

SOME
Serious Reflections
On that Part of
Mr. Bunions
Confession of Faith
TOUCHING
Communion
WITH
Unbaptized Persons
AS ALSO
Several Arguments against the
Practice and Seven Queries
To the Author

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Courteous Reader

Here is presented to thy serious consideration some observations upon a late book initialed **The Confession of Faith of J.B.** wherein that author declareth his faith concerning Church Fellowship and the way of entrance therein endeavoring, after his manner, to prove that men and women that believe in Jesus Christ, although not baptized with water, may be members of any particular Church of Christ and ought to be admitted to the Lord’s supper and all other Church ordinances, a doctrine not known or practiced in the

first Gospel Churches or by any others of what persuasion soever that have professed the Christian Faith since that time to this very age. As for the practice of the Churches in the primitive times, the scripture is in no one thing plainer than in this that all persons before they were added to the Church, were baptized with water which appeareth both by the Commission given by Jesus Christ, Mat 28:19 and the practice of the Apostles, Acts 2:38, 39 which is more at large showed in this treatise. I suppose the author who himself is against the baptizing of children and for the baptizing of believers upon profession of faith in Christ, makes none of the least of his arguments why he is against children's baptism than this, viz. that there being no express precedent, or example in the scriptures for children's baptism, therefore children ought not to be baptized. If this argument be good (as I believe it is) that causeth him to forsake the practice of baptizing children, why should it not be as good at least to him in the case in hand, but to cause in him the same belief that none ought to be admitted to the Lord's supper, but such as are baptized with water seeing there cannot be shown any precept or example in the scriptures that any unbaptized person was ever admitted to the Lord's supper. For the scriptures alleged by him, and some consequences drawn therefrom to the contrary, if they be seriously considered by the reader, they show a great deal of boldness and confidence of his own, but for anything to the matter to prove what they are brought for, but it is very usual for such persons who have not the truth with them to fill their writings with their own confidences that so they may induce a belief in others of the things they assert from their own authority. The severe charges laid by him against those that are contrary minded, if true, would be sufficient to frighten them into his persuasion, but we pass not for man's judgment knowing that he which judgeth us is the Lord who will bring the hidden things of darkness to light. All we plead for is that all that profess themselves to be Christians should walk according to the primitive pattern and in this matter we are sure we follow none other, but the footsteps of the Flock of Christ in all ages.

We would appeal to the conscience of this opposer, whether the arguments published by many for baptizing of children, have not more force in them and of greater antiquity (although in our judgments short of proof) than any other that is written by him to prove the lawfulness of any to receive the Lord's supper that is not first baptized with water. I shall say nothing of the great contempt cast upon water baptism, but desire the Lord may humble him for it. Wisdom is justified of her children.

I desire to honor and reverence those many faithful Christians that differ from us who notwithstanding value this ordinance of Christ, only mistake in the subject and are far from placing religion only in this or any other institution of Christ, but finding the scriptures show no other rule in the order of instituted worship, than upon believing, to be first baptized, then added to the Church. We dare not be wise above what is written.

Communion with all saints, in all things, is a desirable thing and not the least part of that glory which will be forever enjoyed in heaven. And it would be a blessed thing if while Christians differ in their light, the best knowing in but part, it might be made up by an increase of love. This would convince the world they were Christ's disciples indeed, but care must be had in the first place to observe the rules given by our great Lord and to walk according to them and not for communion's sake to leap over the order Jesus Christ hath prescribed in his word. I shall not trouble thee any longer, but commend the consideration of the matter ensuing to thy serious thoughts and the blessing of that God who is able to cause all grace and truth to abound in thy soul.

Thine in the Lord,

W. K.

Sir,

Your **Confession of Faith** I have viewed, and have reviewed this part which respects Church Communion with unbaptized persons. Should all of your rank take occasion to tell the world what they do, and do not believe or practice, it might give them more employment than they can or need to attend. I should little have troubled myself to take notice of the rest of your offers, in your confession, had you not under the head before expressed, showed yourself so bold to assert that which is yet unproved. Neither should I have meddled with the controversy at all had I found any, of parts, that would divert themselves from more

weighty occasions to take notice of you. But since you are so willing to be known in the world by your singular faith, it is my liberty, as well as others', into whose hands it falls to weigh what you have said in truth's balance. And if it be found too light, to reject it whether you will or no. Though I love not controversies, yet truth must not be lost.

Now Sir, for your ten arguments for your practice with the eighteen absurdities drawn from the principle or practice of them that are contrary minded wherein you insult over them as babes foolish, yea, beasts, if not men, as you seem proudly and imperiously to assert. You, by your fixing of these absurdities upon this innocent principle and practice, do not content yourself to degrade all the baptized brethren of this persuasion, but with too much impudence do render them amongst the worst of men meddling with the very secrets of the Most High. Which are so much out of your reach that you have rendered them that oppose your principle to be the cause of the deaths of those hundreds of thousands that have fallen by God's judgments in these late years. This is one of the most prodigious sentences that ever I heard pass from the mouth or fall under the pen of the worst of truth's enemies. As though nothing short in your rage would serve you than to defy all the brethren of the baptized way and blaspheme them that dwell in heaven. I shall orderly touch at these things as I go along.

