

PEACEABLE PRINCIPLES AND TRUE

BY

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PEACEABLE PRINCIPLES AND TRUE

OR, A BRIEF ANSWER TO MR. D'ANVER'S AND MR. PAUL'S
BOOKS AGAINST MY CONFESSION OF FAITH, AND DIFFERENCES
IN JUDGMENT ABOUT BAPTISM NO BAR TO COMMUNION.

WHEREIN THEIR SCRIPTURE-LESS NOTIONS ARE OVERTHROWN,
AND MY PEACEABLE PRINCIPLES STILL MAINTAINED.

*'Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation?
do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?' - Psalm 58:1*

PEACEABLE PRINCIPLES AND TRUE

SIR,

I have received and considered your short reply to my differences in judgment about water baptism no bar to communion; and observe, that you touch not the argument at all: but rather labour what you can, and beyond what you ought, to throw odiums upon your brother for reproving you for your error, viz. 'That those believers that have been baptised after confession of faith made by themselves, ought and are in duty bound to exclude from their church fellowship, and communion at the table of the Lord, those of their holy brethren that have not been so baptised.' This is your error. Error, I call it, because it is not founded upon the word, but a mere human device; for although I do not deny, but acknowledge, that baptism is God's ordinance; yet I have denied, that baptism was ever ordained of God to be a wall of division between the holy and the holy; the holy that are, and the holy that are not, so baptised with water as we. You, on the contrary, both by doctrine and practice, assert that it is; and therefore do separate yourselves from all your brethren that in that matter differ from you; accounting them, notwithstanding their saving faith and holy lives, not fitly qualified for church communion, and all because they have not been, as you, baptised. Further, you count their communion among themselves unlawful, and therefore unwarrantable; and have concluded, 'they are joined to idols, and that they ought not to be shewed the pattern of the house of God, until they be ashamed of their sprinkling in their infancy, and accept of and receive baptism as you.' Yea, you count them as they stand, not the churches of God; saying, 'We have no such custom, nor the churches of God.' At this I have called for your proofs, the which you have attempted to produce; but in conclusion have shewed none other, but 'That the primitive churches had those they received, baptised before so received.'

I have told you, that this, though it were granted, cometh not up to the question; for we ask not, 'whether they were so baptised? But whether you find a word in the Bible that justifieth your concluding that it is your duty to exclude those of your holy brethren that have not been so baptised?' From this you cry out, that I take up the arguments of them that plead for infant baptism: I answer, I take up no other argument but your own, viz. 'That there being no precept, precedent, nor example in all the scripture, for our excluding our holy brethren that differ in this point from us, therefore we ought not to dare to do it,' but contrariwise to receive them; ^[1] because God hath given us sufficient proof that himself hath received them, whose example in this case he hath commanded us to follow (Romans 14:3, 15). This might serve for an answer to your reply. But because, perhaps, should I thus conclude, some might make an ill use of my brevity; I shall therefore briefly step after you, and examine your short reply; at least, where shew of argument is.

Your first five pages are spent to prove me either proud or a liar; for inserting in the title-page of my 'Differences,' etc. that your book was written by the Baptist, or brethren of your way.

In answer to which; whoso readeth your second, your fifth and sixth questions to me, may not perhaps be easily persuaded to the contrary; but the two last in your reply, are omitted by you; whether for verity's sake, or because you were conscious to yourself,

that the sight of them would overthrow your insinuations, I leave to the sober to judge. But put the case I had failed herein, Doth this warrant your unlawful practice?

You ask me next, 'How long is it since I was a Baptist?' and then add, 'It is an ill bird that betrays his own nest.'

Answer. I must tell you, avoiding your slovenly language, I know none to whom that title is so proper as to the disciples of John. And since you would know by what name I would be distinguished from others; I tell you, I would be, and hope I am, A CHRISTIAN; and choose, if God should count me worthy, to be called a Christian, a Believer, or other such name which is approved by the Holy Ghost (Acts 11:26). And as for those factious titles of Anabaptists, Independents, Presbyterians, or the like, I conclude, that they came neither from Jerusalem, nor Antioch, but rather from hell and Babylon; for they naturally tend to divisions, 'you may know them by their fruits.'

Next, you tell us of your goodly harmony in London; or of the 'amicable Christian correspondence betwixt those of divers persuasions there, until my turbulent and mutineering spirit got up.'

Answer. The cause of my writing, I told you, which you have neither disapproved in whole, nor in part. And now I ask what kind of Christian correspondence you have with them? Is it such as relateth to church communion; or such only as you are commanded to have with every brother that walketh disorderly, that they may be ashamed of their church communion, which you condemn? if so, your great flourish will add no praise to them; and why they should glory in a correspondence with them as Christians, who yet count them under such deadly sin, which will not by any means, as they now stand, suffer you to admit them to their Father's table, to me is not easy to believe.

Farther, Your Christian correspondence, as you call it, will not keep you now and then, from fingering some of their members from them; nor from teaching them that you so take away, to judge and condemn them that are left behind: Now who boasteth in this besides yourself, I know not.

Touching Mr. Jesse's judgment in the case in hand, you know it condemneth your practice; and since in your first, you have called for an author's testimony, I have presented you with one, whose arguments you have not condemned.

