

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 27.-Of the Sacraments.

I. Sacraments are holy Signes, and Seals of the Covenant of Grace¹, immediately Instituted by God², to represent Christ, and his benefits; and, to confirm our interest in him³; as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the World⁴; and, solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his Word⁵.

Question 1.—*Are sacraments holy signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace?*

Answer.—Yes. Rom. 4:11; Gen. 17:7,10. Thus do the Socinians and Anabaptists err maintaining that the sacraments are not seals of the covenant of grace, but only bare tokens and tests of our Christian profession. The Papists err denying the sealing function of the sacraments. In their opinion, the sacraments themselves have the efficacy to engender grace. The church, on the contrary, holds to God's Word, maintaining that *the sacraments are seals whereby the covenant of grace is sealed to true believers*. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because circumcision is expressly called a sign or seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. 4:11. Now, if circumcision was a seal and sign, why ought not baptism, and the Lord's supper to be signs and seals also? 2.) Because the names and properties of the things signified are given to the sacramental signs. Thus, circumcision is called the covenant, Gen. 17:10. The bread is called the body of Christ, Matt. 26:26. And baptism is called the washing of regeneration, Tit. 3:5. This they are called for no other reasons, but because they represent and confirm things spiritual to believers.

Question 2.—*Are sacraments immediately instituted by God?*

Answer.—Yes. Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23. The Author or Person who has instituted it can be none other than God. It does not suffice that something has been instituted by God (as taught by the Papists), but rather it must have been instituted by God as a sacrament, and thus as a seal of the covenant of grace, for: 1.) God—and no one else—establishes the covenant, Gen. 15:18; 17:7. 2.) Only God makes the promises and gives the matters which are promised, Isa. 43:25. 3.) The sacraments belong to that religion which God only has commanded and instituted, Matt. 15:9. 4.) Scripture declares plainly that God has instituted the sacraments. This is true for circumcision, Gen. 17:10; the passover, Ex. 12:3,27; 2 Chron. 35:6; holy baptism, John 1:33; Matt. 28:19; and the Lord's Supper, Matt. 26:26–28; 1 Cor. 11:25.

Question 3.—*Do sacraments represent Christ, and his benefits; and, confirm our interest in Him?*

¹Rom. 4:11; Gen. 17:7,10.

²Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23.

³1 Cor. 10:16; 11:25,26; Gal. 3:27.

⁴Rom. 15:8; Ex. 12:48; Gen. 34:14.

⁵Rom. 6:3,4; 1 Cor. 10:16,21.

Answer.—Yes. 1 Cor. 11:25,26; Gal. 3:27. If we consider, 1.) The cup of blessing in the sacrament, is the communion of the blood of Christ; the bread is the communion of the body of Christ, 1 Cor. 10:16. 2.) The sacraments bring into our memories Christ and his benefits; and therefore, as it were, they set him before our eyes, and so increase and confirm our faith, 1 Cor. 11:24,25.

Question 4.—*Do sacraments put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church, and the rest of the world?*

Answer.—Yes. Rom. 15:8; Ex. 12:48; Gen. 34:14. They are badges of our profession, and, a means of putting a visible difference between those who belong to the Church and the rest of the world, giving visibility to the Church, and separating its members from the world.

Question 5.—*Do sacraments solemnly engage those who belong to the Church to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word?*

Answer.—Yes. Rom. 6:3,4; 1 Cor. 10:16,21. They were designed to be “seals” of the benefits of the new covenant. The gospel is presented under the form of a covenant. Salvation and all the benefits of Christ’s redemption are offered upon the condition of faith. In the sacraments God, sensibly and authoritatively, pledges himself to invest us with this grace if we believe and obey. In receiving the sacrament, we actively assume all the obligations implied in the gospel, and bind ourselves to fulfill them. “Circumcision,” Paul says, is “the seal of the righteousness of faith,” Rom. 4:11; and Baptism is declared to be “the circumcision of Christ,” Col. 2:11,12. We are said to be actually “buried with Christ by baptism,” Rom. 6:4; *i.e.*, united to him in his death. Jesus says, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood,” Luke 22:20; that is, This cup represents my blood, by which the new covenant was ratified; and therefore it is a visible confirmation of the covenant, since it is a visible representative of the blood. If a man was circumcised, he was “a debtor to do the whole law,” Gal. 5:3. “As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” Gal. 3:27.