

“The Son of God Who Is Our Red Sea”

An Exposition of Article Thirty-Four of the Belgic Confession

Article 34: The Sacrament of Baptism

We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, in whom the law is fulfilled, has by his shed blood put an end to every other shedding of blood, which anyone might do or wish to do in order to atone or satisfy for sins. Having abolished circumcision, which was done with blood, he established in its place the sacrament of baptism.¹ By it we are received into God’s church and set apart from all other people and alien religions, that we may be dedicated entirely to him, bearing his mark and sign.² It also witnesses to us that he will be our God forever, since he is our gracious Father.

Therefore he has commanded that all those who belong to him be baptized with pure water “in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). In this way he signifies to us that just as water washes away the dirt of the body when it is poured on us and also is seen on the body of the baptized when it is sprinkled on him, so too the blood of Christ does the same thing internally, in the soul, by the Holy Spirit.³ It washes and cleanses it from its sins⁴ and transforms us from being the children of wrath into the children of God.⁵ This does not happen by the physical water⁶ but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God,⁷ who is our Red Sea,⁸ through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, who is the devil, and to enter the spiritual land of Canaan.

So ministers, as far as their work is concerned, give us the sacrament and what is visible, but our Lord gives what the sacrament signifies—namely the invisible gifts and graces; washing, purifying, and cleansing our souls of all filth and unrighteousness;⁹ renewing our hearts and filling them with all comfort; giving us true assurance of his fatherly goodness; clothing us with the “new man” and stripping off the “old,” with all its works.¹⁰

For this reason we believe that anyone who aspires to reach eternal life ought to be baptized only once¹¹ without ever repeating it—for we cannot be born twice. Yet this baptism is profitable not only when the water is on us and when we receive it but throughout our entire lives. For that reason we detest the error of the Anabaptists who are not content with a single baptism once received and also condemn the baptism of the children of believers. We believe our children ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as little children were circumcised in Israel on the basis of the same promises made to our children.¹² And truly, Christ has shed his blood no less for washing the little children of believers than he did for adults.¹³ Therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of what Christ has done for them, just as the Lord commanded in the law that by offering a lamb for them the sacrament of the suffering and death of Christ would be granted them shortly after their birth.¹⁴ This was the sacrament of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, baptism does for our children what circumcision did for the Jewish people. That is why Paul calls baptism the “circumcision of Christ.”

¹ Col 2:11 ² Ex 12:48; 1 Pt 2:9 ³ Mt 3:11; 1 Cor 12:13 ⁴ Acts 22:16; Heb 9:14; 1 Jn 1:7; Rev 1:5b ⁵ Tit 3:5 ⁶ 1 Pt 3:21 ⁷ Rom 6:3; 1 Pt 1:2, 2:24 ⁸ 1 Cor 10:1-4 ⁹ 1 Cor 6:11; Eph 5:26 ¹⁰ Rom 6:4; Gal 3:27 ¹¹ Mt 28:19; Eph 4:5 ¹² Gen 17:10-12; Mt 19:14; Acts 2:39 ¹³ 1 Cor 7:14 ¹⁴ Lev 12:6

Before our Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, he left his disciples with the following command: “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*” (Matthew 28:19-20). Based upon these words of the great commission, it is now the mission of Christ’s church to go into the world, preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations. And how do we make disciples? We baptize them in the name of the Triune God.

We are working our way through articles Thirty-Three through Thirty-Five of our confession which deal with the sacraments. Previously, we made the point that the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper are visible signs and seals of invisible grace, given to us by a gracious God who is ever mindful of our hardness of heart and insensitivity to things of the Lord.

In Article Thirty-Three, our confession makes the point that the sacraments draw their efficacy from God’s word through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is quite unlike the view of the medieval Roman church. Rome held (and still does) that the sacraments are efficacious because Jesus Christ vested this gracious power in the church through a sacrificing priesthood. Therefore, Rome’s errors regarding the sacraments are two-fold. The water of baptism supposedly regenerates, washing away the guilt of original sin, while the essence of the Lord’s Supper (the Mass) is an unbloody re-sacrifice of Christ’s broken body, which is offered daily by the priests to appease God’s wrath and anger.