For your insinuating my abusive and unworthy behaviour, as the cause of the brethren's attempting to break our Christian communion; it is not only false but ridiculous. False; for they have attempted to make me also one of their disciples, and sent to me, and for me for that purpose. Besides, it is ridiculous; surely their pretended order, and as they call it, our disorder, was the cause; or they must render themselves very malicious, to seek the overthrow of a whole congregation, for, if it had been so, the unworthy behaviour of one.

Now, since you tell me 'That Mr. Kiffin hath no need of my forgiveness for the wrong he hath done me in his epistle.'

I ask, did he tell you so? But let it lie as it doth; I will at this time turn his argument upon him, and desire his direct answer: There being no precept, precedent or example for Mr. Kiffin to exclude his holy brethren from Christian communion that differ with him about baptism, he ought not to do it; but there is neither precept, precedent, nor example; therefore, etc.

You blame me for writing his name at length: but I know he is not ashamed of his name: and for you, though at the remotest rate, to insinuate it, must needs be damage to him.

Your artificial squibbling ^[2] suggestions to the world about myself, imprisonment, and the like I freely bind unto me as an ornament among the rest of my reproaches, till the Lord shall wipe them off at his coming. But they are no argument that you have a word that binds you to exclude the holy brethren communion.

Now what if, as you suggest, the sober Dr. Owen, though he told me and others at first he would write an epistle to my book, yet waved it afterwards; this is also to my advantage; because it was through the earnest solicitations of several of you that at that time stopped his hand; And perhaps it was more for the glory of God that truth should go naked into the world, than as seconded by so mighty an armour-bearer as he.

You tell me also, that some of the sober Independents have shewed dislike to my writing on this subject: What then? If I should also say, as I can without lying, that several of the Baptists have wished yours burnt before it had come to light; is your book ever the worse for that?

You tell us, you meddle not with Presbyterians, Independents, mixed Communionists (a new name), but are for liberty for all according to their light.

Answer. I ask then, suppose an holy man of God, that differeth from you, as those above-named do, in the manner of water baptism; I say, suppose such an one should desire communion with you, yet abiding by his own light, as to the thing in question, Would you receive him to fellowship? If no, do you not dissemble?

But you add, 'If unbaptised believers do not walk with us, they may walk with them with whom they are better agreed.'

Answer. Then it seems you do but flatter them. You are not, for all you pretend to give them their liberty, agreed they should have it with you. Thus do the Papists give the Protestants their liberty, because they can neither will nor choose.

Again, But do you not follow them with clamours and out-cries, that their communion, even amongst themselves, is unwarrantable? Now, how then do you give them their liberty? Nay, do not even these things declare that you would take it away if you could?

'For the time that I have been a Baptist (say you) I do not remember that ever I knew that one unbaptised person did so much as offer themselves to us for church fellowship.'

Answer. This is no proof of your love to your brethren; but rather an argument that your rigidness was from that day to this so apparent, that those good souls despaired to make such attempts; we know they have done it elsewhere, where they hoped to meet with encouragement.

You seem to retract your denial of baptism to be the initiating ordinance. And indeed Mr. D'Anvers told me, that you must retract that opinion, and that he had, or would speak to you to do it; yet by some it is still so acknowledged to be; and in particular, by your great helper, Mr. Denne, who strives to maintain it by several arguments; but your denial may be a sufficient confutation to him; so I leave you together to agree about it, and conclude you have overthrown him.

But it seems though you do not now own it to be the inlet into a particular church; yet, as you tell us of your last, 'you never denied that baptism doth not make a believer a member of the universal, orderly, church visible. And in this Mr. D'Anvers and you agree.' 'Persons enter into the visible church thereby,' saith he.

Answer. Universal, that is, the whole church: This word now comprehendeth all the parts of it, even from Adam to the very world's end, whether in heaven or earth, etc. Now that [water] baptism makes a man a member of this church, I do not yet believe, nor can you shew me why I should. 2. The universal, orderly church. What church this should be, if by orderly you mean harmony or agreement in the outward parts of worship, I do not understand neither.

And yet thus you should mean, because you add the word *visible* to all at the last; 'The universal, orderly, visible church.' Now I would yet learn of this brother where this church is; for if it be visible, he can tell and also shew it. But, to be short, there is no such church: the universal church can not be visible; a great part of that vast body being already in heaven, and a great part as yet, perhaps, unborn.

But if he should mean by universal, the whole of that part of this church that is on earth, then neither is it 'visible' nor 'orderly.' 1. Not visible; for the part remains always to the best man's eye utterly invisible. 2. This church is not orderly; that is, hath not harmony in its outward and visible parts of worship; some parts opposing and contradicting the other most severely. Yea, would it be uncharitable to believe that some of the members of this body could willingly die in opposing that which others of the members hold to be a truth of Christ? As for instance at home; could not some of those called Baptists die in opposing infant baptism? And again, some of them that are for infant baptism die for that as a truth? Here therefore is no order, but an evident contradiction: and that too in such parts of worship, as both count visible parts of worship indeed.

So then by 'universal, orderly, visible church,' this brother must mean those of the saints only that have been, or are baptised as we; this is clear, because baptism, saith he, maketh a believer a member of this church; his meaning then is, that there is an universal, orderly, visible church, and they alone are the Baptists; and that every one that is baptised is by that made a member of the universal, orderly, visible church of Baptists, and that the whole number of the rest of saints are utterly excluded.

