

On the Terms of Communion and Fellowship of Christians at the Table of the Lord

COMPRISING I. HIS
CONFESSION OF FAITH, AND
REASON OF HIS PRACTICE; II.
DIFFERENCES ABOUT
WATER BAPTISM NO BAR TO
COMMUNION; AND III.
PEACEABLE PRINCIPLES
AND TRUE¹

¹ It is much to be regretted that these books, in common

ADVERTISEMENT BY THE EDITOR.

Reader, these are extraordinary productions that will well repay an attentive perusal. It is the confession of faith of a Christian who had suffered nearly twelve years' imprisonment, under persecution for conscience sake. Shut up with his Bible, you have here the result of a prayerful study of those holy oracles. It produced a difference in practice from his fellow Christians of ALL denominations, the reasons for which are added to this confession; with a defence of his principles and practice, proving them to be peaceable and true. In all this an unlettered man displays the acumen of a thoroughly educated polemical theologian. The author was driven to these publications to defend himself from the slanders which were showered down upon him, by all parties, for nearly eighteen years, and by the attempts which were made to take away his members, injure the peace of his

with all Mr. Bunyan's Works, were grossly corrupted in the text in all the editions published since 1737,—'poor peace indeed,' was changed to 'pure peace indeed'; 'here is Rome enough,' meaning popery enough, was altered to 'here is room enough'; 'Baptist,' was printed 'Papist,' &c., &c.: all the typographical errors have now been carefully corrected by Bunyan's editions.

congregation, and alienate him from the church to which he was tenderly attached. His first inquiry is, Who are to be admitted to the Lord's table; and his reply is, Those whom God has received: they have become his children, and are entitled to sit at their Father's table: such only as have examined themselves, and by their conduct lead the church to hope that they have passed from death unto life. The practice of those who admit ungodly persons because they have submitted to some outward ceremonies, he severely condemns. The mixture of the church and the world he deems to be spiritual adultery, the prolific source of sin, and one of the causes of the deluge. The Lord's table is scripturally fenced around: 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers'; 'what communion hath light with darkness; Christ with Belial; the temple of God with idols? be ye separate, touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.' 'Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God, not to doubtful disputations.' 'Withdraw from them that walk disorderly, working not; but busy bodies; unless with quietness they work and eat their own bread. If any are proud, doting about questions and strifes of words, evil surmisings, perverse disputings, supposing that *gain is godliness*;

from such withdraw.' Bunyan rests all upon the word,—the characters are described who are to be excluded from the Lord's table; but in no instance is it upon record that any one was excluded because he had not been baptized in water. And who will dare to make any addition to holy writ?

The practice of making the mode in which water baptism was administered a term of communion, existed among the Independents long before Bunyan's time. Crosby, in his *History of the Baptists*, makes some long extracts from a book entitled, "The sin and danger of admitting Anabaptists to continue in the congregational churches, and the inconsistency of such a practice with the principles of both.' In America, Cotton and the Independents severely persecuted their Baptist brethren, even to deportation. As the Baptists increased in numbers, they refused to admit any to the Lord's table, even to occasional communion, who had not been baptized in water upon a profession of faith: in fact, the difference between those who consider baptism to be a *relative* duty to be performed by parents in having their infants sprinkled, and those who deem it a *personal* duty to be immersed in water, as a public putting on of Christ, is so great, as to require the utmost powers of

charity to preserve peace. Thus it was in the primitive churches, where great differences prevailed even as to the duty of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles; the keeping of days probably extending to the Jewish sabbath, and to the abstaining from certain meats, with other ordinances of the Jewish law.

Bunyan saw all the difficulties of this question: he was satisfied that baptism is a personal duty, in respect to which every individual must be satisfied in his own mind, and over which no church had any control; and that the only inquiry as to the fitness of a candidate for church fellowship should be, whether the regenerating powers of the Holy Ghost had baptized the spirit of the proposed member into newness of life. This is the only *livery* by which a Christian can be known. Bunyan very justly condemns the idea of water baptism being either the Christian's livery or his marriage to the Saviour.

We do well, in our examinations into this subject, to note carefully the various applications of the word baptize, and not always attach the use of water to the term. There is a being baptized in a cloud, and in the sea, to protect God's Israel from their deadly foes; a baptism in sufferings; a baptism in water unto repentance; a baptism in fire, or the

Holy Ghost; a baptism into the doctrine of the Trinity (Matt 28:19). Bunyan had no doubt upon this subject; he deemed water baptism an important personal duty; and that a death to sin, and resurrection to newness of life—a different tint, or dye, given to the character—was best figured by immersion in water: still he left it to every individual to be satisfied in his own mind as to this outward sign of the invisible grace. ‘Strange,’ he says, ‘take two Christians equal on all points but this; nay, let one go far beyond the other for grace and holiness; yet this circumstance of water shall drown and sweep away all his excellencies; not counting him worthy of that reception that with hand and heart shall be given to a novice in religion, because he consents to water.’

For these catholic principles he was most roughly handled. Deune, in a pamphlet in the Editor’s possession, called him a devil; and likened him to Timri, who slew his master. The most learned of the Baptist ministers entered upon the controversy. They invited him to a grand religious tournament, where he would have stood one against a legion. A great meeting was appointed, in London, for a public disputation—as was common among the puritans—and in which the poor country mechanic was to be overwhelmed with

scholastic learning and violence; but Bunyan wisely avoided a collision which could have answered no valuable purpose, and which bid fair to excite angry feelings. He had appealed to the press as the calmest and best mode of controversy; and to that mode of appeal he adhered. Three learned men undertook the cause against Bunyan: these were, D'Anvers, W. Kiffin, and T. Paul. When these lettered, able, and distinguished disputants published their joint answer, it contained much scurrilous abuse. Their brother, Bunyan, was in prison, and they visited him with gall and wormwood. He closes his reply with these remarkable words, 'Thine to serve thee, Christians, so long as I can look out at those eyes that have had so much dirt thrown at them by many.'

The late Mr. Robert Hall, in his controversy upon this subject with Mr. Kinghorn, in which—having demolished Kinghorn's castle in a few pages—he, in order to make a book, amused the public by kicking the ruins about, thus adverts to these treatises: 'The most virulent reproaches were cast upon the admirable Bunyan, during his own time, for presuming to break the yoke; and whoever impartially examines the spirit of Mr. Booth's Apology, will perceive that its venerable author regards him, together with his successors,

much in the light of rebels and insurgents, or, to use the mildest terms, as contumacious despisers of legitimate authority.²

We cannot have a more decided proof of Bunyan's great powers, and of his being much in advance of his times, than by the opinions of which he was the Christian pioneer having spread so extensively through the Baptist denomination. In this his predictions were fully verified. It is surprising that pious dissenters should ever have made uniformity in outward ceremonies of more importance than inward holiness, as a term of communion. Such sentiments naturally attach to state churches; and ought to be found only with those bodies which exist merely for political purposes, and for it are rewarded with earthly power, pomp, and wealth. I close these observations by quoting the words of Bunyan's learned antagonists, published within a few years of this controversy, and during his lifetime. his sentiments appear to have had a hallowed effect even upon their minds, and produced an apology for their conduct. It is in the appendix to the Baptist confession of faith, republished in 1677: 'We would not be misconstrued, as if the discharge of our

² Reply to Kinghorn. 1818, p. xii.

consciences did any way disoblige or alienate our affections or conversations from any others that fear the Lord: earnestly desiring to approve ourselves to be such as follow after peace with holiness. We continue our practice, not out of obstinacy, but we do therein *according to the best of our understandings*, in that method which *we* take to be most agreeable to the scriptures. The christening of infants, we find by church history, to have been a very ancient practice; still we leave every one to give an account of himself to God. And if in any case debates between Christians are not plainly determinable by the scriptures, we leave it to the second coming of Christ.' In 1689, the year after Bunyan's death, this appendix was omitted from the Baptist confession of faith.

May the time soon arrive when water shall not quench love, but when all the churches militant shall form one army, with one object,—that of extending the Redeemer's kingdom.—GEO. OFFOR.

A Confession of My Faith, and a Reason of My Practice

or, With Who, and Who Not, I
Can Hold Church Fellowship,
or the Communion of Saints.

SHEWING, BY DIVERSE ARGUMENTS, THAT
THOUGH I DARE NOT COMMUNICATE WITH
THE OPENLY PROFANE, YET I CAN WITH
THOSE VISIBLE SAINTS THAT DIFFER
ABOUT WATER-BAPTISM. WHEREIN IS ALSO
DISCOURSED, WHETHER THAT BE THE
ENTERING ORDINANCE INTO FELLOWSHIP,
OR NO.

'I believed, therefore have I spoken.'—Psalm
116:10

TO THE READER.

Sir,

I marvel not that both you and others do think my long imprisonment strange, (or rather strangely of me for the sake of that) for verily I should also have done it myself, had not the Holy Ghost long since forbidden me (1 Peter 4:12; 1 John 3:13). Nay, verily, that notwithstanding, had the adversary but fastened the supposition of guilt upon me, my long trials might by this time have put it beyond dispute; for I have not hitherto been so sordid, as to stand to a doctrine right or wrong; much less when so weighty an argument as above eleven years' imprisonment, is continually dogging of me to weigh and pause, and pause again, the grounds and foundation of those principles, for which I thus have suffered;³ but having not only at my trial

³ King Charles the 2nd, about a year after this time, pardoned near five hundred Quakers, who had been languishing in prison for not attending the church service. Upon this Mr. Bunyan, and his fellow prisoners at Bedford, petitioned for liberty, and at a court of privy council at Whitehall, the 17th May, 1672, present, the King and twenty-four of his councillors, the following minute was made:—'Whereas, by order of the Board of the 8th instant, the humble petition of John Penn, John

asserted them, but also since, even all this tedious tract of time, in cool blood, a thousand times, by the word of God, examined them, and found them good; I cannot, I dare not now revolt or deny the same, on pain of eternal damnation.

And that my principles and practice may be open to the view and judgment of all men, though they stand and fall to none but the word of God alone, I have in this small treatise presented to this generation, 'A Confession of

Bunyan, John Dunn, Thomas Haynes, Simon Haynes, and George Parr, prisoners in the goale of Bedford, convicted upon several statutes for not conforming to the rights and ceremonyes of the church of England, and for being at unlawful meetings, was referred to the Sheriff of the county of Bedford, who was required to certify this Board whether the said persons were committed for the crimes in the said petition mentioned, AND FOR NO OTHER; which he having accordingly done, by his certificate dated the 11th instant. It was thereupon, this day, ordered by his Ma(tie) in council, That the said petition and certificate be (and are herewith) sent to his Ma(tie's) Attorney General, who is authorized, and required, to insert them into the general pardon to be passed for the Quakers.' This fully confirms what Bunyan says as to the cause of his long and dangerous imprisonment. It was for being absent from the state church and worshipping God according to His will, as expressed in the Bible. See Introduction to *Pilgrim's Progress*, Hansard Knollys edition.

my Faith, and a Reason of my Practice in the Worship of God'; by which, although it be brief, candid Christians may, I hope, without a violation to faith or love, judge [that] I may have the root of the matter found in me.

Neither have I in this relation abusively presented my reader, with other doctrines or practices, than what I held, professed, and preached when apprehended, and cast in prison. Nor did I then or now retain a doctrine besides, or which is not thereon grounded. The subject I should have preached upon, even then when the constable came, was, 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?' From whence I intended to shew, the absolute need of faith in Jesus Christ; and that it was also a thing of the highest concern for men to inquire into, and to ask their own hearts whether they had it or no.