Baptism Does Not Make Church Members

Your great noise about an initiating ordinance, wherein you spend time enough, I shall take no notice of. I know none that assert it to be the inlet into particular churches, though it prepares them for reception. It is consent on all hands, and nothing else that makes them members of this or that particular church and not faith and baptism.

You are pleased in the general, before you come to your arguments, to call in several scriptures to support your practice which yourself do acknowledge are not direct to the purpose as Acts 9: 25-27; 1 Cor 16:10; 2 Cor 8: 23 which you confess, respects the receiving them as officers. Is there no difference between the receiving of the one and of the other? Must Phoebe's case and others of the like nature be brought in to patronize your practice when there is nothing in them that respects the matter in controversy? Were any of these unbaptized persons? Say it if you dare! Sure it is a bad cause that must be upheld by such foreign and remote shifts. Besides, what need Paul plead for the vindication of himself or others? That he was baptized when yourself acknowledge that baptism immediately after conversion was the known practice of the first Christians which none in those times did so much as question. Therefore no need to plead that, but his conversation in those things about which the false apostles, or other, might unjustly tax him.

Bunion's first Argument: God's Acceptation the only rule by which persons ought to be received.

Paul's Answer.

You start a question, page 70, by what rule persons are to be received. And answer, by a discovery of their faith and holiness and willingness to subject to all Christ's laws. And pray you tell me is the obeying baptism no part of a Christian's holiness? Is baptism none of the laws of Christ, the lawgiver? Must this with others have no place of discovery? But must it altogether be shut out from being a witness to the truth of faith. If it must, let's know by what rule for we shall not take your word, but by holiness I perceive you mean only a walking according to the moral precept which with faith in Christ is sufficient to make a Church member so that I perceive Moses is more beholden to you than Christ, the servant than the son. If Moses' law in his moral precepts be the only bounds of a Christian's holiness or sanctification under the Gospel, for what end then are all those Gospel commands especially in instituted worship, they are in your case of little use to us. Obedience to them doth not add to our holiness, therefore a breach of them, by that rule, must be no part of our sin.

Ignorance Respecting Baptism No Excuse

But you tell us, page 93; none ever received baptism without light in it. I grant it. They never received it aright which is a clear argument that the persons you plead for church fellowship never received it at all, because they could not them have light in it when they were sprinkled and therefore ought to repent and be

ashamed of that abomination before they come to have a sight of the pattern of the house of God, the goings in, and comings out thereof, Eze 43: 10, 11.

Is it a person's light that gives being to a precept? Is it not his sin though he want light? He that knew not his master's will was beaten, because it is like he had means to know it though he was ignorant.

Suppose men plead want of light in other commands. Must they be excused? What if a man want light in the supper after he's in the church, or in church government, and therefore thinks not himself accountable for his conversation to men, but God. Or what if a man wants light in his duty to the poor and thinks it enough to bid his brother be fed and be clothed though he give little for his relief? Perhaps he may give two pence when according to what he hath; he ought to give twelve pence? Why may not want of light excuse these men from being rejected out of churches as well as want of light makes way for unbaptized to come in? But perhaps you will say these are moral evils and they sin against men, well, let it be so, but I remember what old Samuel said to his sons, 1 Sam 2: 25 *if one man sin against another, the judge shall plead for him, but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall plead for him?* But we have now found an Advocate for sin against God, in the breach of one of his holy commands when sin against God that wrongs the poor shall not go free.

You are pleased to tell us that same object, page 86, against your proofs out of the Epistles because they were written to particular Churches. Indeed, I am one of those same to which you answer that some of them, as the first Epistle to Corinth, and some others named, were not so directed, but to particular saints as well as Churches.

I answer I think that will be difficult for you to prove, for it is apparent the matter of those Epistles did respect Churches in special to whom directed (although of use to all saints) as I might easily demonstrate. But sir, pray you tell us in your next whether any of those you mean were unbaptized believers that were concerned in those Epistles. Forasmuch as you confess in those times baptism followed immediately upon conversion. If they were not unbaptized believers, it is without our question, for Paul might write to them as well as Timothy and others that they might know how to behave themselves in the house of God.

Bunions Assert Baptism is Harmful to Church Communion

You also say, page 16, if water baptism as other things pester the Church as of old, trouble the peace, wound the conscience of the godly, dissemble and break their fellowships, though an ordinance, it is prudently to be shunned.