But now if other men should do as this man, how many universal churches should we have? An 'universal, orderly, visible church of Independents'; an 'universal, orderly, visible church of Presbyterians,' and the like. And who of them, if as much confused in their notions as this brother, might not, they judging by their own light, contend for their universal church, as he for his? But they have more wit.

But suppose that this unheard of fictitious church were the only true universal church; yet whoever they baptise must be a visible saint first, and if a visible saint, then a visible member of Christ; and if so, then a visible member of his body, which is the church, before they be baptised; now he which is a visible member of the church already, that which hath so made him, hath prevented all those claims that by any may be made or imputed to this or that ordinance to make him so (Acts 8:37; 19:17; 16:33). His visibility is already; he is already a visible member of the body of Christ, and after that baptised. His baptism then neither makes him a member nor a visible member of the body of Jesus Christ.

You go on, 'That I said it was consent that makes persons members of particular churches is true.'

Answer. But that it is consent and nothing else, consent without faith, etc., is false. Your after-endeavour to heal your unsound saying will do you no good: 'Faith gives being to, as well as probation for membership.'

What you say now of the epistles, that they were written to particular saints, and those too out of churches as well as in, I always believed: but in your first you were pleased to say, 'You were one of them that objected against our proofs out of the epistles, because they were written to particular churches, [intending these baptised] and that they were written to other saints, would be hard for me to prove': but you do well to give way to the truth.

What I said about baptism's being a PEST, take my words as they lie, and I stand still thereto: 'Knowing that Satan can make any of God's ordinances a PEST and plague to his people, even baptism, the Lord's table, and the holy scriptures; yea, the ministers also of Jesus Christ may be suffered to abuse them, and wrench them out of their place.' Wherefore I pray, if you write again, either consent to, or deny this position, before you proceed in your outcry.

But I must still continue to tell you, though you love not to hear thereof, That supposing your opinion hath hold of your conscience, if you might have your will, you would make inroads and out-roads too in all the churches that are not as you in the land. You reckon that church privileges belong not to them who are not baptised as we, saying, 'How can we take these privileges from them before they have them, we keep them from a disorderly practice of ordinances, especially among ourselves'; intimating you do what you can also among others: and he that shall judge those he walketh not with, or say, as you, that they, like Ephraim, are 'joined to an idol, and ought to repent and be ashamed of that idol before they be shewed the pattern of the house'; and then shall back all with the citation of a text; doth it either in jest or in earnest; if in jest it is abominable; if in earnest his conscience is engaged; and being engaged, it putteth him upon doing what he can to extirpate the thing he counteth

idolatrous and abominable, out of the churches abroad, as well as that he stands in relation unto. This being thus, it is reasonable to conclude, you want not an heart, but opportunity for your inroads and out-roads among them.

Touching those five things I mentioned in my second; you should not have counted they were found no where, because not found under that head which I mention: and now lest you should miss them again, I will present you with them here.

1. 'Baptism is not the initiating ordinance. 2. That though it was, the case may so fall out, that members might be received without it. 3. That baptism makes no man a visible saint. 4. That faith, and a life becoming the ten commandments, should be the chief and most solid argument with churches to receive to fellowship. 5. That circumcision in the flesh was a type of circumcision in the heart, and not of water baptism.' To these you should have given fair answers, then you had done like a workman.

Now we are come where you labour to insinuate, 'that a transgression against a positive precept, respecting instituted worship, hath been punished with the utmost severity that God hath executed against men, on record, on this side hell.'

Answer. Mr. D'Anvers says, 'That to transgress a positive precept respecting worship, is a breach of the first and second commandments.' If so, then it is for the breach of them, that these severe rebukes befall the sons of men. 2. But you instance the case of Adam his eating the forbidden fruit; yet to no great purpose. Adam's first transgression was, that he violated the law that was written in his heart; in that he hearkened to the tempting voice of his wife; and after, because he did eat of the tree: he was bad then before he did eat of the tree; which badness was infused over his whole nature; and then he bare this evil fruit of eating things that God hath forbidden (Genesis 3). Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or the tree bad, and his fruit bad (Matthew 7:17; Luke 6:43-44). Men must be bad, ere they do evil; and good, ere they do good. Again, which was the greatest judgment, to be defiled and depraved, or to be put out of paradise, do you in your next determine.

But as to the matter in hand, What positive precept do they transgress that will not reject him that God bids us receive, if he want light in baptism?

As for my calling for scripture to prove it lawful thus to exclude them; blame me for it no more; verily I still must do it; and had you but one to give, I had had it long before this. But you wonder I should ask for a scripture to prove a negative.

Answer. 1. Are you at that door, my brother? If a drunkard, a swearer, or whoremonger should desire communion with you, and upon your refusal, demand your grounds; would you think his demands such you ought not to answer? would you not readily give him by SCORES? So, doubtless would you deal with us, but that in this you are without the lids^[3] of the Bible. 2. But again, you have acted as those that must produce a positive rule. 'You count it your duty, a part of your obedience to God, to keep those out of church fellowship that are not baptised as you.' I then demand what precept bids you do this? where are you commanded to do it?