Faith and holiness are my professed principles, with an endeavour, so far as in me lieth, to be at peace with all men. What shall I say, let mine enemies themselves be judges, if anything in these following doctrines, or if ought that any man hath heard me preach, doth [savour], or hath according to the true intent of my words, savoured either of heresy or rebellion. I say again, let they themselves be judges, if ought they find in my writing or preaching, doth render me worthy of almost

twelve years' imprisonment, or one that deserveth to be hanged, or banished for ever, according to their tremendous sentence. Indeed my principles are such, as lead me to a denial to communicate in the things of the kingdom of Christ, with the ungodly and openly profane; neither can I in or by the superstitious inventions of this world, consent that my soul should be governed in any of my approaches to God, because commanded to the contrary, and commended for so refusing. Wherefore excepting this one thing, for which I ought not to be rebuked; I shall, I trust, in despite of slander and falsehood, discover myself at all times a peaceable and an obedient subject. But if nothing will do, unless I make of my conscience a continual butchery, and slaughter-shop, unless putting out my own eyes, I commit me to the blind to lead me, as I doubt is desired by some, I have determined, the Almighty God being my help and shield, yet to suffer, if frail life might continue so long, even till the moss shall grow on mine eyebrows, rather than thus to violate my faith and principles. 'Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon, *which cometh* from the rock of the field? *or* shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?' (Jer 18:14). 'Hath a nation changed *their* gods,

which *are* yet no gods?’ (Jer 2:11). ‘For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever’ (Micah 4:5).

Touching my practice as to communion with visible saints, although not baptized with water; I say it is my present judgment so to do, and am willing to render a farther reason thereof, shall I see the leading hand of God thereto.

Thine in bonds for the gospel,
JOHN BUNYAN.

A CONFESSION OF MY FAITH, AND A REASON OF MY PRACTICE, ETC.

‘Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.’—1 Peter 3:15, 16.

1. I believe, that there is but one only true God, and there is none other but he. ‘To us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things’ (1 Cor 8:6). ‘And this is life eternal,

that they might know thee the only true God' &c. (John 17:3, see also Mark 12:32; Acts 17:24).

2. I believe, that this God is almighty, eternal, invisible, incomprehensible, &c. 'I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect' (Gen 17:1). 'The eternal God *is thy* refuge' (Deut 33:27). 'Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever' (1 Tim 1:17, see also Job 11:7; Rom 11:33).

3. I believe, that this God is unspeakably perfect in all his attributes of power, wisdom, justice, truth, holiness, mercy, love, &c. his power is said to be *eternal* (Rom 1:20), his understanding and wisdom *infinite* (Psa 147:5); he is called the *just Lord* in opposition to all things (Zeph 3:5). He is said to be truth itself and the God thereof (2 Thess 2:10; Deut 32:4). There is none holy as the Lord. 'God is love.' 'Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?' (Job 11:7).

4. I believe, that in the Godhead, there are *three persons* or substances. 'There are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost' (1 John 5:7, see also Gen 1:26, 3:22, 11:7; Isa 6:8).

5. I believe, that these three are in nature,

essence, and eternity, equally one. 'These three are one' (1 John 5:7).

6. I believe, [that] there is 'a world to come' (Heb 2:5, 6:5).

7. I believe, that there shall be 'a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust' (Acts 24:15). 'Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt' (Dan 12:2). 'Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation' (John 5:28).

8. I believe, that they that 'shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection' (Luke 20:34-36, see also John 10:27-29; Rev 7:16, 20:6).

9. I believe, that those that die impenitent, shall be tormented with the devil and his angels, and shall be cast with them into 'the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone' (Rev 21:8). 'Where their worm dieth not, and the

fire is not quenched' (Mark 9:43,48, see also Matt 25:41,46; John 5:29).

10. I believe, that because God is naturally holy and just, even, as he is good and merciful; therefore, all having sinned, none can be saved, without the means of a redeemer. 'Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom' (Job 33:24). 'We have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins' (Col 1:14). For which 'without shedding of blood, is no remission' (Heb 9:22).

11. I believe that Jesus Christ our Lord himself is the redeemer. 'They remembered that God *was* their rock, and the high God their redeemer' (Psa 78:35). 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot' (1 Peter 1:18,19).

12. I believe, that the great reason why the Lord, the second person in the Godhead, did clothe himself with our flesh and blood, was that he might be capable of obtaining the redemption, that before the world, was intended for us. 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he

also himself likewise took part of the same; [mark] that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb 2:14,15). 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law' (Gal 4:4,5). 'Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto *his* brethren, and that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted' (Heb 2:17,18). 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through [faith in] Jesus Christ' (Gal 3:13,14).

13. I believe, that the time when he clothed himself with our flesh, was in the days of the reign of *Caesar Augustus*; then, I say, and not till then, was the Word 'made flesh,' or clothed with our nature (John 1:14; 1 Tim 3:16). 'And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the

world should be taxed. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered' (Luke 2:1,4-6). This child was he of whom godly Simeon was told by the Holy Ghost, when he said, That he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ (vv 25-27).

14. I believe, therefore, that this very child, as afore is testified, is both God and man; the Christ of the living God. 'And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds - keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this *shall be* a sign unto you; ye

shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger' (Luke 2:7-12). Again, 'But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him; - saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us' (Matt 1:21,22).

15. I believe, therefore, that the righteousness, and redemption, by which we that believe, stand just before God, as saved from the curse of the law, is the righteousness, and redemption, that consists in the personal acts and performances of this child Jesus; this God-man the Lord's Christ: it consisteth, I say, in his personal fulfilling the law for us, to the utmost requirement of the justice of God. 'Think not [saith he] that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil' (Matt 5:17). By which means he became 'the end of the law for

righteousness to every one that believeth' (Rom 10:4). 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh' (Rom 8:3). So finishing transgressions, and making an end of sins, and making reconciliation for iniquity, He brought in everlasting righteousness (1 John 3:8; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 10:5-10; Dan 9:24).

16. I believe, that for the completing of this work, he was always sinless (Heb 4:15); did always the things that pleased God's justice (John 8:29), that every one of his acts, both of doing and suffering, and rising again from the dead, was really and infinitely perfect, being done by him as God-man (Heb 7:26-28): wherefore his acts before he died, are called, 'the righteousness of God' (Rom 3:21,22), his blood, 'the blood of God' (Acts 20:28), and 'hereby perceive we the love of *God*, because he laid down his life for us' (1 John 3:16). The Godhead which gave virtue to all the acts of the human nature, was then in perfect union with it, when he hanged upon the cross for our sins (Acts 10:36; John 20:28; Rom 1:4).

17. I believe then, that the righteousness that saveth the sinner from the wrath to come, is properly and personally Christ's, and ours

but as we have union with him; God by grace imputing it to us. 'Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith' (Phil 3:8,9). 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption' (1 Cor 1:30). 'For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (2 Cor 5:21) ['IN the LORD have I righteousness and strength' (Isa 45:24).]

18. I believe, that God, as the reward of Christ's undertakings for us, hath exalted him to his own right-hand, as our mediator, and given him a name above every name; and hath made him Lord of all, and judge of quick and dead: and all this that we who believe might take courage to believe, and hope in God (Eph 1:17-22). 'And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself - unto death, even the death of the cross, [where he died for our sins]. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him;

and given him a name - above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil 2:8-11). 'And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead' (Acts 10:42, 17:31). 'Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God' (1 Peter 1:19-21).

19. I believe, that being at the right hand of God in heaven, he doth there effectually exercise the offices of his excellent priesthood, and mediatorship, presenting himself continually before God, in the righteousness which is accomplished for us, when he was in the world. For by the efficacy of his blood, he not only went into the holy place, but being there, and having by it obtained eternal redemption for us; now, as receiving the worth and merit thereof from the Father; doth bestow upon us grace, repentance, faith, and the remission of sins: yea he also received for us,

the Holy Ghost to be sent unto us, to ascertain⁴ us of our adoption and glory: 'For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest' (Heb 8:4). 'Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession' (Heb 4:14). 'For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (1 Tim 2:5). For 'by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. - For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us' (Heb 9:12,24). 'Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear' (Acts 2:23, 5:31).⁵

20. I believe, that being there, he shall so continue till the restitution of all things, and

⁴ 'To ascertain us,' in the 17th century, meant 'to make us confident,' 'to assure us.' 'It ascertaining me that I am one of God's children.'—*Hammond*. Ed.

⁵ Eternal blessings on our Emmanuel, who faithfully performed His promise of sending the Comforter to unlock the mysteries of the kingdom of grace, and guide us into all truth: without His powerful aid we can neither know or perform any thing to a good or saving purpose.—*Mason*.

then he shall come again in glory, and shall sit in judgment upon all flesh. And I believe, that according to his sentence so shall their judgment be. 'Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, - spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began' (Acts 3:19-21). For 'this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heave' (Acts 1:11). 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God'; &c. (1 Thess 4:16). 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall

he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal' (Matt 25:31-33,41,46). For 'the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat' (2 Peter 3:10-12).

21. I believe that when he comes, his saints shall have a reward of grace, for all their work and labour of love which they showed to his name in the world. 'And every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour' (1 Cor 3:8). 'And then shall every man have praise of God' (4:5). 'And behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be' (Rev 22:12). 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord' (1 Cor 15:58). 'Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ' (Col 3:24).

How Christ is made ours; or by what means this or that man, hath that benefit by him, as to stand just before God now, and in the day of judgment.

Of Justification.

1. I believe, we being sinful creatures in ourselves, that no good thing done by us, can procure of God the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. But that the imputation thereof is an act of grace, a free gift without our deserving. 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Rom 3:24, 5:17). 'Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim 1:9).

2. I believe also, That the power of imputing righteousness resideth only in God by Christ: 1. Sin being the transgression of the law. 2. The soul that hath sinned being his creature, and the righteousness also his, and his only. 'Even as David also describeth the

blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin' (Rom 4:6-8). Hence therefore it is said again, That men 'shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness' (Psa 145:7). 'For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy' (Rom 9:15,16).

3. I believe, that the offer of this righteousness, as tendered in the gospel, is to be received by faith; we still in the very act of receiving it, judging ourselves sinners in ourselves. 'Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ' (Rom 7:24,25). 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved' (Acts 16:31). The gospel is preached in all nations for the obedience of faith. 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation, [a sacrifice to appease the displeasure of God] through faith in his blood. To declare his

righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth on Jesus' (Rom 3:24-26). 'Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses' (Acts 13:38,39).

4. I believe, that this faith, as it respecteth the imputation of this righteousness, for justification before God, doth put forth itself in such acts, as purely respect the offer of a gift. It receiveth, accepteth of, embraceth, or trusteth to it. 'As many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name' (John 1:12). 'This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief' (1 Tim 1:15; Heb 11:13). 'In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise' (Eph 1:13). I believe therefore, that as to my justification from the curse of the law, I am, as I stand in myself, ungodly, to receive, accept of,

embrace, and trust to the righteousness, that is already provided by, and wrapt up in the personal doings and sufferings of Christ; it being faith in that, and that only, that can justify a sinner in the sight of God.⁶

5. I believe, that the faith that so doth, is not to be found with any but those, in whom the Spirit of God by mighty power doth work it: all others being fearful and incredulous, dare not venture their souls and eternity upon it. And hence it is called the faith that is wrought by the exceeding great and mighty power of God; the faith of the operation of God. And hence it is that others are said to be fearful, and so unbelieving. These with other ungodly sinners must have their part in the lake of fire (Eph 1:18,19; Col 2:12; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:19; Rev 21:8).

6. I believe, that this faith is effectually wrought in none, but those which before the world were appointed unto glory. ‘And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed’ (Acts 13:48). ‘That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory’ (Rom

⁶ The gracious soul believes in Christ for justification, from a sense of utter inability to obtain justification by works. This is effected by the power of the Holy Spirit, the glorifier of Jesus.—*Mason*.

9:23). ‘We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God; - knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God’ (1 Thess 1:2-4). But of the rest he saith, ‘ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep, as I said’ (John 10:26), which latter words relate to the 16th verse, which respecteth the election of God.

‘Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and I should heal them’ (John 12:39,40).

Of Election.

1. I believe that election is free and permanent, being founded in grace, and the unchangeable will of God. ‘Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then *it is* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more of grace: otherwise work is no more work’ (Rom 11:5,6). ‘Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this

seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his' (2 Tim 2:19). 'In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will' (Eph 1:11).

2. I believe, that this decree, choice or election, was before the foundation of the world; and so before the elect themselves, had being in themselves: For 'God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were' (Rom 4:17), stays not for the being of things, to determine his eternal purpose by; but having all things present to him, in his wisdom, he made his choice before the world was (Eph 1:4; 2 Tim 1:9).