Paul's Answer

I answer it's very boldly offered who gave you liberty to shun truth for peace, but you hint, the church hath of old been pestered with baptism and therefore when it is so, it may prudently be shunned. I confess if ever you find baptism a pest or plague to Churches, all men will shun the plague. Is this the best title you can give to one of Christ's commands? Did God ever send an ordinance as a pest and plague to his people? Are not all the ordinances of the Gospel blessings, yea, new covenant blessings? Is there anything in the nature of innocent baptism to pester churches or do they pester churches that plead for it or they that deny it? But the consciences of the godly, you say, are wounded, the Church's peace broken, their fellowship dismembered and what then? I have in my time known godly men, conscientious persons who dismember fellowships, break the peace of churches, by making preaching method, doctrine, reason and use to be Antichristian. Who could not be satisfied in their consciences as they said unless the great ordinance of thus preaching was exploded and some things like conscience brought in the room. I have known persons make a sacrifice of the peace of churches for putting the administration of breaking bread upon particular persons, by church appointment, and not leaving it promiscuously amongst the gifted brethren as each of them was free and these as exact moralists in their lives and as holy in their conversations as any of your unbaptized persons that you so highly extol above others to be the honor and crown of churches and must the church for peace's sake shun these great appointments of preaching and breaking bread rather than grieve the consciences of these godly ones? Though it was no part of their godliness to make such breaches, neither is it for any of those you plead for to deny baptism however godly they may be in other things. If this is your prudence or wisdom to shake hands with truth and purity for peace, the Lord deliver me from such a fellowship. This wisdom is from beneath and not from above.

Bunions's Second Argument Asserts that Ephesians 4 is Spirit Baptism

Your second argument is taken from Ephesians 4, One Spirit, One Hope, One Faith, One Baptism. This baptism, you say, is not of water, but the Spirit.

Paul's Answer

I answer I see rather than you will miss your end in saying something you care not if your pen be employed against every man and you give the lie to all expositors besides yourself (as I know of) of this be Spirit baptism. Pray you tell me what you mean by Spirit baptism. If you mean the work of the Spirit in conversion, I grant conversion is the Spirit's work, but where conversion barely without extraordinary gifts is called the baptism of the Spirit, I am in readiness to learn. If you cannot teach me, but why must this baptism not be water baptism, if water baptism be a truth, the Spirit leadeth into this truth, as well as others. If Paul intended Spirit baptism in this place, as the last thing he urgeth upon them for union, what doth he mean by Spirit and Faith, which are urged before by him as arguments? Can persons have the Spirit without the fruits of the Spirit? Why doth not Paul put Spirit again in the place of baptism according to your sense who are pleased to make him speaking one and the same thing in his first and last arguments, though the one he calls Spirit and the other Baptism?

Sir, I list not to contend about this, but leave you to answer those expositors that have in all their writings made this water baptism. Farther, if nothing but extraordinary gifts be called the baptism of the Spirit, in a strict sense, then that baptism, 1 Cor 12 must be water baptism, as well as this in Ephesians 4 and then your argument from both is void.

Bunions's Third Argument Distinguishes between Doctrine and Practice

With Paul's Answer.

Your third argument is that these you plead for have the doctrine of baptisms in which you are pleased to distinguish between the doctrine and the practice. This is one of the strangest paradoxes that I have lightly observed. It is enough to hold practical doctrines, to know them so as to hold them and yet not to do them? You need never ask a believer whether he hold a practical doctrine, his obedience to it will always speak for him. But I pray you how came these unbaptized persons to have the doctrine of baptism? Why? The doctrine of baptism, you say, is the death of Christ, his resurrection and the believers' interest in both to newness of life. I confess the Christ's death and resurrection, and our interest in both, is signified by baptism, but that that was, or ought to be called the doctrine of baptism, I am yet to learn. Verily, I took the doctrine of baptism to be the command that a believer ought to be baptized in Christ's name for such ends, which the Gospel expresses. I never took the death of Christ, nor the resurrection, to be the doctrine of baptism. If the resurrection be the doctrine of baptism, why doth the Apostle make that and the doctrine of baptisms distinct in Hebrews 6, which you quote?

Under the law, all the sacrifices of that dispensation with their Sabbaths and other things were types of that Christ who was the substance of all those ceremonies. If any of them then that professed faith in the messiah to come should upon scruples or want of pretended light neglect the whole or part of that typical worship, why may not a man say of them as this advocate says of the practice under debate? They had the richer and better sacrifice. They had the substance and body of all the types. So that this principle puts the whole of God's instituted worship, both under the law and Gospel, to the highest uncertainties and it is so indifferently commended to men for their practice that the holiness of good that is in it is by the author so indiscernible that he can hardly fix upon anything to say for it, though enough he hath to say against it. And that is the third thing I would take notice of in this argument.

Bunions Holds Baptism to be a Circumstantial Outward Show

Paul's Answer

Baptism is but a circumstance, as he is pleased often to word it and, page 88, *only outward show*. He may have the heart of water baptism that is never baptized. It is but a form, (an almost nothing). Men are not much better. Is it not enough for you to despise your brethren, but contempt also must be thrown upon this precious truth of Christ? From whom have you authority to nickname any of Christ's precepts? Is this according to the form of sound words? Will you be wise above what is written and call commands circumstances, only mere shows? Do you pretend yourself a minister of the Gospel and dare you thus disparage Gospel truths by such low titles, to discharge men of their obedience to them? Verily sir, whatever you think of yourself, I am confident Christ will not take this well at your hands.