You object, That in Ephesians 4:5 and 1 Corinthians 12:13 is not meant of Spirit baptism: but Mr. Jesse says it is not, can not be the baptism with water: and you have not at all refuted him. And now for the church in the wilderness; 'You thought, as you say, I would have answered myself in the thing'; but as yet I have not, neither have you. But let us see what you urge for an answer.

I. Say you, 'Though God dispensed with their obedience to circumcision in that time (Genesis 17; Exodus 12) it follows not that you or I should dispense with the ordinance of water baptism now.'

Answer. God commanded it, and made it the initiating ordinance to church communion. But Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, and the elders of Israel, dispensed with it for forty years; therefore the dispensing with it was ministerial, and that with God's allowance, as you affirm. Now if they might dispense with circumcision, though the initiating ordinance; why may not we receive God's holy ones into fellowship, since we are not forbidden it, but commanded; yea, why should we make water baptism, which God never ordained to that end, a bar to shut out and let in to church communion?

II. You ask, 'Was circumcision dispensed with for want of light, it being plainly commanded?'

Answer. Whatever was the cause, want of light is as great a cause: and that it must necessarily follow, they must needs see it, because commanded, favours too much of a tang of free will, or of the sufficiency of our understanding, and entrencheth too hard on the glory of the Holy Ghost; whose work it is 'to bring all things to our remembrance, whatsoever Christ hath said to us' (John 14:26).

III. You ask, 'Can not you give yourself a reason, that their moving, travelling state made them incapable, and that God was merciful? Can the same reason, or anything like it, for refusing baptism, be given now?'

Answer. I can not give myself this reason, nor can you by it give me any satisfaction. Because their travelling state could not hinder; if you consider that they might, and doubtless did lie still in one place years together. 1. They were forty years going from Egypt to Canaan: and they had but forty-two journeys thither. 2. They at times went several of these journeys in one and the same year. They went, as I take it, eleven of them by the end of the third month after they came out of the land of Egypt. Compare Exodus 19:1 with Numbers 33:15. 3. Again, in the fortieth year, we find them in Mount Hor, where Aaron died, and was buried. Now that was the year they went into Canaan; and in that year they had nine journeys more, or ten, by that they got over Jordan (Numbers 33:38), etc. Here then were twenty journeys in less than one year and an half. Divide then the rest of the time to the rest of the journeys, and they had above thirty-eight years to go their two and twenty journeys in. And how this should be such a travelling moving state, as that it should hinder their keeping this ordinance in its season, to wit, to circumcise their children the eighth day; especially considering to circumcise them in their childhood, as they were born, might be with more security, than to let them live while they were men, I see not.

If you should think that their wars in the wilderness might hinder them; I answer, They had, for ought I can discern, ten times as much fighting in the land of Canaan, where they were circumcised, as in the wilderness where they were not. And if carnal or outward safety had been the argument, doubtless they would not have circumcised themselves in the sight, as it were, of one and thirty kings (Joshua 5; 12). I say, they would not have circumcised their six hundred thousand warriors, and have laid them open to the attempts and dangers of their enemies. No such thing, therefore, as you are pleased to suggest, was the cause of their not being as yet circumcised.

VI. 'An extraordinary instance to be brought into a standing rule, are no parallels': That is the sum of your fourth.

Answer. The rule was ordinary; which was circumcision; the laying aside of this rule became as ordinary, so long a time as forty years, and in the whole church also. But this is a poor shift, to have nothing to say, but that the case was extraordinary, when it was not.

But you ask, 'Might they do so when they came into Canaan?'

Answer. No, no. No more shall we do as we do now 'when that which is perfect is come.'

You add, 'Because the church in the wilderness (Revelation 12) could not come by ordinances, etc. therefore when they may be come at, we need not practise them.'

Answer. No body told you so. But are you out of that wilderness mentioned? (Revelation 12). Is Antichrist down and dead to ought but your faith? Or are we only out of that Egyptian darkness, that in baptism have got the start of our brethren? For shame be silent: yourselves are yet under so great a cloud, as to imagine to yourselves a Rule of Practice not found in the Bible; that is, to count it a sin to receive your holy brethren, though not forbidden but commanded to do it (Romans 14; 15).

Your great flourish against my fourth argument, I leave to them that can judge of the weight of your words; as also what you say of the fifth or sixth.

For the instance I give you of Aaron, David, and Hezekiah, who did things not commanded, and that about holy matters, and yet were held excusable; you, nor yet your abettors for you, can by any means overthrow. Aaron transgressed the commandment (Leviticus 6:26; 10:18); David did what was not lawful; and they in Hezekiah's time, 'did eat the Passover otherwise than it was written' (2 Chronicles 30:18). But here I perceive the shoe pincheth; which makes you glad of Mr. Denne's evasion for help At this also Mr. D'Anvers cries out, but yet to no purpose, charging me with asserting, that ignorance absolves from sin of omission and commission. But, Sirs, fairly take from me the texts, with others that I can urge; and then begin to accuse. You have healed your suggestion of unwritten verities poorly. But any shift to shift off the force of truth. After the same manner also you have helped your asserting, 'that you neither keep out, nor cast out from the church, if baptised, such as come unprepared to the supper, and other solemn appointments.' Let us leave yours and mine to the pondering of wiser men.