3. I believe, that the decree of election is so far off from making works in us foreseen, the ground or cause of the choice: that it containeth in the bowels of it, not only the persons, but the graces that accompany their salvation. And hence it is, that it is said; we are predestinated '*to be* conformed to the image of his Son' (Rom 8:29); not because we are, but 'that we **SHOULD** be holy and without blame before him in love' (Eph 1:4). 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them' (Eph 2:10). He blessed us according as he chose us in Christ.

And hence it is again that the salvation and calling of which we are now made partakers, is no other than what was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; according to his eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph 3:8-11; 2 Tim 1:9; Rom 8:29).

4. I believe that Christ Jesus is he in whom the elect are always considered, and that without him there is neither election, grace, nor salvation. 'Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace: wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. - That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, *even* in him' (Eph 1:5-7,10). 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12).

5. I believe, that there is not any impediment attending the election of God, that can hinder their conversion, and eternal salvation. 'Moreover whom he did predestinate,

them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? - Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth?' &c. (Rom 8:30-35). 'What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded' (Rom 11:7). 'For Israel *hath* not *been* forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts: though their land was filled with sin, against the holy one of Israel' (Jer 51:5). When Ananias made intercession against Saul, saying, 'Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.' What said God unto him? 'Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel' (Acts 9:12,15).

6. I believe that no man can know his election, but by his calling. The vessels of mercy, which God afore prepared unto glory, do thus claim a share therein: 'Even us, [say they,] whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also

in Hosea; I will call them my people, which were not my people, and her beloved, which was not beloved' (Rom 9:24,25).

7. I believe therefore, that election doth not forestall or prevent the means which are of God appointed to bring us to Christ, to grace and glory; but rather putteth a necessity upon the use and effect thereof; because they are chosen to be brought to heaven that way: that is, by the faith of Jesus Christ, which is the end of effectual calling. 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure' (2 Peter 1:10; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Peter 1:12).

Of Calling.

I believe, that to effectual calling, the Holy Ghost must accompany the word of the gospel, and that with mighty power: I mean that calling, which of God is made to be the fruit of electing love. 'Knowing,' saith Paul to the Thessalonians, 'brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,' &c. (1 Thess 1:4,5). Otherwise men will not, cannot, hear and turn. Samuel was called four times, before he knew the voice of him that spake from heaven (1 Sam 3:-610). It is said of them in

Hosea, That as the prophets called them so they went from them; and instead of turning to them, 'sacrificed to Baalim, and burned incense to graven images' (Hosea 11:2). The reason is, because men by nature are not only dead in sins, but enemies in their minds by reason of wicked works: the call then is, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light' (Eph 5:14). Understand, therefore, that effectual calling is like that word of Christ that raised Lazarus from the dead; a word attended with an arm that was omnipotent. 'Lazarus, come forth' (John 11:43). It was a word to the dead; but not only so: it was a word for the dead; a word that raised him from the dead; a word that outwent all opposition; and that brought him forth of the grave, though bound hand and foot therein (Gal 1:15). And hence it is, that calling is sometimes expressed by quickening (Eph 2:1,2), awakening, illuminating, or bringing them forth of darkness to light, that amazeth and astonisheth them (Heb 10:32; Acts 9:6). For as it is a strange thing for a man that lay long dead, or never saw the light with his eyes, to be raised out of the grave, or to be made to see that which he could not so much as once think of before, so it is with effectual calling. Hence it is that Paul, when called, stood

‘trembling and was astonished’: and that Peter saith, ‘he hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light’ (1 Peter 2:9; Eph 4:24; Acts 9:6). In effectual calling the voice of God is heard, and the gates of heaven are opened:⁷ when God called Abraham, he appeared to him in glory. That of Ananias to Saul is experienced but by few. ‘The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, [saith he,] that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just one, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth’ (Acts 22:14). True, Saul’s call was out of the ordinary way, but yet as to the matter, and truth of the work, it was no other than all the chosen have, viz.

(1.) An effectual awakening about the evil of sin; and especially of unbelief (John 16:9). And therefore when the Lord God called Adam, he also made unto him an effectual discovery of sin; insomuch that he stript him of all his righteousness (Gen 3). Thus he also served the gaoler (Acts 16:29,30). Yea it is such an awakening, as by it, he sees he was without Christ, without hope, and a stranger to the

⁷ Effectual calling is evidenced by the soul’s love to God, in his dear Son; a superior delight in Him, as a reconciled Father, cleaving to Him, His ways, and people; and longing for the full fruition and final enjoyment of Him in glory.—*Mason*.

commonwealth of Israel, 'and without God in the world' (Eph 2:12). Oh the dread and amazement that the guilt of sin brings with it, when it is revealed by the God of heaven; and like to it is the sight of mercy, when it pleaseth God, who calleth us by his grace, to reveal his Son in us.

(2.) In effectual calling there is great awakenings about the world to come, and the glory of unseen things; the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment; the salvation that God hath prepared for them that love him; with the blessedness that will attend us, and be upon us, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, are great things in the soul that is under the awakening calls of God. And hence we are said to be called to glory (1 Thess 2:12). 'To the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Thess 2:14).

(3.) In effectual calling there is also a sanctifying virtue; and hence we are said to be called with an holy calling (1 Thess 4:7), with an 'heavenly calling' (Heb 3:1). Called to glory and virtue. 'But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light' (1 Peter 2:9). Yea, effectual calling hath annexed to it, as its

inseparable companion, the promise of thorough sanctification. 'Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*' (1 Thess 5:24).

Of Faith.

I believe, that effectual calling doth therefore produce, 1. FAITH; and therefore it is said, that 'faith *cometh* by hearing' (Rom 10:17); by hearing the word that calleth us 'unto the grace of Christ' (Gal 1:6). For by the word that calleth us, is Jesus Christ held forth to us; and offered to be our righteousness; and therefore the apostle saith again, that God hath called us 'unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ' (1 Cor 1:9); that is, to be made partakers of the riches of grace, and the righteousness that is in him. 2. It produceth hope. It giveth a ground to hope; and therefore hope is said to be the hope of our calling (Eph 1:18). And again, 'Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling' (Eph 4:4). Now the godly wise know, whoso misseth of effectual calling, misseth of eternal life; because God justifieth none but them whom he calleth; and glorifies none but those whom he justifies: and therefore it is that Peter said before, 'Make your calling, and [so] your election sure': make it sure, that is, prove your calling right, by the word of God. For whoso staggereth at the

certainty of his calling, cannot comfortably hope for a share in eternal life. 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. My soul fainteth for thy salvation, *but* I hope in thy word' (Psa 119:49,81). 3. It produceth repentance; for when a man hath heaven and hell before his eyes (as he will have if he be under the power of effectual calling) or when a man hath a revelation of the mercy and justice of God, with an heart-drawing invitation to lay hold on the tender forgiveness of sins; and being made also to behold the goodly beauty of holiness; it must needs be, that repentance appears, and puts forth itself, unto self-revenging acts, for all its wickedness which in the days of ignorance it delighted in. And hence is that saying, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Mark 2:17). For the effecting of which, the preaching of the word of the kingdom, is most proper: 'Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Matt 4:17).

Of Repentance.

Repentance is a turning the heart to God in Christ: a turning of it from sin, and the devil, and darkness; to the goodness, and grace, and holiness that is in him. Wherefore, they that of old are said to repent, are said to loath and

abhor themselves, for all their abominations. ‘I abhor myself,’ [said Job,] ‘and repent in dust and ashes’ (Job 42:6, see also Eze 6:9, 20:43, 36:31, 42:6, 16:63).

Godly repentance doth not only affect the soul with the loathsome nature of sin that is past; but filleth the heart with godly hatred of sins that yet may come. When Moses feared that through his being overburthened with the care of the children of Israel, some unruly or sinful passions might show themselves in him, what saith he? ‘Kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight, and let me not see my wretchedness’ (Num 11:15). See also how that which Paul calleth godly repentance, wrought in the upright Corinthians, ‘Behold, ‘ [saith he,] this self same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter (2 Cor 7:11).

Of Love.

It [effectual calling] produceth also love: wherefore Paul, when he had put the church in remembrance that they were called of God,

adds, That concerning brotherly love, they had no need that he should write unto them (1 Thess 4:9). As who should say, If God be so kind to us, to forgive us our sins, to save our souls, and to give us the kingdom of heaven; let these be motives beyond all other to provoke us to love again. Farther, if we that are thus beloved of God, are made members of one man's body, all partakers of his grace, clothed all, with his glorious righteousness, and are together appointed to be the children of the next world; why should we not love one another? 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another' (1 John 4:11). And truly so we shall, if the true grace of God be upon us; because we also see them to be the called of Jesus. Travellers, that are of the same country, love and take pleasure one in another, when they meet in a strange land.⁸ Why, we sojourn here in a strange country, with them that are heirs together with us of the promised

⁸ How great is the delight of meeting in a foreign country, after a long absence from home, with one who speaks your own language and sympathizes with your national feelings. How much more strong are those enjoyments arising from the communion of saints, while travelling through an enemy's country, with difficult duties to perform,—animated by a kindred spirit, and seeking the same eternal home.—Ed.

kingdom and glory (Heb 11:9). Now, as I said, this holy love worketh by love: mark, love in God and Christ when discovered, constraineth us to love [one another] (2 Cor 5:14).

The name, therefore, and word, and truth of God in Christ, together with the sincerity of grace, of faith, and holiness in us, are the delightful objects of this love (Psa 119:47,127,132,159, 5:11, 69:36, 101:6). For it embraceth with delight and complacency, but as it discerneth the image of God, and of Christ in the soul, his presence in the ministry, and a suitableness in our worship to the word and mind of Christ (Psa 26:8, 27:4, 84:1-4; 1 Thess 5:13; Phil 1:3-7; Eph 4:32).

Love also hath a blessed faculty, and heavenly, in bearing and suffering afflictions, putting up wrongs, overlooking the infirmities of the brethren, and in serving in all Christian offices the necessities of the saints. 'Charity suffereth long *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth' (1 Cor 13:4-8, also 1 Peter 4:8; Gal 5:13). In a word, it designeth a

holy conversation in this world; that God, and Christ, and the word of Christ, 'may be glorified thereby' (2 Cor 11:10-12; 1 Peter 1:12, 3:16).

Of the Scriptures.

Touching which word of God I thus believe and confess, 1. That all the holy scriptures are the words of God. 'All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God' (2 Tim 3:16). For the prophecy [of the scripture] came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21). 2. I believe that the holy scriptures, of themselves, without the addition of human inventions, are able to make the man of God perfect in all things; and 'thoroughly to furnish him unto all good works.' They are able 'to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim 3:15). And to instruct thee in all other things, that either respect the worship of God, or thy walking before all men (2 Tim 3:17; 2 Peter 1:19-21). 3. I believe the great end why God committed the scriptures to writing was; that we might be instructed to Christ, taught how to believe (1 John 5:13), [and be] encouraged to patience and hope, for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ (John

20:31; Rom 15:4). Also that we might understand what is sin, and how to avoid the commission thereof. ‘Concerning the works of men [said David] by the word of thy lips, I have kept *me from* the paths of the destroyer’ (Psa 17:4). ‘Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way’ (Psa 119:104). ‘Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee’ (Psa 119:11). 4. I believe that they cannot be broken, but will certainly be fulfilled in all the prophecies, threatenings, and promises, either to the salvation or damnation of men. They are like that flying roll, that will go over all the earth to cut off and curse (Ze 5:2-4). In them is contained also the blessing, they preach to us also the way of salvation (Gal 3:8). ‘Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish:⁹ for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you’ (Acts 13:40,41, see also John 10:35, 12:37-41,

⁹ The despising and disregarding the Holy Scriptures, rejecting Jesus and the way of salvation by Him, especially after having attained to the knowledge and conviction of the truth of it by the gospel, is the unpardonable sin, and renders men obdurate and impenitent.—*Mason*.

