

Henry Danvers (1573-1643)

17th Century Baptist who both William Kiffin and Benjamin Keach below refer to in their understanding of the relationship between baptism and visible church membership. Fred Malone writes on Danver's *Treatise on of Baptism* (1674), "Danver's biblical argument much favors the principle that the reformed regulative principle of worship establishes a disciple's baptism while refuting the biblical silence of paedobaptism." [found on page 1 of the foreword to the following work]

Danvers, Henry *A Treatise of Baptism* (Harrisonburg: Sprinkle Publications, 2004), 22-27. [Originally published in London, 1674]

"The seventh end of baptism is, that the baptized person may orderly thereby have an entrance into the visible Church, and have a right given him to partake of all the ordinances and privileges thereof. For as circumcision of old was the visible door of entrance into the Old Testament Church, and so essentially necessary thereto, that without it, none were esteemed either church members, or were to partake either of the Passover, or of any of the privileges thereof, all without being called the uncircumcision - so also was baptism such a door and visible entrance into the New Testament Church, that none were esteemed members thereof, or did partake of tis ordinances before they were baptized, being so God's hedge and boundary, that others were esteemed without. And therefore as Christ has laid down the order int he Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) first to teach, then to baptize, and then to teach them all things, viz., in the place of teaching His school of Church. So did the practice accordingly; as we read [in] Acts 2:41-42, where, after Peter had taught them, it is said, That they who gladly received His word, were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and and [sic.] fellowship, and breaking of bread and prayer. So that after baptism, no before, the believers were said to enjoy, and partake of all Church privileges. And which is Christ's directory and standard for rule and order to the end of the world. The Church of Corinth was said to have kept the ordinances as they were delivered to them (1 Cor. 11:12). And it was the Apostle's joy and rejoicing to see the order and faith of the saints (Col. 2:5).

And therefore it is said, That by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), viz., the same Spirit of faith, regeneration and holiness, which gives right to baptism, orderly lets into the Body or Church, and so admits also unto the Supper - which is the received sense of most interpreters upon the place.

And by this order believers were said to be baptized into Christ, and to be implanted together with Him (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27).

For as public officers are invested into their trust by some external solemnity, that passes upon them at the time of their installment; and as the husband and wife enter into their relation by some solemn act done at the time of their marriage. Or, as a corporation, by some public act done, receives its members at their enfranchisement; even so according to the import of these Scriptures mentioned, do men and women receive that relative being, which they have in Christ, and as visible members of that spiritual corporation, wherein Christ is Head and Chief, from that solemn act of being baptized into Him.

And as the officer is not invested with his authority, or husband and wife with that power over each other's bodies (as 1 Cor. 7:4), nor any members with the immunities of

the corporation, by any pre-qualifications, or actions preparatory thereto, until that be acted and done by way of solemnity, which immediately invests them with their several and respective capacities. In like manner, none are to be esteemed capable of those privileges, which visibly belong to the Body of Christ, upon the account of any precedaneous qualification or actions whatsoever, until first they have passed through those spiritual solemnities in baptism, upon which they are invested with the denomination and visible privileges which belong in common to the members of Christ's mystical Body.

Which order or Christ has had such a sanction upon it, that all, or for the most part all, that have professed Christianity, whether Papists, Prelatists, Presbyterians, or Independents, have owned the same; not communicating in the Supper with any they judged unbaptized.

In a word, baptism has been called of old among the ancients, and not without reason, *Janua Sacramentorum*, the Gate of the Sacraments, whereof they gave this reason, viz.: Ambrose - 'In all respects, the order of the mystery is kept, that first by remission of sins a medicine be prepared for their wounds, and then the nourishment of the heavenly table be added.'

Which truth is further witnessed unto, and confirmed by the following testimonies.

Justin Martyr, in *Secunda Apologia Pro Christianis*, speaking of the Lord's Supper, to which the new baptized person is admitted, says, 'This food we call the Eucharist, to which no man is admitted, but only he that believeth the truth of our Doctrine, being washed in the Laver of Regeneration for the Remission of sins,' etc.

Ursinus, in his Catechism: 'Baptism is a Sacrament of entrance into the Church, whence it cometh, that the Supper is presented to none, except first baptized.'

The [Westminster] Assembly's Catechism: 'Baptism,' say they, 'is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church; But,' etc.

Mr. Baxter, in his *Plain Scripture-Proof*.

As a Souldier before listing, and a King before Crowning and taking his Oath; so are we Church-Members before baptism: But as every one that must be admitted solemnly into the army, must be admitted by listing, as the solemn engaging sign: So everyone that has right to be solemnly admitted into the Visible Church, must ordinarily be admitted by Baptism; proved thus:

If we have neither precept nor example in Scripture, since Christ ordained baptism, of any other way of admitting visible members, but only by baptism; then all that must be admitted visible members, must ordinarily be baptized.

