

# WRITINGS OF BENJAMIN COX

by Benjamin Cox

---

*A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Benjamin Cox, compiled for study and devotional reading.*

8 Chapters

## Table of Contents

1. 01.00 An Affair Reckoning with Mr. Edwards
2. 01.01 Personal Remarks
3. 01.02 Efforts to Purity and Cleanse the Evil Ways
4. 01.03 A MEETING HOUSE OR A PERISH CHURCH
5. 01.04 Postscript
6. S. A Thesis or Position Concerning Lord's Supper
7. S. An Appendix to a Confession of Faith, 1646
8. S. Some Mistaken Scriptures Sincerely Explained

## 01.00 An Affair Reckoning with Mr. Edwards

---

An Affair Reckoning with Mr. Edwards

Or, A True and Sober Answer, to a False Accusation;

Wherein (Among other things) is showed the Unlawfulness of Giving the Name of Church to an House Made of Lime and Stone; And the Name of CHURCHES to Parochial Congregations.

Written by

Benjamin Cox,

Master of Arts, Being One of Them Whom Master Edwards has Abused, Unjustly Calling them Sectaries, Time-Servers, and Innovators, in His Gangraena, or Book of Slanders.

Jeremiah 20:10 I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side: Report, say they, and we will report it.

2 Corinthians 6:4; 2 Corinthians 6:8 In All Things Approving Ourselves as the Ministers of God, By Honor, and Dishonor, by Evil Report, and Good Report, as Deceivers, and Yet True.

London:

Printed by R. White, for Giles Calvert, at the Blackspred-Eagle, Near the West End of Pauls,

1646.

Mr. Edwards,

Although your Book of Slanders, by you entitled Gangraena, has been answered by divers of those whom you have abused, yet in as much as you have endeavored to defame me also in that Book, in two several places, and nothing has been particularly answered thereunto, it seems to be a meet and just thing, that you should hear a word also from me.

I judge it no honor to encounter with such a man as you by your writing appears to be, not caring whom you abuse and slander. Yet remembering what is written in Proverbs 19:25; Proverbs 26:5, I have thought it convenient to give you this ensuing Answer, partly (I confess) lest in the apprehension of some, my silence should argue a guiltiness of what whereof you accuse me, but principally (if my heard deceive me not) because I perceive that your drift in slandering me, is to disgrace the way of God in which I endeavor to walk. And observing the continuance and increase of the evil of your heart, and way, which has appeared abundantly, not only by your reprinting of your Gangraena, but also by your adding more thereunto, and discerning also some to be so foolish as to magnify your folly, and you therein, (though impartial Readers do show their loathing thereof, and the wiser sort of your friends are ashamed of it), I have resolved no longer to defer the publishing of this my Answer, and do now send it forth to the view of the world, committing it to the censure of every discreet and indifferent Reader.

<http://www.reformedreader.org/rbb/coxe/affairreckoning.htm>

## 01.01 Personal Remarks

---

**Chapter I Personal Remarks** The first place in which I find you naming me is in page 75 of the first edition of the first part of your *Gangraena*. There you have these words: "The full relation of the Time-serving, and Innovations of Den, Cox, Ellis of Colchester, Dr. Holms, Saltmarsh, Cummius, Wale of Norfolk, cum multis aliis, would make a new Book."

Seilicet, You could easily fill a new Book, as you have done this, with false and slanderous accusations of such Time-Serving and innovations, as we are as truly guilty of as Naboth was of Blasphemy. No wonder that you were so free in your promise to write books so frequently, being so stored with matter.

**Many Former Bishops Turned Presbyterians** The next and last place in which I find you mentioning me, is in pages 95 and 96, of the same Book, where your words are these: "One Mr. Cox, who came out of Devonshire, &c."

What is the reason of this alteration? Before it was Den, Cox, Ellis, &c. Now, One Mr. Cox, &c. It seems at last that you remembered that I had sometimes been a man of your own coast; a Reverend Bishop, whom you and some others have now metamorphosed into a Presbyter, having laid his hand on my head as well as yours, and therefore now it is Mr. Cox. If I could handsomely claw you, following the example of the Epistles that you have printed, calling you, Good Mr. EDWARDS, Worthy Sir, Reverend Sir, &c. it were then probable that I should still be Mr. Cox, at every word. But as I account it no dishonor to be degraded or slighted by your Pen, so neither do I account it any honor to have from you any title implying respect, it being so familiar with you to contemn them that fear God, and to honor vile persons.

You add: "An Innovator, and great Time-Server in the Bishops' time." Here you speak of me as truly, and as charitably, as Tertullus spoke of Paul, when he said of him, "We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a Ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes," Acts 24:5. Touching your numbering me here among those whom you are pleased to call Sectaries, (for so you do) you are no more able to prove me a Sectary, then Tertullus was able to prove Paul to be the ringleader of a sect. My true and direct answer hereunto shall not be much unlike to Paul's, in Acts 25:14, "After the way which they call Heresy (or Sect) so worship I the God of Israel, believing all things that are written in the Scriptures." Touching Innovations, I shall hear more from you, and you from me, by and by. **No Time-Serving Stood Alone Against Profane Sports on the Lord's Day**

Touching my Time-Serving, it partly appeared when I lived in London, in the year 1618, when that base and licentious Pamphlet, that proclaimed liberty for profane sports on the Lord's Day, came forth in King James' name, then (according as my conscience directed me) both in the public Meeting-House of great Alballows, where I was then Lecturer, and also at Paul's cross, I did in my public Preaching openly and earnestly reprove and condemn, as profane and hateful, those things to which liberty and commendation was given in that Pamphlet. So that it was admired at, that the

Persecutions of those times did not then violently seize upon me.

#### Reproves Scandalous Ministers and Ungodly Society

Afterwards when I was Lecturer at Barstaple, (which was the first place in Devonshire that I lived in) my time-serving farther appeared by my open and sharp reproving of my Fellow-Ministers (as we then called one another) for their scandalous life, their not Preaching, and their preaching loose and false doctrine. Whereby I incurred the hatred of the Profane and Prelatical crew. That hatred appeared also by my reproving and condemning of their Doctrine, who hold bare Reading to be that Preaching which is required of a Minister, and by my justifying that Reproof, when I was questioned for it, and by my renewing and confirming of the same in a public Sermon, when a Recantion was required and expected. It appeared also by my bold declaring of the intolerable baseness of Stage-Players, (though then going about with the King's license) and my sharp reproving of the Magistrates for suffering them, and of others for seeing their Plays, and countenancing them, whereby I exceeding angered the profane Gentry in the adjacent parts of the country, and the profane ones in the Town, both Magistrates and others. For which also I was convented before Bishop Carey, but never yielded to any acknowledgment of any fault herein, or any relinquishing of my opposing of that baseness. It like appeared by my open reproving of the Magistrates, for their suffering Whoredom, Adultery, Drunkenness and Profane Swearing to so much unpunished, and by my continual standing up for Godly persons and their ways which did then lie under the contempt and reproach of the world.

These things were not done in a corner, neither can they be denied by my very enemies, which knew me at that time.

Leaves Barstaple At my going off from Barstaple, I showed my Time-Serving, and Self-Seeking, by my leaving of that place, for another of less profit and less honor in the eye of the world, which was a place near Credition in the same Country of Devon, where I remained till my conscience would not permit me to possess any such place nay longer. To that place I then conceived myself to be called, not by the call of so many Pounds per annum, but by the desire and necessity of the people there.

#### Preaching Against Arminianism

There my Temporizing did in like manner appear, by my preaching constantly against the Arminian errors, notwithstanding the King's Directions to the contrary, and against the profanation of the Lord's Day, notwithstanding King Charles' reviving of the base Pamphlet aforespoken of, (which Pamphlet the Ministers about me did publicly read, yet I neither read it myself, neither was it read by any other for me).

Against Alter-Worship My Temporizing was further seen by my preaching against Altar-Worship, and against divers other evils which that time did favor, which my soul did (and still does) abhor.

#### Episcopal Prelacy a Human Thing

There in my latter time, my Temporizing did more fully appear by my preaching, that Episcopal Prelacy was a human thing, and by my giving to Bishop Hall a true and full copy of that Sermon, when I was questioned for it, and owning the same not only before him, but also before the Arch-Prelate of Canterbury, and coming off from that business with such an Explication of my self,

as had not in any Recantation or Retracting of any one sentence that I had before delivered, and was immediately followed (in the same Sermon) with a sharp reproof of those Arminian tenets that were then defended, and divers evils which were then countenanced. All this was before this present Parliament.

