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The Scriptural Reasons /As Proof

That the Young Children of Believers Must Be Baptized.

Translated using AI by Confetti

Christian Reader:

You should understand that our intention has not been to treat the subject of the baptism of young children exhaustively or solely to present our own work on it, nor to say everything that might be necessary on this matter. For, aside from the fact that such a work would differ significantly from what is contained in these few pages—where otherwise a whole book would have been required—other very learned men have long before explicitly treated this topic; and now a very substantial work, professedly on this matter among others, has been printed.

However, in putting forth our Christian views, these ten reasons have occasionally been set down by us in writing. We understood that some lovers of truth might not find them fully satisfactory, or might be a little disturbed at first, and so we thought it proper in this second edition to expand them somewhat and add them here at the end. Consider our effort as being in a good cause, and let it profit you for salvation.

Exhortation

O you who are stubbornly blind and scorn God's truth, wandering in the midst of clarity, hear now: God calls us to show a place where, alongside the plain meaning of His words, the baptism of children is explicitly taught. He has powerfully demonstrated this in His Word. It is not sufficient to ignore this; it must be proclaimed without evasion.

Why, then, do misguided people resist God? Just as the Jewish people bore the sign of Christ and were marked by many deeds full of miraculous works, so too this people bears witness. Yet men still disregard the truth of God's Word.

But you, renewed in spirit through God's gift of rebirth, are stirred by His holy Word and do not resist it. As soon as you receive the covenant of God and are consecrated through baptism in water for salvation, you bring your children to Him so that they, too, may receive the sign of God's covenant and be heirs of its promises as they ought.

For this is your duty, grounded in God's Word. Let these pages teach you this comfort, and use them for your benefit, to honor the good God who has so swiftly guided the pen for this purpose. To Him be glory forevermore.

Hope in Christ.

Ten Pages

Scriptural Memorials

As Proof That the Young Children of Believers Must Be Baptized

Introduction

Among the various main points of doctrine that distinguish us from the Mennonites, none is more significant than the doctrine of baptism, in which differences have been found on both sides.

Foremost among these questions—and indeed the most well-known—is this:
Should the young children of believers be baptized?

The believing Mennonites respond: “No.” Over this matter, daily disputes took place, but in practice, the debate usually occurred between a Mennonite and a learned Reformed person. The discussion was primarily concerned with the doctrine itself.

The Mennonites have always insisted that one should not unjustly baptize young children in the Reformed Church.

On Baptizing Children

To reject this [practice of baptizing young children] is deemed **unscriptural**; it is called a human invention, a fabrication of the Antichrist. In doing so, one does great injustice not only to us and our teaching, but indeed to God and His Church; it is the greatest injustice of all in the matter of baptism in the world.

For, apart from this, no one in the world—neither in our day nor in former times—has been able to demonstrate otherwise or prove from antiquity that humans, or any pope, or any council, ever instituted, ordained, or authorized the baptism of young or infant children in any way contrary to the apostolic tradition.

Indeed, **Augustine, Origen, Cyprian, Tertullian, Justin Martyr**, and many other fathers and notable teachers who followed the apostles, living shortly after the apostolic era, **explicitly attest in their writings** that the baptism of young children was practiced throughout the entire Christian Church. They **expressly deny** that it was instituted by any human authority or by any council.

Moreover, Menno Simons himself, through the power of the truth, confirms this having been carefully preserved in their writings, it is clearly known that this Christian practice—the baptism of young children—was established at the very foundation, already in the time of the apostles, and indeed may also have begun to shine forth in their own era. Beyond this, many other credible testimonies are preserved, serving to confound our opponents and refute their objections.

Thus, it is declared that **our teaching—that the young children of believers must be baptized—has its firm and foundational basis in the faith of God’s Word**. This will, with God’s help, serve as instruction for the simple and as a refutation of misrepresentations. It can be shown, as clearly and concisely as possible, by the following **ten arguments**, which are so solid and compact that no Mennonite can successfully refute them.

Therefore, by the power of God, we maintain that the young children of believers **must be baptized**, for they, just like adults, are **members of God’s covenant**.

They are **included in the congregation** and They are **received into the congregation**

That they **receive the forgiveness of sins**.

That they **share in the benefits of Christ’s blood**.

