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The doctrine of close
communion tested by





The Doctrine of Close Communion.



THE DOCTRINE
OF
CLOSE COMMUNION

TESTED BY SCRIPTURE AND REASON.

BY
WILLIAM ANNAN.

“Buy the truth and sell it not.” Prov. 23. 23.

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P R E F A C E .

THE volume which is here presented to the public, originated in representations of its necessity from the most respectable sources. Our brethren of the United Presbyterian body are in the habit, through their publications, of greatly (not *intentionally*) misrepresenting the views of the Old School Church on the subject of catholic communion. We are charged with inviting to the Table of the Lord "all parties of *professed* Christians"—"all who *call themselves* Christians"—"all who in their *own judgment* are Christians," &c. It was thought a brief and comprehensive volume, of moderate price and easily read, might be useful to counteract these misstatements, as also to place in their genuine light the true doctrine of the communion of saints as taught by the Apostles and practiced in our Church.

That "visible discipleship"—"a credible profession of faith in Christ and obedience to him," have been the uniform terms of communion in the Presbyterian Church, is proved by such formal deliverances of her highest judicatory as the following :

"We have ever admitted to our communion all those who, in the *judgment of charity*, were the sincere disciples of Christ." "We require nothing more than faith, love and obedience to Him." This cannot mean that every one shall *judge for himself* as to his possessing these qualifications.

Again "We are willing to admit to fellowship in sacred ordinances, all such as we have ground to believe Christ will at last admit to the kingdom of Heaven."

Agreeably to these principles, a case is on record, in which it was formally decided that a person "having scruples concerning infant baptism," might be permitted to partake with us of the Lord's Supper—"the question of expediency" in each particular instance, being left to the discretion of the Session of the Church. These or similar statements range from 1729 to 1839, more than a century: and it is expressly declared, "that if in some instances stricter terms have been insisted upon, they were *few* and unauthorized." And the same is true of any instances of more loose terms of communion.

As regards the views which are here controverted, the writer has aimed to state them fairly. The longer he studies the differences which keep our U. P. brethren in a separate organization from the O. S. Church, the more fully is he persuaded that to a very great extent they originate in mistake of our real sentiments. In the language of a writer in the *Christian Witness*, a U. P. paper, "there is a most wonderful degree of harmony among all true Christians in all the great *leading principles* of divine truth. There is a unity of doctrine and sentiment and affection lying deep in the hearts of God's people." This is especially true of sound Calvinistic Presbyterians, and should shame them out of their sinful divisions.

ALLEGHENY CITY, April 17, 1867.

CONTENTS.

	Page
CHAP. I. STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION, -	7
CHAP. II. HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE SUBJECT, 19	
CHAP. III. HISTORICAL VIEW, <i>continued</i> , -	30
CHAP. IV. HISTORICAL VIEW, <i>concluded</i> , -	38
CHAP. V. APPEAL TO SCRIPTURE AND REASON, 56	
CHAP. VI. APPEAL, &c., <i>concluded</i> , 7 - -	65
CHAP. VII. DOCTRINE OF WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY, 79	
CHAP. VIII. INCONSISTENCIES OF CLOSE COMMUNION, 92	
CHAP. IX. PROOF-TEXTS EXAMINED, - -	107
CHAP. X. FALLACIES DETECTED, - - -	121
CHAP. XI. MORE FALLACIES, - - -	140
A REMEDY FOR DIVISION, - -	144
APPENDIX, - - - - -	149



THE

Doctrine of Close Communion.

CHAPTER I.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

AMONG the controversies which have divided and weakened the Christian church, thus in a measure paralyzing her efforts to enlighten and save mankind, the question of close communion has contributed its share of malign influence. According to the teaching of several of the denominations, which do not differ on the great fundamental doctrines of grace as taught in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, it is a *duty* enjoined by the Author of Christianity, to refuse communion in sealing ordinances to all who are not of their sect, though acknowledged to be Christians by profession, and in their walk and conversation creditable followers and friends of a common Lord. The advocates of these rigid views give them considerable prominence in their standards and controversial writings; and with them it is plainly a matter of conscience to deny admission to *their* communion table, to many who are otherwise recognized as sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, children of the common

faith and hope of the gospel. A dogma which thus divides from each other the mutual friends of the Redeemer, forbids their participation in the most affecting of all the memorials of his dying love, and apparently tends to perpetuate schism in the body of Christ, has in its very terms a strong presumption against its truth. To examine its foundations in the light of Scripture and reason is the object of this volume.

