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5-3-1: #11(4/12)

Questions

1. What is Bird's distinction between a sacrament and an ordinance in regards to these two emblems?
2. In regards to paedobaptism, what is the function of infant baptism?
3. In regards to baptism generally, what is the 'equivalent alternative' that Bird suggests?
4. What are the five "R's" that Bird lists regarding the Eucharist?
5. What do all major traditions agree about the Eucharist?

Answers

1. *An ordinance is a ritual ordained by Christ and repeated by the church that is chiefly symbolic in character. A sacrament, by contrast, is defined as a visible sign of an invisible grace. The difference is that whereas an ordinance remembers God's grace toward us, a sacrament is a means by which God's divine presence is actualized in the believing community.*
2. *It functions to initiate children into the new covenant and to incorporate them into the visible church.*
3. *That believers are compelled to recognize any baptism that is tied to the message of the gospel and to a gospel-proclaiming community.*
4. *It is REMEMBERING Jesus' death, REINSCRIBING the story of Jesus' passion with paschal imagery, RESTATING the promises of the new covenant, REHEARSING the victory of Jesus over sin and death and REFOCUSING our attention toward the parousia (the Second Coming) of the Lord Jesus Christ.*
5. *That it was instituted by Jesus, it is to be repeated by his followers, that it is a form of proclamation about his death and it is a means to the unity of the church. It is for all a thanksgiving to the Father, a remembrance of Christ, an invocation of the Spirit, a communion of the faithful in the body and blood of Christ and the meal of the kingdom.*

Terms

Freighted: to be laden or imbued with something abstract

Consubstantiation: the doctrine, especially of Lutheran belief, that the substance of the bread and wine coexists with the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

Triclinium: a dining table with couches along three sides used in ancient Rome, a room containing a triclinium

Summary

In these sections, Bird covers the two recognized sacraments as instituted by Jesus; baptism and the Lord's Supper (which Bird prefers to refer to as the Eucharist). Within baptism, he covers the various debates on when baptism should occur, how it should occur and the benefits for the one being baptized. Similarly, he examines the Eucharist from various doctrinal perspectives, reminding the reader that ultimately, the meal is to be about the presence of Christ in the life of a believer.