

## THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

HAVING SEEN WHAT THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH US CONCERNING GOD, IT  
FOLLOWS TO CONSIDER WHAT THEY REQUIRE AS THE DUTY OF MAN

QUESTIONS # 166 & 95.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #166. *Unto whom is baptism to be administered?*

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him,<sup>1</sup> but infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect within the covenant, and to be baptized.<sup>2</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #95. *To whom is baptism to be administered?*

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him;<sup>3</sup> but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.<sup>4</sup>

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Question 1—*Ought baptism to be administered to those who are out of the visible church?*

*Answer*—No, baptism ought to be administered to visible church members who give evidence of knowledge, sound sentiments, credible profession of faith, and a consistent practice and godly conduct, as appears: 1.) From the demands of John the Baptist, who required repentance and works worthy of repentance, Matt. 3:8. 2.) From the demands of the apostles, who demanded a profession of faith, Acts 8:36, 37; as well as repentance, Acts 2:38. 3.) From the demands of our Lord who required discipline and baptism, Matt. 28:19. 4.) From the consideration that these will ordinarily accompany a saving interest in Christ, 2 Cor. 7:10, 11. 5.) Because the church should, in dispensing baptism, be a faithful witness for Christ, and a faithful instructor and reprover, Acts 10:47, 48. 6.) The same requisitions may be inferred from the saying of Peter, for a “good conscience” implies knowledge, faith, *etc.*,<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 3:21.

Neither is the church guilty, if such as are baptized upon these premises, prove to be hypocrites, Acts 8:13. The church cannot judge the heart, and God does not require of her an impossibility, 1 Sam. 16:7.

The church ought not to baptize those who, in the judgment of charity, are believers, if they are living in some known sin, or openly holding to some error against the church’s profession because: 1.) This is forbidden in Scripture, 2 Thess. 3:14, 15. 2.) Because the church should faithfully warn such a person of such a sin or error, Ezek. 3:18, 19. 3.) Because she should be a faithful witness for Christ, his truth and his law, Isa. 43:10. 4.)

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 8:36, 37; 2:38.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 17:7, 9; Gal. 3:9, 14; Col. 2:11, 12; Acts 2:38, 39; Rom. 4:11, 12; 1 Cor. 7:14; Matt. 28:19; Luke 18:15, 16; Rom. 11:16.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 8:36, 37; 2:38.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 2:38, 39; Gen. 17:10; Col. 2:11, 12; 1 Cor. 7:14.

She should keep herself from participation in the sin of others, 2 John 10, 11. 5.) The communion of the church is not appointed for the sole purpose of distinguishing between Christians and the world, but for the instructing of the ignorant, correcting the erring, edifying the members and maintaining Christ's cause, for his glory, and the continued enlargement and purity of the church, 1 Tim. 3:15.

Question 2—*Are infants, descending from parents, one or both of whom profess faith and obedience, to be baptized?*

*Answer*—Yes, because God granted the privileges of the covenant of grace to infants of believing parents under the old dispensation, Gen. 17:7, 9. Furthermore, this was a promise in Christ, and a gospel promise, as appears: 1.) This was a tendering of the gospel itself, Gal. 3:8, 9. 2.) It was an offer and promise in Christ, Gal. 3:16. 3.) It was an offer and promise confirmed in Christ, Gal. 3:17.

Now, in this gospel grant of covenant privilege, God claims the infant children as his, which is made clear: 1.) In that he holds out his promises to them, Gen. 17:7. 2.) He gives them the seal of the covenant of grace, Gen. 17:10. 3.) He requires that they be instructed in his law, Deut. 6:7. 4.) He charges Israel, in their idolatry, with taking his children, and offering them to idols, Ezek. 16:20, 21.

This grant of covenant privileges to infants has not been repealed under the new dispensation of the covenant of grace, as the New Testament demonstrates: 1.) Little children, even infants, are said to belong to the kingdom of God, Luke 18:15, 16. 2.) The children of believers, even of one believing parent, are said to be "holy," that is, in covenant with God, or under the covenant of promise, 1 Cor. 7:14. 3.) This promise is expressly recognized in the preaching of Peter, on the day of Pentecost, as being a continuation of the Abrahamic promise, Acts 2:38, 39.

The unity of both the Old and New Testament church requires the continuance of this covenant promise to children, Rom. 11:16, 17. Circumcision was administered to infants on the ground of covenant privilege, Gen. 17:7-12. The same duty of dedicating children to God, as children to whom the kingdom belongs, remains under the New Testament, Matt. 19:13-15. As circumcision did signify and seal, on God's part, the promise of the covenant, Rom. 4:11, 12; and on the part of his people the receiving and engaging to God, Deut. 10:16; so, now, under the New Testament, baptism is appointed to replace circumcision in the ratifying of the covenant, Col. 2:11-13.

Additionally, we see in Christ's command to baptize a warrant for infant baptism, Matt. 28:19; because: 1.) Clearly infants are included in "nations." 2.) Christ commanded the apostles to disciple these nations starting with baptism (μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐ τοῦ ς), Matt. 28:19. 3.) Infants were brought under discipleship, or regular teaching, when their parents were; for when parents from the Gentiles, or nations, were brought under instruction and discipleship, their children were circumcised, Ex. 12:48. 4.) The disciples would have understood these words of Christ's as Jews were accustomed to hear such expressions; thus, they acted accordingly, in baptizing whole households, Acts 16:15, 31-33; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16.

Finally, the external church covenant and church right to the means of grace is given to a society and made with nations appears: 1.) In Abraham, when the covenant privilege was extended, Gen. 17:12, 13. 2.) Afterwards, when God chose the nation with that same covenant, Deut. 7:6, 7; Amos 3:2. 3.) Under the New Testament, Isa. 2:1-3; Ps. 2:8, 9; 22:27; Rev. 11:15.