My seventh argument, as I said, you have not so much as touched; nor the ten in that one, but only derided at the ten. But we will show them to the reader. 1. Love, which above all other things we are commanded to put on, is much more worth, than to break about baptism (Colossians 3:14). 2. Love is more discovered, when we receive for the sake of Christ and grace, than when we refuse for want of water. 3. The church at Colossae was charged to receive and forbear the saints, because they were new creatures. 4. Some saints were in the church at Jerusalem, that opposed the preaching of salvation to the Gentiles; and yet retained their membership. 5. Divisions and distinctions among saints are of later date than election, and the signs of that; and therefore should give place. 6. It is love, not baptism, that discovereth us to the world to be Christ's disciples (John 13:35). 7. It is love that is the undoubted character of our interest in, and fellowship with, Christ (Romans 12:10; 16:10). 8. Fellowship with Christ is sufficient to invite to, and the new creature the great rule of our fellowship with, Christ (1 John 1:2). 9. Love is the fulfilling of the law, wherefore he that hath it is accepted with God, and ought to be approved of men; but he fulfils it not, who judgeth and setteth at nought his brother (Galatians 6:16; Philippians 3:16; Romans 14; James 4:11). 10. Love is sometimes more seen, and showed in forbearing to urge and press what we know, than in publishing and imposing (John 16:12; 1 Corinthians 3:1-2). 11. When we attempt to force our brother beyond his light, or to break his heart with grief, to trust him beyond his faith, or bar him from his privileges, how can we say I love? 12. To make that the door to communion which God hath not; to make that the including, excluding charter, the bar, bounds, and rule of communion, is for want of love. Here are two into the bargain.

If any of these, Sir, please you not in this dress; give me a word; and I shall, as well as my wit will serve, give you them in asyllogistical mode.

Now that you say (practically) for some speak with their feet [their walking (Proverbs 6:13)] that water is above love; and all other things are evident; because have they all but water, you refuse them for want of that; yea, and will be so hardy, though without God's word, to refuse communion with them.

In our discourse about the carnality that was the cause of the divisions that were at Corinth, you ask, Who must the charge of carnality fall upon, them that defend, or them that oppose the truth?

Answer. Perhaps on both; but be sure upon them that oppose, wherefore look you to yourselves, 'who without any command of God to warrant you, exclude your brother from communion; your brother whom God hath commanded you to receive.'

My ninth argument, you make yourself merry with in the beginning: but why do you by and by so cut and hack, and cast it as it were in the fire. Those seventeen absurdities you can by no means avoid. For if you have not, as indeed you have not, though you mock me for speaking a word in Latin, one word of God that commands you to shut out your brethren for want of water baptism, from your communion; I say, if you have not one word of God to make this a duty to you, then unavoidably, 1. You do it by a spirit of persecution. 2. With more respect to a form, than the spirit and power of godliness. 3. This also, makes laws, where God makes none; and is to be wise above what is written. 4. It is a directing the Spirit of the Lord. 5. And bindeth all men's

consciences to our light and opinion. 6. It taketh away the children's bread. 7. And withholdeth from them the increase of faith. 8. It tendeth to make wicked the hearts of weak Christians. 9. It tendeth to harden the hearts of the wicked. 10. It setteth open a door to all temptations. 11. It tempteth the devil to fall upon them that are alone. 12. It is the nursery of all vain janglings. 13. It occasioneth the world to reproach us. 14. It holdeth staggering consciences in doubt, of the right ways of the Lord. 15. It abuseth the holy scriptures. 16. It is a prop to Antichrist. 17. And giveth occasion to many to turn aside to most dangerous errors.

And though the last is so abhorred by you, that you can not contain yourselves when you read it: yet do I affirm, as I did in my first 'That to exclude Christians from church communion, and to debar them their heaven-born privileges, for the want of that which God never yet made a wall of division between us; did, and doth, and will prevail with God to send those judgments we have, or may hereafter feel.' Like me yet as you will.

I come next to what you have said in justification of your fourteen arguments. 'Such as they were,' say you, 'I am willing to stand by them: What I have offered, I have offered modestly: according to the utmost light I had into those scriptures upon which they are bottomed; having not arrived unto such a peremptory way of dictatorship, as what I render must be taken for laws binding to others in faith and practice; and therefore express myself by suppositions, strong presumptions, and fair seeming conclusions from the premises.'

Answer. Your arguments, as you truly say, are builded upon, or drawn from suppositions and presumptions; and all because you want for your help the words of the holy scripture. And let the reader note. For as I have often called for the word, but as yet could never get it, because you have it not, neither in precept, precedent, nor example, therefore come you forth with your seeming imports and presumptions.

The judicious reader will see in this last, that not only here, but in other places, what poor shifts you are driven to, to keep your pen going. But, Sir, since you are not peremptory in your proof; how came you to be so absolute in your practice? For notwithstanding all your seeming modesty, you will neither grant these communion with you; nor allow their communion among themselves, that turn aside from your 'seeming imports'; and that go not with you in your strong presumptions. You must not; you dare not; lest you countenance their idolatry; and nourish them up in sin; they live in the breach of gospel-order; and Ephraim-like are joined to an idol. And as for your love, it amounts to this, you thus deal with them, and withdraw from them, and all because of some strong presumptions and suppositions.

