

- o We have seen that paedobaptists like John Murray argue for infant baptism from the circumcision in the OT based on “good and necessary inference.”
  - To be consistent, “good and necessary inference” would require that baptised infants be allowed at the Lord’s supper, i.e. the practice of paedocommunion. In the OT, the Passover meal would have included children (Ex12:24 cf. 1 Cor 5:7-8; Acts 2:38-39).
  - John Murray argued against paedocommunion, claiming that: (i) there is no mention of infants in the text of the OT; (ii) the diet was not suitable for infants.
    - : But there is also no mention of infants in the NT household to justify infant baptism.
    - : Infants under one year old, in fact, are capable of ingesting unleavened bread and meat. During the Passover, no leavened bread or meat were allowed in the house (Ex 12:19, 28, 29).
  - Another paedobaptist, Louis Berkhof, admits that the OT children participated in the Passover. Berkhof excludes children from the Lord’s supper because the NT positively requires self-examination and discerning of the body (1 Cor 11:28).
    - : Berkhof inconsistently allows for infant baptism even though there are positive commands and examples in the NT to repent and believe before baptism.
- = Why is paedocommunion not required of all Presbyterians when paedobaptism is required, though both are based on OT good and necessary inference? Why is NT precept and example sufficient to deny paedocommunion but insufficient to deny paedobaptism?

### **I. Basic evangelical and reformed hermeneutics (principles of interpretation).**

- o Differences between evangelicals often arise from inconsistent applications of principles which they hold in common. The following ten principles are generally held by all sides.

#### ***1. The inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.***

- Both the OT and NT are fully inspired by God and kept from error in the original autographs.

#### ***2. The literal-grammatical-historical method.***

- Literally: interpretation according to the ordinary meaning of the words, unless the text and context show otherwise. (“Plain” would be better than “literal,” for the latter has been wrongly taken as “literalistic.”)
- Grammatically: with strict attention to the grammar of the original languages, including the ordinary use of grammar from secular sources.
- Historically: with regard to historical backgrounds of the text, including secular and biblical resources that enlighten the events, customs, language usage, etc.

#### ***3. The analogy of faith.***

- The final authoritative interpreter of a specific Scripture is the rest of Scripture. This places Scripture over man’s tradition, church history, science, or ecclesiastical pronouncements.

#### ***4. The perspicuity of Scripture.***

- Scripture is sufficiently clear upon essential matters of faith and practice. Gifted teachers help us to understand, but the common Christian should be convinced from the Scripture alone without blindly following respected teachers.

#### ***5. The unity of Scripture.***

- The OT and NT are not contradictory but complimentary, having the Holy Spirit as their divine Author. Both necessary to discover God’s will.

#### ***6. The diversity of Scripture.***

- “The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is by the New revealed.” God’s progressive revelation in history necessitates a distinction to some degree between the two.

#### ***7. The finality and clarity of the NT.***

- The NT is the final and clearest revelation of God to man, and men must not add to it any alleged revelation. The NT is clearer than the OT because it finally and authoritatively interprets OT types and shadows.

#### ***8. The priority of the NT.***

- There must be a final dependence upon the NT revelation to determine how the OT is fulfilled in it. This follows from progressive revelation and biblical theology, and is essential to a sound systematic theology. The Lord declared His authority over OT and noninstituted forms of worship (Jn 4:21-24), charging the apostles to teach the church to do what He actually commanded (Mt 28:20). The teachings of Jesus and His apostles are the standard of OT interpretation (Eph 2:20).

### **9. Typology of Scripture.**

- Recognising the fulfillment of types of the OT in the NT is a necessary principle. The NT quotations of OT prophecies must be understood as biblical and literal fulfillment if there is a historical correspondence and a heightened fulfillment. For example, the church fulfills Ezek 37:26-28 (cf. 2 Cor 6:16), thus eliminating the need for a physical temple on earth (cf Heb 9).

### **10. Priority between hermeneutical principles.** There are priorities in the application of biblical principles of interpretation.

- (i) *The near context is more determinative of meaning than the far context.* A statement of Paul should be related to other statements of Paul before being compared to statements of Matthew or Isaiah.
- (ii) *A didactic or systematic discussion of a subject is more significant for that subject than a historical or descriptive narrative.*
- (iii) *Explicit teaching is more significant than supposed implications of a text.*
- (iv) *Literal passages are more determinative than symbolic ones.*
- (v) *Later revelation reflect a fuller revelation than earlier.*

## **II. The inconsistent hermeneutics of infant baptism.**

1. The priority of the NT is supposed to be held by all, but the paedobaptists negate this principle, and end up with other errors.
    - *Paedobaptists* claim that whatever is in the OT continues unless it is specifically abrogated in the NT. They wrongly apply “good and necessary inference” to the circumcision of the OT to baptism in the NT.
    - *Dispensationalists* claim that if any element of an OT prophecy is not literally fulfilled in a one-to-one fashion in the NT, then one must assume it awaits a further literal fulfillment in the future millennium. They wait for a future literal rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.
    - *Permissive/normative worship practices* upheld by Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists and others justify noninstituted practices from wrong inferences from the OT.
    - *Theonomy* advocates the continued authority and necessity of the Mosaic case laws to be applied to church and society. This is based on the idea that we have an obligation to obey any OT commandment unless the NT indicates otherwise.
    - One error will lead to another. This is why Presbyterians are struggling over theonomy, paedocommunion, and permissive worship practices. This also explains why many Baptists, ignorant of NT priority and the regulative principle of worship, have adopted permissive worship practices and have lost many to paedobaptist churches.
  2. The use of inference must be bound by correct principles to ensure that our conclusions are contained in Scripture and not contrary to that which is “expressly set down in Scripture.”
    - *We must affirm the unity of Scripture.* The OT is inspired and profitable for us (2 Tim 3:15-17). The NT shows how the OT continues to be authoritative to Christians, e.g. the Moral Law (Mt 5-7; Rom 13:11ff.), examples of faith (Heb 11), the warnings (1 Cor 10:1-13), etc. The NT also describes the unity between the two testaments in terms of typological fulfillment, e.g. the children of Abraham (Gal 3), the true Jew and circumcision (Rom 2:29; Phil 3:1-3; Col 2:11-12), the new temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 2:19ff.), etc.
    - *We must affirm the diversity of Scripture.* There is a difference between the testaments, and the covenants under which they are administered, e.g. the worship system of the OT was fulfilled in Christ and has been abolished (Heb 10:1-17).
    - *The priority and finality of the NT.* The explicit teaching of Scripture takes precedence over inference from Scripture. Regeneration, not baptism, is the fulfillment of OT circumcision.
- = Paedobaptists have failed to hold consistently to the Regulative Principle of worship. They have failed to apply consistently the rules of Bible interpretation on baptism. In particular, they have failed to give due consideration to the priority of the NT.