That they **receive the Holy Spirit**.

That they **are recognized among the believers**.

That they **are made Christians**.

That they **have God as Father, the Son of God as Savior, and the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier**.

That they **must be baptized under the New Testament**, just as in the Old Testament they **had to be circumcised**.

That the **command of baptism** (Matt. 28; Mark 16) is universal, and applies to **them as well as their believing parents**.

Reason I

The first reason by which we prove that **the young children of believers must be baptized** is because For all the baptized members of God's covenant must be baptized; but the young children of the believing members are also members of God's covenant. Therefore, the young children of believers must be baptized. That all the members of God's covenant must be baptized — which is the first presentation of this point — reason:

Look at the unchangeable will of God, who once and for all has decreed that all His members shall bear the sign and seal of His covenant, and that through an eternal and uninterrupted ordinance,

saying, “This is the sign of my covenant” (Genesis 17:10), which is the sign of my covenant for your flesh to be in an eternal covenant. There He commands that the sign of the covenant be administered to all His members, under penalty of being cut off from His people.

This sign of the covenant in the Old Testament was circumcision, but in the New Testament it is baptism.

Just as Dirck Philips acknowledges, saying in his Handbook: “Baptism is a sign of the covenant of Christ.”

The Mennonites of Dael, who in the *Proto-Franckeno* (act. col. of Franckendael) and more than once in 31. act. 34, call baptism the sign of the covenant and the seal of the covenant in the New Testament. All members of God's covenant, therefore, must in both the New and the Old Testament receive

the sign of God's covenant — that is, be baptized. That also the young children of believing members of God's covenant must be baptized — which is the second presentation of this point —

appears in the words of God to Abraham, the father of the believers (Genesis 17:7): *“I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you, that it may be an everlasting covenant, so that I am your God, and the God of your descendants after you.”* This means that God desired all that He is and has to belong to the believers and their children, not only for temporal prosperity, but also and especially for eternal happiness.

Which Peter also declares and confirms in Acts 2:38, to the believing Jews: *“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the promise is to you and to your children.”*

This is also acknowledged by the opponents themselves, as Menno Simons states in his *New Fundamental Book*, saying: *“Thus our little children are in God's covenant.”* Likewise, *“The children are in God's covenant and promise.”* And Dirck Philips says: *“The children are not excluded from God's covenant.”*

Thus the conclusion follows naturally: For if all members of God's covenant must be baptized, and the young children of believing members of God's covenant are members, it necessarily follows that the young children of believers must be baptized. And if it is universally accepted that one of the two is true — either the children are outside of God's covenant or they are members of His covenant —

If they are outside of God's covenant, then baptism is merely a promise of salvation, which contradicts Scripture and all Christian feeling. If they are members of God's covenant, then the sign and seal of the covenant belongs to them, which is baptism; this corresponds with Scripture and all Christian understanding.

II. Reason.

2. Because, indeed, the reason why we assert that the young children of the believing must be baptized is that they themselves, just as the adults, are included in the congregation of God. For God's command is: all who are

included in the congregation of God must be baptized; and the young children of the believers are included in the congregation of God. Therefore, the young children of believers must be baptized.

The first proposition, namely that all who are included in the congregation of God must be baptized, is beyond question, for baptism is an initiation into the congregation, and the entire congregation participates as one member of the body of the congregation. Therefore, Menno Simons also calls it an initiation into the congregation, and Peter van Teulen acknowledges that in the visible congregation of Christ no other initiation can occur according to Scripture than through baptism.

The second proposition, namely that the young children of believers are included in the congregation of God, was proven from Joel 2, where the young children and infants, as well as the adults, are included and counted among the congregation: for there the servants of God go out, blow the trumpets in Zion, sanctify a fast, call the congregation together, assemble the people, sanctify the congregation, gather the elders, bring the young children and infants in hope. Likewise, in Isaiah 49, which speaks of the congregation of the New Testament: *“Bring your sons in your arms, and carry your daughters on your shoulders”* (Isaiah 49:22).

This is also acknowledged by Menno Simons and Dirck Philips, that the young children are in the congregation of God.

Therefore, the conclusion follows naturally: For if all who are included in the congregation of God must be baptized, and the young children of believers are included in the congregation of God — as has now been proven — it follows indisputably that the young children of believers must be baptized.