3:17-19). 5. I believe that Jesus Christ, by the word of the scriptures, will judge all men at the day of doom; for that is the book of the law of the Lord, according to Paul's gospel (John 12:44-50; Rom 2:16). 6. I believe, that this God 'made the world and all things [that are] therein' (Acts 17:24), for 'in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*' (Exo 20:11). Also, that after the time of the making thereof, he disposed of it to the children of men, with a reserve thereof for the children of God, that should in all ages be born thereunto. 'When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel' (Deut 32:8), for as he 'made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, [so he] hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation' (Acts 17:26).

Of Magistracy.

I believe, that magistracy is God's ordinance, which he hath appointed for the government of the whole world; and that it is a judgment of God, to be without those ministers of God, which he hath ordained to put wickedness to shame (Ju 18:7). 'Whosoever

therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou not then be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing' (Rom 13:2-6). Many are the mercies we receive, by a well qualified magistrate, and if any shall at any time be otherwise inclined, let us shew our Christianity in a patient suffering, *for well doing*, what it shall please God to inflict by them.¹⁰

¹⁰ How strongly must have been the principle of humble submission to the will of God implanted and rooted in Bunyan's mind. He writes this peaceful advice from his dungeon, after twelve years' cruel imprisonment for his love and obedience to the Saviour. It requires a holy flame of Divine love to enable us to take the spoiling of our goods joyfully; but how much more strongly must this principle pervade the heart to enable us to suffer the loss of liberty, deprived of the society

A REASON OF MY PRACTICE IN WORSHIP.

Having thus made confession of my faith, I now come to shew you my practice in worship, with the reasons thereof. The which I shall have occasion to touch, under two distinct heads.

I. With whom I dare not hold communion.

II. With whom I dare.

Only, first, note, that by the word communion, I mean fellowship in the things of the kingdom of Christ, or that which is commonly called church communion, the communion of saints. For in civil affairs, and in things of this world that are honest, I am not altogether tied up from the fornicators thereof (1 Cor 5:9,10); wherefore in my following discourse understand me in the first sense:—Now, then,

of a much loved wife and family, and in daily fear of an ignominious death! We cannot sufficiently admire the grace of God in the sufferer, nor abhor the tyranny under which he suffered.—Ed.

[I. With whom I dare not hold communion.]

FIRST, I dare not have communion with them that profess not faith and holiness; or that are not visible saints by calling; but note, that by this assertion, I meddle not with the elect; but as he is a visible saint by calling; neither do I exclude the secret hypocrite, if he be hid from me by visible saintship. Wherefore I dare not have communion with men from a single supposition, that they may be elect, neither dare I exclude the other from a single supposing that he may be a secret hypocrite. I meddle not here with these things; I only exclude him that is not a visible saint. Now he that is visibly or openly profane, cannot be then a visible saint; for he that is a visible saint must profess faith, and repentance, and consequently holiness of life: and with none else dare I communicate.

First, Because God himself hath so strictly put the difference, both by word and deed; for from the beginning, he did not only put a difference between the seed of the woman and the children of the wicked (Gen 3:15), only the instinct of grace and change of the mind is his own, but did cast out from his presence the father of all the ungodly, even cursed Cain,

when he shewed himself openly profane, and banished him to go into the land of the runnagate, or vagabond, where from God's face, and so the privileges of the communion of saints, he was ever after hid (Gen 4:8-16).

Besides, when after this, through the policy of Satan, the children of Cain, and the seed of Seth, did commix themselves in worship, and by that means had corrupted the way of God: what followed, but first, God judged it wickedness, raised up Noah to preach against it, and after that, because they would not be reclaimed, he brought the flood upon the whole world of these ungodly; and saved only Noah alive, and his because he had kept himself righteous (Gen 6:1-13)¹¹. Here I could enlarge abundantly, and add many more instances of a like nature, but I am here only for a touch upon things.

Second, Because it is so often commanded in the scriptures, That all the congregation should be holy. 'I *am* the Lord your God: ye

¹¹ This idea is found in other of Bunyan's Works. Certainly the mixture of saints and sinners in a national church established for worldly purposes, must engender hypocrisy and pride, intolerance and persecution. Such leaders in Satan's army were calculated mightily to assist, if they were not the original cause, of the overspreading of sin which called forth the flood to wash away.—Ed.

shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy' (Lev 11:44). 'Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God *am* holy' (19:2). 'Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the Lord your God' (20:7; 1 Peter 1:15,16). Besides, 1. The gates of the temple were to be shut against all other. 'Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in' (Isa 26:2). 'This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter' (Psa 118:20). 'Thus saith the Lord God: No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that *is* among the children of Israel' (Eze 44:9). 2. Because the things of worship are holy; 'Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord' (Isa 52:11). 3. Because all the limits and bounds of communion are holy. 'This *is* the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof - *shall be* most holy. Behold, this *is* the law of the house' (Eze 43:12)¹².

Third, I dare not have communion with

¹² Bishop Hall describes a Christian indeed as 'having white hands and a clean soul, fit to lodge God in; all the rooms whereof are set apart for his holiness.'—Ed.

them; because the example of New Testament churches before us, have been a community of visible saints. Paul, to the Romans, writes thus: 'To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints' (1:7). And to the rest of the churches thus: 'Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus; called *to be* saints' (1 Cor 1:2). 'To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus' (Eph 1:1). 'To all the saints which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons' (Phil 1:1). 'To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse' (Col 1:2). 'To the church of the Thessalonians, *which is* in God the Father, and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. (1 Thess 1:1). Thus you see under what denomination those persons went of old, who were counted worthy to be members of a visible church of Christ. Besides, the members of such churches go under such characters as these.

(1.) 'The called of Christ Jesus' (Rom 1:6). (2.) Men that have drank into the Spirit of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 12:13). (3.) Persons in whom was God the Father (Eph 4:6). (4.) They were all made partakers of the joy of the gospel (Phil 1:7). (5.) Persons that were circumcised inwardly (Col 2:11). (6.) Persons that turned from idols to serve the living and true God (1

Thess 1:9). (7.) Those that were the body of Christ, and members in particular, that is, those that were visibly such; because they made profession of faith, of holiness, of repentance, of love to Christ, and of self-denial, at their receiving into fellowship.

Fourth, I dare not hold communion with the open profane.

(1.) Because it is promised to the church, that she shall dwell by herself; that is, as she is a church, and spiritual; Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations (Num 23:9). (2.) Because this is their privilege. 'But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light' (1 Peter 2:9,10). (3.) Because this is the fruit of the death of Christ, 'who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works' (Titus 2:14). (4.) Because this is the commandment: 'Save yourselves from this untoward generation' (Acts 2:40). (5.) Because with such it is not possible we should have true and spiritual communion. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with

unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, - saith the Lord Almighty (2 Cor 6:14-18).

Fifth, I dare not hold communion with the open profane. Because

(1.) This would be ploughing with an ox, and an ass together (Deut 22:10): heavenly persons suit best for communion in heavenly matters. (2.) It subjecteth not the nature of our discipline, which is not forced, but free,¹³ in a professed subjection to the will and commandment of Christ: others being excluded by God's own prohibition (Lev 1:3; Rom 6:17; 2 Cor 8:12, 9:7,13, 8:5). Paul also, when he exhorteth Timothy to follow after

¹³ Submission to the disciples of a Christian church must be voluntary, and not by the constraint of force or hypocrisy. In Christ's church ALL must be free, and not a mixture of free-men and the slaves of sin.—Ed.

righteousness, faith, charity, peace, &c., (which are the bowels of church communion,) he saith, do it 'with them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart' (2 Tim 2:22).

Sixth, In a word, to hold communion with the open profane, is most pernicious and destructive. (1.) 'Twas the wicked multitude that fell a lusting, and that tempted Christ in the desert (Num 11:4). (2.) It was the profane heathen, of whom Israel learned to worship idols. They 'were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And served their idols; which were a snare unto them' (Psa 106:35,36). (3.) It is the mingled people that God hath threatened to plague with those deadly punishments of his, with which he hath threatened to punish Babylon itself; saying, When a sword is upon her liars, her mighty, her chariots, and treasures; a sword also shall be upon the mingled people that are in the midst of her.

And no marvel: for, (1.) Mixed communion polluteth the ordinances of God. Say to the rebels, saith the Lord God, 'Let it suffice you of all your abominations, in that ye have brought *into my sanctuary* strangers, uncircumcised *in heart*, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, *even* my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and

they have broken my covenant, because of all your abominations' (Eze 44:6,7). (2.) It violateth he law. 'Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: [how] They have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed *difference* between the unclean and the clean' (Eze 20:26). (3.) It profaneth the holiness of God. 'Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god' (Mal 2:11). (4.) It defileth the truly gracious. 'Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?' (1 Cor 5:6). Look diligently therefore, 'lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled' (Heb 12:15).

Lastly, To conclude, it provoketh God to punish with severe judgments: And therefore heed well. (1.) As I said before, The drowning of the whole world was occasioned by the sons of God commixing themselves with the daughters of men; and the corruption of worship that followed thereupon (Gen 6, 7). (2.) He sent a plague upon the children of Israel, for joining themselves unto the people of Moab; and for following their abominations in worship (Num 25:1-5; Josh 22:17): and let no

man think, that now I have altered the state of the question: for it is all one with the church to communicate with the profane; and to sacrifice and offer their gifts to the devil (Deut 32:16-19; Psa 106:36-40)¹⁴: the reason is, because such have by their sin forsaken the protection of heaven, and are given up to their own heart-lusts; and left to be overcome of the wicked, to whom they have joined themselves (Deut 12, 7:1-6). join not yourselves, said God, to the wicked, neither in religion nor marriages; 'For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly' (Deut 7:5). 'Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him who was beloved of his God' (Neh 13:26). Hear how Paul handleth the point; 'But I say, that the things which the Gentiles [or openly profane] sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: Ye cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils. Do

¹⁴ What faithfulness and plain dealing is here. If any church communicates with the profane it is offering sacrifice to the devil.—Ed.

we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?' (1 Cor 10:20-22). I conclude, that therefore it is an evil, and a dangerous thing to hold church communion with the openly profane and ungodly. It polluteth his ordinances: it violateth his law: it profaneth his holiness: it defileth his people; and provoketh the Lord to severe and terrible judgments.

Object. But we can prove in all ages [that] there have been the open profane in the church of God.

Ans. In many ages indeed it hath been so: but mark, they appeared not such, when first they were received unto communion (Exo 12:48), neither were they with God's liking, as such, to be retained among them, but in order to their admonition, repentance and amendment of life: of which, if they failed, God presently threatened the church; and either cut them off from the church, as he did the idolators, fornicators, murmurers, tempters, sabbath breakers; with Korah, Dathan, Achan, and others (2 Cor 6; 1 Cor 5; Exo 32:25; Num 25:1-9, 21:5,6, 14:37, 16, 15:32-36; Josh 7; 2 Kings 17; Eze 22, 23) or else cut off them with the church and all, as he served the ten tribes at one time, and the two tribes at another. 'My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers

among the nations' (Hosea 9:17). I might here greatly enlarge, but I intend brevity; yet let me tell you, that when Nehemiah understood by the book of the law of the Lord, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God: 'They separated from Israel all the mixed multitude' (Neh 13:1-3). Many have pleaded for the profane, that they should abide in the church of God; but such hath not considered, that God's wrath at all times hath with great indignation been shewed against such offenders and their conceits. Indeed they like not for to plead for them under that notion, but rather as Korah, and his company: 'All the congregation are holy every one of them' (Num 16:3). But it maketh no matter by what name they are called; if by their deeds they shew themselves openly wicked: for names and notions sanctify not the heart and nature; they make not virtues of vice, neither can it save such advocates from the heavy curse both of God and men (Prov 17:15, 24:24). 'The righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood; because they *are* adulteresses, and blood *is* in their hands' (Eze 23:45).

[II. With whom I dare to hold communion.]

