

I. THE INSTITUTION OF BAPTISM (PARAGRAPH 1)***Baptism is an Ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ***- Matthew 28:16-20

- 1.) The Recipients of the Command – the 11 disciples (particularly to them as church leaders)
- 2.) The Basis of the Command – the universal authority of Jesus Christ
- 3.) The Essence of the Command – (1.) make disciples, (2.) baptizing them, (3.) teaching them
- 4.) The Assurance of the Command – I am with you always, even to the end of the age

II. THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM (PARAGRAPH 1).**1.) To the one who is baptized**

- Sign = Something that suggests the presence or existence of a fact, condition, or quality.
- Token = Something serving as an indication, a proof, or an expression of something else. Something that signifies or evidences authority, validity, or identity. Illustrated by subway token. Does it have any value?
- This is different than a “sacramentalist”, that sees value in the thing itself as the reality. This includes the view of baptismal regeneration, which states that in baptism there is the actual regeneration (or new birth).
- In Scripture, the sign/reality are so closely related, they are spoken of as the same.
- Romans 6; Col2:12; Gal3:27 indicates that it is a sign at least to (1.) a profession of one’s fellowship with Christ in His death and resurrection (2.) of the washing of sin (3.) and commitment to walk in newness of life among the people of God. So in thinking back on baptism, one is to remember what one is in Christ and live accordingly.

2.) To those who witness the baptism

- (1.) a profession of repentance (Mark 1:4) and obedient belief to the teachings of Jesus (Matthew 28)
- (2.) a commitment to the people of God (Acts 2:41)

III. THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM (PARAGRAPH 2)***Those who do actually profess [confess] repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience, to our Lord Jesus, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.***

- This is the place of the biggest distinction between Reformed Paedo-Baptists and Reformed Baptists. What is the basis for this?

Before the Reformation, infant baptism was practiced on the basis of church tradition and the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Since Reformed Protestants rejected both these things, one would have expected them to reject infant baptism. Their response, however, was to construct an argument for paedo-baptism from the Old Testament. Without this argument there is no biblical justification for it. Representative paedo-baptists admit this. Warfield remarks, ‘The warrant for infant baptism is not to be sought in the new Testament, but in the Old Testament.’ Louis Berkhof confirms this thought: ‘It will be observed that all these statements are based on the commandment of God to circumcise the children of the covenant, for in the last analysis that commandment is the ground of infant baptism.’

- Infant baptism is argued from the nature of the Old Covenant (especially equating the Covenant of Grace with the Abrahamic covenant) as well as connecting circumcision and baptism (i.e. circumcision = baptism).
- PB’s argue that the children of believers should be included. This cannot be born out exegetically from the New Testament. RB’s argue, especially from Jeremiah 31 as well as the examination of New Testament passages, that baptism is to be applied only to those who profess repentance and faith in response to the preaching of the Gospel.

IV. THE FORM OF BAPTISM (PARAGRAPH 3)***The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.***

- This statement may seem unnecessary at first, for what else would someone baptize with? There are some even in our day who erroneously argue that baptism becomes in the New Testament merely a spiritual act equated with the preaching of the Gospel, and does not involve any physical action pertaining to water. However, a basic observation of key texts quickly demonstrate the error of this view. Matthew 28:19, 20; Act8:38

V. THE MODE OF BAPTISM (PARAGRAPH 4)***Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due [proper] administration of this ordinance.***

- Another difference between PB’s and RB’s is the issue of how one is to be baptized. We won’t take the time to go deeply into the issue, but to summarize that the primary meaning of baptidzo means to cover, immerse, dip or overwhelm. In key passages regarding baptism, the existence of sufficient water to do so is emphasized, as seen in John 3:23 and Acts 8:38.

Additional paragraphs in Westminster and Savoy

- Paragraph 5 – Salvation not inseparably annexed to baptism, so that those who are not baptized cannot be saved. Neither are all who are baptized truly saved. This is an attempt to distance themselves from “sacramentalism.”

- Paragraph 6 – The efficacy of baptism is not tied to moment of baptism. Yet, when it is done correctly the promised grace is exhibited and conferred. In my estimation, this is a step back toward “sacramentalism”, especially in relation to infants.
- Paragraph 7 – Baptism is only to be administered once to any person. Likely a response to “re-baptism” issue.