And here, once again, one of two things is true: either the young children of believers are baptized into the congregation of God, or are included in it. If they are baptized into the congregation of God, then they are also baptized into salvation (Acts 2:47), for the Lord daily added to the congregation those who were being saved, as recorded in the acts of the apostles. Likewise, there was no salvation outside of Noah’s Ark; so, too, there is no salvation outside of the Church of God, of which the Ark was a type. If they are included in the

congregation of God, then baptism belongs to them, which is the sacrament and sign of the congregation.

III. Reason.

3. Because the third reason why we assert that the young children of believers must be baptized is that they share in the forgiveness of sins; for all those who have the forgiveness of sins must be baptized. But the young children of believers have the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, the young children of believers must be baptized. That all those who have the forgiveness of sins must be baptized is the first proposition. This is thereby proven. Baptism is a sign and seal of the washing away and forgiveness of sins.

As appears from the words of Peter to the Jews (Acts 2:38): “*Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*” And from the words of Ananias to Paul (Acts 22:16): “*Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins.*”

That the young children also have the forgiveness and washing away of sins — which is the second proposition — appears from the fact that Christ says that the kingdom of heaven belongs to them (Matthew 19:14). Therefore, they must have forgiveness of sins, for nothing unclean enters the New Jerusalem, which is defiled by sin.

Yet the young children are in themselves innocent and free from actual sins, but they are subject to original and hereditary sin, being descended from sinful seed (Job 14:4) or born in unrighteousness and receiving sin according to their nature (Psalm 51). Likewise, as Paul teaches, children inherit the corruption of human nature (Ephesians 2:3).

Other: For they are also subject to various hardships, pains, illnesses, and afflictions, being the fruits of sin and the punishments of God; yes, even death, which is the wages of sin, they often experience in their infancy. Therefore, if the young children are to enter the kingdom of heaven, they must have the washing away and forgiveness of sins.

Here again, one of two things must be true: namely, either that the young children have the washing away of sins, or not. If they do not have the washing away and forgiveness of sins, then they also have no salvation, for sin — whether original or actual — is condemnable, and where sin is reckoned, death follows; yes, eternal death. Therefore, salvation is grounded in the forgiveness of sins.

If they do have forgiveness and washing away of sins, then baptism belongs to them, which is the sacrament of the forgiveness and washing away of sins; for by what right can one withhold the sign from those who rightfully and indeed rightfully belong to the sign? And according to the established conclusion, it follows necessarily that the young children of believers must be baptized.

IV. Reason.

4. Because the proof that the young children of believers must be baptized is that they share in the redemption through the blood of Christ. For all who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ must be baptized; but the young children of believers are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the young children of believers must be baptized.

The first proposition, namely that all who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ must be baptized, is thereby proven. Baptism is a sign and seal of redemption through the blood of Christ, and the two are mutually related: for it regards the washing away of sins through the blood of Christ, as Ananias said to Paul: *“Arise, be baptized and wash away your sins”* (Acts 22:16).

It also regards the outward redemption through baptism, for Paul calls the blood of Christ a blood of sprinkling (Hebrews 12:24), and John says that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sins (1 John 1:7).

Here it is also fitting to mention what the same Apostle states (1 John 5:6): *“This is He who came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood.”* So the blood of Christ and the water of baptism cannot be separated or considered apart from one another, but must go together; and whoever shares in the one has also a claim to the other.

The second proposition, namely that the young children are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, is indisputable and is even acknowledged by the principal Mennonites themselves.

For, as Peter van Ceulen states in the Liede protocol of Embden: that also the children were washed and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, just as it is written in Revelation 1:5 and 1 John 1:7. Likewise, Dirck Philips states: *“The children are baptized, washed, and redeemed with the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Therefore, the conclusion follows as well, namely that the young children of believers must be baptized. And indeed, I cannot see why anyone would be more sparing or reluctant with the water of baptism than with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who refuse to administer baptism are withholding the precious and costly blood of the Son of God, which is given to redeem them from their sins.

V. Reason.

Because the young children of believers have the Holy Spirit; for all who have the Holy Spirit must be baptized. But the young children of believers have the Holy Spirit; therefore, the young children of believers must be baptized.