Article Thirty-Three also makes the point that the sacraments are means of grace and that God communicates his grace through material things, specifically the water of baptism and the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper. The material language of our confession is drawn from New Testament, and our confession is a response to the Anabaptists of the 1560’s, who believed that God works directly upon the human heart apart from means. Since Anabaptists did not understand baptism in the context of God’s gracious covenant, they denied baptism to children of Christian believers. As they saw it, baptism has nothing to do with our ratification of God’s gracious promise to us and to our children. Children are not members of the covenant of grace—contrary to what is taught throughout both the New and Old Testaments. Rather, the Anabaptists understood baptism as an act of obedience on the part of someone able to make a decision to follow Jesus. Therefore baptism is our promise to be faithful—not our ratification of God’s promise to be faithful to us and to our children. Baptism is the public confirmation of our personal decision to follow Jesus.

As signs and seals of invisible grace which are given their efficacy by the preaching of the gospel,¹ the sacraments are not incidental to the Christian life. They lie at the heart of a truly healthy Christian life. Since the sacraments communicate to us visibly (“take and eat”), what is promised to us audibly in God’s word (“I will be your God”), we must endeavor to understand the benefits of the sacraments in direct connection to the gospel. As baptism is the sacrament of entrance into the covenant, distinguishing us from unbelievers and members of false religions, so too the Lord’s Supper is the sacrament of sustenance, given to us by God for the purpose of nourishing and sustaining that same faith which he creates through the preaching of the gospel. Word and sacrament are inextricably linked. When, in faith, we receive the signs and seals of the sacraments, we also truly receive the reality (those things signified

¹ Cf. Q 65 from the *Heidelberg Catechism*. Q. It is by faith alone that we share in Christ and all his benefits: where then does that faith come from? A. The Holy Spirit works it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel, and confirms it by the use of the holy sacraments.

by outward signs), namely, Jesus Christ and all his saving benefits.

Article Thirty-Three of our confession focused upon the sacraments in general. Article Thirty-Four deals with the sacrament of baptism, while article Thirty-Five deals with the Lord's Supper. In order to set forth the Reformed view of baptism our confession develops four main points. First, baptism is the sign and seal of the new covenant, and replaces circumcision which was the sign and seal of the old covenant. But even as the covenant sign changes from circumcision to baptism, the thing signified does not change—God's covenant promise to be our God and we his people. Second, our confession deals with the nature and purpose of baptism. What is the meaning of baptism? Third, our confession addresses the problem with the Anabaptist view of baptism (more specifically the problem of "re-baptism"), before concluding by making the case that all children of believers are to be baptized, since they too are members of the covenant of grace, along with their parents.² If our children are indeed members of the covenant of grace, how can the sign and seal of the covenant be denied to them?

First, our confession deals with the relationship between baptism and circumcision. Article Thirty-Three opens by setting forth the continuity between the Old and New Testaments regarding the thing signified (God's covenant promise under the terms of the covenant of grace), while at the same time contrasting the signs and seals of Old and New Testaments—the difference between a cutting ritual (circumcision) and a water ritual (baptism). Our confession states, "We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, in whom the law is fulfilled, has by his shed blood put an end to every other shedding of blood, which anyone might do or wish to do in order to atone or satisfy for sins. Having abolished circumcision, which was done with blood, he established in its place the sacrament of baptism."

Once Christ has come and shed his blood for the forgiveness of our sins, circumcision (a knife/cutting ritual, in which blood was shed, pointing ahead to the blood of Christ) is no longer appropriate as the sign of membership in the covenant. After the coming of Christ, what is appropriate, is a water ritual (symbolic of cleansing). Two of them are found in the Old Testament—Noah and the flood and the crossing of the Red Sea—which are mentioned in direct connection with baptism in the New (cf I Peter 3:18-22; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

The basis for the covenant sign of circumcision is God's covenant promise, made to Abraham in Genesis 17:7-14. In verses 7-8, we read of the Lord's promise,

"and I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

Notice how Abraham is to ratify God's covenant promise made to him and to all his descendants. In verse 9, we read,

And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and

² Beets, The Reformed Confession Explained, 249.

you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

Circumcision is the sign of the Old Testament administration of the covenant of grace, pointing forward to both the promised blessing (the messianic seed) and to the promised curse (being cut off from the people of God). With the coming of Christ, neither the blessing nor the curse pictured by circumcision are appropriate now that the promised seed has come. Paul makes this point in Colossians 2:11-12. *“In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.”*

Notice what Paul says—in Christ, we have received true circumcision of the heart, having been buried with Christ in baptism. Since the Old Testament sign is fulfilled by Christ’s redemptive work on the cross, not only does baptism replace circumcision in the New Covenant, but that the efficacy of the sacrament is directly tied to our faith in the power of God to do those things he has promised to do. In this case, the “circumcision of Christ”³ refers to our Lord’s suffering upon the cross so that our sins are forgiven and so that our own death to sin and resurrection to new life becomes a reality. Baptism is the sign and seal that we have died to sin and are to live in new obedience to the commandments of God.