The Requirements of Gospel Baptism

You say these have the doctrine of baptism. If they have it, they understand it. You say it is the death of Christ, his resurrection and their interest in it. But I cannot conceive in the doctrine of baptism there is something else that more properly relates to baptism as a command which it will be hard for you to prove these unbaptized persons have:

1. A right administration;
2. A right subject;
3. The right manner of dipping, and;
4. The right end.

Have these you speak of the doctrine of baptism, as you say, and are strangers to, or enemies to these essentials of Gospel baptism? I think you upon second thoughts you will hardly stand by it.

Who taught you to divide between Christ and his precepts that you word it at such a rate that he that hath the one hath that, which is better & richer than the other? I had thought that he that hath Christ hath an orderly right to all Christ's precepts and that the precepts of Christ are part of the riches, which a believer hath in and by Christ and ought not to be so lightly represented. He that slightly despiseth his birth right of ordinances, or church privileges will be found to be a profane person as Esau in God's account though he thinks it is no sin to make a mean account of them.

Bunion's Fourth Argument: Romans 15 proves receiving without baptism

Your fourth argument is grounded upon Romans 15: 1, 6 *Receive one another to the glory of God.*

Paul's Answer

I answer; firstly, it was Paul's direction to the church at Rome how they ought to carry it towards their brethren church members. And it is no ways likely that this receiving is a receiving one another into church communion, for they were in before, but by reason of those Jewish differences that was amongst them about meats and drinks and days they were apt to grieve and judge one another in those indifferent things and to cast each other out of their hearts having not that Christian respect to each other as they ought by which God was dishonored. Therefore, he exhorts them to receive each other's into their affections, which would be to the glory of God.

That the difference amongst the Romans was about indifferent things that might or might not be done is clear from the 14th chapter. Their difference was not about baptism or any New Testament ordinance, for I have endeavored to prove them before baptized. Therefore, what you urge from hence comes not near the matter in question.

Bunion Asserts God's Receiving Only Necessity to Church Communion, Not Baptism

Secondly, you make God's receiving to be the rule for our receiving which in all case will not hold. God receives men at that very instant in which they receive his Son, before the fruits of their faith appear, but so cannot we. God received the thief upon the cross, but the church ought not to receive him till he had given satisfaction by repentance showing the fruits of it for his sinful by-past life. I doubt not but God may receive infants dying in infancy as the fruit of his electing love, but I suppose you yourself will not yet receive them upon that ground.

Bunion Mocks Strict Gospel Order

Thirdly, you are pleased to go on in page 91 very rhetorically: *Vain man, think not by the straightness of thin order in outward and bodily conformity to outward & shadowish circumstances that thy peace is maintained with God.*

Paul's Answer

First, by vain man, you mean I suppose the brethren of the baptized way that differ from you in this point. Is this the best title you have for them? But,

Secondly, you pinch at the straightness of their order. I never knew straightness in order to be a crime, but rather a praise. Paul rejoiced to behold the order, Col 2:5, as well as the faith of the Collossians though you despise it. But,

Thirdly, you are pleased to say it is outward, bodily conformity to outward and shadowish circumstances.

Sir, is outward and bodily conformity a crime? Ought we not to glorify God with our bodies as well as souls, which are God's? Is not the whole man to be improved in the service of God? But you add in outward and shadowish circumstances. I know you mean baptism, a title that was never given (by any found in the faith) to any New Testament ordinances. But you say our peace is not maintained with hereby, but by the blood of the cross. I know our peace is made for us by the blood of Christ's cross, but is not our peace maintained and kept alive in the way of obedience? Hath your sincere obedience to the Gospel commands no influence upon your conscience in the matter of peace? Or is your peace maintained in the way of disobedience? If it be, I fear it is a false peace. I speak now of peace of conscience.

If you mean by peace with God, that which pacifies God, and is the manifest cause of God's being at peace with us, who amongst us ever told you that our peace in that sense is maintained by baptism? Or dare you say that your faith, or love, or obedience to any precept doth in that sense, either procure, or maintain your peace in the matter of justification? If not, you ought not to pare off any part of Gospel obedience and render it of so little worth when we own the whole of what we all do, is altogether too little to be a peace offering for us.

Bunion's Fifth Argument: Failure in baptism doesn't unchristian men, therefore they should be received without it.

Your fifth argument is that a failure in baptism doth not unchristian men.

Paul's Answer

Who saith it doth? Persons ought to be Christians before they are baptized and once a Christian, and always a Christian, but in pursuit of this argument you are pleased to rank water baptism with eating or not eating. That if a man do it, he is not the better, or neglect it, he is not the worse.

Verily sir, if Gospel precepts must be ranked with Old Testament ceremonies that are abrogated by the death of Christ, I know not upon what account you practice instituted worship now, unless upon the same account as Paul practiced circumcision upon Timothy, or shaving others, not as a command from God, but as a prudential consideration as to others which is below that confession or profession that hitherto you have made about baptism whatever your design may be, either now, or hereafter.