#### God Gives More Light Against Anglican Practices and Preaches A Holy or Closed Communion

Presently after this followed (as God gave in more light) my casting away, and preaching against the Ceremonies, laying aside the Service Book, and refusing to admit the mix multitude to Communion. At the last, the leaving of my place, because I could not keep it with a quite conscience. And now, Mr. Edwards I freely confess that I cannot object unto you any such time serving. For myself, If I am become a fool in glorying, you have compelled me.

Evils of Old Conformity But this I freely confess, not so much to you, as to the people of God, into whose hands these lines shall come, that as though ignorance for a long time I swallowed (as well as others) the Bishop's Ordinations, and Licenses, and the Service-Book and old conformity, as you call it. So in part of that time, the expectation of a High-Commission suit, that I was threatened with, did make me for a season, through my weakness at that time, so exact in that Conformity, that I cannot now think of it without being ashamed. Yes, and touching bowing at the name of Jesus, I did for a while submit to that also, then seeing no more sin therein, then in the rest of that old conformity. But I still reprov'd those that urg'd it as a duty from Scripture, and I never press'd any to it. As soon as the Lord showed me the evil of it, I did not only forebear it, but also preach against it in the same place where I had practiced it, preferring the glory of God before my own credit among men. Thus I am, and will be fare, not only from denying nay thing that is true, but also from justifying my self in any thing wherein I can see that I have failed. But truly when I now consider how far I was then from a good way, wherein I thought I had been right, I acknowledge it to be the wonderful goodness of God unto me, that I did not then run much farther, and offend more grievously then I did.

## 01.02 Efforts to Purity and Cleanse the Evil Ways

---

### Chapter II Efforts to Purity and Cleanse the Evil Ways

It follows in your book, That against the will of the Bishop of Excester, Doctor Hall, in his Diocesan, brought in innovations into his Parish Church. This is as true as the rest of your slanders. The things which I did in my Meeting House, which you call my Parish Church, which in likelihood the Bishop might not approve of, were these:

1. I constantly refused to read the Lessons appointed in the Service-Book, that were any part of the Apocrypha, and read only the Canonical Scripture and did ordinarily read the Scriptures in order, not taking here one Chapter, and there another, according to the direction of the Service Book.
2. I usually expounded, sometimes more largely, and sometimes more briefly the Chapters that I read, specially in my later time, wherein I seldom read any part of the Scripture without expounding it.
3. When I read the Psalms, and other parts of Scripture that were corruptly translated in the Service-Book, I used not that corrupt translation, but the best translation (as I conceived) that was extant.
4. I refused to use the corrupt Metaphrase of the Psalms, that was annexed to the Service-Book, and not then seeing the unlawfulness of that way of singing, I used sometimes King James's Metaphrase, yet not without some corrections, sometimes (in the use of some Psalms) a Metaphrase of mine own, and sometimes Mr. Rowse's Metaphrase when it was come forth.
5. I preached weekly lecture in my Public Meeting-House, without asking any leave of the Bishop to do so.
6. I did sometimes there keep public Fasts without any leave either from the Bishop, or any other man.
7. I refused (as the last) to read or use the Fast-Books sent about by the Prelates and when a public Fast was appointed by the King's Proclamation, I did not stay (as others did) for leave or order from the Bishop to observe it.

If I brought in any Innovations against the Bishop's will, it must be some of these things, or some such like. But I suppose, neither you, nor your informers will now object unto me any such thing as an offensive Innovation. Though it be probable that Bishop Hall did not like some of these things, or would not have seemed to have liked them, if he had taken notice of them, yet (that I may do him no wrong) he never gave me any reproof for any of these things, nor for any thing else, so far as I remember, saving only for preaching, that Prelatical Episcopacy was a Human tradition, whereat indeed he was exceedingly displeased. How far he was from disliking me, as one bringing in Innovations against his will, he did manifest, partly by settling me in the Lecture at Tiverton,

which act of his he never recalled, but I continued enjoying the liberty of preaching that Lecture, till I myself (finding it a burden to me) did voluntary give it over, partly also by appointing me to preach at the Assize in Excester, immediately upon his receiving a strict order from authority to be very circumspect in his choice of me for that service. Partly also by his ready and earnest applying himself to free me out of trouble, when I had been vehemently prosecuted by his Chancellor Doctor Parrie, and began to be used in the High Commission by one Mr. John Weeks, for excepting against the said Mr. Week as an unfit person to be Clerk of the Convocation, though Bishop Hall himself had commended him to our choice for that place. Yea, when in his haste he had exposed me to no small danger (as he afterwards apprehended) by sending my Sermon to the Archbishop, in which I had declared his Episcopacy to be a Human Ordinance, and I had taken my journey towards London to answer that matter, he, himself, sent after me, such letters of commendation, and of earnest request in my behalf, as he thought would be most prevalent for my peace. Although he can neither be ignorant nor insensible of my utter disliking, and earnest opposing of that way which he has both walked in, and pleased for, yet I am so far persuaded of his respect to his conscience, credit, and honor, as that I dare refer this matter to his testimony, viz., whether this assertion of yours: That I brought in innovations into my Parish-Church, against the will of Dr. Hall my Diocesan, be not (as I affirm it to be) a mere calumniation.

Mr. Edwards and His Reporters are Liars and Slanderers But you have (as you pretend) your informers, that must then take this off from you, and bear it upon their own shoulders. For this you have provided in this Parenthesis, (as some godly people that came out of those parts, have informed me.) But why, I pray you, are the names of these Godly Informers concealed? Is it because if you should name any Godly man as the givers of such information, they would clear themselves, and declare you to be a liar? Or is it because your Informers, by you falsely called Godly, being conscious to themselves of their false dealing, have given you order to conceal their names, lest they should be discovered to have dealt dishonestly? Deal plainly, Mr. Edwards, and if they cannot reprove you as a false reporter, I shall prove them to be slanderers. No True and Just Charge Against Mr. Cox But now some reader may now enquire in his thoughts, was there not something from which some mighty possibly (though not justly) take occasion to raise some such report? My true answer is this, When the Jews cried out against Paul, that he had brought Greeks into the Temple, and had polluted that holy place, Acts 21:28, there was something from which they took occasion to raise that clamor, For they had been before with him in the City, Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into that Temple, Acts 21:29. So I suppose the case here stands with me in respect of two things.

Moved the So-Called Communion Table

First in respect of the Communion Table (as men commonly call it) placed North and South, not East and West. Touching which, this is the true state of the business.

1. The Table was so placed on before there was any word spoken (that I heard of) of turning Tables into Altars, otherwise I should have given no consent to the placing of it in that manner. It stood so a long time before there was any offence taken by any (that I did ever hear of) at the standing of it in that sort.

2. It was so placed merely for convenience, the Chancel being very short, yea, shorter (as I remember) then the Table it self, and yet of a sufficient breadth.

3. The Table was not placed Altar-Wise, in as much as there was a fear between it and the East end of the Chancel, where people did ordinarily sit, and at the time of the Communion, that seat was made use of by the Communicants.

4. While the Table stood in that manner, I was so far in the favor of the Bishop, and had such frequent and familiar access unto him, as that if I had therein done any thing against his mind, that he had known and taken notice of, he would lovingly have told me of it. But he never so much as intimated the least dislike of ought that I did in this thing.

5. All this time there was no Altar-Worship, or bowing towards the Table there used. For as I always showed a detestation of that thing, so the people there did not use it, not in the last measure.

6. When I understood that some at last took offence at that standing of the Table, and put an ill construction upon it, though they were only strangers that did so, yet to remove the occasion of the offence, I caused that Table to be taken away, and a square Table to be set in the room of it.

#### Secondly Reading From The Table

Secondly, in respect of my reading some part of the Service sometime at that Table, touching this, my true Apology is as follows:

1. This thing also was done without any Altar-Worship, and without any looking upon one place as more holy than another, either by me, or by the people.

2. The meeting-house was so square, and the Chancel so short, that the whole congregation could hear me there, as well as in any other place.