SECOND, Thus have I shewed you with whom I dare not have communion: and now to shew you with whom I dare. But in order thereto, I desire you

First, To take notice; That touching shadowish, or figurative ordinances; I believe that Christ hath ordained but two in his church, viz., Water baptism and the supper of the Lord: both which are of excellent use to the church in this world; they being to us representations of the death and resurrection of Christ; and are, as God shall make them, helps to our faith therein. But I count them not the fundamentals of our Christianity, nor grounds or rule to communion with saints: servants they are, and our mystical ministers, to teach and instruct us in the most weighty matters of the kingdom of God: I therefore here declare my reverent esteem of them; yet dare not remove them, as some do, from the place and end, where by God they are set and appointed; nor ascribe unto them more than they were ordered to have in their first and primitive institution. It is possible to commit idolatry even with God's own appointments: but I pass this, and come to the thing

propounded.

Second, then, I dare have communion, church communion, with those that are visible saints by calling: with those that, by the word of the gospel, have been brought over to faith and holiness: and it maketh no matter to me, what their life was heretofore, if they now be 'washed,' if they be 'sanctified,' if they be 'justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God' (1 Cor 6:11). Now in order to the discovery of this faith and holiness, and so to fellowship in church communion: I hold it requisite that a faithful relation be made thereof by the party thus to be received; yea, if need be, by witnesses also, for the satisfaction of the church, that she may receive in faith and judgment, such as best shall suit her holy profession (Acts 9:26-28; 1 Cor 16:10; 2 Cor 8:23). Observe it; these texts do respect extraordinary officers; and yet see, that in order to their reception by the church, there was made to them a faithful relation of the faith and holiness of those very persons; for no man may intrude himself upon, or thrust himself upon, or thrust himself into a church of Christ; without the church have first the knowledge and liking of the person to be received: if otherwise, there is a door opened for all the heretics in the world; yea, for devils

also if they appear in human shapes. But Paul shows you the manner of receiving, by pleading (after some disgrace thrown upon him by the false apostles) for his own admission of his companions: ‘Receive us, [saith he,] we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man; we have defrauded no man’ (2 Cor 7:2). And so concerning Timothy: ‘If Timotheus come, [saith he,] see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do’ (1 Cor 16:10). Also, when Paul supposed that Titus might be suspected by some; see how he pleads for him: If ‘*any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ*’ (2 Cor 8:23). Phebe also, when she was to be received by the church at Rome; see how he speaketh in her behalf: ‘I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is sat Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also’ (Rom 16:1,2). Yea, when the apostles and brethren sent their epistles from Jerusalem to Antioch; under what characters do those go, that were the

messengers to them? 'It seemed good unto [the Holy Ghost and to] us, - to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. (Acts 15:25-27). Now though the occasions upon which these commendations were written were not simply, or only, in order to church relation, but also for other causes; yet because the persons concerned were of the churches to be received as faithful, and such who would partake of church privileges with them, they have, therefore, their faith and faithfulness related to the churches, as those that were particularly embodied there. Besides Timothy and Titus being extraordinary officers, stood as members and officers in every church where they were received. Likewise Barnabas and Saul, Judas and Silas, abode as members and officers where they were sent. It was requisite, therefore, that the letters of recommendation should be in substance the same with that relation that ought to be made to the church, by or for the person that is to be embodied there. But to return, I DARE HAVE COMMUNION, CHURCH COMMUNION, WITH THOSE THAT ARE VISIBLE SAINTS BY CALLING.

Quest. But by what rule would you receive

them into fellowship with yourselves?

Ans. Even by a discovery of their faith and holiness, and their declaration of willingness to subject themselves to the laws and government of Christ in his church.

Quest. But do you not count that by water baptism, and not otherwise, that being the initiating and entering ordinance; they ought to be received into fellowship?

Ans. No; But tarry, and take my sense with my word. For herein lies the mistake, To think that because in time past baptism was administered upon conversion, that therefore it is the initiating and entering ordinance into church communion: when by the word no such thing is testified of it. Besides, that it is not so will be manifest, if we consider the nature and power of such an ordinance.

That ordinance then, that is, the initiating or entering ordinance [as before] doth give to them that partake thereof a right to, and a being of, membership with that particular church by which it is administered. I say, a right to, and a being of, membership, without the addition of another church act. This is evident by the law of circumcision, which was the initiating law of old; for by the administration of that very ordinance, the partaker thereof was forthwith a member of

that congregation, without the addition of another church act (Gen 17). This is declared in its first institution, and therefore it is called the token of the covenant. The token or sign of righteousness, of Abraham's faith, and of the visible membership of those that joined themselves to the church with him; the very inlet into church communion that gave a being of membership among them. And thus Moses himself expounds it; 'every man's servant, that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall eat' of the passover (Exo 12:44), without the addition of another church act, to empower him thereunto; his circumcision hath already given him a being there, and so a right to, and privilege in church relation: 'A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof, [because not circumcised]. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; [For then he is one of the church] and he shall be as one born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof' (Exo 12:48). Neither could any other thing, according to the law of circumcision, give the devoutest person that breathed a being of membership with them. 'He that is born in thy house, and he that is

bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: - and the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people' (Gen 17:13,14). Note then, that that which is the initiating ordinance admitteth none into church communion but these that first partake thereof. The angel sought to kill Moses himself, for attempting to make his child a member without it (Exo 4:24-26). Note again, that as it admitteth of none to membership without it; so as I said, the very act of circumcising them, without the addition of another church act, gave them a being of membership with that very church, by whom they were circumcised. But none of this can be said of baptism. First, there is none debarred or threatened to be cut off from the church, if they be not first baptized. Secondly, Neither doth it give to the person baptized a being of membership with this or that church, by whose members he hath been baptized. John gathered no particular church, yet was he the first and great baptizer with water; he preached Christ to come, and baptized with the baptism of repentance, and left his disciples to be gathered by him (Acts 19:3-5). 'And unto him *shall* the gathering of the people be' (Gen 49:10). Besides, after Christ's ascension, Philip

baptized the eunuch, but made him by that no member of any particular church,. We only read, that Philip was caught away from him, and that the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing to his master and country of Ethiopia (Acts 8:35-40). Neither was Cornelius made a member of the church at Jerusalem, by his being baptized at Peter's command at Cesarea (Acts 10, 11). Neither were they that were converted at Antioch, by them that were scattered from the church at Jerusalem, by their baptism, if they were baptized [in water] at all, joined to the church at Jerusalem (Acts 11:19). No, they were after gathered and embodied among themselves by other church acts (Acts 16). What shall I say? into what particular church was Lydia baptized by Paul, or those first converts at Philippi? Yea even in the second of the Acts, baptizing and adding to the church appear to be acts distinct: but if baptism were the initiating ordinance, then was he that was baptized made a member; made a member of a particular church, by the very act of water baptism. Neither ought any by God's ordinance to have baptized any, but with respect to the admitting them by that act to a being of membership in this particular church. For if it be the initiating ordinance, it entereth them into the church: What church?

Into a visible church. Now there is no church visible but that which is particular; the universal being utterly invisible, and known to none but God. The person then that is baptized stands by that a member of no church at all, neither of the visible, nor yet of the invisible. A visible saint he is, but not made so by baptism; for he must be a visible saint before, else he ought not to be baptized (Acts 8:37, 9:17, 16:33).

Take it again; Baptism [in water] makes thee no member of the church, neither particular nor universal: neither doth it make thee a visible saint: It therefore gives thee neither right to nor being of membership at all.

Quest. But why then were they baptized?

Ans. That their own faith by that figure might be strengthened in the death and resurrection of Christ. And that themselves might see, that they have professed themselves dead, and buried, and risen with him to newness of life (Col 2:12; Rom 6:4). It did not seal to the church that they were so (their satisfaction as to that arose from better arguments) but taught the party himself that he ought so to be. Farther, it confirmed to his own conscience the forgiveness of sins, if by unfeigned faith he laid hold upon Jesus Christ

(Gal 3:26; 1 Cor 15:29; Acts 2:38, 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). Now then, if baptism be not the initiating ordinance, we must seek for entering some other way, by some other appointment of Christ, unless we will say that without rule, without order, and without an appointment of Christ, we may enter into his visible kingdom. The church under the law had its initiating and entering ordinance: it must not therefore be, unless we should think that Moses was more punctual and exact than Christ, but that also our Lord hath his entering appointment. Now that which by Christ is made the door of entrance into the church, by that we may doubtless enter; and seeing baptism is not that ordinance, we ought not to seek to enter thereby, but may with good conscience enter without it.

Quest. But by what rule then would you gather persons into church communion?

Ans. Even by that rule by which they are discovered to the church to be visible saints; and willing to be gathered into their body and fellowship. By that word of God therefore, by which their faith, experience and conversation, being examined, is found good; by that the church should receive them into fellowship with them. Mark; not as they practice things that are circumstantial, but as their faith is

commended by a word of faith, and their conversation by a moral precept. Wherefore that is observable, that after Paul had declared himself sound of faith, he falls down to the body of the law: 'Receive us, [saith he,] we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.' He saith not, I am baptized, but I have wronged no man, &c. (2 Cor 7:2, see also 5:18-21). And if churches after the confession of faith made more use of the ten commandments, to judge of the fitness of persons by; they might not exceed by this seeming strictness, Christian tenderness towards them they receive to communion.

I will say therefore, that by the word of faith, and of good works, moral duties gospelized, we ought to judge of the fitness of members by, by which we ought also to receive them to fellowship: For he that in these things proveth sound, he hath the antitype of circumcision, which was before the entering ordinance. 'For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is *that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, - whose praise *is* not of men, but of God' (Rom 2:28,29: Phil 3:1-4). Now a confession of this by word and life, makes this inward circumcision visible; when you know

him therefore to be thus circumcised, you ought to admit him to the Lord's passover: he, if any, hath a share not only in church communion, but a visible right to the kingdom of heaven. Again, 'For the kingdom of God, [or our service to Christ] is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, *is acceptable to God, and approved of men*' (Rom 14:17,18; Deut 28:47). By which word Righteousness, he meaneth as James doth, the royal law, the perfect law, which is the moral precept evangelized, or delivered to us by the hand of Christ (John 2:8.9). The law was given twice on Sinai: the last time it was given with a proclamation of grace and mercy of God, and of the pardon of sins going before (Exo 19, 34:1-10). The second giving is here intended; for so it cometh after faith, which first receiveth the proclamation of forgiveness; hence we are said to do this righteousness in the joy and peace of the Holy Ghost. Now he that in these things serveth Christ, is accepted of God, and approved of men. For who is he that can justly find fault with him, that fulfilleth the royal law from a principle of faith and love. *'If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well'*; ye are approved of men.

Again, he that hath loved another hath fulfilled the law, for love is the fulfilling of the law. He then that serveth Christ according to the royal law, from faith and love going before, he is a fit person for church communion; God accepteth him, men approve him. Now that the royal law is the moral precept, read the place (John 2:8-12). It is also called the law of liberty, because the bondage is taken away by forgiveness going before; and this is it by which we are judged, as is said, meet or unmeet for church communion, &c.