Bunion's Sixth Argument: Saints' edification more important than doctrinal differences

Your sixth argument is edification, which you say is greater than agreement in outward things and contesting for water baptism.

Paul's Answer

Edification is the end of all communion, but all things must be done in order, orderly. Edification as to church fellowship, being a building up, doth suppose the being of a church before they can be thus edified or built up. But pray you, show us a church without baptism, approved of by the New Testament, and then edify them as much as you can. But if by edification be meant private means as private Christians in meeting together, how doth the principle you oppose hinder that? Endeavor to make men as holy as you can that they may be fit for church fellowship, when God shall show them the orderly way to it, we shall never blame you, but you say edification is greater than contesting for water baptism. To which I answer:

I had thought that a preaching and opening baptism might have been reckoned as a part of our edification. And we may be as well edified by rightly knowing and understanding that, as by many other ordinances, especially if it signify so much as you say it doth. But add:

Why may you not as well say that edification is greater than breaking bread, than any part of church rule or government and so at once shout out all instituted worship for something you call edification? Why must water baptism be the BUT that you so constantly shoot at?

How comes contesting for water baptism to be so much against you? Is not the least of truths worth contending for, or what need any to trouble themselves, to contest for water baptism if none of your new church members do not contest against it in principle or practice? Which, if they do, at whose door shall sinful contention be laid, ours or theirs?

As for your instance of Aaron, it was not a constant continued forbearance of that part of God's worship, but a suspending of it for that reason, (and perhaps upon just and legal grounds, though not expressed) which made that zealous man Moses, (who stoned a man for gathering sticks on the Sabbath day and was a spectator of God's judgments on Aaron's sons for their sins) so easily bear with Aaron in that matter. Paul for a seeming low thing did withstand Peter to his face and blamed him. And for Elded and Meded if they did miss it, it was but in a circumstance of place. It appears not there was any positive law broken by it, which is the case under our debate. Howsoever you despicably call baptism circumstance.

Neither doth the case of Hezekiah reach our case. It was indeed their not being prepared for that service which was their sin. And may be too fitly compared to unpreparedness, to the Lord's supper, or other solemn appointments for which we do not cast, nor keep any out of the church, it being no denying either in word or practice, of any positive ordinance which is that we charge your intended church members with.

Bunions's Seventh Argument: All are to received in Christian love

Your seventh argument for communion with unbaptized persons is love.

Paul's Answer

That man that makes affection the rule of his walking rather than judgment; it is no wonder to me if he go out of the way. We can as boldly assert our love to all the godly, though unbaptized, as you. And I think we have not been behind hand to manifest it either in private duties of piety with them, wherein we are agreed, or in works of charity towards them in all their sufferings, according to our utmost ability. But must our love to these indulge them in any act of disobedience? Cannot we love their persons, parts, graces, but we must love their sins and disorders? I rake it to be the highest act of friendship to be faithful to these professors, and to tell them they want this one thing in Gospel order which ought no to be left undone. And I doubt you r favor towards them, in decrying before them one of Christ's commands, as a circumstance, mere show, that that may, or may not be done for which we are neither better nor worse (in your sense) making it no more than eating, or not eating, as men are persuaded. Is this your faithfulness to you r friends that you pretend so much love to? I doubt when it comes to be weighed in God's balance; it will be found no less than flattery for which you will be reprov'd. May I not love a saint as a saint for Christ's sake unless I hold church communion with him, unless I countenance him in a breach of Gospel order? Nay, if a child of God fall into sin, or disorder, without the due sense of his sin, yet I ought to love him though I am forced to deal with him and to withdraw form him, yet I am not to count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother in some respects. And must we be judged to have no love to the persons under debate because we are not willing to suffer them to sit down satisfied with a lie instead of the truth, a false baptism instead of Christ's appointment? If in that matter of Ephraim like, they are joined to an idol, must I not wait till God shows them that abomination and yet love them for what of God we see in them?

Bunions Eighth Argument: The Corinthian Church proves disorder because of baptism

Your eighth argument is from the state of the Church at Corinth who you say are called carnal. For their divisions and shutting each other out of communion for greater points and on higher pretenses than that of water baptism.

Paul's Answer

It is true there was divisions in the Church at Corinth for which they are often called carnal. And their divisions were about greater things than baptism, I grant, for I believe it was not barely their divisions about persons, but the highest fundamental principles opposed by some of the leaders of those factions amongst them as denying the resurrection of the dead, as Paul saith some of them did, Chap. 15. But whereas you say they shut one another out of communion for these things that I find not. (Whatever they might or ought to do, it is certain they were a church in order, planted upon Gospel principles and thought the principles about which they might differ was greater than baptism, is true, but that without much means and due waiting for the fruits of that means, they could not shut them out of communion is as true). And I put it to yourself, if any person should offer communion with you that deny the resurrection, would you receive him? But if any person do after receiving deny that, or other principles, can you immediately shut him out of the church without the use of means and waiting? This seems to me to be their case, which agrees not with the controversy in hand. But you say their divisions were about persons, Paul, Apollo, and Christ. I do grant their division was about persons, their teachers and one was for one and others for another, but I question whether any of them in this division was for Paul, Apollo or Christ, but rather for others in opposition to them who were true ministers. My reason is because Paul tells us that when he had said of himself and Apollo, was a figure, 1 Cor 4:6, not properly, but doth modestly apply the business to himself and others as though their divisions were about them when it was not about them, but others that did oppose them, namely the false apostles, or notional teachers of that church.

