

- o Paedobaptists like to argue from the silence of Scripture, and the history of the early church, in support of infant baptism.
 - It is claimed that the Bible is silent about infant baptism because infant baptism is obviously a part of the Covenant of Grace such that there is no reason to mention it.
 - It is claimed that the post-apostolic writings are silent about infant baptism because it was a widely accepted practice such that there was no need to teach or defend it.
 - We contend that the arguments from silence to establish an instituted sacrament is logically faulty and can quickly lead to error.

1. The weight of precept.

- o If we were to list the positive commands (or precepts) in the NT supporting infant baptism, we would find none. Each of the positive commands in the NT apply only to disciples because repentance and faith are necessary requirements for New Covenant baptism (Acts 2:38-41).
 - Many paedobaptists agree. However, they attempt to get out of a dilemma by arguing that these precepts arise in the context of a missionary church, when the gospel was first being preached. Therefore, the requirement for repentance and faith does not apply to infants of believers in an established church.
- o This is an absurd position for three reasons.
 - First, it would require stated NT prohibition against other things such as household servant's baptism and adult relatives' baptisms, since the argument in support of infant baptism based on "good and necessary inference" from the Abrahamic Covenant applies equally to these cases.
 - Second, it demands of God a specific prohibition for a practice never mentioned against His stated precept of believer's baptism.
 - Third, it is inconsistent with the position of many paedobaptists against infant communion. Paedobaptists, like Berkhof and Murray, require a stated prohibition of infant baptism to abandon it, yet prohibit infant communion because there is a positive precept requiring self-examination (1 Cor. 11:28). Why is the positive precept requiring repentance and faith not enough to prohibit infant baptism? Furthermore, there are so many passages teaching believers' baptism (e.g. Acts 2:38-42; Matt. 28:18-20), and so many examples of it (e.g. John 4:1; Acts 8:38), but only one passage requiring self-examination for communion which is sufficient to overthrow infant communion.

2. The proper argument from silence.

- o The paedobaptists wrongly argue from silence, claiming that if there is no prohibition in Scripture, the practice must be allowed. The right argument from silence should be that since it is not taught in Scripture, the practice should not be adopted. This applies to infant baptism.
 - In Acts 15, the council of Jerusalem had to deal with the Judaizers who required circumcision for new Christians. The answer of the council was that Christians are saved by grace alone without circumcision (v. 11) and that it is good to "abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication" (v. 29).
 - : If baptism is the direct counterpart of circumcision, the council could have said, "You and you children have been circumcised in the baptism of Christ and do not need physical circumcision." The council did not employ what would have been an obvious argument. This shows that baptism is not the direct counterpart of circumcision.
- o In Galatians, Paul had to deal with the Judaizers who were requiring Gentile believers to be circumcised (Gal. 5:2, 3).
 - Why didn't Paul simply say, "After believing, you and your children were baptized; thus, you have already received the New Covenant counterpart of circumcision and no longer need it?"
 - : Here, again, the argument from silence speaks against baptism as the direct counterpart of circumcision. Instead, it supports the receiving of the Spirit by hearing "with faith" as its counterpart, and its basis for abrogation (Gal. 3:2, 3).
- o Some paedobaptists have tried to strengthen their wrong argument from silence by referring to NT silence concerning the Christian Sabbath and the admission of women to the Lord's supper.
 - They claim that Christians today keep the Sabbath even though there is no mention that the Fourth Commandment continues to be in force.

- : While the Fourth Commandment is not repeated in the NT, it was certainly taught by our Lord (Matt 12; Mark 2).
- : There are explicit references to the Lord's Day as being practised by Christians on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10).
- : It is taught that the law is written on the heart, showing that the Ten Commandments are still applicable to Christians, not for salvation, but as the consequence of salvation (Rom. 8:4; Jer. 31:31-34).
- Paedobaptists claim that women are admitted to the Lord's supper even though there is no explicit teaching allowing for that.
- : This claim is absurd. Paul expressly addresses both men and women in the first part of 1 Cor. 11, concerning the length of hair and submission. His instructions w.r.t. the Lord's table are given to the same people.

3. The regulative principle of worship.

- o Historically, both Baptists and paedobaptists have held to the same regulative principle of worship. It is possible that, today, some Baptists have become Presbyterians because the Baptists themselves no longer understand the regulative principle.
 - The regulative principle of worship is taught in the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians (WCF 21:1) as well as the 1689 Baptist Confession (1689, 22:1).
 - : It teaches that worship must include only elements and practices "instituted by God Himself, ...limited by His own revealed will," and not any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.
 - : The argument from inferential silence is against the regulative principle. It is actually the view of the permissive principle (often called the normative principle), which teaches that whatever not prohibited in Scripture is permissible.
 - Baptism is one of the sacraments (or holy ordinances) instituted by Christ, governed by the regulative principle, instituted by God, limited by His revealed will, and prescribed by Holy Scripture.
 - : The subjects, mode, and meaning of baptism must be determined from Scripture. As far as the subjects are concerned, Scripture reveals that only professing disciples are to be baptised. Infant baptism is based on an erroneous use of "good and necessary consequence," and therefore breaches the regulative principle of worship.

4. The sole authority of Scripture.

- o Paedobaptists use the permissive principle of argument from silence, not only when dealing with Scripture, but also when dealing with history. They claim that there is no mention of infant baptism in the post-apostolic writings of the first three centuries because it was a prevalent practice that needed no teaching no defence.
 - We believe in the sole authority of Scripture, and must allow Scripture to determine our practice. History, archaeology, and science may be used to *support* a biblical teaching but they cannot *prove*, let alone be allowed to *contradict*, a clear teaching of Scripture.
 - : Errors very quickly crept into the church in biblical times, what more in post-apostolic times. The early church father, Irenaeus, claimed that he received an apostolic tradition that Jesus was forty to fifty years old in His active ministry, contradicting the scriptural record.
 - The earliest explicit mention of infant baptism in the writings of the early church is from Tertulian, around 200 AD. Origen, Augustine, and many others following say that it was the apostolic custom to baptise infants.
 - : Against infant baptism as an apostolic tradition, the "Didache" (100-125 AD) gives instruction only for the baptism of catechumens (disciples). This is an awesome silence regarding infant baptism in such a significant post-apostolic church manual.
 - Archaeological findings show that the baptismal pools of the early centuries were big, allowing for adult baptism, and became smaller as infant baptism became prevalent.
- = An erroneous inference from silence, whether of Scripture or history, cannot overturn the clear teaching of the Bible. The baptism of disciples alone is the only baptism prescribed in God's word.