3. Even this also was a part of the Old Conformity, as you call it, the Service-Book then Authorized by Parliament (as was then conceived) requiring this as well as any other Conformity.

4. The occasion of my so doing, was the trouble and censure in the High-Commission Court, of one Doctor Down, for his Non-Conformity, this being a part of his Non-Conformity that he was so troubled for, viz. his not reading the second Service (as they called it) at the Communion-Table. This wrought upon me, I being then in expectation of a High-Commission Suit, and knowing my self to be extremely maligned by the malignant crew.

5. I was so far from doing this against the Bishop's will, that I first advised with him before I did it, and he understanding the fashion of my Meeting-House, did advise me to do it for my safety. Yet do I now not justify myself in this action, for though I then discerned no evil in it, yet is it one of those things of which I am now ashamed. But suppose I had formerly been such a Time-Server and Innovator, as you accuse me to have been, yea, suppose I had been a persecutor of the people of God (as you by your writing now appear to be)? Suppose I had persecuted men for not coming to Divine-Service, falsely so called, for not kneeling at the Communion? Suppose I had been an Altar-Worshipper, a setter up of Images, (which abominations and abominable persecutions through the grace of God I abhorred and shunned) suppose I say, I had then walked in those evil paths. Should this be not urged to the disgrace of my present practice most manifestly and directly contrary to such evils? Should it not rather be applied to the disgrace of that false way in which I then walked with you and others? Does not my present practice really manifest my

abhorring of Time serving, and of having any fellowship with Popish Innovations? If I could apply myself to Temporizing, and to a shadowing of false ways, or but to a conniving at the same, I might (in all probability) as easily rise, and rustle in silks, as any of you. But I choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season, and esteem the reproach of Christ far greater riches than the fattest Benefice, or largest Stipend.

Now tell me, Mr. Edwards, whether Paul when he was a baptized believer, and a Servant of Jesus Christ, hating all Blasphemy, Persecution, and Injuriousness, might yet have been justly reproached by some, because he had sometimes been a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and Injurious. And if any of the false Apostles had in that respect dealt with him, as you now deal (and that falsely too) with me, tell me whether they had not herein showed themselves the servants of the Devil, rather than the servants of God?

I may not omit yet further to examine this passage in your slander, Against the will of the Bishop. Do you conceive that they which swallowed the use of the Service-Book communicated with Fornicators, or Covetous Persons, or Idolaters, or Railers, or Drunkards, or Extortioners, and did many other acts of that nature, now known to be hateful unto GOD, may yet hold themselves to be excused, because though they did these things against the will of God, yet they did them not against the will of the Bishop? Will this serve their turn at the great day? Surely at that day neither the will of the Bishop heretofore, nor yet the will of any Assembly or Presbytery now, will be found sufficient to bear men out in the things not according to the will of God.

Edwards Now a Presbyterian but Could Just As Well Be an Anglican

I cannot but take notice also of the titles which you give to Dr. Hall, in that your aggravation of the offense unjustly laid to my charge, viz., The Bishop of Excester's Diocesan. This seems to intimate that I was then bound to conform to the will of Dr. Hall, because he was then the Bishop of Excester, my Diocesan. Do not you yet acknowledge this to be a truth, that their Prelatical Episcopacy was from man, not from God? If you do acknowledge it, tell me by what Law of God, or by what Just Authority of man, I was then bound to conform to the Bishop's will? By these titles thus given and made use of by you, you signify how well you could brook that Episcopacy again. Only I suppose, you had rather exercise that tyrannical power, than be under it.

## 01.03 A MEETING HOUSE OR A PERISH CHURCH

---

### Chapter III A MEETING HOUSE OR A PERISH CHURCH IS NOT THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

I would next have it to be considered by what rule you call a meeting-house, a Parish-Church? The word in Scripture that is translated Church, used to signify A congregation called out of the world to be God's people, a company of people that are to be looked upon as sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints, 1 Corinthians 1:2. By what authority do you give this title to an house made of Stones and Timber? The Word Church

Perhaps you will say the word Church is (like the Scottish word Kirk) derived from the Greek word Kiriaco "Symbol", which signifies, the Lord's or appertaining to the Lord, and that you call these houses Churches, because they are the Lord's Houses. But how came these to be the Lord's Houses, more than any other houses? They were consecrated indeed by Popish Bishops. But though these Bishops had power from the Pope, we know who gave to the Pope his power and his seat and great authority, Revelation 13:2. Yet all this power and authority is too weak, and too little, to make these houses the Lord's Houses. These house were also dedicated to Saints Canonized (or approved) by the Pope. Yet this also is not sufficient to make them the Lord's Houses. The Latin Mass-Book (in the last age refined and turned into an English Service-Book) has also been used in these houses as many times as there be untruths in your Gangraena. Yet this also is not enough to make these houses the Lord's Houses. It is not in the power of men, no not of the Pope, and all his Vassals, to make any place to be for ever the Devil's house, for then many of these places had been made such, so neither is it in the poer of men, no not of an Assembly of Bishops or Presbyters, to make an house to be the Lord's House.

O. T. Temple Was The House of God The Temple at Jerusalem was indeed called the House of God, because it was a type of Christ, as our Savior's words do intimate in John 2:19. Dare you to make these houses herein like unto the Temple? Dare you say that any house may now be looked upon as a type of Christ? Or dare you say that one place may now be looked upon as more holy than another? Do you not know that this would be found an implicate denying that Christ is come, and has suffered in the flesh and is risen again according to the Scriptures? Do you not know what is written in John 4:21, and what is means? "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father." Do you knot know the words of Paul in 1 Timothy 2:8? "I will that men pray in every place." The Gospel Meeting Places Do you not know that Christ took every opportunity in every place to preach His Gospel? Do you not know that the Apostles did both preach, pray, and break bread in such houses as you call private houses? Do you not know that God neither puts difference now between place and place, nor gives to men any authority, warrant, or leave so to do? Yea, you know all these things. But if you should let the people know the same, your market would be marred. The Pedobaptist's Market Places for their Unholy Goods 1. The glory of your preeminence in these supposed holy places, would then be darkened;

2. The people would not then reverence your Sermons (whether true or false, whether sound or rotten) for the supposed holiness of the place where they are preached;

3. You would not then be so able to stir up the people to persecute us for preaching, praying and breaking bread in those houses in which we meet for the performance of these actions. Therefore, you hide this truth from the people's eyes. The Parish Assemblies are Not True Churches of Jesus Christ But it may be you will say, that you call such an house, A Church, by a figure because the congregation that meets there, is a Church. If so, then let it be considered,

First, that no example in the word of God does teach us so to speak. The word rendered Church, in 1 Corinthians 11:18 and 1 Corinthians 11:22 does there signify, not a meeting place, but the congregation of Christians.

Secondly, that there is a great difference between a Parish-Assembly and a true Church of Christ, as between Babylon and Sion, (There is a great difference between a Parish Assembly and a well ordered Church of Christ,) which I shall now prove:

#### Proofs That the Parish Assemblies Are Not True Churches of Jesus Christ

1. It is a most evident thing that the Parish Assemblies are not Congregations of Visible Saints, such as all true Churches are, 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 14:33, and 1 Thessalonians 2:14.

2. It is also manifest that the Parish-Assemblies in this land in the days of Queen Mary (not withstanding the Reformation in King Edward's days) were part of those many waters on which the Whore sitteth, Revelation 17:1; Revelation 17:15. Then certainly they were not true Churches. (Then what kind of Churches were they?) Their state was no more changed afterwards by a second bringing in of the English Service-Book in the room of the Latin Mass Book, then it was changed by the first bringing in of the same in King Edward's days.

3. The few believers that yet remain in the Parish Assemblies, being that people of God who are called out Babylon, Revelation 18:4, are not there in the right state of a Church, nor can attain thereunto without coming out of Babylon, (are not there in the right state of a Church, nor can attain thereunto without coming out of it).

Here let it be laid to heart, that these Parish assemblies, being falsely persuaded (because persuaded) that they are Churches of Christ, are here miserably hardened in pride and profaness, and in security and presumption, whereby Satan is not a little strengthened to carry them away with ease to eternal destruction. The motives to you and others such, to Persuade them notwithstanding to look upon themselves as (right) Churches of God, do seem to be these:

#### Evil Advantages

1. By this means you seem to obtain the honor of Pastors of supposed Churches, (of Pastors of these Churches) as you call them.