Therefore I say, the rule by which we receive church-members, it is the word of the faith of Christ, and of the moral precept evangelized, as I said before, I am ‘under the law to Christ,’ saith Paul (1 Cor 9:21). So when he forbiddeth us communion with men, they be such as are destitute of the faith of Christ, and live in the transgression of a moral precept: ‘I have written unto you, [saith he,] not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat’ (1 Cor 5:11). He saith not, if any man be not baptized [in water], have not hands laid on him, or join with the unbaptized, these are fictitious, scriptureless notions. ‘For this, Thou shalt not commit

adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; And if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law' (Rom 13:9,10). The word of faith, and the moral precept, is that which Paul enjoins the Galatians and Philipians, still avoiding outward circumstances: hence therefore when he had to the Galatians treated of faith, he falls point blank upon moral duties. 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God' (Gal 6:15,16). As many as walk according to this rule: What rule? The rule by which men are proved new creatures: The word of faith, and the moral precept. Wherefore Paul exhorteth the Ephesians not to walk, 'as other Gentiles, in the vanity of their mind'; seeing they had received Christ, and had 'heard him, and had been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus.' That they would put off the old man; what is that? Why, 'the former conversation,' which is 'corrupt according to the deceitful lusts'; lying, anger, sin, giving place to the

devil, corrupt communication, all bitterness, wrath, clamour, evil-speaking, with all malice. And that they would 'put on the new man.' What is that? That which is 'created in righteousness and true holiness'; a being 'renewed in the spirit' of their mind, and a putting away all these things (Eph 4). 'For in Christ Jesus'; these words are put in, on purpose to shew us the nature of New Testament administrations, and how they differ from the old. In Moses an outward conformity to an outward and carnal ordinance, was sufficient to give (they subjecting themselves thereto) a being of membership with the Jews; but in Christ Jesus it is not so; of Abraham's flesh was the national Jewish congregation; but it is Abraham's faith that makes New Testament churches: They that are of faith, are the children of faithful Abraham. They that are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham (Gal 3:7-9). So then the seed being now spiritual, the rule must needs be spiritual also, viz. The word of faith and holiness. This is the gospel concision knife, sharper than any two-edged sword; and that by which New Testament saints are circumcised in heart, ears, and lips. '*For in Christ Jesus,*' [is] no outward and circumstantial thing, but the new creature; none are subjects of the visible kingdom of

Christ but visible saints by calling: now that which manifesteth a person to be a visible saint, must be conformity to the word of faith and holiness. 'And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts' (Gal 5:24). Harken how delightfully Paul handleth the point: The new creatures are the Israel of God. The new creature hath a rule by himself to walk by; and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Paul to the Philippians commandeth as much; where treating of his own practice in the doctrine of faith and holiness, requireth them to walk by the same rule, to mind the same thing. I desire to be found in Christ, saith he, I reach forward toward the things that are before; my conversation is in heaven, and flatly opposite to them whose God is their belly, who glory in their shame, and who mind earthly things. Brethren, saith he, 'be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so' (Phil 3:17). Mark them; for what? For persons that are to be received into fellowship, and the choicest communion of saints. And indeed this is the safest way to judge of the meetness of persons by: for take away the confession of faith and holiness; and what can distinguish a Christian from a Turk? He that indeed receiveth faith,

and that squareth his life by the royal, perfect, moral precept; and that walketh therein, in the joy and peace of the Holy Ghost, no man can reject him; he cannot be a man if he object against him; not a man in Christ; not a man in understanding. 'The law is not made for a righteous man'; neither to debar him the communion of saints if he desire it, nor to cast him out if he were in. 'But for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust' (1 Tim 1:9-11). Paul also, when he would leave an everlasting conviction upon the Ephesians, concerning his faith and holiness, treating first of the sufficiency of Christ's blood, and the grace of God to save us; he adds, 'I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel,' he bringeth them to the moral precept, to prove the sincerity of his good conversation by (Acts 20:33). And when men have juggled what they can, and made never such a prattle about

religion; yet if their greatest excellency, as to the visibility of their saintship, lieth in an outward conformity to an outward circumstance in religion, their profession is not worth two mites. 'Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts thereof' (Rom 13:13,14). And it is observable, that after the apostle had in the 9th and 10th verses of this chapter told us, that the moral precept is the rule of a good conversation, and exhorted us to make no provision for the flesh; he adds, these things provided, we may receive any that believe in Christ Jesus unto communion with us; how weak soever and dark in circumstantials; and chiefly designs the proof thereof in the remaining part of his epistle. For he that is of sound faith, and of conversation honest in the world; no man, however he may fail in circumstantials, may lightly reproach or vilify him. And indeed such persons are the honour of Christian congregations. Indeed he is prejudiced, for want of light in these things about which he is dark, as of baptism, or the like; but seeing that is not the initiating ordinance, or the visible character of a saint;

yea, seeing it maketh no breach in a good and holy life: nor intrencheth upon any man's right but his own; and seeing his faith may be effectual without it, and his life approved by the worst of his enemies; why should his friends, while he keeps the law, dishonour God by breaking of the same? 'Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge' (James 4:11). He that is judged, must needs fail somewhere in the apprehension of him that judgeth him, else why is he judged. But he must fail in substance, for then he is worthy to be judged (1 Cor 5:12). His failure is then in a circumstance, for which he ought not to be judged.

Object. But notwithstanding all that you have said, water baptism ought to go before the church-membership; shew me one in all the New Testament, that was received into fellowship without it.

Ans. 1. That water baptism hath formerly gone first is granted: but that it ought of necessity so to do, I never saw proof. 2. None ever received it without light going before, unless they did play the hypocrite: and besides no marvel though in the primitive times it was

so generally practised first, for the unconverted themselves know, it belonged to the disciples of Jesus Christ (John 1:24-27). Yet that all that were received into fellowship were even then baptized first, would strain a weak man's wit to prove it, if arguments were closely made upon these three texts of holy scripture (1 Cor 1:14-16; Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3). But I pass them, and say, If you can shew me the Christian, that in the primitive times remained dark about it, I will shew you the Christian that was received without it. But should I grant more than can be proved, viz. That baptism was the initiating ordinance; and that it once did, as circumcision of old, give a being of membership to the partakers; yea set the case that men were forbidden then to enter into fellowship without it: yet the case may so be, that these things notwithstanding, men might be received into fellowship without it. All these things intailed to circumcision; that was the initiating ordinance; that gave being of membership; that was it without which it was positively commanded none should be received into fellowship (Josh 5). Yet for all this more than six hundred thousand were received into the church without it, yea received, and also retained there, and that by Moses and Joshua, even those to whom the land was promised,

when the uncircumcised were cut off. But why then were they not circumcised? Doubtless there was a reason; either they wanted time, or opportunity, or instruments, or something. But they could not render a bigger reason than this, I have no light therein: which is the cause at this day that many a faithful man denieth to take up the ordinance of baptism: but I say whatever the hindrance was, it mattereth not; our brethren have a manifest one, an invincible one, one that all the men on earth, nor angels in heaven can remove: For it is God that createth light; and for them to do it without light would but prove them unfaithful to themselves, and make them sinners against God; 'For whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin' (Rom 14:23). If therefore Moses and Joshua thought fit to communicate with six hundred thousand uncircumcised persons; when by the law not one such ought to have been received among them; why may not I have communion, the closest communion with visible saints as afore described, although they want light in, and so cannot submit to that, which of God was never made the wall of division betwixt us. I shall therefore hold communion with such.

First, Because the true visible saint hath already [been] subjected to that which is better; even to the righteousness of God, which is by

faith of Jesus Christ; by which he stands just before God; he also hath made the most exact and strict rule under heaven, that whereby he squares his life before men. He hath like precious faith with the best of saints, and a conversation according to light received, becoming the gospel of Christ. He is therefore to be received, received I say, not by THY light, not for that in circumstances he jumpeth with thy opinion; but according to his own faith which he ought to keep to himself before God. 'Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other; for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience' (1 Cor 10:29). Some indeed do object, that what the apostles wrote, they wrote to gathered churches, and so to such as were baptized. And therefore the arguments that are in the epistles about things circumstantial, respect not the case in hand. But I will tell such, that as to the first part of their objection, they are utterly under a mistake. The first to the Corinthians, the epistle of James, both them of Peter, and the first epistle of John, were expressly written to all the godly, as well as particular churches. Again; if water baptism, as the circumstances with which the churches were pestered of old, trouble their peace, wound the consciences of the godly, dismember and break their

fellowship; it is, although an ordinance, for the present to be prudently shunned; for the edification of the church, as I shall shew anon, is to be preferred before it.

Second, and observe it; 'One Spirit, - one hope, - one Lord, one faith, one baptism [not of water, for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body] one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all' (Eph 4:1-6). This is a sufficient rule for us to hold communion by, and also to endeavour the maintaining that communion, and to keep it in unity, within the bond of peace against all attempts whatsoever (1 Cor 12:16).

Third, I am bold therefore to have communion with such (Heb 6:1,2). Because they also have the doctrine of baptism: I say the doctrine of them. For here you must note, I distinguish between the doctrine and practice of water baptism; The doctrine being that which by the outward sign is presented to us, or which by the outward circumstance of the act is preached to the believer: viz. THE DEATH OF CHRIST; MY DEATH WITH CHRIST; also his resurrection from the dead, and mine with him to newness of life. This is the doctrine which baptism preacheth, or that which by the outward action is signified to the believing receiver. Now I say, he that believeth

in Jesus Christ hath richer and better than that [of baptism in water], viz. is dead to sin, and that lives to God by him, he hath the HEART, POWER and DOCTRINE of baptism: all then that he wanteth, is but the sign, the shadow, or the outward circumstances thereof. Nor yet is THAT despised but forborne for want of light. The best of baptisms he hath; he is baptized by that one Spirit; he hath the heart of water baptism, he wanteth only the outward shew, which if he had would not prove him a truly visible saint; it would not tell me he had grace in his heart. It is no characteristical note to another, of my sonship with God. Indeed it is a sign to the person baptized, and an help to his own faith. He should know by that circumstance, that he hath received remission of sins; if his faith be as true, as his being baptized is felt by him. But if for want of light, he partake not of that sign, his faith can see it in other things, exceeding great and precious promises. Yea, as I also have hinted already, if he appear not a brother before, he appeareth not a brother by that: And those that shall content themselves to make that the note of visible church-membership; I doubt make things not much better, the note of their sonship with God.

Fourth, I am bold to hold communion with

visible saints as afore [described]; because God hath communion with them; whose examples in the case, we are straitly commanded to follow. 'Receive ye one another as Christ also received us [saith Paul,] to the glory of God' (Rom 15:1-7). Yea, though they be saints of opinions contrary to you; though it goeth against the mind of them that are strong. 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves' (Rom 15:1).¹⁵ What infirmities? Those that are natural are incident to all, they are infirmities then that are sinful, that cause a man, for want of light, to err in circumstantialia; And the reason upon which he grounds this admonition is, that 'Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me.' You say, to have communion with such weak brethren, reproacheth your opinions, and practice. Grant it, your dulness and deadness, and imperfections also reproach the holiness of

¹⁵ One of the most touching scenes in the *Pilgrim's Progress* beautifully illustrates this fact. When Christian led Hopeful into Bye-path Meadow, so that they fell into the hands of Giant Despair, Hopeful says, 'I wold have spoke plainer, but that you are older than I.' That whole scene manifests the most delicate sensibility and christian feeling.—Ed.

God; if you say no, for Christ hath borne our sins; the answer is still the same, Their sins also are fallen upon Christ; he then that hath taken away thy sins from before the throne of God; hath taken away their shortness in conformity to an outward circumstance in religion. Both your infirmities are fallen upon Christ; yea, if notwithstanding thy great sins, thou standest by Christ complete before the throne of God; why may not thy brother, notwithstanding his little ones, stand complete before thee in the church.

Vain man! think not by the straitness of thine order, in outward and bodily conformity, to outward and shadowish circumstances, that thy peace is maintained with God, for peace with God is by faith in the blood of his cross; who hath borne the reproaches of you both. Wherefore he that hath communion with God for Christ's sake, is as good and as worthy of the communion of saints as thyself. He erreth in A CIRCUMSTANCE, thou errest in A SUBSTANCE; who must bear these errors? Upon whom must these reproaches fall? (Phil 1:10). Some of the things of God that are excellent, have not been approved by some of the saints: What then? must these for this be cast out of the church? No, these reproaches by which the wisdom of heaven is reproached

have fallen upon me, saith Christ. But to return; GOD HATH RECEIVED HIM, Christ hath received him, therefore do you receive him. There is more solidity in this argument, than if all the churches of God had received him. This receiving then, because it is set as an example to the church, is such as must needs be visible to them; and is best described by that word which discovereth the visible saint. Whoso, therefore, you can by the word, judge a visible saint, one that walketh with God; you may judge by the selfsame word that God hath received him. Now him that God receiveth and holdeth communion with, him you should receive and hold communion with. Will any say we cannot believe that God hath received any but such as are baptized [in water]? I will not suppose a brother so stupefied; and therefore to that I will not answer.

