

LESSON 15

CHAPTER 28. “Of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper”

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are “ordinances” of the New Testament Church. The Westminster Confession differs significantly from the 1689 on baptism. All of the reformers accepted that infants should be baptized because they viewed the church as an institution not separable from the state. Baptists believe that only believers (i.e., persons who understand the Gospel and are resting in Christ) should be baptized. The term “Baptist” was originally used to mock adults who were publicly immersed to profess their faith. Our brothers, the reformers, were gifted interpreters of Scripture and did a wonderful job extracting God’s teaching from It. But, due in part to sacramental tradition, belief in a state church, and a misunderstanding of the New Covenant, they failed to see the meaning of Scripture in regard to baptism.

Sacrament versus symbol

I. Paragraph 1: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are divinely instituted.

- A. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordained by Jesus Christ.
- B. They are perpetual to the end of the world.

II. Paragraph 2: Their proper administration

- A. These ordinances are to be administered only by those qualified and called by Christ.

Admittedly, paragraph 2 is vague. The First London Confession (remember, the 1689 is also called the Second London Confession) stated that being a Christian was sufficient qualification. However, the language of the 1689 suggests that there is a higher qualification and particular calling on those who should administer these ordinances. The Westminster Confession specifically states that only “lawfully ordained ministers” can dispense the sacraments. A quick review of all of the water baptisms described in the NT shows that the baptisms were all performed by persons called to the ministry of the Word (i.e., apostles, elders, evangelists, and church planters.)

Discussion Questions:

Why did the reformers initially accept, but ultimately reject, believer baptism in favor of infant baptism? What is the Roman Catholic view of baptism and the Lord’s Supper?

Recommended Reading:

R.B.C. Howell, *The Evils of Infant Baptism*

R.B.C. Howell, *The Terms of Communion at the Lord’s Table*