In testing the Scriptural authority for this theory of communion, it is proper to state it in the precise terms of its abettors, as follows :

“ We declare, that the church should not extend communion in sealing ordinances to those who refuse adherence to her profession, or subjection to her government and discipline, or who refuse to forsake a communion which is inconsistent with the profession that she makes ; nor should communion in any ordinance of worship be held under such circumstances as would be inconsistent with the keeping of these ordinances pure and entire, or so as to give countenance to any corruption of the doctrines and institutions of Christ.”*

Or as otherwise expressed,

“ The church cannot, without betraying her trust, receive into her fellowship those who are unwilling to unite with her in her testimony for the truth, and refuse to submit to her authority.”†

This certainly sounds very well, and when we remember the great value which the Holy Scriptures attach to divine truth as the appointed means of sanctification, and which we are commanded to “ buy and not

* Testimony of the U. P. Church, Article 16.

† Church Fellowship, by Dr. Pressly.

to sell," the theory assumes very considerable plausibility. We may add, that if these brethren had so framed their doctrine as to indicate by the phrase "the truth," only those grand, essential, fundamental principles which lie at the basis of all Christian character, and which are commonly included in the term "evangelical," or the distinguishing "doctrines of grace," there would not have been serious objection to this feature of the theory. Far be it from us to invite to the Lord's table any who avowedly reject such essentials as the doctrine of the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, universal, helpless depravity by the Fall, necessity of regeneration by divine power, &c. The person who disbelieves such foundation truths as these, however correct in outward deportment, cannot give credible evidence of being a Christian, is not a "saint by profession," and of course is to be excluded from the table which is spread for the children of the family of God.

But it is obvious to the slightest inspection, that by "uniting in their testimony for the truth," and "adherence to their profession," the advocates of what is termed "close communion," mean much more than a cordial adoption of such fundamental doctrines as above indicated. In proof, we find such reasonings as the following ·

"The private members of the church," * * * "if professors at all, and if their membership constitutes them professors, are professors of ALL its principles, and of course have come under an implied if not an

express obligation to maintain them." Again in the same connection, these brethren indignantly denounce "the palpable inconsistency," as they term it, of the doctrine they oppose, viz., "that there are *some truths* which Christ has made it the duty of the church to profess, * * * yet she may not exercise her government and discipline in maintaining *these truths*,"* *i. e.* by denying the privilege of communion at the Lord's table. This is certainly plain enough. The doctrine of the "Testimony" is, that in order to admittance to a seat at the Lord's Supper, its authors and advocates will require of all applicants a profession of "*all* their principles," for the obvious reason that it would be absurd to teach that "there are *some truths* which Christ has made it their duty to profess," but which they may innocently neglect to maintain, viz., by neglecting to practice "close communion!"

The same doctrine is still more emphatically taught in the volume published by the U. P. Board of Publication at Pittsburgh, the author of which is Dr. Pressly; thus:

"Union with *the church in her profession of faith* is a prerequisite to the enjoyment of her fellowship."

But what does he mean by her "profession of faith?" Here is his answer:

"She (the church) has no more right to receive into her fellowship one who rejects the truth, or refuses to observe *anything* which Christ has commanded, than she has to disregard the authority of her Lord by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."†

* See "Testimony of the U. P. Church," pp. 37, 38.

† Church Fellowship, p. 41.

