

# DISCOURSES, &c.

## OF BAPTISM.

MATTH. xxviii. 19.

*Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them.—*

**W**E are still upon that question in the catechism,  
“ *What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?* ”

“ *Ans.* They are his ordinances, especially the word sacraments, and prayer.”

I have spoken to the first, ‘ The word read and preached : ’  
I now proceed to the second.

II. *The way whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, is, in the use of the sacraments.*

Qu. 1. *What are sacraments in general?*

*Ans.* They are visible signs of invisible grace.

Qu. 2. *Is not the word of God sufficient to salvation? What need then is there of sacraments?*

*Ans.* We must not be wise above what is written: this may satisfy, it is God’s will, that his church should have sacraments; and it is God’s goodness, thus by sacraments to condescend to our weak capacities, John iv. 48. ‘ Except ye see signs, ye will not believe.’ God to strengthen our faith, confirms the covenant of grace, not only by promises, but by sacramental signs.

Qu. 3. *What are the sacraments of the New Testament?*

*Ans.* Two: baptism, and the Lord’s supper.

Qu. 4. *But are there no more? the papists tell of five more, viz. confirmation, penance, matrimony, orders, and the extreme unction.*

*Ans.* 1. There were but two sacraments under the law, therefore there are no more now, 1 Cor. x. 2, 3, 4.

2. These two sacraments are sufficient: the one signifying our entrance into Christ, and the other our growth and perseverance in him.

(1.) I begin with the first sacrament, Baptism. ‘ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of

the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them—‘Go teach all nations:’ the Greek word is “Make disciples of all nations.” If it be asked, how should we make them disciples? It follows, Baptizing them and teaching them. In a heathen nation, First teach them, and then baptize them; but in a Christian Church, First baptize them, and then teach them.

Qu. 5. *What is baptism?*

Ans. In general, it is a matriculation, or visible admission of children into the congregation of Christ’s flock: more particularly, ‘Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing, or sprinkling with water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord’s.’

Qu. 6. *What is the meaning of the parent in presenting his child to be baptized?*

Ans. The parent, in presenting his child to be baptized, doth, (1.) Make a public acknowledgment of original sin; that the soul of his child is polluted, therefore needs washing away of sin by Christ’s blood and spirit; both which washings are signified by the sprinkling of water in baptism. (2.) The parent by bringing his child to be baptized, doth solemnly devote his child to the Lord, and enrol him in God’s family; and truly this may be a great satisfaction to a religious parent, that he hath given up his child to the Lord in baptism. How can a parent look with comfort on that child, who was never yet dedicated to God?

Qu. 7. *What then is the benefit of baptism?*

Ans. The party baptized hath, (1.) An entrance into the visible body of the church. (2.) The party baptized hath a right sealed to the ordinances, which is a privilege full of glory, Rom. ix. 4. (3.) The child baptized is under a more special providential care of Christ, who appoints the tutelage of angels to be the infant’s life-guard.

Qu. 8. *Is this all the benefit?*

Ans. No: to such as belong to the election, baptism is a ‘seal of the righteousness of faith,’ Rom. iv. 11. a laver of regeneration, and a badge of adoption.

Qu. 9. *How doth it appear that children have a right of baptism?*

Ans. Children are parties of the covenant of grace. The covenant was made with them, Gen. xvii. 7. ‘I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee.’ And Acts ii. 39. ‘The promise is to you and to your children.’ The covenant of grace may be considered

either, (1.) More strictly, as an absolute promise to give saving grace; and so none but the elect are in covenant with God. Or, (2.) More largely as a covenant containing in it many outward glorious privileges, in which respects the children of believers do belong to the covenant of grace: the promise is to you and to your seed. The infant seed of believers may as well lay a claim to the covenant of grace as their parents; and having a right to the covenant, they cannot justly be denied baptism, which is the seal. I would ask this question of them who deny infant baptism, It is certain the children of believers were once visibly in covenant with God, and did receive the seal of their admission into the church; now, where do we find this covenant-interest, or church-membership of infants was ever repealed or made void? Certainly Jesus Christ did not come to put believers and their children into a worse condition than they were in before. If the children of believers should not be baptized, and they are in a worse condition now, than they were in before Christ's coming. Before I come to prove the baptizing of infants I shall answer the objections made against it.

*Obj. 1. The scripture is silent herein, and doth not mention infant-baptism.*

*Ans.* Though there is not the word infant baptism in scripture, yet there is the thing; there is not mention made in scripture of women's receiving the sacrament; but who doubts but the command, 'Take eat, this is my body,' concerns them? doth not their faith need strengthening as well as others? So the word Trinity is not to be found in scripture, but there is that which is equivalent, 1 John v. 7. 'There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One.' So, tho' the word infant-baptism is not mentioned in scripture, yet the practice of baptizing infants, may be drawn out of scripture by undeniable consequence.