That all who have the Holy Spirit must be baptized is confirmed by Peter in Acts 10, saying: *“Can anyone withhold water from being baptized for these?”* (Acts 10:47–48) baptized and received the Holy Spirit, just as we do? Although the Apostle does not principally or solely refer to those visible signs as we do — for then no one else could have been baptized except those who received the Holy Spirit so visibly, miraculously, and abundantly as the Apostles did, and according to that, at that time no one would have been baptized — he principally refers only to those who have received the Holy Spirit.

And to this purpose also serves what John says in his first epistle, chapter 5 (1 John 5:8): *“There are three that testify: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are one,”* indicating that the baptism of the blood of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, and of the water belong together, and that those who share in the baptism of the blood and of the Spirit must also receive the baptism of water.

Which is also agreed upon by Peter van Ceulen in the protocol of Embden (Prot. Act. 82), stating: *“Those who thus have the Holy Spirit..”* baptized with the Holy Spirit, they also belong to be outwardly baptized with water. Moreover, one must understand that baptism occurs inwardly through the Holy Spirit and outwardly with water, which proves the first proposition.

That the young children of believers have the Holy Spirit is shown by the words of Paul (Romans 8:9): “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him; but the young children do belong to Christ.” Therefore, they have the Spirit of Christ.

This is also confirmed by the example of John the Baptist, who was filled with the Holy Spirit even in his mother’s womb (Luke 1:15). Likewise, the children of believers are called holy (1 Corinthians 7:14), which Menno Simons also acknowledges, saying: “We believe truly that the children are holy, blessed, and redeemed. And if they are holy, they must also be blessed.”

For without holiness no one can see God (Hebrews 12). Now, if the children are holy, they have the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of sanctification (Romans 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2) from whom all holiness of man comes.

Since the second proposition is also thereby proven, it follows naturally that the young children of believers must be baptized, which is the conclusion.

Now again, one of two things must be true: either the young children have the Holy Spirit, or they do not. If they do not have the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9), then we say with Paul in the aforementioned passage that they do not belong to Christ. Indeed, we say with Christ (John 3) that they cannot enter the kingdom of God, for John 3:5 says, unless one is born of water and the Spirit (that is, by our Savior’s ordinance), one cannot enter the kingdom of God.

And who would be so bold as to oppose Christ and all Christian understanding by asserting that the young children of believers are excluded from the kingdom of heaven? They are partakers of the Holy Spirit, as Acts 10:47 confirms, where Peter asks: *“Can anyone withhold water from being baptized for these who have received the Holy Spirit?”*

VI. Reason.

6. Because the young children of believers are counted among the believers; for all who are counted among the believers must be baptized, and the young children of believers are counted among the believers. Therefore, the young children of believers must be baptized.

The first proposition is that all who are counted among the believers must be baptized, and this is proven from the words of Christ (Mark 16): “*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.*” Hence, baptism belongs to all believers, and therefore also to all who are counted among the believers.

The second proposition is that the young children of believers are counted among the believers. And who can doubt this? For there are no more than two kinds of people: good and evil, believers and unbelievers. Now, among the unbelievers belong... the young children ...of believers not, they would otherwise be lost. Therefore, they belong among the believers. Where else should one place the baptized children (says Augustine) if not among the believers? Indeed, the baptized children are to be counted among the believers, and no one should judge otherwise, unless one wishes to be an open heretic — and rightly so. For even though they do not yet perform the acts of faith, they nevertheless have the seed of faith.

They have the Holy Spirit, the author of faith, who works faith in the adults at harvest and in the children in the seed; they have the justification that is granted through faith. They have the promise of the end of faith, the salvation of their souls. Therefore, we conclude that the young children of believers must be baptized: for if they are counted among the believers, they have the seed of faith, the Spirit of faith, the justification of faith, and salvation, the end of faith. What then would prevent them from receiving the sign of baptism, as a seal of the righteousness of faith?

VII. Reason.

7. Why the young children of believers must be baptized is because they are also Christians. For all Christians must be baptized; but the young children of believers are Christians. Therefore, the young children of

believers must be baptized.