But you tell me, 'I use the arguments of the paedo-baptist, to wit, But where are infants forbidden to be baptised?'

But I ingenuously tell you, I know not what paedo means: and how then should I know his arguments. 1. I take no man's argument but Mr. K.'s, I must not name him farther, I say I take no man's argument but his now, viz. 'That there being no precept, precedent or example, for you to shut your holy brethren out of church communion; therefore you should not do it.' That you have no command to do it, is clear, and you must of necessity grant it. Now where there is no precept for a foundation; it is not

what you by all your reasonings can suggest; can deliver you from the guilt of adding to his word. Are you commanded to reject them; If yea, where is it? If nay, for shame be silent.

‘Let us say what we will,’ say you, ‘for our own practice; unless we bring positive scriptures that yours is forbidden, though nowhere written; you will be as a man in a rage without it; and would have it thought you go away with the garland.’

Answer. 1. I am not in a rage, but contend with you earnestly for the truth. And say what you will or can, though with much more squibbing frumps ^[4] and taunts than hitherto you have mixed our writing with, Scripture, scripture, we cry still. And it is a bad sign that your cause is naught; when you snap and snarl because I call for scripture. 2. Had you a scripture for this practice, that you ought to shut your brethren out of communion for want of water baptism I had done; but you are left of the word of God, and confess it! 3. And as you have not a text that justifies your own; so neither that condemns our holy and Christian communion. We are commanded also to receive him that is weak in the faith, for God hath received him. I read not of garlands, but those in the Acts; take you them. And I say moreover, that honest and holy Mr. Jesse hath justified our practice, and you have not condemned his arguments. They therefore stand all upon their feet against you.

I leave your 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 arguments under my answers where they are suppressed. In your seventh you again complain, for that I touch your ‘seeming imports’; saying, ‘I do not use to say as *John Bunyan*, this I say, and I dare to say. I please myself by commending my apprehensions soberly, and submissively to others much above me.’

Answer. 1. Seeming imports are a base and unworthy foundation for a practice in religion; and therefore I speak against them. 2. Where you say, you submit your apprehensions soberly to those much above you; it is false; unless you conclude none are above you, but those of your own opinion. Have you soberly, and submissively commended your apprehensions to those congregations in London, that are not of your persuasion in the case in hand? and have you consented to stand by their opinion? Have you commended your apprehensions soberly and submissively to those you call Independents and Presbyters? And are you willing to stand by their judgment in the case? Do you not reserve to yourself the liberty of judging what they say? and of choosing what you judge is right, whether they conclude with you or no? If so; why do you so much dissemble with all the world, in print; to pretend you submit to others’ judgment, and yet abide to condemn their judgments? you have but one help: perhaps you think they are not above you; and by that proviso secure yourself; but it will not do.

For the offence you take at any comment upon your calling baptism, ‘a livery’: and for your calling it ‘the Spirit’s metaphorical description of baptism’: both phrases are boldness, without the word. Neither do I find it called a listing ordinance, nor the solemnisation of the marriage betwixt Christ and a believer. But perhaps you had this from Mr. D’Anvers, who pleaseth himself with this kind of wording it: and says moreover in justification of you, ‘That persons entered into the visible church thereby [by baptism, which is untrue, though Mr. Baxter also saith it] are by consent admitted into particular congregations, where they may claim their privileges due to baptised

believers, being orderly put into the body, and put on Christ by their baptismal vow and covenant: for by that public declaration of consent, is the marriage and solemn contract made betwixt Christ and a believer in baptism. And, saith he, if it be preposterous and wicked for a man and woman to cohabit together, and to enjoy the privileges of a married state without the passing of that public solemnity: So it is NO less disorderly upon a spiritual account, for any to claim the privileges of a church, or be admitted to the same, till the passing of this solemnity by them.'

Answer. But these words are very black. First, Here he hath not only implicitly forbidden Jesus Christ to hold communion with the saints that are not yet his by [water] baptism; but is bold to charge him with being as preposterous and wicked if he do, as a man that liveth with a woman in the privileges of a married state, without passing that public solemnity. Secondly, He here also chargeth him as guilty of the same wickedness, that shall but dare to claim church communion without it; yea, and the whole church too, if they shall admit such members to their fellowship.

And now since cleaving to Christ by vow and covenant, will not do without baptism, after personal confession of faith; what a state are all those poor saints of Jesus in, that have avowed themselves to be his a thousand times without THIS baptism? Yea, and what a case is Jesus Christ in too, by your argument, to hold that communion with them, that belongeth only unto them that are married to him by this solemnity! Brother, God give him repentance. I wot that through ignorance and a preposterous zeal he said it: unsay it again with tears, and by a public renunciation of so wicked and horrible words; but I thus sparingly pass you by.^[5]

I shall not trouble the world any farther with an answer to the rest of your books: The books are public to the world: let men read and judge. And had it not been for your endeavouring to stigmatise me with reproach and scandal, a thing that doth not become you, I needed not have given you two lines in answer.

And now, my angry brother, if you shall write again, pray keep to the question, namely, 'What precept, precedent, or example have you in God's word to exclude your holy brethren from church communion for want of water baptism.' Mr. Denne's great measure, please yourself with it, and when you shall make his arguments your own, and tell me so, you perhaps may have an answer, but considering him, and comparing his notions with his conversation, I count it will be better for him to be better in morals, before he be worthy of an answer.