2. Thus you seem to have some color to press all the people to maintain you by Tithes, or Oblations, or Stipends, &c.

3. You politically foresee, that if you should declare according to truth these Assemblies to be no true Churches, (no right Churches) then not only your honor, and your rich maintenance, and your

Presbytery would all fall to the ground, but also you must undergo contempt and persecution from the World.

Hereupon (though it work to their eternal destruction) you bear them in hand that they are right Churches by all means, yea that their Infants are holy, and under the Covenant of Grace, and that the very place where they do meet, must, or may be called by the name of Churches. O that you were sensible of the sinfulness, of this your dealing. But I now hasten to that which you yet further add concerning me, and so to an end. That which follows in your book is this: Why has put out a Pamphlet called, A Declaration Concerning the Public Dispute Which Should Have Been in the Public Meeting-House of Aldermanburie the Third of December, Concerning Infant's Baptism.

I am not ashamed of the assistance that I gave in putting out that Declaration. What have you to say against it? Can you therein find any one sentence swerving from the truth? If either you, or they that made a show of a mind to dispute with us, could therein have found any falsehood, we should surely have heard of it long ago. But it is enough that your Gravity calls it, A Pamphlet. Indeed, it is not very large, for it was not needful, as we conceived, that it should be large. But though we there us not many words, yet we write the words of Truth and Soberness. If you will blot out of your Gangraena all the words of Falsehood and Folly with which it is stuffed, it will, I suppose, be much shorter then this Pamphlet.

Having thus answered these things in your book that do particularly concern me, I will rake no further in such an unfavorable heap. I desire that you, yourself, may at the last be so sensible of the ill favor thereof, as that you may be moved to a loathing of it, and that you may not have a miserable experimental knowledge of the truth, of that word of truth in Proverbs 29:1, "He that being often reproved, hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

## 01.04 Postscript

---

### A POSTSCRIPT TO THE READER How Far May Baptized Saints Go Toward Others Who Are Not Of Due Order?

Though I have reprov'd Master Edwards, for giving this name, or title, Church, to an House made of Lime and Stone, yet I desire you not to judge me an approver of their practice, who now give such names to Houses that have been called Churches, as tend only to the provoking and exasperating of their spirits that use to meet in them. I exceedingly approve of this name, A Public Meeting House. This would be found neither to favor superstition, neither yet to provoke men's spirits by any intimation of contempt. Of those that yet use to hear and pray in those Houses, there are many who give good evidences of sincerity. Why then should we unnecessarily embitter their spirits by our expressions? We are also to seek the salvation of those who are yet unconverted. Why then should we causelessly provoke them to wrath so as to harden their hearts and stop their ears against our words? Also, in as much as they which yet meet in these Houses, are fellow-members together with us, of the same Political Body, and the same common enemy (seeking the destruction both of them and us) strives to set them at variance with us, that he may the more easily destroy both, it is therefore both just and necessary that they should find us not only faithful to them in our dealings, but also respectful, and not provoking in our expressions, we still being careful to have no fellowship with any evil.

#### Concerning Hearing, Praying and Appearing in Houses for Public Worship

Moreover, I think it not unmeet to acknowledge by my pen, what I declare by my practice, viz., that I cannot see it to be an unlawful thing, to preach or to pray in those houses, nor yet to hear in them, so far as it may be done without having any fellowship (either really, or in appearance) with any false Church-State, False Worship, False Doctrine, or False Ministry. The Building is Nothing But a Mere Building

I do not recede from my professed and utter disliking of their ill dealing, of their misapplying (and so abusing) of the Scriptures, which write upon the doors and walls of those houses: "This is the house of God. The Lord is in this place. My house shall be called the house of Prayer. Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God. Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, the house of the God of Jacob," and the such like. Yea, because of this my spirit has been, and still is, stirred within me, even as it has been a vexation to my spirit, to hear men say with relation to these houses, that they are now met in God's own house, that He still keeps open the doors of His sanctuaries, ect. But men's misnaming these places the Houses of God do not make them to be the house of the Devil, no more than their miscalling another place the house of the Devil can make it to be the House of God. Yea, as it is also a great error to ascribe holiness to these places, so it is also an error to imagine any unholiness to be inherent in them. Even here we have need to beware of Satan's wiles, and to take heed that he carry us not from one extreme to another and to the unnecessary and dangerous disturbance both of our selves and others. For our safety herein, let us be careful that we swerve not from the rule of the Word, neither in Allowing, neither yet in

Condemning.

Thus courteous Reader, as I have not sincerely expressed my mind unto thee, so through the Grace of God I shall still remain, A True Seeker Both of Your

Temporal and Eternal Peace,

Benjamin Cox A Second Postscript

Such was the cautiousness of that friend, for whom this book is printed, that he would not have it to be printed for him without License, and such was the cautiousness of the Licenser, that he would not license it without some alterations. This has caused this printing copy to fall a little short of that which I wrote, viz., in these places ((I have made these correction in this edition-REP)), page 9, line 11, (as you by your writing now appear to be) my copy added, a persecutor of the people of God. Page 12, line 5, 6, 7, (That there is a great difference between a Parish-Assembly, and a well ordered Church of Christ), I wrote, That there is as great a difference between a Parish-Assembly and a true Church of Christ, as between Babylon and Sion. Line 14, (Then what kind of Churches were they?) I had written, Then certainly they were not true Churches. Line 21, 22, (Are not there in the right state of a Church, nor can attain thereunto without coming out of it), I wrote, Are not there in the state of a Church, nor can attain thereunto, without coming out of Babylon. Line 23, 24, (Those Parish-Assemblies because persuaded), I wrote, being falsely persuaded. Line 28, 29, (as right Churches), I wrote, As Churches. Line 30, 31, (Of Pastors of the Churches, as you call them), I wrote, Of pastors of supposed Churches. Line 35, (No right Churches), I wrote, No True Churches. Page 13, line 1, (That they are right Churches), I wrote, That they are Churches, &c. Thus courteous Reader, thou has now the whole of that which was written, and given forth to be printed upon this Subject, by your loving friend.

B. C.

FINISH.

## S. A Thesis or Position Concerning Lord's Supper

---

### A THESIS OR POSITION

CONCERNING THE ADMINISTERING AND RECEIVING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER CLEARED AND CONFIRMED BY

B. C.

Preacher of God's Word

1642

Thesis

He who administers the Lord's Supper to one who is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, does therein commit a very grievous and hateful sin. The children of God must have no fellowship at all with this sin, but reprove it. This is meant only of such a one who is known to have been either a fornicator or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, and has given no sufficient evidence for a judgment of charity to be satisfied with, of his turning from this wickedness in the exercise of true repentance. The position or Thesis, specially as touching the first part of the same, is certainly confirmed by the saying of the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 5:11, "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man who is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one, no not to eat."

Part I

Paul's Force and Meaning Touching the meaning and force of this place, I desire that these ensuing propositions may be weighed.

Consider the Following Propositions

1. No man may be admitted to the Lord's Supper, unless he be called a Brother according to the meaning of the Apostle's phrase in this place. For he that is not a Brother in this sense, does remain without, 1 Corinthians 5:12.

2. The Apostle's meaning in this place is, that it is more tolerable and safe to keep company with fornicators, covetous persons, extortioners, idolaters, who are out of the Church, than with those who are such wicked ones as are here named, and yet are called brethren. We must farther estrange ourselves from these, than from those who are without. The truth of this will presently appear unto you, if you do but look back to 1 Corinthians 5:9-10. How then may we safely administer the Lord's Supper to these, or communicate with them?

3. The word here translated, to keep company, does properly signify, to be mingled with. He who administers the Lord's Supper to others, and they also that communicate, are in that action

mingled one with another.

4. The meaning of the Apostle's charge concerning the sinners here mentioned is, that which such we should not so much as eat. Does not the Minister eat at the Lord's Table with those to whom he administers the Sacrament? Do not Communicants there eat and drink with those with whom they do communicate? If we must shun communion with such at a common table, should we not much more shun to communicate with them at the Lord's Table? It was the use of Christians in the Apostles' days, to have their Love-Feats, even then, when they met together for the receiving of the Sacrament, as appears in 1 Corinthians 11:1-34. They did not then hold it lawful to receive the Sacrament with those, touching whom they were charged, no not to eat with them.