That all Christians must be baptized cannot be doubted by anyone who knows that baptism is a seal of Christianity, as Theophylactus calls it. Through baptism, one enters into the fellowship of Christians. Indeed, as Paul says to the Galatians (Galatians 3:27), all who are baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Since the young children of believers are Christians, they cannot be denied baptism or placed among the unchurched or Christless people, for there is no third category. Therefore, the young children of believers must be baptized. And indeed, how can one deny that baptism marks a Christian, just as one recognizes a Christian by avoidance or distinction does a Jew or Turk recognize, or together a Mamluk, or an apostate Christian; and if none of these belong to any of these, then do not all Christians — young as well as old, children as well as adults — belong to a distinction from Jews and Turks and therefore must be baptized? And if one baptizes only adult Christians, what sign of distinction would the minor children have as Christians?

VIII. Reason.

The reason we give to confirm the baptism of the young children of believers is because God is their Father, the Son of God is their Savior, and the Holy Spirit is their Sanctifier. For all who have God as Father, the Son of God as Savior, and the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier, the Lord commands to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

For to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is otherwise not only with a visible sign to signify and seal that God is a Father, the Son of God a Savior, and the Holy Spirit a Sanctifier of the one who is baptized. But the young children of believers have God as Father, the Son of God as Savior, and the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier; for they are children and members of God, heirs of salvation, promised through the blood of Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, as has been shown above. Therefore, the young children of believers must be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

IX. Reason.

9. Because the young children of believers must be baptized in the New Testament just as they had to be circumcised in the Old Testament. This is thereby proven, for baptism has come in place of circumcision, and the conclusion follows: baptism has been instituted in the place of circumcision. Therefore, the young children of believers in the New Testament must be baptized, just as the young children of believers in the Old Testament had to be circumcised.

The first proposition I hold without question, for the Mennonites will well allow that, since baptism has come in the place of circumcision, the young children of believers in the New Testament must be baptized, just as the young children of believers in the Old Testament had to be circumcised.

The second proposition is denied by them; therefore, I will prove it, namely, that baptism has come in the place of circumcision. And this is made clear from the following reasons.

First, in the Old Testament, there were two primary sacraments: circumcision and the Passover. In the New Testament, there are likewise two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper. All of these sacraments point to Christ and His grace.

The sacraments of the Old Testament looked forward to Christ, who was yet to come, and symbolized His grace and the sacrifice He would offer in His coming. The sacraments of the New Testament look to Christ who has now come, representing His grace and the sacrifice He has accomplished in His coming.

Since Christ has now come, He has abolished the Old Testament sacraments — circumcision and the Passover — which were figures of the grace of His coming, and established the sacraments of the New Testament in their place. Just as He established the Lord's Supper in the place of the Passover, so He has established baptism in the place of circumcision; for wherever one is removed and another is instituted in its place, the new comes in the place of the old.

But here the old practice was removed, and baptism was instituted; therefore, baptism has come in the place of circumcision, which Paul strongly confirms in his letter to the Galatians, saying (Galatians 5:2): *"If you let yourselves be*

circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. But those who are baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

It is true that circumcision was still practiced by the apostles alongside baptism as a customary observance, which Paul had Timothy maintain for the Jews (Galatians 2:3); but this was temporary and ceased over time, so that the apostles and elders, when gathered in the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1, 24:28–29), decided not to impose circumcision on the Gentiles. In the end, circumcision was entirely left behind by Christians, and baptism was instituted and retained in its place (Acts 16:3).

Secondly, because the Apostle Paul in Colossians 2, where he speaks of baptism and circumcision, showing that both work equally according to Scripture, saying (Colossians 2:11–12): *“In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands, by the putting off of the sinful nature, and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God has made alive together with him and has forgiven all your trespasses.”*

From these words, and from the manner of speech that Paul here uses, it is clear that through Christ circumcision has been abolished, and baptism has been instituted in its place. This shows the correspondence and similarity between circumcision and baptism in their purpose and effect and baptism (understood as taken in place of circumcision), noting that circumcision pointed to Christ who was yet to come, whereas baptism points to Christ who has already come.

Firstly, circumcision (Genesis 17:11, 7) was a sign of God’s covenant, sealing to the believer that God was their God (Genesis 17). Baptism is the same, sealing to believers that God the Father is their Father, the Son of God their Savior, and the Holy Spirit their Sanctifier (Matthew 28:19).