THE CONCLUSION

Reader, when Moses sought to set the brethren that strove against each other, at one, he that did the wrong thrust him away, as unwilling to be hindered in his ungodly attempts; but Moses continuing to make peace betwixt them, the same person attempted to charge him with a murderous and bloody design, saying, 'Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?' (Exodus 2:14) a thing too commonly thrown upon those that seek peace, and ensue it (Acts 7:24-29). 'My soul,' saith David, 'hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I *am for* peace, [said he] but when I speak, they *are for* war' (Psalms 120:6-7). One would think that even nature itself should count peace and concord a thing of greatest worth among saints, especially since they, above all men, know themselves; for he that best knoweth himself is best able to pity and bear with another (Hebrews 5:2); yet even amongst these, such will arise, as will make divisions among their brethren, and seek 'to draw away disciples after them' (Acts 20:30), crying still that they, even they are in the right, and all that hold not with them in the wrong, and to be withdrawn from (Romans 16:17). But when every HE, hath said all that he can, it is one of the things which the Lord hateth, to sow '*discord among brethren*' (Proverbs 6:19).^[6]

Yet many years' experience we have had of these mischievous attempts, as also have others in other places, as may be instanced if occasion requireth it, and that especially by those of the rigid way of our brethren, the Baptists so called, whose principles will neither allow them to admit *to* communion, the saint that different from them about baptism, nor consent they should communicate in a church-state among themselves: but take occasion still ever as they can, both to reproach their church-state, and to finger from amongst them who they can to themselves. These things being grievous to those concerned, as we are, though perhaps those at quiet are too little concerned in the matter, therefore when I could no longer forbear, I thought good to present to public view the warrantable-ness of our holy communion, and the unreasonableness of their seeking to break us to pieces. At this Mr. William K [iffin], Mr. Thomas Paul, and Mr. Henry D'Anvers, and Mr. Denne, fell with might and main upon me; some comparing me to the devil, others to a bedlam, others to a sot, and the like, for my seeking peace and truth among the godly. Nay, further, they began to cry out murder, as if I intended nothing less than to accuse them to the magistrate, and to render them incapable of a share in the commonwealth, when I only struck at their heart-breaking, church-rending principles and practice; in their excluding their holy brethren's communion from them, and their condemning of it [eve] among themselves. They also follow me with slanders and reproaches, counting, it seems, such things arguments to defend themselves.

But I in the meantime call for proof, scripture proof, to convince me it is a duty to refuse communion with those of the saints that differ from them about baptism: at this Mr. P [aul] takes offence, calling my demanding of proof for their rejecting the unbaptised believer, how excellent soever in faith and holiness, a clamorous calling for proof, with high and swelling words, which he counteth not worthy of answer; but I know the reason, he by this demand is shut out of the Bible, as himself also suggesteth: wherefore when coming to assault me with arguments, he can do it but by seeming imports, suppositions, and strong presumptions, and tells you farther in his reply, 'That this is the utmost of his light in the scriptures urged for his practice'; of which light

thou mayest easily judge, good reader, that hast but the common understanding of the mind of God, concerning brotherly love. Strange! that the scripture that everywhere commandeth and presseth to love, to forbearance, and bearing the burden of our brother; should yet imply, or implicitly import that we should shut them out of our Father's house; or that those scriptures that command us to receive the weak, should yet command us to shut out the strong! Thinkest thou, reader, that the scripture hath two faces, and speaketh with two mouths? yet it must do so, by these men's doctrine. It saith expressly, 'Receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God' (Romans 15:7). But these men say, it is not duty, it is preposterous, and idolatrous; concluding that to receive this brother, is not a custom of them, not yet of the churches of God: consequently telling thee, that those that receive such a brother are not (let them talk while they will) any of the churches of God: see their charity, their candour and love, in the midst of their great pretensions of love.

But be thou assured, Christian reader, that for these their uncharitable words and actions, they have not footing in the word of God, neither can they heal themselves with suggesting their amicable correspondence to the world. Church communion I plead for, church communion they deny them, yet church communion is scripture communion, and we read of none other among the saints. True, we are commanded to withdraw 'from every brother that walketh disorderly, - that he may be ashamed, yet not to count *him* as an enemy, but to admonish *him* as a brother' (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15). If this be that they intend, for I know not of another communion, that we ought to have with those, to whom we deny church communion; then what ground of rejoicing those have that are thus respected by their brethren, I leave it to themselves to consider of.

In the meanwhile, I affirm, 'that baptism with water, is neither a bar nor bolt to communion of saints, nor a door nor inlet to communion of saints.' The same which is the argument of my books; and as some of the moderate among themselves have affirmed, that neither Mr. K., Mr. P. nor Mr. D'Anvers, have made invalid, though sufficiently they have made their assault.

For Mr. Denne, I suppose they count him none of themselves, though both he, and Mr. Lamb, like to like, are brought for authors and abettors of their practice, and to refel my peaceable principle. For Mr. Denne, if either of the three will make his arguments their own, they may see what their servant can do: but I shall not bestow paper and ink upon him, nor yet upon Mr. Lamb; the one already, having given his profession the lie, and for the other perhaps they that know his life, will see little of conscience in the whole of his religion, and conclude him not worth the taking notice of. Besides Mr. P. hath also concluded against Mr. Denne, That baptism is not the initiating ordinance, and that his utmost strength for the justification of his own practise is, 'suppositions, imports, and strong presumptions,' things that they laugh at, despise and deride, when brought by their brethren to prove infant baptism.