Even though the sign changes from baptism to circumcision with the coming of Christ, in whom the promise to Abraham was fulfilled, the thing signified (God’s covenant promise to us and to our children) does not change. We see this in the very first Christian sermon in Acts 2:39, where this same promise is proclaimed by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost—*“For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”* This clearly refers to the promise God made to Abraham in Genesis 17, and like the promise made to Abraham, the promise made by God his people, extends to our children as well. The sign has changed, but the thing signified has not.

Second, our confession takes up the nature and character of baptism. The purpose of baptism is set forth as follows. *“By it we are received into God’s church and set apart from all other people and alien religions, that we may be dedicated entirely to him, bearing his mark and sign. It also witnesses to us that he will be our God forever, since he is our gracious Father.”* In baptism, through which we embrace God’s covenant promise, we are clearly identified as followers of Jesus Christ. It is baptism which separates us from all other religions and from the secularism of modern America. Through baptism, we and our children, become members of the visible church, since through baptism we ratify God’s covenant promise to be our God and to save us from our sins. It is possible that our confession has in mind Revelation 7:2-3 in this regard, *“then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’”* Whether or not John is referring to baptism in Revelation 7

³ Cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1984), 103-104

when he speaks of God's people being "sealed," the result is the same—God's people are marked off from all others, so as to be protected from his wrath.

Our confession goes on to flesh out the meaning of baptism by addressing a number of the important biblical passages. "Therefore he has commanded that all those who belong to him be baptized with pure water "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). In this way he signifies to us that just as water washes away the dirt of the body when it is poured on us and also is seen on the body of the baptized when it is sprinkled on him, so too the blood of Christ does the same thing internally, in the soul, by the Holy Spirit." Not only is baptism commanded as the means of making disciples, but this is Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 12:13, when he writes, "*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.*" It is through the waters of baptism that the Holy Spirit makes us part of the body of Christ (the visible church).

Our confession also states that [baptism] "it washes and cleanses [our souls] it from its sins" (based upon verses like Acts 22:16—when Paul addresses the crowd in Jerusalem, "*and now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name*"). But it is the next phrase in our confession which catches our attention, when it states that baptism "regenerates us from children of wrath into children of God."⁴ This phrase is taken from Titus 3:5, where Paul speaks of baptism as the bath of regeneration—"*he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.*" Paul says this not because the water itself regenerates, but because the water of baptism is the visible sign and seal of the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit.⁵ Where the sign is applied (the water), so too, we believe, the thing signified (regeneration) is present. Given the use of sacramental language, the sign can be spoken of as the thing signified. This is how Paul can call baptism the "bath of regeneration," and tell the crowd in Jerusalem that baptism washes away sin, when this is the work of the Holy Spirit in applying the blood of Christ.

Our confession goes on to make this very point by appealing to a number of important events in redemptive history. "This does not happen by the physical water"—citing from 1 Peter 3:21 ("*Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*"). The confession adds, "but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God, who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, who is the devil, and to enter the spiritual land of Canaan." This sentence is a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 10:1-4. While the act of baptism does not in and of itself regenerate us, nevertheless, the sign (water) is so closely identified with the thing signified that where the one is present (water), so too, we believe, is the thing signified is present (forgiveness of sins), which is brought about by the blood of Christ, not the application of water.

To make certain that we understand this, our confession points out that "So ministers, as far as their work is concerned, give us the sacrament and what is visible, but our Lord gives what the sacrament signifies—namely the invisible gifts and graces; washing, purifying, and cleansing our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts and filling them with all comfort; giving us true assurance of

⁴ The French text reads, "*et nous re'ge'ne'rants d'enfants de col'ere en enfants de Dieu.*"

⁵ John Calvin, The Second Epistle of Paul The Apostle to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, trans. T. A. Small (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1979), 382-383

his fatherly goodness; clothing us with the “new man” and stripping off the “old,” with all its works.” In baptism, God is the active party, since he alone gives the reality which is promised by the outward sign. Since ministers can only apply water, it is God who washes away our sins, gives the new birth, and assures us that we are his.

This illustrates the fundamental difference between the Reformed and Anabaptist views of baptism. For the Anabaptist, baptism means “I really mean it.” For the Reformed, baptism is the promise from God that “I really mean it!