5. The Apostle, having laid this ground in 1 Corinthians 5:11, does in 1 Corinthians 5:13 add this inference, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." He thereby means, not only that the incestuous person should be repelled from the Sacrament, but also that he should be cast out of the Church by the sentence of Excommunication. Then he meant not, that these offenders should only be shunned in respect of private and common familiarity, but that they should be repelled from the Sacrament and that their Communion at the Lord's Table should be shunned.

Paul's Force So that the force of this which has been spoken may yet appear more clearly, consider what the Apostle said concerning the Sacrament in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? For, we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." This test assures us of the truth of these Propositions. The Truth of These Four Propositions

1. True believers rightly receiving this Holy Sacrament, are thereby assured of their partaking of the benefits of Christ's death.
2. All they who do outwardly receive this Sacrament do therein make an outward profession of receiving Christ crucified, and partaking of the benefits of Christ's death.
3. This Sacrament does teach and assure all true believing communicants, that they being many persons, are yet one mystical body, because they are all partakers of one and the same Jesus Christ, of whose body the bread is an ordained token and pledge in this Sacrament.
4. They who join together in outward receiving of this Sacrament do both join together in the profession of the same faith in Christ, and also do profess themselves to be (in the judgment of charity, which they now mutually profess concerning each other) fellow members of the same mystical body, as being all fed with the same spiritual food.

How Can a Minister Administer the Supper to the Ungodly?

Judge then with what good conscience a Minister may give this Sacrament to those with whom, for their open wickedness, we are charged not to be mingled, yea, not so much as to eat with them? Consider also with what comfort a Christian may communicate with such?

Now, howsoever in my Thesis and in 1 Corinthians 5:11, there is express mention made only of him who is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, yet

what is there expressly said of these, is also to be understood of every other who is called a Brother, and yet is known to live under the reign of any other like sin. For the truth and soundness of this, see and consider these places, Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; and 2 Timothy 3:2-5. The Meaning of These Propositions

Whereas I say of the evil that I have reprov'd, not only that it is a sin, but also a very grievous and hateful sin, that I may not seem to charge it too heavily, consider,

1. That these persons thus admitted by the Minister to the receiving of the Sacrament, and outwardly joined with by the rest of the Communicants, are by this means hardened in their security and cursed presumption, and thus the Devil is exceedingly aided to carry them easily to hell. Whatsoever fig-leaves we now make use of to cover this shameful evil, their blood will cry loud against us at the day of judgment.
2. That these persons thus communicating must needs abuse God's ordinance in a high degree, thereby most fearfully increasing both their own sin, and their damnation hereafter.
3. That this admitting of such persons to the Sacrament, makes the whole lump to be soured with their leaven, 1 Corinthians 5:6.
4. That this admitting of such persons to the Sacrament, and communicating with them, makes their wickedness to redound to the shame and dishonor of the Faith and Religion which we profess.

#### Orderly Conclusions and Biblical Proofs for this Thesis

I shall not need now to insist on any farther proof of the latter part of my Thesis, viz., The Children of God must have no fellowship at all with this sin, but reprove it. But only to press the consideration of these places. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," Ephesians 5:10. "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him," Leviticus 19:17. "Abstain from all appearance of evil," 1 Thessalonians 5:22. To which you may add Acts 2:40, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." and 2 Corinthians 6:17, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, said the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." Against the application of this last place, it will be objected, that it is to be understood of separation from wicked ones that are yet without. But then let it be remembered, we must estrange ourselves more from known wicked persons who would seem to be within, than from open wicked persons who are manifestly without. For, so much we have learned from 1 Corinthians 5:9-11.

#### Part II

Objections Where as in public a silly objection has been made from 1 Corinthians 11:29, let it be considered:

1. That the Apostle speaks that with an intended application to the Corinthians, who received the Sacrament unworthily (that is, after an unmeet and irreverent manner) only in a measure, not being under the reign of this sin, as the unregenerate are. The word there translated (damnation) does signify only judgment, and is there to be understood only as such judgments, as God laid upon the Corinthians for their correction in that respect. Thus, the verse there following does make manifest.

2. That this inference, "He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself," therefore his sin cannot hurt any other, or, therefore, no man else ought to restrain him from his sin, or, therefore, no man else needs to refuse to communicate with him. That this inference, I say, is so illogical, false and senseless, as that a man which regards his credit, will be ashamed to own it. It is every man's duty to keep himself unspotted from the world, James 1:27. Does it therefore follow, that a man is not bound to regard his Brother? Or, that a Christian needs not to turn away from those who deny the power of godliness? Who will stick to say, that Acken by his sin did draw down judgment upon himself only? Will any man of understanding conceive such a saying to imply, that his sin did hurt no body but himself? As touching those many who were weak and sickly among the Corinthians, and those many among them who were smitten with death, does the Text imply, that none of these felt this affliction for their sinful fellowship with the sin of others who did communicate unworthily? When the Apostle said, "He who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself," his meaning is plainly this, he draws misery upon himself by his own sin in communicating unworthily.

If it be farther objected, that the Apostle does not here give order for the repelling of any from the Communion, or for refusing to communicate with them, it is answered, That the persons touching whom he now speaks, were either indeed, or at the least in the Church's judgment of charity, in some measure fit for the receiving of the Sacrament, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints, 1 Corinthians 1:2. Touching wicked persons, appearing to be such, he had already taken order in Chapter 5 and needed not now to repeat it again.

#### Let A Man Examine Himself

Whereas there has been also some nibbling at these words of the Apostle, "Let a man examine himself," consider:

1. That the emphasis there lies, not in the word, himself, but in the verb, examine;
2. That no man in his right wits will infer from thence, that a man should not examine those of his own charge;
3. That our present question is not concerning persons, whose unfitness is to be fitted out by examination, but concerning persons whose unfitness and wickedness does already manifestly appear.

#### Matthew 22:11-12 Considered

Whereas a like poor objection has been publicly made from Matthew 22:11-12, for answer thereto consider, That by persons called, spoken of in Matthew 22:14, of that chapter, are meant such persons as have not only been invited to faith and repentance by the preaching of the Gospel, but also in outward profession have seemed to answer that call. Accordingly, by the man not having on a wedding garment, are meant such as in God's sight were found to come short both of sanctification and justification, notwithstanding their fair outward profession by which they had deceived the eyes of men. What is this to the admitting of open wicked persons to the Communion, or communicating with them?

Whereas it is further objected by some well-meaning Christians, deceived by the error of their own judgment, and by the false suggestion of others, That it is their duty to receive the Sacrament, and

they cannot be persuaded, that by the performing of their required duty, they should make themselves guilty of hardening others in their sin, or of any such like offence against God to this I answer, that men must take heed that they perform required duties in the right order and manner, not transgressing the rule of God's Word in the pretended performance of a duty. Otherwise, they will be found not so much to perform a duty, as to provoke God to anger by a great sin. It was the duty of David to bring the Ark to Jerusalem, yet because the Ark was then set upon a cart, and not born by the Priests, the Lord was provoked to anger, see 1 Chronicles 15:13. It was the duty of the Jews, in the days of Zerubable, to build the Temple, yet might they not suffer the Samaritans to build with them, Ezra 4:2-3. It was the duty of the Jews to eat the Passover, yet might they not eat it in Babylon, though they were enforced to tarry there 70 years, because their eating the Passover there would not have been according to the rule of God's Word. It was the duty of the Priests to offer Sacrifices, yet they that offered Sacrifices, not in the Temple at Jerusalem, but on the High-Places, did in so doing sin greatly against the Lord. Though it were the duty of all the Israelites to eat the Passover, yet might they not eat the same, either in their own uncleanness, or with those who were uncircumcised, or unclean. So, though it be the duty of Christians to receive the Sacrament, viz., when they may do the same in a right manner and order, yet it does not follow, that they may safely receive the same with those, touching whom they are charged, no, not so much as to eat with them.

If any shall be pleased to own any other Objections against my Thesis or any part of the same, he shall, God willing, speedily receive a satisfactory answer thereunto. But I would now desire, not to be put off with meet objections, but either to have a punctual and clear Answer to the ground that I have now laid, and to the several parts of the same, or, if the same shall be found unanswerable (as indeed it is) then to have the truth thereof ingenuously acknowledged, so I rest, Jaec Scripsi

April 6, 1642

A True Lover of the Truth, and Sincerely set for the Defence of the Same,

Benjamin Cox.