Bunions Holds Baptism Caused Divisions

Paul's Answer

Secondly, you tell us the great divisions of Corinth were helped forward by water baptism-a very high charge against this great truth. It is no wonder you lay divisions at our doors when baptism itself must be accused as a make-bate, or a furtherer of divisions amongst the saints. O! Let the heavens blush at the insolency of this man of words that ever Christ should appoint an ordinance so highly detrimental to the peace of saints. But how doth it appear that baptism hath a hand in these divisions? Because Paul imitates they were not baptized in his name-a good argument to provoke to union and to take them off from doting upon those factious leaders amongst them by whom it is like they were most of them baptized, to let them know they were not baptized in the names of men, but of Christ. But wherein lies the force of this man's argument against baptism as to its place, worth or continuance? Why? It is urged from two grounds. First, because Paul knew not that he baptized any but those he names, which argues, *he made not so great a matter of baptism as some do nowadays, for when he would have heeded it better and made more conscience thereof, then so lightly pass it over.* What must the blessed Apostle's conscience be called in question about one of Christ's appointments? And must it be supposed he is so negligent in this matter? And only because he knew not who of the Corinthians he had baptized. Sir, if one should ask you how many you have baptized in the course of your ministry, can you give an account? I think not (unless you have kept a record by you, of the persons, that your works might be heard of to your praise as occasion serves) which I suppose few ministers do, neither did Paul it seems by his own words. I could tell you of a person that is zealous for baptism in the sense that you oppose, and makes conscience of it, as one of Christ's precepts to that degree which you disallow of, and, yet, for those few that he hath baptized, far short of what Paul, or you may have done, and yet he knows not, remembers not, who of the church he walks with that he hath baptized, much less then number or names of them he hath baptized elsewhere and yet but one of the meanest dispensers of baptism who hath had less share in that blessed work, than many others he knows amongst us. That Paul did first gather and plant the Church at Corinth is clear, but that the many that

were added to that populous people might be baptized by the teaching brethren amongst themselves is more probable. And therefore well might Paul say He knew not or did not remember whom he had baptized amongst them.

But your second ground is from Paul's thanking God and telling us he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. Doth this prove that Paul slighted baptism? I think not as will afterwards appear.

That Paul did baptize some of them and many others is not to be questioned, because expressed. That Paul did anything in this or other ordinances, but what he had a commission for, may not be presumed. His meaning then must be that he was not only or mainly sent to baptize, but preach as the great work he was to attend upon. Note. He doth not say he was not sent to preach baptism, but not mainly to baptize. He had the same commission to preach baptism as faith, and he could not be true to his trust if he should shun to declare that part of the council of God as occasion served and required. And yet though he preached faith and baptism, he might baptize but few of them that were persuaded to obedience by his ministry, but the bare dispensing that ordinance might be by any gifted brother called to that work.

Annanias, a certain disciple, baptized Paul (and not an Apostle). Peter commanded Cornelius and those that were with him to be baptized, but the text doth not say Peter did it. It might be done by some of the brethren that came with him. Neither can it reasonably be supposed that the 3000 converted by Peter's sermon, Acts 2, were all baptized by him or the Apostles only, but is very likely they had many administrators which doth not at all entrench upon the great commission of Christ, but is found in it. It being given to preaching disciples as preaching disciples and all preaching disciples have authority from thence to preach and baptize (these being properly no church ordinances) though in order to it.

**Bunions Ninth Argument:
Failure to receive Christians without baptism is
a denial of their birthright privileges**

Your ninth argument is *That by denying communion with unbaptized persons, we take from them their privilege to which they are born.*

Paul's Answer

We take from them nothing, but we keep them from a disorderly practice of Gospel ordinances. We offer them their privilege in the way of the Gospel order as all the scripture saints received their privileges. But if any will find and force another way into the sheepfold, then by following the footsteps of the flocks, we have no such custom, nor the churches of God. You according to your old manner of confidence affirm Drink ye all of this? Is this entailed to faith and not baptism? It is soon said, but never yet proved, it is neither entailed by precept, promise or precedent to faith without baptism that ever yet can be showed. Nay, it is most apparent that this new way of fellowship was not from the beginning, but baptism went before as a symbol of our new birth. And breaking bread followed after as the spiritual nourishment of Christ's newborn babes.