Secondly, circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, which exists in the forgiveness of sins (Romans 4:11, 5:16; Colossians 2:11). Baptism is likewise the same, serving believers as a seal of the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 1:4).

Thirdly, circumcision was a sacrament of regeneration and renewal, admonishing believers to circumcise and put away the precepts of their hearts, and obliging obedience to the Law (Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Galatians 5). Such a sacrament is also baptism, expressly given to the believer admonishing the believer to the mortification of sins and the renewal of life (Titus 3:5; Romans 6:2), and obliging and urging progress in conversion, which is why it is also called the baptism of repentance (Mark 1:4).

Fourthly, circumcision was a sign of admission and incorporation into the congregation of Israel, for no uncircumcised person could partake in the Passover. Baptism is likewise a sign of admission and incorporation into the Church of Christ, and no one unbaptized may partake in the Lord's Supper. Just as circumcision formerly distinguished between Jews and Gentiles, so baptism now distinguishes between Christians and non-Christians, insofar as it concerns the name and outward profession.

Finally, regarding the comparison of these two sacraments, baptism and circumcision: the Jews in the Old Testament were circumcised, yet Paul says of them that they were baptized (1 Corinthians 10:1–2). Likewise, Christians in the New Testament are baptized.

1. We are circumcised (Colossians 2), so that we may be assured concerning the placement of baptism in the stead of circumcision, and regarding the coming together of both in their significance and sealing.

Against this objection, which is raised:

It is claimed that baptism came in the place of circumcision, and therefore must be administered only to male children, and on the eighth day after their birth. This, however, has nothing to do with the body.

1. It is not necessary that a sign which is placed in the stead of another must, in all circumstances, correspond exactly with the other. Just as the Lord's Supper, although it came in the place of the Passover, is not bound to the precise time of the Passover.
2. That women were not circumcised was because they lacked the ability to receive circumcision; but for baptism, they are as capable as males. And

even if they did not carry the outward sign of circumcision on their body, they were still considered circumcised in principle.

According to Genesis 34, the sign of circumcision applied equally well to women as to men. Moreover, circumcision on the eighth day occurred for particular reasons, which do not apply to baptism; among these reasons, the mothers were still unclean from the previous seven days, as seen in Leviticus 22. This ceremonial purification was fulfilled by Christ in the New Testament.

The Mennonites also argue against this, claiming that since baptism came in place of circumcision, those already circumcised do not need to be baptized. This does not hold: for circumcision, which symbolized the coming and blood-shedding of Christ, became entirely void and powerless once Christ had come and shed His blood. Now all believers must receive a sign on their bodies, by which it may be evident that they believe in the Messiah—not in His mere physical appearance, but in the Christ who is already present in the flesh, the faithful community incorporated, while the unbelieving, even among the Jews, were separated and excluded. And in the New Testament, that sign is none other than Baptism. Thus, for many reasons, the circumcised still needed to be baptized, indeed, they had to be baptized.

Hence, it is clearly and powerfully demonstrated in our second proposition and evidence reason, showing that Baptism has come in the place of circumcision. From this follows the conclusion: just as the young children of believers in the Old Testament had to be circumcised, so also the young children of believers in the New Testament must be baptized. For, tell me, why would we refuse our young children Baptism when God in the Old Testament commanded the sign of His covenant to be administered to the young children of the faithful? And such a command in the New Testament has neither been changed nor revoked.

Understandably, our young children do not grasp the full mysteries of Baptism. Just as the young children in the Old Testament did not comprehend the covenant realities of circumcision, so too our young children cannot fully understand the doctrine or meaning of Baptism.

Do our young children possess immediate faith? No, they do not. Did the young children in the Old Testament possess immediate faith? They did not. Do our children know the purpose for which they are being baptized? No; their

understanding is just as limited as that of the children who were circumcised under the Old Covenant.

X. Reason.

10. The tenth reason why we assert that even the youngest children of believers must be baptized is because the command to administer Baptism, as given in Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:16, is universal—it concerns all, both young children and adult believers.

For Christ says in Matthew 28:19–20: “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.” This command extends to everyone, including children of believers, just as it does to adult disciples.