## S. An Appendix to a Confession of Faith, 1646

---

An Appendix to a Confession of Faith, 1646 or, A More Full Declaration of the Faith and Judgment of Baptized Believers Occasioned by the Inquiry of Some Wo-affected and Godly Persons in the Country.

Written by Benjamin Cox, a Preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Published for the further clearing of Truth, and discovery of their mistake who have imagined a dissent in fundamentals when there is none.

Matthew 10:27-28

What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

LONDON, Printed in the year 1646.

DECLARATION of the FAITH and JUDGMENT of Baptized Believers:

"Be ready always." saith the Apostolic Peter, "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear," 1 Peter 3:15. It is therefore our duty in meekness and love to give an answer to those godly persons, which desire to be fully informed of our judgment concerning religion and the ways of our God: To those therefore that have expressed a desire to be so informed, I thus answer. In a book lately reprinted, entitled, A Confession of Faith of Several Congregations or Churches of Christ in London, etc. is a plain and sincere expression of our judgment in the things therein spoken of, in 52 Articles: And if our judgment touching some particulars, wherein we seem, or are supposed, to dissent from some others, do not appear clearly enough in that confession, I hope that same shall somewhat more clearly appear in this ensuing Appendix.

I. We believe that the punishment due to Adam for his first rebellion, and due to all men for their sin in Adam, and for all their sins against the law, was not a lying of the whole person of man in the dust, or grave, eternally without life or sense; for then the punishment of man that sinned, should not have differed from the punishment to the brute beast that sinned not. But the punishment due to man, as aforesaid, was "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," and that eternal: And consequently the redemption which we have by Christ from the curse of the law, is a redemption from eternal misery and torment: this we learn from these places of Scripture compared together, Romans 2:8-9; Jude 1:7; Galatians 3:13 : Hebrews 9:12.

II. We believe that the eternity of the punishment of the vessels of wrath, is an absolute eternity, knowing no end; as well as the eternity of the life of the saints, Matthew 25:46. This we maintain against those that affirm that all men shall be saved at the last.

III. Although all the power of the creature to act be from the Creator, and there is a providence of God always extended to every creature, and to every action of the creature; yet we judge that the final corruption of the creature, and the sinfulness of the creature's action, is from the creature, and not from God: and that it is a great sin to say that God is the author of sin, Ecclesiastes 7:29; Habakkuk 1:13; James 1:13-15 : 1 Corinthians 14:33; 1 John 2:16. As touching that place which is here objected against us, viz., Amos 3:6, "Shall there be evil in a city, etc.." we conceive that it is either to be rendered according to the last translation in the margin, "Shall there be evil in a city, and shall not the Lord do somewhat?" or else that it is to be understood only of the evil of punishment, and not of the evil of sin.

IV. We teach that they only do, or can believe in Jesus Christ, to whom it is given to believe in Him by a special, gracious and powerful work of His Spirit: And that this is (and shall be) given to the elect in the time appointed of God for their effectual calling; and to none but the elect, John 6:64-65; Php 1:29; Jeremiah 31:33-34; Ezekiel 36:26; Romans 8:29-30; John 10:26. This we hold against those that do maintain a freewill and sufficient ability in a man to believe; and do deny election.

V. We affirm, that as Jesus Christ never intended to give remission of sins and eternal life unto any but His sheep (John 10:15; John 17:2; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 5:9); so these sheep only have their sins washed away in the blood of Christ: The vessels of wrath, as they are none of Christ's sheep, nor ever believe in Him, so they have not the blood of Christ sprinkled upon them, neither are partakers of Him: And therefore have all their sins remaining upon them, and are not saved by Christ from any of them under any consideration whatsoever; but must lie under the intolerable burden of them eternally. The truth of this appears unto us by the light of these Scriptures compared together.

Hebrews 12:24; 1 Peter 1:2; Hebrews 3:14; Matthew 7:23; Ephesians 5:6; 1 Timothy 1:9; John 8:24.

VI. Though some of our opponents do affirm. that by this doctrine we leave no Gospel to be preached to sinners for their conversion; yet through the goodness of God we know and preach to sinners this precious Gospel: "God so loved the world, (that is, has been so loving to mankind) that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him. should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16; and this faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, "That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." 1 Timothy 1:15, viz., all those sinners (how vile and grievous soever) not only which already do, but also which hereafter shall believe on Him to everlasting, 1 Timothy 1:16, and that "to Christ all the Prophets give witness, that through His name, whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins," Acts 10:43. And this is called "The word of the Gospel." Acts 15:7. This is the Gospel which Christ and His Apostles preached, which we have received, and by which we have been converted, unto Christ. And we desire to mind what Paul saith in Galatians 1:9. "If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

VII. Though we confess that no man doth attain unto faith by his own good will; John 1:13, yet we judge and know that the Spirit of God doth not compel a man to believe against his will, but doth powerfully and sweetly create in a man a new heart, and so make him to believe and obey willingly, Ezekiel 36:26-27; Psalms 110:3. God thus working in us both to will and to do, of His

good pleasure, Php 2:13.

VIII. Though all our workings for life be in vain, irregular, and not accepted of God, (Jesus Christ being our life, who is freely given to us of God) yet we believe and know that being made partakers of Jesus Christ, we do, and shall, and must, through Him, and walking in Him, bring forth the fruit of good works, serving God (in true obedience, and love, and thankfulness unto Him) in holiness and righteousness, being "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which He hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10; Luke 1:74-75.

IX. Though we that believe in Christ, be not under the law, but under grace, Romans 6:14; yet we know that we are not lawless, or left to live without a rule; "not without law to God, but under law to Christ," 1 Corinthians 9:21. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a law, or commanding rule unto us; whereby, and in obedience whereunto, we are taught to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Titus 2:11-12; the directions of Christ in His evangelical word guiding us unto, and in this sober, righteous, and godly walking, 1 Timothy 1:10-11.

X. Though we be not now sent to the law as it was in the hand of Moses, to be commanded thereby, yet Christ in His Gospel teacheth and commandeth us to walk in the same way of righteousness and holiness that God by Moses did command the Israelites to walk in, all the commandments of the Second Table being still delivered unto us by Christ, and all the commandments of the First Table also (as touching the life and spirit of them) in this epitome or brief sum, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, etc.," Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 13:8-10.

XI. Though no sin be imputed to those that believe in Christ, nor any sins do totally or fully reign over them, or in them, yet in them "the flesh lusteth against the spirit," Galatians 5:17; and "in many things they all offend," James 3:2, where the Apostle speaks of offenses that one believer may take notice of in another. Thus "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." Ecclesiastes 7:20, and "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 John 1:8.

XII. Though there be no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, yet they are taught, and that effectually, to be ashamed of their sins. Romans 6:21, and to be sorry for them after a godly sort, 2 Corinthians 7:9-11. Yea to loath themselves for them, Ezekiel 36:31. Because that sin is an evil and a filthy thing, and in its own nature tends to the provoking and dishonouring of God, being disobedience against God, and a thing which the most holy God declares Himself to loath and abhor; so that nothing but the blood of Christ could purge us from our sins, and reconcile us to God, whom by sin we had offended. Therefore the saints both are, and must be grieved, and must judge them selves, because they have sinned against their holy and glorious God, and merciful and loving Father, 1 Corinthians 11:31

XIII. Though nothing be hid from God, and God imputeth not iniquity to any believer, yet ought we to confess our sins unto God, and to beseech Him to deal with us according to His own promise; viz.. to be still gracious and merciful unto us though we have sinned against Him, not being wroth with us, nor rebuking us, nor ceasing to do good unto us because we have sinned, Isaiah 54:9; Hebrews 8:12; Daniel 9:18-20; Psalms 32:5; Psalms 25:7; Ezekiel 36:37; James 5:1. Thus according to Christ's direction, we pray unto God to forgive us our sins, Luke 11:4; yet still we are

to look upon God as our Father, Luke 11:2; and consequently upon ourselves as His children; and so not short of justification, or under wrath, but washed in Christ's blood from all our sins. In such confession and petitions we show obedience to God, and do also exercise faith towards God, and repentance or godly sorrow for sin by which we see and confess that we for our parts have deserved wrath.