Third, given the prior understanding of the nature and character of baptism, our confession now addresses the errors of the Anabaptists in specifically in regards to rebaptism as adults, of those who had been baptized as infants.

Our confession states, “For this reason we believe that anyone who aspires to reach eternal life ought to be baptized only once without ever repeating it—for we cannot be born twice. Yet this baptism is profitable not only when the water is on us and when we receive it but throughout our entire lives. For that reason we detest the error of the Anabaptists who are not content with a single baptism once received and also condemn the baptism of the children of believers.” Paul condemns the practice of re-baptism in Ephesians 4:5—“*one Lord, one faith, one baptism.*” As a covenant sign and seal, the promise God makes to us in baptism abides with us until we die. In baptism we are both buried with Christ and rise to newness of life (Romans 6:1-7). In baptism, we are clothed with Christ (Galatians 3:27), and receive the outward sign that our sins are forgiven (Acts 22:16). Whenever we witness a baptism and the promises are read to the one being baptized, or to those parents who are presenting their child for baptism, God’s renews his covenant promise with all those who have already been baptized. The blessings of baptism extend from the time of our baptism, until the time the Lord calls us home.

Finally, our confession takes up the subject of the baptism of infants. Having refuted the Anabaptist practice of rebaptizing adults who were once baptized as children, our confession goes on to make the case for the baptism of the children of believers. “We believe our children ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as little children were circumcised in Israel on the basis of the same promises made to our children.¹² And truly, Christ has shed his blood no less for washing the little children of believers than he did for adults.¹³ Therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of what Christ has done for them, just as the Lord commanded in the law that by offering a lamb for them the sacrament of the suffering and death of Christ would be granted them shortly after their birth.¹⁴ This was the sacrament of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, baptism does for our children what circumcision did for the Jewish people. That is why Paul calls baptism the “circumcision of Christ.”

In order to make the case for infant baptism, we must do so within the overall context of our doctrine of baptism and in light of our covenant theology. But before we do that, we should not overlook the obvious. One of the best ways to defend the doctrine of infant baptism is to simply look at how Jesus viewed children of believers. In Luke 18:15-17, we read that,

“Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, ‘Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.’”

If infants are members of the kingdom of God (of which the covenant of grace is the historical manifestation), how can we deny to them the sign and seal of membership in that kingdom and covenant, which is baptism? Even as Jesus receive the children (and rebukes the disciples for preventing them from coming), so should we. Baptism is the divinely-appointed means for doing this very thing.

How then does our theology of baptism, require the baptism of infants? First, in Colossians 2:11-12, Paul states that baptism is the fulfillment of circumcision. To be baptized is to be united to Christ in his circumcision upon the cross (the circumcision “of Christ”), and according to Romans 6:3-4 to be united with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. To be baptized is to “put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27) and to receive the “bath of regeneration” (Titus 3:5).

With the coming of Christ as the mediator of a new and better covenant fulfilling that promised to Abraham (Hebrews 8:7 ff; Galatians 3:15 ff), the sign of the covenant of grace changes from a cutting rite (circumcision) with its exclusively male curse of being severed from the covenant with the loss of all descendants, to a water rite (baptism). Nevertheless the thing signified by the sign—God’s covenantal oath to be God to his people and to consecrate them unto himself—does not change. Like circumcision, baptism is a gospel sign, focusing upon the promises God makes on behalf of sinners (including our children).

Second, as circumcision was an oath-curse sign, so also baptism is best understood primarily as a water-ordeal sign of blessing and curse (1 Corinthians 10:1 ff; 1 Peter 3:20-22; Romans 6:3 ff), and not as many Baptists see it as essentially total immersion in water. As Noah entered the Ark (Genesis 6 ff) as Moses crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 13:17 ff), and as Joshua led God’s people through the Jordan (Joshua 3), baptism is the sign and seal of ordeal-judgement as Jesus Christ takes us through the waters of judgment. In each of these cases, no one got wet! In the Old Testament water-ordeals (the Ark, the Red Sea, the River Jordan) women, infants and children (entire households) were delivered through means of the ordeal element itself (water). This explains why baptism is applied to both men and women, when circumcision was only applied to males.