According to Mark 16:16, Christ commands: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

What does our Savior here command His apostles to do other than to preach the Gospel? By the preaching of the Gospel, they are to gather a people or a congregation and make them disciples, that is, Christians. This is accomplished through Baptism, which serves as the sacrament of the Christian Church, sealing the blessed fellowship of God and distinguishing the unbelievers.

Alongside this, the baptized are to be instructed in all His commands. Christ adds a promise of salvation to all believers and a judgment of condemnation to all unbelievers. This promise and obligation extend also to the young children of believers, for they are, just like their parents, counted among the people of God, members of the Christian Church, and the faithful; thus, the promise of salvation also pertains to them.

By Marcum: **16.** From there, he went and preached the Gospel to all creatures: those who believe and are baptized shall be saved. And whoever does not believe shall be condemned.

What does our Savior here command His apostles, other than to preach the Gospel? By the evangelical preaching, they are to gather a certain people or congregation and make them His disciples or Christians. They do this through baptism, as the sacrament of the Christian Church, to seal the blessed communion of God and to separate the unbelievers; meanwhile, they are to instruct the baptized in all His commands.

Here, a promise of salvation is added for all believers, and a declaration of condemnation for all unbelievers.

And all of this also applies to the young children of the believers; for they are, just like their parents, under the people of God, under the disciples of Christ, in the Christian Church, and counted among the faithful. The promise of salvation also belongs to them: the blessed community. The community with God must also be sealed through baptism; and they must, as they grow up, be taught and instructed in all the commandments of Christ. Therefore, our Savior here speaks concerning them, as well as concerning their believing parents:

Do not omit baptism.

Some people say (just as the Mennonites with this outburst try to defend their position) that Christ only instituted teaching for baptism. Therefore, they ask: are young children, who cannot yet be taught, not to be baptized? I say that Christ indeed here establishes both baptism and teaching. And therefore, young children, who after their baptism can indeed be instructed, may rightly be baptized, because through instruction, they can be brought up in the commandments of Christ.

For it is stated by those baptizing, etc., in Matthew (and the instruction continues) that they are to observe everything I have commanded you. This, of course, can indeed be done for children as they grow up.

Also, baptism is connected to teaching, as in Mark 1:4. For the evangelist says: John was in the wilderness, baptizing and preaching, etc. Notice first baptizing, and then preaching. And in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter **19**, it states: baptism for those who believe. For there it says, Acts 19:4, Paul: “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in Jesus Christ.”

Notice again that he first baptized, and afterward said that they should believe in Christ.

It is true: Christ commands all peoples to be baptized; but under this name of “peoples,” young children can also be included—those who are within the households of the peoples—and indeed, peoples are also mentioned in Scripture.

For Genesis 25 records the Lord speaking to Rebecca: “Two peoples are in your womb” (Gen. 25). And by “all peoples,” the Lord Christ does not mean only all adults and grown-ups, but in general all kinds and ranks of people—not only Jews, but also Gentiles—spread over the entire earth, to whom the saving grace of God, through the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, would one day be extended. This is what Mark calls “all creatures.”

And when all has been accomplished, one must make a distinction between a congregation that is yet to be established and a congregation that is already established. When God made His covenant with Abraham and his offspring, and commanded circumcision, this was the beginning of the Old Covenant. And when they were circumcised, all the children who were born in their households, and who would yet be born, were to be circumcised on the eighth day, as is seen in Genesis 17.

Likewise, when Christ entrusted His apostles with the task of making disciples and gathering congregations through preaching and baptism, they first had to bring the message to the adults; and when they became believers, they could also baptize their children.

If anyone doubts this, let them pay attention to the practice of their apostolic ministry, which was doubtless conducted according to their charge, and they will notice the truth here. For did the apostles not first preach to the adults? And when they believed in Christ and were baptized, then they also baptized their children.

Unless they are not their entire household? As is evident in Lydia and her household in Philippi, and all the others, and in the household of Stephanus, under whose household were found both children and adults; indeed, especially the children—all who were there, even the infants, were counted and included.

Thus, when the Gospel was to be proclaimed among the Gentiles, one was to begin with the adults, not with the children, in baptism. And when they believed and were baptized, then one could first baptize their children. Just as is practiced in the East Indies and elsewhere by our preachers: for there is an entire difference between adults who are unbaptized and the young children of believers.