Bunions Asserts that Baptists are the cause of England's woes

Paul's Answer

As for your eighteen inferences or absurdities drawn from our principle and practice, they are in themselves so ridiculous, so top full of ignorance or prejudice and are in themselves such a heap of unheard of reproaches that deserve no other answer than contempt, they carrying their self-contradiction in their own bowels. I must commit this cause to the worst of our enemies and doubt not that they themselves being judges would clear us in the things laid to our charge. That none but yourself could ever find an innocent truth big with so many monstrous absurdities, as you do. You have carried it like one of Machevel's scholars, to purpose, *Throw dirt enough and some of it will be sure to stick.* And the last of all looks with so dreadful a countenance that it hath a tendency to provoke not only all other professors, but all sorts of persons to shun us as well as of principle as that which is ruining to mankind in general that they may upon that account (if such eye us as the most pernicious varmint under heaven, perhaps made to be taken and

destroyed). Can you so confidently affirm that this principle and practice is the cause of all our late judgments? Sir, it is well for us that you are none of the King's chaplains, or if you were, that his Majesty had not an ear to hear, or a heart to believe such unheard of reproaches as these are. For if he did, he could do no less than expulse such vipers that have been then death of so many hundred thousands of his subjects, as your devilish suggestions seem to intimate, not only out of the land, but out of the world.

Sir, who made you so privy to the secrets of God's judgments that you must assign this alone as the cause of (not some but) all the judgments that have befallen us? And is not this high charge a proud, presumptuous, impeaching of the justice of God? Shall not the judge of all the earth do righteously? Gen 19 *Will he slay the innocent with the guilty?* Are there not millions lately swept into the grave and buried in the great depths that never heard directly or indirectly of the controversy between you and us, nor knew nothing of the form or order of God's house? And must their ruin lie at our doors? No wonder sir, that you deal so severely with us since the righteous proceeds of the great God have such a hidden cause assigned to them as though the times profaneness, superstition, blasphemy and atheism hath no hand in our late judgments. But the load of all must be laid upon that which so few that suffered are concerned in. The Lord judge between us and this accuser, to whom we shall say no more.

Bunion's Ten Argument:

All are to be received so the world doesn't wonder at their exclusion

Paul's Answer

Your tenth and last argument hath so little reason and so much of confusion in it that it renders itself unworthy of an answer. *The world may wonder at our carriage to these unbaptized persons in keeping them out of communion* is your last argument.

I grant the world are in some cases judges of our conversation. And it becomes us to carry it well in those things wherein they are capable to be judges, but I deny that the world are proper judges of the grounds of our profession or communion as to church fellowship. These things are out of their sight and they do not oftener judge them that walk closest in their duty than they that are for the greatest liberty. All that then enemy could find against Daniel was in the matters of his God (in the business of worship) which the world are incapable to judge of. And therefore what you say as to their reproaches doth clearly vanish. And if you eye that you may preach and pray, especially baptize no more, which I perceive you have no great zeal for.

I shall now take liberty to add some arguments to justify our principle and practice against all that you have said to the contrary.

Ought Unbaptized Persons be Members of Churches?

The question is Whether unbaptized persons have been or ought to be members of Gospel Churches.

I answer They ought not to be for these reasons:

Reasons Why They Should Not

1. Because of the great commission of Christ, Matt 28, from which all persons have their authority for their ministry (if any), doth clearly direct the contrary by that commission. Ministers are first to disciple and then to baptize them, to make disciples and afterward teach them to observe all that Christ had commanded as to other ordinances of worship. If ministers have no other authority to teach them other parts of Gospel worship before they believe and are baptized, it may be strongly supposed they are not to admit them to other ordinances before they have passed the first enjoined in that commission.
2. That the order of Christ's commission, as well as the matter therein contained to be observed, may easily be concluded from God's severity towards them that sought him not according to due order, 1 Chron 15: 13. Was God so exact with his people then that all things to a pin must be according to the pattern in the Mount, Eze 44:7-16; 9:10 whose worship then comparatively to the Gospel's was but after the law of a carnal commandment and can it be supposed he should be so indifferent how to leave men to their own liberty, to time and place, his appointments contrary to what he hath given an express rule for in his word as before showed, Eze 44: 7-16; 9: 10?