Receive him 'TO THE GLORY OF GOD.' To the glory of God, is put in on purpose, to show what dishonour they bring to God, who despise to have communion with them; who yet they know have communion with God. For how doth this man, or that church, glorify God, or count the wisdom and holiness of heaven beyond them, when they refuse communion with them, concerning whom, they are by the word convinced, that they have communion

with God. 'Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus' (Rom 15:5). By this word patience, Paul insinuateth how many imperfections, the choicest Christians do mingle their best performances with. And by this of consolation, how readily God overlooks, passeth by them, and comforteth you notwithstanding. Now that this mind should be in Christians one to another, is manifest; because Paul prays that it might be so. But this is an heavenly gift, and therefore must be fetched from thence. But let the patience of God, and the willingness of Christ, to bear the reproaches of the weak; and the consolations that they have in God, notwithstanding, moderate your passions, and put you upon prayer, to be minded like Jesus Christ.

Fifth, Because a failure in such a circumstance as water, doth not unchristian us. This must needs be granted, not only from what was said before; but for that thousands of thousands that could not consent thereto as we have, more gloriously than we are like to do, acquitted themselves and their christianity before men, and are now with the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. What is said of eating, or the

contrary, may as to this be said of water baptism. Neither if I be baptized, am I the better, neither if I be not, am I the worse: not the better before God: not the worse before men: still meaning as Paul doth, provided I walk according to my light with God: otherwise it is false; for if a man that seeth it to be his duty shall despisingly neglect it; or if he that hath no faith therein shall foolishly take it up; both these are for this the worse, being convicted in themselves for transgressors. He therefore that doth it according to his light, doth well, and he that doth it not, or dare not do it for want of light, doth not ill; for he approveth his heart to be sincere with God; he dare not do any thing but by light in the word. If therefore he be not by grace a partaker of light, in that circumstance which thou professest; yet he is a partaker of that liberty and mercy by which thou standest. He hath liberty to call God father, as thou: and to believe he shall be saved by Jesus: his faith, as thine, hath purified his heart: he is tender of the glory of God as thou art: and can claim by grace an interest in heaven; which thou must not do because of water: ye are both then Christians before God and men without it: he that can, let him preach to himself by that: he that cannot, let him preach to himself by the

promises; but yet let us rejoice in God together: let us exalt his name together. Indeed the baptized can thank God for that, for which another cannot; but may not he that is unbaptized thank God for that which the baptized cannot? Wouldest thou be content that I should judge thee, because thou canst not for my light give thanks with me? why then should he judge me, for that I cannot give thanks with him for his? 'Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way' (Rom 14:13). And seeing the things wherein we exceed each other, are such as neither make nor mar Christianity; let us love one another and walk together by that glorious rule above specified, leaving each other in all such circumstances to our own master, to our own faith. 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand' (Rom 14:4).

Sixth, I am therefore for holding communion thus, because the edification of souls in the faith and holiness of the gospel, is of greater concernment than an agreement in

outward things;¹⁶ I say, it is of greater concernment with us, and of far more profit to our brother; than our agreeing in, or contesting for the business of water baptism (John 16:13; 1 Cor 14:26; 2 Cor 10:8, 12:19; Eph 4:12; 2 Tim 3:17; 1 Cor 8:1, 13:1-4). That the edification of the soul, is of the greatest concern, is out of measure evident because heaven and eternal happiness are so immediately concerned therein. Besides, this is that for which Christ died, for which the Holy Ghost was given, yea for which the scriptures and the gifts of all the godly are given to the church; yea, and if gifts are not bent to this very work, the persons are said to be proud or uncharitable that have them; and stand but for cyphers or worse among the churches of God. Farther, edification is that that cherisheth all grace, and maketh the Christians quick and lively, and maketh sin lean and dwindling, and filleth the mouth with thanksgiving to God.

¹⁶ How strange that *pious* men should have been prone to punish their *fellows* for non-conformity in an outward sign. They themselves were suffering inconceivable miseries under acts of uniformity in rites and ceremonies. How applicable to the framers of such acts of parliament are our Lord's words, 'Woe unto you, pharisees, who whiten and garnish the outside of a sepulchre, while within it is full of uncleanness, hypocrisy, and iniquity' (Matt 23).—Ed.

But to contest with gracious men, with men that walk with God; to shut such out of the churches; because they will not sin against their souls, rendereth thee uncharitable (Rom 14:15,20). Thou seekest to destroy the word of God; thou begetteth contentions, janglings, murmurings, and evil surmisings, thou ministerest occasion for whisperings, backbitings, slanders and the like, rather than godly edifying; contrary to the whole current of the scriptures and peace of all communities. Let us therefore leave off these contentions, ‘and follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another’ (Rom 14:19). And know that the edification of the church of God dependeth not upon, neither is tied to this or that circumstance. Especially when there are in the hearts of the godly, different persuasions about it; then it becometh them in the wisdom of God, to take more care for their peace and unity; than to widen or make large their uncomfortable differences.

Although Aaron transgressed the law, because he ate not the sin-offering of the people; yet seeing he could not do it with satisfaction to his own conscience, Moses was content that he left it undone (Lev 10:16-20). Joshua was so zealous against Eldad and Medad,

for prophesying in the camp, without first going to the Lord to the door of the tabernacle, as they were commanded, that he desired Moses to forbid them (Num 11:27,28). But Moses calls his zeal envy, and prays to God for more such prophets; knowing that although they failed in a circumstance, they were right in that which was better. The edification of the people in the camp was that which pleased Moses.

In Hezekiah's time, though the people came to the passover in an undue manner, and 'did eat it otherwise than it was written'; yet the wise king would not forbid them, but rather admitted it, knowing that their edification was of greater concern, than to hold them to a circumstance or two (2 Chron 30:13-27). Yea, God himself did like the wisdom of the king, and healed, that is, forgave, the people at the prayer of Hezekiah. And observe it, notwithstanding this disorder, as to circumstances, the feast was kept with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord; yea, there was not the like joy in Jerusalem from the time of Solomon unto that same time. What shall we say, all things must give place to the profit of the people of God. Yea, sometimes laws

themselves, for their outward preservation, much more for godly edifying. When Christ's disciples plucked the ears of corn on the sabbath, no doubt for very hunger, and were rebuked by the Pharisees for it, as for that which was unlawful; how did their Lord succour them? By excusing them, and rebuking their adversaries. 'Have ye not read,' said he, 'what David did when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profaned the sabbath, and are blameless?' (Matt 12:1-5). Why blameless? because they did it in order to the edification of the people. If laws and ordinances of old have been broken, and the breach of them borne with, when yet the observance of outward things was more strictly commanded than now, when the profit and edification of the people came in competition, how much more may not we have communion, church communion, where no law is transgressed thereby.

Seventh, Therefore I am for holding communion thus, because love, which above all things we are commanded to put on, is of

much more worth than to break about baptism; Love is also more discovered when it receiveth for the sake of Christ and grace, than when it refuseth for want of water: and observe it, as I have also said before, this exhortation to love is grounded upon the putting on of the new creature; which new creature hath swallowed up all distinctions, that have before been common among the churches. As I am a Jew, you are a Greek; I am circumcised, you are not: I am free, you are bound. Because Christ was all in all these, 'Put on therefore,' saith he, 'as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering,' that is, with reference to the infirmities of the weak, 'forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye: and above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness' (Col 3:12-14). Which forbearing and forgiving respecteth not only private and personal injuries, but also errors in judgment about inclinations and distinctions tending to divisions, and separating upon the grounds laid down in verse 11 which how little soever they now seem to us, who are beyond them, were strong, and of weight to them who in that day were entangled with them. Some

saints then were not free to preach to any but the Jews: denying the word of life to the Gentiles, and contending with them who preferred it to them: which was a greater error than this of baptism (Acts 11:1-19). But what should we do with such kind of saints? Why love them still, forgive them, bear with them, and maintain church communion with them. Why? because they are new creatures, because they are Christ's: for this swallows up all distinctions. Farther, because they are elect and beloved of God. Divisions and distinctions are of shorter date than election; let not them therefore that are but momentary, and hatched in darkness, break that bond that is from everlasting. It is love, not baptism, that discovereth us to the world to be Christ's disciples. It is love, that is the undoubted character of our interest in, and sonship with God: I mean when we love as saints, and desire communion with others, because they have fellowship one with another, in their fellowship with God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3). And now though the truth and sincerity of our love to God, be then discovered when we keep his commandments, in love to his name; yet we should remember again, that the two head and chief commandments, are faith in Jesus, and love to the brethren (1 John

3:23). So then he that pretendeth to love, and yet seeks not the profit of his brother in chief; he loveth, but they are his own opinions and froward notions (James 4:11; Rom 14:21). ‘Love *is* the fulfilling of the law’; but he fulfils it not who judgeth and setteth at nought his brother; that stumbleth, offendeth, and maketh weak his brother; and all for the sake of a circumstance, that to which he cannot consent, except he sin against his own soul, or Papist like, live by an implicit faith.¹⁷ Love therefore is sometimes more seen and showed, in forbearing to urge and press what we know, than in publishing and imposing. ‘I could not,’ (saith Paul, love would not let me) ‘speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able’ (1 Cor 3:1,2). The apostle considered not only the knowledge that he had in the mysteries of Christ; but the temper, the growth, and strength of the churches, and accordingly kept back, or communicated to them, what might be for their profit (Acts 20:18-20). So Christ, ‘I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye

¹⁷ ‘An implicit faith’; faith in things without inquiry, or in things not expressed.—Ed.

cannot bear them now' (John 16:12). It may be some will count these old and threadbare texts; but such must know, that the word of the Lord must stand for ever (Isa 40:8). And I should dare to say to such, if the best of thy new shifts, be to slight, and abuse old scriptures; it shews thou art more fond of thy unwarrantable opinion, than swift to hear, and ready to yield to the authority that is infallible.

But to conclude this, when we attempt to force our brother beyond his light, or to break his heart with grief; to thrust him beyond his faith, or to bar him from his privilege: how can we say, I love? What shall I say? To have fellowship one with another for the sake of an outward circumstance, or to make that the door to fellowship which God hath not; yea to make that the including, excluding charter; the bounds, bar, and rule of communion; when by the word of the everlasting testament there is no warrant for it; to speak charitably, if it be not for want of love, it is for want of knowledge in the mysteries of the kingdom of Christ. Strange! take two Christians equal in all points but this, nay, let one go beyond the other far, for grace and holiness; yet this circumstance of water shall drown and sweep away all his excellencies, not counting him worthy of that reception, that with hand and heart shall be

given to a novice in religion, because he consents to water.

Eighth. But for God's people to divide into parties, or to shut each other from church communion; though from greater points, and upon higher pretences, than this of water baptism; hath heretofore been counted carnal, and the actors herein babyish Christians. Paul and Apollos, Cephas and Christ, were doubtless higher things than those about which we contend: yet when they made divisions for them; how sharply are they rebuked? Are ye not CARNAL, CARNAL, CARNAL? For whereas there are among you, envyings, strife, divisions, or factions: 'are ye not carnal' (1 Cor 1:11,12, 3:1-4). While one saith, I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? See therefore from whence arise all they endeavours, zeal, and labour, to accomplish divisions among the godly: let Paul or Cephas, or Christ himself, be the burthen of thy song, yet the heart from whence they flow is carnal; and thy actions, discoveries of childishness. But, doubtless when these contentions were among the Corinthians, and one man was vilified, that another might be promoted; a lift with a carnal brother, was thought great wisdom to widen the breach. But why should HE be rebuked, that said he was for Christ?