Adults who are unbaptized are not yet part of the communion of the Church; therefore, without their own consent, they cannot be baptized into the life of the Gospel and the confession of faith. But the young children of believers are already in the Church. If believers' children are born in the same (household), for God makes His covenant with the believer in such a way that He is their God, and the God of their offspring. Therefore, they may and ought to be baptized as covenant members of God and members of the Church of Christ.

One asks: if the young children of believers are covenant members of God and members of the congregation, why then are they not admitted to the Lord's Supper? I answer: because the young children are not yet capable of receiving that sacrament. For Paul says, "Let a person examine themselves, and so eat" (1 Cor. 11:28). But young children are not able to do this.

Christ says: "Do this in remembrance of me"—the remembrance of Christ exists in the proclamation of His death, according to Paul's explanation (1 Cor. 11:26). And what capacity do young children have for this? In the Lord's Supper, the covenant members are presented with the likeness of the body and the shedding of Christ's blood; but how could young children behold it without true faith? There, the body and shed blood are presented to them; but how can they partake of these treasures without true faith? They must eat the body and drink the blood, but how can they do this without true faith? Which young children do not possess.

But for the sacrament of baptism, they are just as capable as adults.

Behold, therefore, ten reasons and arguments, taken from Holy Scripture, as proof that the young children of believers must be baptized. These we hold so weighty and compelling that, as in an offering or illustration, they are formally expressed in words: **"Baptize young children."**

All the objection of the Mennonites is: “Show us where it is written: ‘Baptize young children.’” We answer that this is written from the foundation and strength of Holy Scripture, in large letters, in all the aforementioned reasons, in which it can also be read and understood by those who have exercised minds in God’s service.

God’s Word, whose eyes of understanding are enlightened, and which they have not wilfully rejected against the clear sunlight. And dear reader: where, indeed, is it written anywhere in God’s Word: **“Baptize no young children”**?

Yes, where is it written in Holy Scripture, with so many letters: **“Baptize old, grown-up, and adult unbelievers”**? Truly, all doctrinal teachings must be held according to God’s Word; and that which is not expressed with so many letters and syllables in Holy Scripture must also be demonstrated to the Mennonites.

Christ also could not have proven powerfully on the books of Moses to the Sadducees that there would be a resurrection of the dead; for He did this not with printed words, but with good reasoning, with a powerful proof from God’s Word (Matt. 22).

How shall the Mennonites establish their practice of re-baptism, their false interpretations, and other errors? I say: not with printed letters, but even with good reasoning, with the foundation and strength of Holy Scripture. Furthermore, we show faithfully some passages of Holy Scripture where it is expressly mentioned that children were baptized. But aside from that, it is likely and credible that the apostles, in those mentioned households, indeed baptized young children—particularly in Lydia’s household—something that no one can ever deny or falsely refute.

For, indeed, many events occurred with Christ and His apostles that are not written down, including that many were baptized whose baptism is not recorded in Holy Scripture. Yet still, the Mennonites hold that such persons were baptized with doubt, for example, Mary, the mother of Christ, and John the Baptist, among others.

Finally, consider the example of our Savior in Luke 3:23, who was baptized when He was about thirty years old, intending thereby to demonstrate that the ministry of baptism was directed to adults and grown persons. But with equal reasoning, one could also conclude Abraham was circumcised in his

ninety-ninth year; therefore, one would have to baptize only the old. But this is indeed false and contrary to God's command.

If the Mennonites wish to hold up Christ as an example in this, then they should not baptize anyone before thirty years of age. But this is mere trifling, and the example of Christ in this matter serves no more than for the Mennonites. For He, who according to God's command was circumcised in His childhood, was baptized to signify His obedience, almost as soon as the baptism of God had been instituted and began to be administered by John the Baptist. This was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius (Luke 3:1), at which time Christ began to be about thirty years old.

From this, we learn that all covenant members of God should obey their God without any delay and partake of the seals of His covenant as soon as possible.

Now, the Father of lights enlightens all blind and erring people, particularly also the Mennonites, through the Spirit of truth, unto the knowledge of salvation.

AMEN

