

Calvinism Leads to Credo-Baptism

by

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Hence Calvinism narrows to the last degree any real difference between its own views and those of *Anabaptists*, or Baptists. In stating the points of controversy between Calvinists and Mennonites and other *Anabaptists*, the Calvinist divines constantly represent themselves and the *Anabaptists* as perfectly agreed, so far as the Baptism of the children of unbelievers is concerned.

The Calvinistic argument against the *Anabaptist* objection to infant Baptism, constantly rests on the theory, that infants have a right to Baptism only as they possess certain spiritual qualifications. Where those qualifications are not to be presumed the *Anabaptist* objection stands, and Calvinism concedes it

. . . . In regard to the overwhelming majority of the children not only of the race, but of nominal Christendom, Calvinism holds, therefore, that they are not proper subjects of Baptism, and so far concedes much to the *Anabaptists* practically, and in regard to each particular case of those to whom it grants Baptism, concedes that it cannot prove, that before God this Baptism is valid, or that it is attended with any value whatever. Calvinism grants, that it does not know, in any one case, that the Baptism of an infant is more than a form, and grants that in no case does Baptism, even as an ordinary means, condition or bear upon the salvation of a child. What more could it grant to *Anabaptism* without granting everything?

. . . . It is evident, then, that on the Calvinistic hypothesis, in Baptism the great name of the adorable Trinity is invoked upon what is always uncertain and sometimes false. Zanchius, to avoid so shocking a possibility, favored the idea that infants should always be baptized *conditionally*, the condition expressed or implied in Baptism being that it was according to the election and purpose of God

. . . . Calvinism has therefore no logical ground against the *Anabaptist* rejection of infant Baptism

. . . . To the *Anabaptists* the Calvinist says: We agree with you that the great mass of infants are not entitled to Baptism; we agree with you that Baptism in

no case confers anything objective on the child; the only question between us is, whether the hypothetical sign of a hypothetical condition shall be given them? As God, according to the illustration of Witsius, sometimes sets his seal to blank paper, or paper so scribbled upon that nothing intelligible can be written upon it, and hides from us all of the paper except the place of the seal, and as the value of the seal as a seal all turns upon the contents of the paper, a Calvinistic seal amounts to little more than an engraver's specimen; and, inasmuch as the paper with the true covenant written on it, is just as valid, according to Calvinism, without the seal as with it, the seal seems to be of very little account in any case. Baptism is no more than a seal at most; the seal of empty or blotted paper, in many cases; the seal, at best, of a covenant, to whose force it contributes nothing; a covenant which in no sense is made by it; a covenant which stands in equal force without it. It is hardly worthwhile for Calvinism, on such a basis, to hold out against Anabaptism. It is therefore not without internal reason that the Calvinistic tendency so often ran out, originally into Anabaptism, that it became a proverb, "a young Calvinist, an old Anabaptist;" that the Anabaptist theories so largely prevail on Calvinistic soils; that the immense growth of the Baptist Church in modern times has taken place where Calvinism has been in the ascendant; that so many Calvinists have become Baptists; that so many Baptists are Calvinists, and that in the Calvinistic churches there is so great and growing a neglect of infant Baptism.

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