*Qu. How is that proved?*

*Ans.* The scripture mentions whole families baptized: as the household of Lydia, Crispus, and the jailor, Acts xvi. 31. 'He was baptized, he and all his house.' Wherein we must rationally imagine that there were some little children. If it be said, there is no mention there made of children: I answer, neither are servants named: yet it cannot be supposed but that, in so great a family there were some servants.

*Obj. 2. But infants are not capable of the end of baptism; for baptism signifies the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ. Now infants cannot understand this; therefore what benefit can baptism be to them?*

*Ans.* Whereas it is said infants cannot understand the mystery of baptism, neither could the child that was to be circumcised understand circumcision; yet the ordinance of circumcision was

not to be omitted or deferred. An infant, though it understand not the meaning of baptism, yet it may partake of the blessing of baptism. The little children that Christ took in his arms, understood not Christ's meaning, but they had Christ's blessing, Mark x. 16. 'He put his hands upon them and blessed them.'

*Qu.* But what benefit can the child have of baptism if it understand not the nature of baptism?

*Ans.* It may have a right to the promise sealed up, which it shall have an actual interest in when it comes to have faith. A legacy may be of use to the child in the cradle; though it now understand not the legacy, yet when it is grown up to years, it is fully possessed of it. But it may be further objected;

*Obj.* 1. *The party to be baptized is to be engaged to God; but how can the child engage?*

*Ans.* The parents can engage for it, which God is pleased to accept as equivalent to the child's personal engaging.

*Obj.* 2. *If Baptism comes in the room of circumcision, only the males were circumcised, Gen. xvii. 30. Then, what warrant is there for baptizing females?*

*Ans.* The females were included, and were virtually circumcised in the males. What is done to the head is done to the body; the man therefore being the head of the woman, 1 Cor. xi. 3. What was done to the male sex was interpretatively done to the female. Having answer'd these objections, I come now to prove by argument infant-baptism.

*1st, Argument.* If children during their infancy are capable of grace, then they are capable of baptism: but children in their infancy are capable of grace, therefore they are capable of baptism. I prove the minor, that they are capable of grace, thus; if children in their infancy may be saved, then they are capable of grace; but children in their infancy may be saved; which is proved thus: if the kingdom of heaven may belong to them, then they may be saved, but the kingdom of heaven may belong to them, as it is clear from Mark x. 14. 'Of such is the kingdom of God.' Who then can forbid that the seal of baptism should be applied to them?

*2d, Arg.* If infants may be among the number of God's servants, then there is no reason why they should be shut out of God's family; but infants may be in the number of God's servants, that is evident, because God calls them his servants, Lev. xxv. 4. 'He shall depart from thee, and his children with him, for they are my servants.' Therefore children in their infancy being God's servants, why should they not have baptism, which is the *teffera*, the mark or seal which God sets upon his servants?

*3d, Arg.* Is from 1 Cor. vii. 14. 'But now are your children holy.' Children are not called holy, as if they were free from

original sin; but in the judgment of Charity they are to be esteemed holy and true members of the church of God, because their parents are believers. Hence that excellent divine Mr. Helderſam ſaith, “ that the children of the faithful, as ſoon as they are born, have a covenant-holineſs, and ſo a right and title to baptiſm, which is the token of the covenant.”

*4th, Arg.* From the opinion of the fathers and the practice of the church. (1.) The ancient fathers were ſtrong aſſerters of infant-baptiſm, Irenæus, Baſil, Lactantius, Cyprian and Auſtin. (2.) It was the practice of the Greek church to baptize her infants. Eraſmus ſaith, that infant baptiſm hath been uſed in the church of God, for above fourteen hundred years. And St. Auſtin, in his book againſt Pelagius, aſſirms, that it hath been the cuſtom of the church in all ages to baptize infants. Yea, it was an apoſtolic practice; St. Paul aſſirms, that he baptiz'd the whole houſe of Stephanus, 1 Cor. i. 16.

And as you have ſeen ſcripture-arguments for infant-baptiſm, ſo let us conſider whether the practice of thoſe who delay the baptizing of children till riper years, be warrantable.—For my part, I cannot gather it from ſcripture: For though we read of perſons adult and grown up to years of diſcretion, in the apoſtles' times, baptiz'd, yet thoſe were ſuch as were converted from heatheniſh idolatry to the true orthodox faith: but that in a Chriſtian church the children of believers ſhould be kept unbaptiz'd ſeveral years, I know neither precept nor example for it in ſcripture, but it is wholly apocryphal. The baptizing of perſons grown up to maturity, we may argue againſt *ab effectu*, from the ill conſequence of it: they dip the perſons they baptize over head and ears in cold water, and naked; which as it is indecent, ſo it is dangerous, and hath been often-times the occaſion of chronical diſeaſes, yea, death itſelf; and ſo it is a plain breach of the ſixth commandment. And how far God hath given up many perſons, who are for the deferring of baptiſm, to other vile opinions and vicious practices, is evident, if we conſult with hiſtory: eſpecially if we read over the acting of the anabaptiſts in Germany.