Because he was for him in opposition to his holy apostles. Hence he saith, 'Is Christ divided,' or separate from his servants? Note therefore that these divisions are deserted by the persons the divisions were made about; neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, nor Christ is here. Let the cry be never so loud, Christ, order, the rule, the command, or the like; carnality is but the bottom, and they are but babes that do it; their zeal is but a puff (1 Cor 4:6). And observe it, the great division at Corinth, was helped forward by water baptism: this the apostle intimates by, 'Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?' Ah, brethren! Carnal Christians with outward circumstances, will, if they be let alone, make sad work in the churches of Christ, against the spiritual growth of the same. But '*I thank God,*' saith Paul, '*that I baptized none of you,*' &c. Not but that it was then an ordinance of God, but they abused it, in making parties thereby. 'I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, - and the household of Stephanus': men of note among the brethren, men of good judgment, and revered by the rest; they can tell you I intended not to make a party to myself thereby. 'Besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.' By this negligent relating, who were baptized by him; he sheweth that he made no

such matter of baptism, as some in these days do; nay, that he made no matter at all thereof, with respect to church communion; for if he did not heed who himself had baptized; he much less heeded, who were baptized by others; but if baptism had been the initiating, or entering ordinance, and so appointed of God; no doubt he had made more conscience thereof, than so lightly to pass it over. 'For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.' The gospel then may be effectually preached, and yet baptism neither administered nor mentioned. The gospel being good tidings to sinners, upon the account of free grace through Christ; but baptism with things of like nature, are duties enjoined such a people who received the gospel before. I speak not this, because I would teach men to break the least of the commandments of God; but to persuade my brethren of the baptized way, not to hold too much thereupon, not to make it an essential of the gospel of Christ, nor yet of communion of saints.

'He sent me not to baptize': these words are spoken with holy indignation against them that abuse this ordinance of Christ. So when he speaketh of the ministers themselves, which also they had abused; in his speaking, he as it were trampleth upon them, as if they were

nothing at all. 'Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos?' 'He that planteth is not any thing, neither is he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase' (1 Cor 3:5,7). Yet for all this, the ministers and their ministry are a glorious appointment of God in the world. Baptism also is a holy ordinance, but when Satan abuseth it, and wrencheth it out of its place; making that which was ordained of God for the edification of believers, the only weapon to break in pieces the love, the unity, the concord of saints; then What is baptism? then neither is baptism anything. And this is no new doctrine; for God by the mouth of his prophets of old, cried out against his own institutions, when abused by his people: 'To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me,' *saith the* LORD: 'I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination to me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with it; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear *them*' (Isa 1:11-14).

And yet all these were his own appointments. But why then did he thus abhor them? Because they retained the evil of their doings, and used them as they did other of his appointments, viz., 'For strife and debate, and to strike with the fist of wickedness' (58:4): Wherefore when that of God that is great, is overweighed by that which is small; it is the wisdom of them that see it, to put load to the other end of the scale; until the things thus abused, poise in their own place. But to pass this and proceed.

Ninth, If we shall reject visible saints by calling saints that have communion with God, that have received the law at the hand of Christ, that are of an holy conversation among men; they desiring to have communion with us, as much as in us lieth, we take from them their very privileges, and the blessings to which they were born of God. For Paul saith not only to the gathered church at Corinth, but to all scattered saints that in every place call upon the name of the Lord; That Jesus Christ is theirs, That Paul, and Apollos, and the world, and life, and death, and all things are theirs, because they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. But saith he, let no man glory in men, such as Paul and Cephas, though these were excellent: because this privilege comes to you upon another bottom, even by faith of Jesus Christ,

‘Drink you all of this,’ is entailed to faith, not baptism: nay, baptized persons may yet be excluded this; when he that discerneth the Lord’s body hath right and privilege to it (1 Cor 11:28,29). But to exclude Christians from church communion and to debar them their heaven-born privileges, for the want of that which yet God never made a wall of division between us.

(1.) This looks too like a spirit of persecution (Job 19:28). (2.) It respecteth more a form, than the spirit and power of godliness (2 Tim 3:5). (3.) This is to make laws, where God hath made none, and to be wise above what is written, contrary to God’s word, and our own principles. (4.) It is a directing of the Spirit of God. (5.) It bindeth all men’s faith and light to mine opinion. (6.) It taketh away the children’s bread. (7.) It withholdeth from them the increase of faith. (8.) It tendeth to harden the hearts of the wicked. (9.) It tendeth to make wicked the hearts of weak Christians. (10.) It setteth open a door to all temptations. (11.) It tempteth the devil to fall upon those that are alone, and have none to help them. (12.) It is the nursery of all vain janglings, back-bitings, and strangeness among the Christians. (13.) It occasioneth the world to reproach us. (14.) It holdeth staggering

consciences, in doubt of the right way of the Lord. (15.) It giveth occasion to many to turn aside to most dangerous heresies. (16.) It abuseth the holy scriptures; It wresteth God's ordinances out of their place. (17.) It is a prop to antichrist. (18.) Shall I add, Is it not that which greatly prevailed to bring down these judgments, which at present we feel and groan under;¹⁸ I will dare to say, it was¹⁹ a cause thereof.

Tenth, and lastly, Bear with one word farther. What greater contempt can be thrown upon the saints than for their brethren to cast them off, or to debar them church communion? Think you not that the world may groundly say, Some great iniquity lies hid in the skirts of your brethren; when in truth the transgression

¹⁸ 'These judgments we feel and groan under.' So frightful were the persecutions of the dissenters by the church in 1670, that the narrative says, 'The town [of Bedford] was so thin of people, and the shops shut down, that it seemed like a place visited with the pest, where usually is written upon the door, "Lord, have mercy upon us."' Had the dissenters been united, the church would not have dared to exercise such barbarities—men and women in jails—some hanged for not going to church—all their goods swept away, and their children perishing.—Ed.

¹⁹ The printer had inserted 'the cause'; Bunyan's manuscript was 'a cause.' See marginal note, in his *Differences in Judgment*.—Ed.

is yet your own? But I say, what can the church do more to the sinners or open profane? Civil commerce you will have with the worst, and what more have you with these? Perhaps you will say we can pray and preach with these; and hold them Christians, saints, and godly. Well, but let me ask you one word farther: Do you believe, that of very conscience they cannot consent, as you, to that of water baptism? And that if they had light therein, they would as willingly do it as you? Why then, as I have shewed you, our refusal to hold communion with them is without a ground from the word of God. But can you commit your soul to their ministry, and join with them in prayer; and yet not count them meet for other gospel privileges? I wold know by what scripture you do it? Perhaps you will say, I commit not my soul to their ministry, only hear them occasionally for trial. If this be all the respect thou hast for them and their ministry, thou mayest have as much for the worst that pisseth against the wall. But if thou canst hear them as God's ministers, and sit under their ministry as God's ordinance; then shew me where God hath such a gospel ministry, as that the persons ministering may not, though desiring it, be admitted with you to the closest communion of saints. But if thou sittest under

their ministry for fleshly politic ends, thou hearest the word like an atheist, and art thyself, while thou judgest thy brother, in the practice of the worst of men. But I say, where do you find this piece-meal communion with men that profess faith and holiness as you, and separation from the world. If you object, that my principles lead me to have communion with all; I answer with all as afore described; if they will have communion with me.

Object. Then you may have communion with the members of antichrist.

Ans. If there be a visible saint yet remaining in that church; let him come to us, and we will have communion with him.

Quest. What, though he yet stand a member of that sinful number, and profess himself one of them.

Ans. You suppose an impossibility; for it cannot be that, at the same time, a man should visibly stand a member of two bodies diametrically opposite one to another. Wherefore it must be supposed, that he who professeth himself a member of a church of Christ, must forthwith, nay before, forsake the antichristian one. The which if he refuseth to do, it is evident he doth not sincerely desire to have fellowship with the saints.

[*Quest.*] But he saith he cannot see that

that company to which you stand opposite, and conclude antichristian, is indeed the antichristian church.

[*Ans.*] If so, he cannot desire to join with another, if he know them to be professedly and directly opposite. I hold therefore to what I said at first; That if there be any saints in the antichristian church, my heart, and the door of our congregation is open to receive them, into closest fellowship with us.

Object. But how if they yet retain some antichristian principles.

Ans. If they be such as eat out the bowels of a church, so soon as they are detected he must either be kept out, while out, or cast out, if in: for it must be the prudence of every community to preserve its own unity with peace and truth: the which the churches of Christ may do; and yet as I have shewed already, receive such persons as differ upon the point of water baptism. For the doing or not doing of that neither maketh nor marreth the bowels or foundation of church communion.

Object. But this is receiving for opinion sake; as before you said of us.

Ans. No; we receive him for the sake of Christ, and grace, and for our mutual edification in the faith; and that we respect not opinions, I mean in lesser matters, 'tis evident;

for things wherein we differ are no breach of communion among us; we let every man have his own faith in such things to himself before God.

I NOW COME TO A SHORT APPLICATION.

I. Keep a strict separation, I pray you, from communion with the open profane; and let not man use his liberty in church relation as an occasion to the flesh; but in love serve one another. 'Looking diligently - lest any root of bitterness - [any poisonous herb (Deut 29:18)] spring up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled' (Heb 12:15). And let those that before were reasons for my separation, be motives to you to maintain the like: and remember that when men have said what they can for a sinful mixture in the worship of God; the arm of the Lord is made bare against it.

II. In the midst of your zeal for the Lord, remember that the visible saint is his; and is privileged in all those spiritual things that you have in the word and live in the practice of, and that he is to partake thereof, according to his light therein. Quarrel not with him about things that are circumstantial; but receive him

in the Lord, as becometh saints: if he will not have communion with you, the neglect is his, not yours. But saith the open profane, why cannot we be reckoned saints also? We have been christened, we go to church, we take the communion.²⁰ Poor people! This will not do; for so long as in life and conversation you appear to be open profane, we cannot, unless we sin, receive you into our fellowship: for by your ungodly lives you shew that you know not Christ; and while you are such by the word, you are reputed but beasts: now then judge yourselves, if it be not a strange community that consisteth of men and beasts: let beasts be with the beasts, you know yourselves do so; you receive not your horse nor your hog to your table, you put them in a room by themselves. Besides I have shewed you before, that for many reasons we cannot have communion with you.

(1.) The church of God must be holy (Lev 11:44, 19:2, 20:7; 1 Peter 1:15,16; Isa 26:2; Psa 118:20; Eze 43:12, 44:9; Isa 52:11).

(2.) The example of the churches of Christ before, hath been a community of visible saints

²⁰ This is a much more extensive evil than many would credit. I have met with these very expressions not only among the poor but the rich. It is an awful delusion.—Ed.

(Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:1; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1-5). Poor carnal man, there are many other reasons urged in this little book, that shew why we cannot have communion with thee: not that we refuse of pride or stoutness, or because we scorn you as men. No, we pity you, and pray to God for you; and could, if you were converted, with joy receive you to fellowship with us: Did you never read in Daniel, That iron is not mixed with miry clay? (2:43). No more can the saints with you, in the worship of God, and fellowship of the gospel, When those you read of in the fourth of Ezra, attempted to join in temple work with the children of the captivity; what said the children of Judah? 'Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel,' &c (Eze 4:3).

I return now to those that are visible saints by calling, that stand at a distance one from another, upon the accounts before specified: Brethren; CLOSE; CLOSE; be one, as the Father in Christ is one.

1. This is the way to convince the world that you are Christ's, and the subjects of one Lord; whereas the contrary makes them doubt it (John 13:34,35, 17:23). 2. This is the way to increase love; that grace so much desired by

some, and so little enjoyed by others (2 Cor 7:15). 3. This is the way to savour and taste the Spirit of God in each other's experience; for which if you find it in truth you cannot but bless, if you be saints, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 1:2-4). 4. This is the way to increase knowledge, or to see more in the word of God: for that may be known by two; that is not seen by one (Isa 52:8). 5. This is the way to remove secret jealousies and murmurings one against the other: yea this is the way to prevent much sin, and greatly to frustrate that design of hell (Prov 6:16-19). 6. This is the way to bring them out of the world into fellowship that now stand off from our gospel privileges, for the sake of our vain janglings. 7. This is the way to make antichrist shake, totter, and tremble (Isa 11:13,14). 8. This is the way to leave Babylon as an habitation for devils only; and to make it a hold for foul spirits, and a cage only for every unclean and hateful bird. 9. This is the way to hasten the work of Christ's kingdom in the world; and to forward his coming to the eternal judgment. 10. And this is the way to obtain much of that, WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT, when you stand before his face. [In the words of Paul] 'I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I

have written a letter unto you in a few words'
(Heb 13:22).

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