3. The practice of the first Gospel ministers with them that first trusted Christ discovers the truth of what I assert. Certainly, they that lived at the springhead or fountain of truth and had the same from Christ's own mouth knew the meaning of his commission better than we. But their constant practice, in conformity to that commission, all along the Acts of the Apostles clearly discovers that they never arrived to such a latitude as men plead for nowadays. ***They that gladly received his word were baptized and they*** (yea, they only) ***were received to the church***, Acts 2.
4. None of the scripture saints ever attempted this church privilege before baptism. If they did let it be shown. The Eunuch first desired baptism before anything else. Paul was first baptized before he did assay to join with the Church. Our Lord Christ, the great example of the New Testament, entered not upon his public ministry, much less any other Gospel ordinance of worship, till he was baptized.
5. If Christ himself was made manifest as the sent of God by baptism as appears in Mark 1:9, 10. Then why may not baptism as the first-fruit of faith and the first step of Gospel obedience, as to instituted worship, be a manifesting, discovering ordinance upon others who thus follow Christ's steps?
6. If baptism be in any sense any part of the foundation of a Church as to order, Heb 6:1, 2, it must have a place here or nowhere. Why are those things called first principles if not first to be believed and practiced? Why are they rendered by the learned as the A B C of a Christian and the beginnings of Christianity, milk for babes if it be no matter whether baptism be practiced or not? If it be said water baptism be not there intended for them, show me how many baptisms there are besides water baptism. Can you build and leave out a stone in the foundation? I intend not baptism as a foundation any other way but respecting order and it is either intended for that or nothing.
7. If Paul knew that Galatians, upon account of charity, no other way to be the Sons of God by Faith, but by this part of their obedience, as he seems to import, then the same way we may judge of the truth of men's profession of faith when it shows itself by this same obedience, Gal 3:26, 27, baptism being an obligation to all following duties.
8. If being baptized into Christ, had a putting on of Christ as Paul expresses, then they have not put on Christ in that sense he means that are not baptized. If this putting on of Christ do no respect the visibility of Christianity, assign something else as its signification. Great men's servants are known by their masters' liveries, so are Gospel believers by this livery of water baptism. That all that first trusted in Christ submitted to, which is in itself, as much as an obligation to all Gospel obediences as circumcision was to keep the whole law.
9. If it were commendable in them of Thessalonica that they followed the footsteps of the Church of Judah, who it appears, observed this order of adding baptized believers to the church; then they that have found out another way of making church members are not by that rule praise-worthy, but are rather to be blamed. It is not what was since in corrupted times, but that which was from the beginning: the first churches was the purest pattern.
10. If so be that any of the members of Corinth, Galatia, Colos, Rome or them that Peter writes to were not baptized, then Paul's arguments for the resurrection to them, or to press them to holiness from that ground, was out a doors and altogether needless. Nay, it bespeaks his ignorance, and throws contempt upon the Spirit's wisdom by which he wrote, if that must be asserted as a ground to provoke them to such an end which had no being. And if all the members of all those churches were baptized, why should any plead for an exemption from baptism for any church members now?
11. If unbaptized persons must be received into the church only because they are believers though they deny baptism, then why may not others plead for the like privilege that are negligent in any other Gospel ordinance of worship from the same ground of want of light? Let it be what it will? So then, as the consequence of this principle, churches may be made up of visible sinners instead of visible saints.
12. Why should professors have more light in breaking bread than baptism? (This must be so urged for their excuse). Hath God been more sparing in making out his mind in the one rather than the other? Is there more precepts or precedents for the supper than baptism? Hath God been so bountiful in making out himself about the supper that few or none that own ordinances scruple it? And must baptism be such a rock of offense to professors that very few will seriously inquire after it or submit to it? Hath not man's wisdom interposed to darken this part of God's counsel by which professors seem willingly led though against so many plain commands and examples written as with a sun beam that he that turns may read? And must an advocate be entertained to plead for so gross a piece of ignorance that the meanest babes of the first Gospel times were never guilty of?
13. If obedience must discover the truth of a man, faith to others? Why must baptism be shut out as if it were no part of Gospel obedience? Is there no precept for this practice that it must be thus despised as

a matter of little use? Or shall one of Christ's precious commands be blotted out of the copy of a Christian's obedience to make way for a church fellowship of man's devising?

14. If the baptism of John was so far honored and dignified that they that did submit to it are said to justify God and they who did not are said to reject his counsel against themselves so that their receiving or rejecting the whole doctrine of God by John hath its demonstration from this single practice, and is there not as much to be said of the baptism of Christ? Unless you will say it is (words missing) worth and use to that of John's.

I add no more, but these few queries, which I commit to your most serious consideration.

Paul Gives Bunion Some Queries

1. Ask your heart whether popularity and applause of variety of professors be not the bottom of what you have said. That hath been your snare to pervert the straight way of the Lord and to lead others in the path wherein we can find none of the footsteps of the Flocks in the first times.
2. Have you dealt brotherly, or like a Christian, to throw so much dirt upon your brethren in print in the face of the world when you had opportunity to converse with brethren of reputation amongst us before printing being afforded the liberty by them at the same time for you to speak amongst them?
3. Doth your carriage answer the law of love or civility? When the brethren used means to send to you for a conference and their letter was received by you, that you should go out again from the City after knowledge of their desires and not vouchsafe a meeting with them when the glory of God and the vindication of so many Churches is concerned?
4. Is it not the spirit of Diophrites of old in you *Who loved to have pre-eminence* that you are showing as to keep out all the brethren that are not of your mind in this matter from having any entertainment in the churches or meetings to which you belong though you yourself have not been denied the like liberty amongst them that are contrary minded to you?
5. Is there no contempt cast upon the brethren who desire your satisfaction that at the same time when you had opportunity to speak to them, instead of that you committed the matter to others by (missing word) reflection upon them?
6. Did not your presumption prompt you to provoke them to printing in your letter to them when they desired to be found in no such practice least the enemies of truth should take advantage by it?
7. Whether your principle and practice is not equally against others as well as us, viz. Episcopal, Presbyterian and Independent who are of our side for our practice (though they differ with us about the subject of baptism)? Do you delight to have your hand against every man?

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