adults, or at least those capable of grasping and responding to it. Abraham believed and was circumcised as a sign and seal of his portion in God's gracious covenant. But his seed were also circumcised. Could they believe? What can an eight-day old infant understand and believe? Yet the sign of God's covenant was to be applied to him as well!

- (b) Why do Presbyterians baptize girl babies, when only males were circumcised in the Old Testament?

Note: Galatians 3:28 tells us that "there is neither male nor female." The New Dispensation brings a widening of the applicability of the sign and seal of the covenant of grace, just as it does in many other respects. This represents a genuine change of dispensation.