Railing for railing, I will not render, though one of these opposers, Mr. Dan. by name, did tell me, that Mr. Paul's reply when it came out, would sufficiently provoke me to so beastly a work: but what is the reason of his so writing, if not the peevishness of his own spirit, or the want of better matter.

This I thank God for, that some of the brethren of this way, are of late more moderate than formerly, and that those that retain their former sourness still, are left by their brethren, to the vinegar of their own spirits, their brethren ingeniously confessing, that could these of their company bear it, they have liberty in their own souls to communicate with saints as saints, though they differ about water baptism.

Well, God banish bitterness out of the churches, and pardon them that are the maintainers of schisms and divisions among the godly. 'Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; [farther it is] As the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion: [Mark] for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore' (Psalms 133).

I was advised by some, who considered the wise man's proverb, not to let Mr. Paul pass with all his bitter invectives, but I consider that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God; therefore I shall leave him to the censure and rebuke of the sober, where I doubt not but his unsavoury ways with me will be seasonably brought to his remembrance. Farewell.

I am thine to serve thee, Christian, so long as I can look out at those eyes, that have had so much dirt thrown at them by many.

JOHN BUNYAN

OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST

The love of Christ, poor I may touch upon:
But 'tis unsearchable. Oh! there is none
Its large dimensions can comprehend,
Should they dilate thereon, world without end.

When we had sinned, in his zeal he sware,
That he upon his back our sins would bear.

And since unto sin is entailed death,
He vowed, for our sins he'd lose his breath.

He did not only say, vow, or resolve,
But to astonishment did so involve
Himself in man's distress and misery,
As for, and with him, both to live and die.

To his eternal fame in sacred story,
We find that he did lay aside his glory,
Stepped from the throne of highest dignity;
Became poor man, did in a manger lie;
Yea was beholden upon his, for bread;
Had of his own not where to lay his head:
Though rich, he did, for us, become thus poor,
That he might make us rich for evermore.

Nor was this but the least of what he did;
But the outside of what he suffered.

God made his blessed Son under the law;
Under the curse, which, like the lion's paw,
Did rend and tear his soul, for mankind's sin,
More than if we for it in hell had been.

His cries, his tears, and bloody agony,
The nature of his death doth testify.

Nor did he of constraint himself thus give
For sin, to death, that man might with him live.

He did do what he did most willingly,
He sung, and gave God thanks, that he must die.

But do kings use to die for captive slaves?
Yet we were such, when Jesus died to save us.

Yea, when he made himself a sacrifice,
It was that he might save his enemies.

And, though he was provoked to retract
His blest resolves, for such, so good an act,

By the abusive carriages of those,
That did both him, his love, and grace oppose:

Yet he, as unconcerned with such things
Goes on, determines to make captives kinds

Yea, many of his murderers he takes
Into his favour, and them princes makes.

FOOTNOTES

[1] A tender conscience, jealous of grieving or offending the Holy Spirit, is of an inestimable value. If in our conscientious conclusions we offend others, we must leave to them an equal right to their own conclusions without harsh judgment. - Ed.

[2] 'Squibbling,' feeble, ill-natured ridicule; now obsolete. - Ed.

[3] 'Without the lids of the Bible,' not within it; a popular Puritan saying. - Ed.

[4] 'Frump,' to mock, flout, scoff. 'You must learn to mock; to frump your own father on occasion.' Ironically used in Ruggle's Ignoramus. - Ed.

[5] Mr. D'Anvers, in a postscript to his History of Baptism, the first edition, 1673, thus violently attacks his brother Bunyan: 'Having read his book, I took myself concerned to give some short return to it, leaving his "manifold absurdities," "contradictions," "unbrotherly tauntings and reflections," "contemptions," "trading the wisdom of Christ, and his holy appointments," to be called to account by that band that hath so well begun to reckon with him.' He was in prison, and his brother *thus* visits him with gall and wormwood instead of consoling cordials. He goes on to confound water baptism with that of the Spirit, and charges Bunyan with 'ignorance and folly - dangerous and destructive to religion itself,' 'contradicting the authority of Christ,' calls him 'egregiously ignorant,' 'self-condemning.' All this uncharitable vituperation was because Mr. Bunyan would hold communion with all those who had been baptised into, and put on, Christ. The passage quoted is correct, except that 'married estate' should be 'marriage state.' So satisfied was D'Anvers with the just and Christian correction given him for so egregious a blunder, that if he did not repent with tears, he took special care to leave out all this absurd reference to the marriage ceremony *performed in water* from his second edition. - Ed.

[6] Strife and contention - evil speaking of surmisings among professors, are tokens of a carnal mind, injurious to spiritual peace, and abominable to God. The envious, discontented, and malicious, are the devil's working tools. If such die unsubdued by divine grace, they plunge themselves into the bottomless pit. True wisdom avoid strife and contention, is moderate in doubtful opinions, patient and cautious in judging others. - Ed.