XIV. Though they which are once really engrafted into Christ shall certainly "be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Peter 1:5; yet ought they to "beware, lest being led away with the error of the wicked they fall from their own steadfastness." 2 Peter 3:17. They ought therefore to seek continual support from God. Yea they ought to seek at God's hand (in prayer, and in the right use and study of His Word, and in the right use of His ordinances) not only continuance, but also growth in grace, 2 Peter 3:18. First, because this is God's command. Secondly, because God who will establish them, will do it in this way; viz.. giving them grace to be obedient to this His command, and blessing them in this obedience.

XV. As we mind that our whole salvation is given unto us of the Father by Jesus Christ, and for His sake; so we likewise mind, that the Father's giving Jesus Christ for us, and to us, and so saving us in Him, and for His sake, is the acting and manifesting of that free love of His towards us, which was in Himself from all eternity. John 17:23; Ephesians 1:4-5.

XVI. Although a true believer, whether baptized, or unbaptized, be in the state of salvation, and shall certainly be saved: Yet in obedience to the command of Christ every believer ought to desire baptism, and to yield himself to be baptized according to the rule of Christ in His word: And where this obedience is in faith performed, there Christ makes this His ordinance a means of unspeakable benefit to the believing soul, Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21. And a true believer that here sees the command of Christ lying upon him, cannot allow himself in disobedience thereunto, Acts 24:16.

XVII. Believers baptized ought to agree and join together in a constant profession of the same doctrine of the Gospel, and in professed obedience thereunto, and also in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:42. And a company of baptized believers so agreeing and joining together, are a church or congregation of Christ. Acts 2:47.

XVIII. As the preaching of the Gospel, both for the conversion of sinners, and the edifying of those that are converted; so also the right use of baptism, and of the Lord's Supper, ought to be till the end of the world, Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:26.

XIX. A disciple gifted and enabled by the Spirit of Christ to preach the Gospel, and stirred up to this service by the same Spirit, bringing home to his soul the command of Christ in His word for the doing of this work, is a man authorized and sent by Christ to preach the Gospel, see Luke 19:12, etc., Mark 16:15, and Matthew 28:19 compared with Acts 8:4, Php 1:14-15; John 17:1-26; John 20:1-31. And those gifted disciples which thus preach Jesus Christ who came in the flesh, are to be looked upon as men sent and given of the Lord. 1 John 4:2; Romans 10:15; Ephesians 4:11-13. And they which are converted from unbelief and false worship, and so brought into church fellowship by such preachers according to the will of Christ, are a seal of their ministry, 1 Corinthians 9:2. And such preachers of the Gospel may not only lawfully administer baptism unto believers, and guide the action of the church in the use of the Supper, (Matthew 28:19; Acts

8:5-12; 1 Corinthians 10:16) but may also call upon the churches, and advise them to choose fit men for officers, and may settle such officers so chosen by a church, in the places or offices (of elder or deacon) to which they are chosen by imposition of hands and prayer. Acts 6:3-6; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5.

XX. Though a believer's right to the use of the Lord's Supper doth immediately flow from Jesus Christ apprehended and received by faith, yet in as much as all things ought to be done not only decently, but also in order, 1 Corinthians 14:40; and the Word holds forth this order, that disciples should be baptized, Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38, and then be taught to observe all things (that is to say. all other things) that Christ commanded the Apostles, Matthew 28:20, and accordingly the Apostles first baptized disciples, and then admitted them to the use of the Supper, Acts 2:41-42; we therefore do not admit any in the use of the Supper, nor communicate with any in the use of this ordinance, but disciples having once been Scripturally baptized, less we should have fellowship with them in their doing contrary to order.

XXI. Although we know that in some things we are yet very dark, and in all things as yet we know but in part, and do therefore wait upon God for further light, yet we believe that we ought in our practice to obey, and serve, and glorify God in the use of that light which He hath given us; and not neglect the good using of that light which God hath already given us, under pretense of waiting for more, 1 Corinthians 13:9; Acts 18:25.

XXII. As Christ doth not teach, nor allow that we should be without natural affection, or unsociable (see Romans 1:31); so our being made partakers of Christ, doth not discharge us from the duties of our relations. Believing servants must perform the duties of servants toward their masters though unbelieving, 1 Timothy 6:1. So believing children must perform the duties of children toward their parents, Colossians 3:20; believing wives, the duties of wives toward their husbands, 1 Peter 3:1; and believing subjects must be subject to principalities and powers, and obey magistrates. Romans 13:1 etc.; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-15. But still they must remember that their fear toward God must not be taught by the precept of men, Isaiah 29:13; that these ought to obey God rather than men, Acts 5:29; and that the submission that must be given to men, must be given to them for the Lord's sake. 1 Peter 2:14. Thus I conclude with the Apostle's words (in 2 Timothy 2:7) a little varied, but not misapplied. "Consider what we teach: and the Lord give you understanding in all things."

FINIS

## S. Some Mistaken Scriptures Sincerely Explained

---

Some Mistaken Scriptures Sincerely Explained.

In Answer to One Infected With Some Pelagian Errors. by

Benjamin Cox When He Was First Prisoner in Coventrie.

Now Published by the Author for the Clearing of the Truth.

1 Corinthians 2:14

The Natural Man Receives Not the Things of the Spirit of God, for They Are Foolishness Unto Him, Neither Can He Know Them, Because They are Spiritually Discerned.

Licensed and Entered According to Order.

LONDON

Printed by Thomas Paine, Living in Red-Cross-Street in Gold-Smiths Alley, Over Against the Sugar Loaf.

1646

Some Mistaken Scriptures Sincerely Explained, in Answer to One Infected With Some Pelagian Errors.

Whereas you say that some Scriptures seem to hold forth unto you that a man has a free-will, I desire you, for your better information, to take notice of these two Propositions:

Proposition 1.

We do not simply deny that a man has any freedom of will, but only do hold that no natural man, not any man of himself, has a sufficient power, or freedom of will, unto the choosing of that way, which is good and right, and acceptable in the sight of God. To the choosing of evil ways, we grant that every natural mans has freed enough, if so be this may be termed by so good a name as Freedom. Consequently, we do not hold that any man is compelled or enforced by violence to choose the evil, or to refuse the good, but that through the corruption of nature man unrenewed does willingly and willfully refuse the good way and chooses the evil way. Whereas the unregenerate person can do no otherwise, this is not the fruit of any force or compulsion laid upon him, but only of the obstinate wickedness, or wicked obstinacy of his own corrupted and depraved will. The truth hereof appear by these Scriptures, Genesis 8:21; Ecclesiastes 9:3; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:19; Romans 3:9, Romans 3:10-11; Romans 8:6-8; James 1:13-15; John 8:44.

Proposition 2. The elect do indeed, with unfeigned willingness, obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and choose the Lord to be their God, but this they do when they are effectually called, and not before. This they do, not of themselves, not only by the well using of an ability or power given to all

men, but by the special grace of God, afforded to them, Who works in them both to will and to do and this according to the good pleasure of His own will concerning them from all eternity. The truth of this appears in these places, Isaiah 54:13; compared with John 6:44-45, John 6:64-65; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-5, Ephesians 1:11; Php 1:29; Php 2:13; James 1:18.

These Propositions being thus laid down and cleared, I come now to consider those Scriptures which you name to prove that a man has free will or free choice, Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15, Joshua 24:22; Judges 10:14; Isaiah 65:12; and Isaiah 66:13; 1 Kings 3:5-11; Psalms 119:30; Luke 10:42.

Deuteronomy 30:19

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, &c.

Answer This place shows what was the duty of the Israelites to do, but it does not prove that they had any ability of themselves to do it, or that God gives any such ability to all men. Compare this place with 2 Corinthians 3:5 and Deuteronomy 29:4.

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve, &c.

Answer

Here I somewhat question what part of the verse you would have especially to be opened, whether this: "Choose you this day whom you will serve," or this "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The first implies that Idolaters do freely choose those Idols, with which they commit spiritual whoredome. Freely, that is to say, not being enforced or compelled thereunto by any violence constraining them to this motion of their will. This is not denied, but acknowledged and held by us, as you may see in the first proposition. The last part of the verse holds forth the free and constant resolution of the Saints to serve the Lord. This also is taught in my second proposition. But there you must likewise remember, that this is the fruit of the special grace of God afforded to the Elect, Who works in them both to will and to do, Php 2:13. This work is wrought by the infinite power of God, Ephesians 1:19 and Ephesians 3:10.