Third, as circumcision was the ratification of God’s covenant promise (“I will be your God”) by passing through the curse-ordeal (the cutting of the foreskin), so too, baptism is a ratification of God’s oath by our passage through the ordeal element itself (water), which is why our confession and baptismal liturgy speaks of us as passing through the Red Sea with Christ. Just as circumcision included the element of consecration (“You will be my people”) so too does baptism (in Romans 6:5, Paul speaks of us being united with Christ in his death and resurrection). In both cases, the sacrament is the believer’s ratification of God’s sworn oath to keep his promise to be God to his people and to deliver us from the curse due us because we have broken the covenant of works and the commandments of God.

Fourth, as with circumcision, the focus in baptism is upon God’s covenant oath and promise to save and forgive sins, not only for believers, but for their children as well (Acts 2:38-39; Acts 16:15; 33). Thus the context for baptism is the covenant of grace. There is no evidence in the New Testament that baptism is exclusively focused upon the testimony of a believer to the presence of regeneration—though there are a number of cases where baptism immediately follows conversion (as in Acts 8:36 ff.). Instead, baptism is seen primarily as the ratification of God’s oath. This becomes clear when we see that the New Testament has many references to “household salvation” (Acts 16:15; 33 ff.; 1 Corinthians 1:16; Acts 2:38 ff.; 10:2, 47 ff; 11:14; 18:8; 2 Timothy 1:16; 4:19; John 4:53). When the head of a household expresses faith in God’s promise to deliver them on behalf of all those in the household under their covenantal authority from the covenant-curse (Acts 16:15; 31), all of the members of the household are

baptized upon the basis of the principle of covenantal authority and the profession of faith by the covenantal head. Though the covenant sign changes from circumcision to baptism, there is nothing unique to baptism that excludes the children of believers.

In fact, the promise (which was certainly a reference to the promise that God had made to Abraham; cf. Galatians 3:29), says Peter, is for believers and their children (Acts 2:39). This is supported by Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 7:14, to the effect that through the faith of one party in a marriage between a believer and a non-believer, the marriage relationship is sanctified, so that any children born to that union are indeed holy and under the covenantal authority of the believing parent. Jesus certainly embraced infants as members of the kingdom (Luke 18:15-17), and viewed them as heirs of the promise. And in doing so implicitly supports the principle of covenantal authority, since the parents of these children brought them to Jesus, and he received them.

This is why the Scriptures speak of baptism as “the bath of regeneration” (Titus 3:5) and being for the “forgiveness of sin” (Acts 2:38 ff; 22:16), without also teaching that it is the waters of baptism that effect (or cause) regeneration *ex opere operato*. Regeneration is everywhere attributed to the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 2:14) and not to the mere presence of the sign itself, as if the sign somehow magically binds God to act. That being said, we must be very careful, however, not to reduce baptism to mere external sign and deny that anything at all is signified and sealed unto the one baptized. For by faith, we can say that the baptized adult or child of a believer, is indeed regenerate and has been washed in the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. If baptism is not only a sign of promise but also curse, then those who do not fulfill their baptism by coming to faith in Jesus Christ, will come under the covenant curses of which baptism is also a sign. This is clearly taught in Hebrews 6:4-6; Galatians 5:4 and John 15:1-16. This is why membership in the covenant cannot be equated with election. There will indeed be baptized members of Christ's visible church who will not inherit eternal life (cf. Simon the Sorcerer, Acts 8:13; 20-23; Those who will say “Lord, Lord,” on the day of judgment, Matthew 7:21 ff; and the weeds who grow together with the wheat until the harvest; Matthew 13:30).

Fifth, according to Hebrews 8:7 ff, the new covenant is a superior covenant. This superiority is because the “new covenant” is different in kind from the old covenant made with Moses (in which the people of God swear the oath, rather than God), and that the new covenant is the fulfillment of that promised to Abraham, and, therefore, stands as the New Testament manifestation of the one previous covenant of grace.

With this in mind, since the Old Testament manifestation of the Covenant of Grace included the children of believers (Genesis 17:7 ff.), on what basis do we exclude them under a better covenant, which fulfills what was promised to Abraham in the first place? Do we now treat or children as unbelievers who are no different than the children of pagans? The New Testament clearly offers evidence that children of Christian parent(s) are members of the covenant community (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20; also see 1 Corinthians 7:14). If they are members of the covenant, how can they be kept from receiving the sign of the covenant - baptism? Add to this the fact that regeneration precedes faith, this line of argumentation becomes that much stronger.

Baptism is a wonderful gift from God to us and to our children. He swears on his oath that he is our God and that we are his people. And once baptized, we not only believe that we are regenerate and our sins are forgiven, but it is through the waters of baptism that we are set apart from all other peoples and false religions. For through baptism, we become disciples of Christ and members of his church. Amen!