*Uſe. 1.* See the riches of God's goodneſs, who will not only be the God of believers, but takes their ſeed into covenant, Gen. xvii. 7. ‘ I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee, to be a God unto thee and thy ſeed.’ A father counts it a great privilege, not only to have his own name, but his child's name put in a will.

*Uſe 2.* It blames thoſe parents who forbid little children to be brought to Chriſt: they withhold the ordinance. By denying their infants baptiſm, they exclude them from having a membership in the viſible church, and ſo their infants are ſuck-ing pagans. Such as deny their children baptiſm, make God's

institutions under the law more full of kindness and grace to children, than they are now under the gospel; which, how strange a paradox it is, I leave you to judge.

*Use 3. Of exhortation. Branch 1.* We that are baptized, let us labour to find the blessed fruits of baptism in our own souls: let us labour not only to have the sign of the covenant, but the grace of the covenant. Many glory in this, that they are baptized. The Jews gloried in their circumcision, because of their royal privileges: to them belonged the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, Rom. ix. 4. But many of them were a shame and reproach to their circumcision, Rom. ii. 24. ‘For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles tho’ God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.’ The scandalous Jews (tho’ circumcised) were, in God’s account, as heathens, Amos ix. 7. ‘Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians to me? saith the Lord.’ Alas! what is it to have the name of Christ, and want his image? what is baptism of water, without the baptism of the Spirit? many baptized Christians are no better than heathens. O labour to find the fruits of baptism, that Christ is formed in us, Gal. iv. 19. that our nature is changed, we are made holy and heavenly: this is to be baptized into Jesus, Rom. vi. 3. Such as live unsuitable to their baptism, may go with baptismal water on their faces, and sacramental bread in their mouths, to hell.

*Branch 2.* Let us labour to make a right use of our baptism.

*First use of baptism.* Let us use it as a shield against temptations. Satan, I have given up myself to God by a sacred vow in baptism; I am not my own, I am Christ’s: therefore I cannot yield to thy temptations, but I break my oath of allegiance which I made to God in baptism. Luther tells us of a pious woman, who when the devil tempted her to sin, she answered, Satan, *Baptizata sum*, “I am baptized:” and so beat back the tempter.

*Second use of baptism.* Let us use it as a spur to holiness. By remembering our baptism, let us be stirred up to make good our baptismal engagements: renouncing the world, flesh, and devil, let us devote ourselves to God and his service. To be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, implies a solemn dedication of ourselves to the service of all the three Persons in the Trinity. It is not enough that our parents dedicate us to God in baptism, but we must dedicate ourselves to him: this is called a ‘living to the Lord,’ Rom. xiv. 8. Our life should be spent in worshipping God, in loving God, in exalting God: we should walk as becomes the gospel, Phil. i. 27. Shine as stars in the world, and live as earthly angels.

*Third use of baptism.* Let us use it as an argument to courage. We should be ready to confess that holy Trinity, into

whose name we were baptised. With the conversion of the heart, must go the confession of the tongue, Luke xii. 8. 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God;' Peter openly confessed Christ crucified, Acts iv. 10. Cyprian, a man of a brave spirit was like a rock, whom no waves could shake; like an adamant, whom no sword could cut: he confessed Christ before the proconsul, and suffered himself to be proscribed; yea, chose death, rather than he would betray the truths of Christ. He that dares not confess the holy Trinity, shames his baptism, and God will be ashamed to own him at the day of judgment.

*Ult. use.* See the fearfulness of the sin of apostacy! 'Tis a renouncing of our baptism, 'Tis damnable perjury to go away from God after a solemn vow, 2 Tim. iv. 10. 'Demas hath forsaken me.' He turned renegado, and afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. Julian the apostate (Gregory Nazianzen observes) bathed himself in the blood of beasts offered in sacrifice to heathen-gods; and so, as much as in him lay, washed off his former baptism. The case of such as fall away after baptism, is dreadful, Heb. x. 38. 'If any man draw back.' The Greek word, to draw back, alludes to a soldier that steals away from his colours; so, if any man steal away from Christ, and run over to the devil's side, 'my soul shall have no pleasure in him;' that is, I will be severely avenged on him; I will make my arrows drunk with his blood. If all the plagues in the Bible can make that man miserable, he shall be so.

II. The second sacrament wherein Jesus Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, is the Lord's supper.

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## OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

MARK xiv. 22. *And as they did eat, Jesus took Bread, &c.*

II. HAVING spoken to the sacrament of baptism, I come now to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The Lord's supper is the most spiritual and sweet ordinance that ever was instituted: here we have to do more immediately with the person of Christ. In prayer, we draw nigh to God; in the sacrament we become one with him. In prayer we look up to Christ; in the sacrament, by faith, we touch him. In the word preached, we hear Christ's voice: in the sacrament we feed on him.

Qu. 1. *What names and titles in scripture are given to the sacrament?*