But since Baptism was instituted, we have no precept or example of admitting Visible Members any other way, but constant Precept, and Example for admittance this way.

Therefore all that must be admitted Visible Members, must be baptized.

I know not what in show of Reason can be said to this by those that renounce not Scripture. For what man dare go in a way that hath neither precept nor example to warrant it, from a way that hath a full current of both. Yet they that will admit Members into the Church without Baptism, do so.'

I had thought to have been larger upon this point, and intended particularly to have answered a late piece of Mr. Bunion's in contradiction hereto. But vein so well replied to by M. Paul, in his *Serious Reflections* so lately printed; I find in the Sixth Chapter, respecting the constitution of the primitive churches.

Now may it not be referred to the judgment and conscience of the considerate impartial reader, whether any but the believer can possibly reach or attain these spiritual ends mentioned? And how capable poor ignorant babes are to answer any of them? And whether it is not contradictions to common sense and experience for any to assert it? For what repentance or faith are they capable to profess? What present regeneration can they evidence? What present regeneration can they evidence? What testimony of a good conscience? can they give in striking, or keeping covenant with God herein? And how can they embrace, or improve the covenant on God's part for pardon, purging, justification, sanctification, and salvation?

And therefore is Mr. Baxter forced to confess, in his *Plain Scripture-Proof*.

'That as to the Ends of Baptism, they are rather to be fetched from the Aged, than Infants; and that because the Aged, 1. are the most fully capable subjects. 2. The most excellent and eminent subjects. 3. Of whom the Scripture fully speaks, etc.'

But on the contrary, as for Infant's Baptism, he acknowledges in the same place, that 'the Scripture speaketh darkly of it. Yea, that it is so dark in the Scripture, that the Controversy is thereby become, not only hard, but so hard,' as he says, 'he finds it.' Wherein, if he has not said more in a few words for the baptizing of believers, and against that of infants, then all his great book can answer - let all the world judge. Though he calls it, in contradiction hereto, *Plain Scripture-Proof* for infant's Church membership and baptism."

William Kiffin (1616-1701)

Particular/Reformed Baptist Pastor of Devonshire-square, London, England - Signer of the 1689 2nd London Baptist Confession.

Kiffin, William *A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion* (London: Rose and Crown, 1681), 87 (wrongly written in the original as page 89).

"Baptism was of old, and not without reason, called the gate of sacraments, and is to keep that name and nature still, viz. to be the first and primitive ordinance."

Benjamin Keach (1640-1704)

Particular/Reformed Baptist Pastor of Horse-lie-down, Southwark, England - Signer of the 1689 2nd London Baptist Confession and Author of the Baptist Catechism.

Keach, Benjamin *Gold Refin'd; or, Proving Bpatism in Water an Holy Institution of Jesus Christ, and to continue in the Church to the End of the World* (London: Printed for the author by Nathaniel Crouch, 1689), 84, 178-9.

"Seventhly, Baptism hath another End and Use assigned to it, viz. That the Party

baptized may have an orderly entrance into the Visible Church, and so have a right to partake of all other Ordinances and Privileges thereof, as *breaking of Bread, &c.*" (p. 84) [He is clearly building on Danver's 7th end of baptism quoted in full above]

"I might write a book of things of this nature, as touching the sentiments of worthy writers, being generally all of the same belief and practice; howsoever in other things they may differ from us, and one from another, nor will those of the Church of England, Presbyterians, or Independents admit any as members into their Communion, as to partake of the Lord's Supper, except they calling sprinkling, or pouring, baptizing; which we deny to be the ordinance... If baptism was appointed to be an initiating ordinance into God's house, tis not only a man's piety that will serve the turn, he must come into the church at the door Christ hath ordained, or not come in at all." (p. 178-9)

Keach, Benjamin *The Baptist Catechism in The Baptist Confession of Faith & The Baptist Catechism* (Carlisle: Reformed Baptist Publications, 2014), 118, 178-9.

"Q. 102: *What is the duty of such who are rightly baptized?* A. It is the duty of such who are rightly baptized to give up themselves to some particular and orderly church of Jesus Christ, that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Acts 2:41, 42; 5:13, 14; 9:26; 1 Peter 2:5; Luke 1:6)."

Hercules Collins (1646-1702)

Particular/Reformed Baptist Pastor of Wapping, London, England - Signer of the 1689 2nd London Baptist Confession and Author of the Baptist version of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Collins, Hercules *An Orthodox Catechism* Ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and G. Stephen Weaver, Jr. (Palmdale: RBAP, 2014), 77-8.

"Q & A. 73...the same qualifications are required to the due performance of baptism as for the Lord's Supper."