Joshua 24:22 You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen you the Lord, to serve Him.

Answer This is meant directly and only of that which went before in Joshua 24:21. "The people said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve the Lord." They who were Israelites indeed, did in truth and sincerity make this promise and choice, but they did not this of themselves, but through the special grace of God, as has been proved already.

Judges 10:14 Go and cry unto the Gods which ye have chosen.

Isaiah 65:12 When I speak, you did not hear, but did evil before mine eyes and did chose that wherein I delighted not.

Isaiah 66:3 They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations.

Answer These three places imply no more than what we clearly hold, as you may see in my first proposition.

1 Kings 3:5-6, 1 Kings 3:9-10

God said, ask what I shall give thee, And Solomon said, Give thy servant an understanding heart, and the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

Answer This places seems to you to import, that Solomon did freely make choice to ask of God for an understand to here judgment. This we deny not. But consider also that this choice and petition was the fruit the wisdom and grace which God had already given him. Compare this place with Zechariah 12:10, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabits of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace, and of supplication," See also Romans 8:26.

Psalms 119:30 I have chosen the Way of Truth.

Luke 10:42 Mary has chosen that good part.

True, but it was the special grace of God, the special, gracious and powerful work of God's spirit, which caused David and Mary to make that good choice, as also has been already proved. Thus, I am done with your first catalogue of tests of Scripture. Your second catalogue contains certain places, in which (as you conceive) the promises of God do depend upon our doing of His commands. Hereto I answer first more generally:

Second Catalogue of Scriptures The Scripture promises eternal like to those who obey the Gospel of Christ, Hebrews 5:9; and threatens eternal destruction to the disobedient, John 3:36; 2 Thessalonians 1:8. Thus we acknowledge and thus we teach. But consider that which I have also already proved, that the elect of God perform this obedience through God's special Grace, and that this special grace is freely given to them of God according to His own purpose concerning them from all eternity, and that God has freely promised this grace to His elect. All this appears by places of Scripture already alleged for the confirmation of my second proposition.

Thus I descend to consider more particularly the places of Scripture that you here present unto me, viz., Leviticus 26:3; and Isaiah 1:19; Proverbs 1:23; Jeremiah 7:13; Matthew 19:17; Matthew 11:28; Matthew 11:21; Matthew 23:37; Luke 16:16; Jeremiah 3:22.

Leviticus 26:3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do then, then I will give you, &c.

Answer Here we must remember:

1. That since Adam's fall no mere man either did or could keep God's commandments and do them according to the rigor and strictness of the Law, Ecclesiastes 7:20.

2. That where as the Elect among the Israelites did truly believe in the promised Messiah, and did show the truth of their faith by the sincerity of their obedience to God's revealed will in every thing, this was the fruit of God's special grace to them afforded, Numbers 14:24; Psalms 119:22, Psalms 119:36. These clear truths may also free you from your doubts that seem to arise from the next place by you mentioned, viz. Isaiah 1:19.

Proverbs 1:23 Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

Answer The former part of this verse is an exhortation. It is the conceit of some that such exhortations do always imply that the persons exhorted have a sufficient ability in them to obey the exhortation directed unto them. But this conceit is a mere presumption, not only without ground, but also against the Scripture, as in John 6:65, and other places. It is demanded, why then are such exhortations used, I answer, 1. To mind the persons exhorted of their duty, and to leave them the more inexcusable in their willful disobedience.

2. Because the Lord is pleased to work powerfully upon the Elect by such exhortations. The latter part of this verse contains a promise. You (as it seems) conceive the promise to be here made only unto those who obey the exhortation afore going. Be it so. Only remember then, that they which obey the exhortation, do obey the same through God's special grace, and that the promise serves to assure them of the continuance and increase of grace.

Jeremiah 7:13 And now because you have done all this work, said the Lord and I spake unto you, rising up early, and speaking, but ye heard not, and I called you, but you answered not.

Answer

If you consider this verse only, and read no further, it only holds forth the goodness and patience of God, in admonishing and exhorting the stubborn Jews and their willful and obstinate disobedience to God's Word. If you read the verses following also, this Scripture minds you that the disobedience and obstinacy of the Jews was the cause of their destruction. All these things we readily acknowledge neither do they make any thing at all against us.

Matthew 19:17 If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.

Answer

Here you must consider to whom our Savior spake this, viz., of one who sought to establish his own righteousness, and to get Heaven by his own doing of the good works which the Law required, who accordingly had propounded this question, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" The meaning of our Savior's answer is this, if thou wilt think to get eternal life this way, you must keep the commandments, that is, you must be found as a person not any way guilty of any transgression against God's commandments. This was a thing of mere and utter impossibility and our Savior's scope in returning to him this answer, was to discover unto him the vanity and madness of his proud and foolish imagination. Thus, this place rightly understood has not in it the least show of opposition against our doctrine.

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me all you who labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Answer

Here Christ promises to give rest, not to all persons whatsoever, but only to those laboring and heavy laden ones who come to Him, namely by a true faith in Him. This makes nothing against us. It still remnant true that they, and only they, do thus come unto Christ, in whose hearts God works lively faith. This God works in His Elect and only in them.

Matthew 11:21

Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida, for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, &c.

Answer The manifest scope of our Savior in this place, is to show the open inexcusable enesse of the impenitence and unbelief of Chorazin and Bethsaida. The last words of the verse, from which your doubt arises, may be understood to be a figurative speech, like unto that in Luke 19:40, "If these should hold their peace, the stones should immediately cry out." Otherwise the words may be thus rendered, "They had possibly repented, or, They would possibly have repented." This translation would be found well to agree to the signification of the potential particle which is here used in the Greek. Then this will be the true and easy interpretation of this passage, viz., "A man would think they should have repented." Beyond this, this place must not be stretched, For no interpretation must be given of any place of Scripture, which shall indeed make it to contradict the Scripture itself in other places.

Matthew 23:37

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a Hen gathers her chickens under her wings and you would not.

Answer The meaning is this, How often have I graciously afforded unto the people of Jerusalem excellent means of salvation? But the stubborn people of Jerusalem have willfully refused to accept of those means of salvation, and to profit by the same. This is all that this place does import, and this makes nothing at all against us.

Luke 16:16 The Law and the Prophets were until John, since that time the kingdom of God is preached and every man, &c.

Answer The words in this verse which you would have to be opened are thus commonly rendered: "The kingdom of God is preached, and every man presses into it," suppose this translation to be right and the meaning to be the same that our common expositions have held forth in this ensuing interpretation; "Every man, that is to say, many men or every older and degree of men presseth into it," that is, with willingness and forwardness receives the doctrine of the kingdom and so entering into the kingdom of God. Suppose I say that this were indeed the meaning of this place, yet it would be found to make nothing at all against us. For still it will remain true, that the Elect do this through God's special grace. But the truth is, that this interpretation does not teach our Savior's meaning in this place. The words should thus be rendered; "every man offereth violence unto it." The meaning is this, "every man," that is, the whole world of ungodly men, offered violence unto it, that is, makes a violent opposition against the kingdom of God and the preaching thereof, See Matthew 11:12, compared with Matthew 11:16-18, &c.

Jeremiah 3:22 Return ye backsliding children, &c.

Answer In this verse is contained:

1. An exhortation, Return ye, backsliding children;

2. A Promise, I will heal your backslidings. This promise you understand to belong only unto those who obey the aforesaid exhortation. Even so this makes nothing against us, but perfectly agrees with our doctrine. But let me here mind you that this promise may be understood not only to be a promise of pardon to them who repent, but also a promise of the gift of repentance to the Elect, see Jeremiah 31:33-34 and Acts 5:31. The particle and here inferred, seems to make against this. But this need not trouble us, since it is only a supplement or addition of the translations, and is not in the text.

3. A Profession of repentance and faith, Behold, we come unto thee, for thou are the Lord our God. You must understand this to be the speech of the Elect endued with God's special grace, see Jeremiah 31:18-19.

Thus according to your request, according to the ability which God has given to me, I have opened the Scriptures that you have mentioned. The Lord open your understanding, that you may discern the truth and acknowledge the same to the glory of God.

FINISH

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
  - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**