The reader will notice the terms employed: "she has no right to receive into her fellowship one who refuses ANYTHING which Christ has commanded;" in other words, who rejects any one solitary *truth* which the church may have conceived to be taught in the Scriptures! Of course the church teaches only the interpretations and views of Scripture which she believes true, and to reject her interpretations of Scripture is "to reject the truth," at least in her judgment! To prove most conclusively that this is the very doctrine taught by Dr. P. and the U. P. Church, it is over and over again repeated, thus: "she (the church) may not *be silent* in relation to ANY ONE TRUTH which God has made known to her;" "she cannot without rendering herself liable to the charge of unfaithfulness, *connive* at the rejection of ANY ONE TRUTH;" "she should *enforce* the observance of *all* that Christ has commanded;" he means, of course, by excluding from the Lord's Supper all who do not subscribe to *every truth*, as she understands it, which the Bible contains!

"For," he adds, "the church is just as truly responsible to her exalted King for her *fidelity in ruling as in teaching—in enforcing* the laws of Christ's house as in giving instruction 'in the doctrine of the Apostles.'" "

And to render his meaning too plain to be misunderstood, he adds:

"Here is an individual who refuses to subscribe to that form of sound words which the church has adopted; and not only so, but testifies against it by professing adherence to another which *is in some degree* antagonistic to it." "Under these circumstances, to open to him the door of the kingdom

of heaven, and receive him into her fellowship, would be to render herself liable to the charge of unfaithfulness to him who requires her to declare the whole counsel of God ; and, by the *exercise of her authority*, to enforce the observance of *all things* whatsoever Christ has commanded."

In other words, the church is unfaithful to her divine trust if she neglect "to enforce the observance of all things commanded" by excluding from "the table of the Lord" every person who cannot adopt any and every truth which she professes to adopt.

The theory of "church fellowship" then, as taught and "enforced" by the United Presbyterian body, may be briefly stated as follows :

1. It is the right and solemn duty of the church to demand an assent to *every* statement of truth which she has comprised in her Confession of Faith and the Articles of her Testimony, from every person who seeks to commune with her at the Lord's table, or to receive adult baptism.

2. Not only so, but "the church may not be silent in relation to *any one truth* which God has made known to her," or as otherwise expressed, "she has no right to receive into her fellowship one who rejects the truth, or refuses to observe *anything*," or "rejects *any one truth* contained in the revelation of the will of God," because this would be "to connive at the rejection of some truth;" it would be "to betray her trust" to receive into her fellowship "one who refuses to observe *something* which Christ has commanded;" *i. e.* of course, as the church *interprets* those commands.

Such is the close communion doctrine as taught and enforced (to some extent at least,) by the U. P. body. The only exception made is that of "babes in Christ, who, we are told, may be unable to give an intelligent assent to some of the more sublime doctrines of the creed."* But even of these "babes," it is not plainly said that their errors and ignorance are to be *connived at*. It is an important question: would not the church incur "the guilt of unfaithfulness to her divine Lord," by refusing or neglecting to enforce the observance (upon these "babes,") of *all* that Christ has commanded in his word? Even in the case of these "babes," the most that is plainly conceded by Dr. P. is, that the church should "take them kindly by the hand, and assist and encourage them in their efforts to acquire a knowledge of *the truth*." But this is a very different thing from admitting them to the communion of the Lord's Supper. "To take these 'babes' kindly by the hand," and endeavor to remove their ignorance and errors, is a very obvious duty. But the real question is this: previous to their receiving "a knowledge of the truth," are they to be admitted to the Lord's table? Would not the church, on U. P. principles, "render herself liable to the charge of unfaithfulness and of *conniving* at the rejection of some truth," by admitting these "babes" while unable to assent to "some of the more sublime doctrines of the creed." It is a question too of great importance, *how long* this *infantile* state may be supposed to last—to months, or years? or to a

* Dr. P. on Church Fellowship, pp. 50, 51.

whole life-time? This is a point of much interest, because in the sense intended, "babes" may be found among the class of "three score and ten," *i. e.* persons who through a long life have continued unable to give an intelligent assent to some of "the more *sublime* doctrines of the creed." Must the doctrine and discipline of the U. P. Church remain in abeyance on their account? This point, however, is settled by the "Testimony," which says, "No Christian should be *excluded* from the sealing ordinances, simply because of the weakness of his faith, * * * or because of difficulties that may be in his mind in relation *to some points* connected with the profession of the church."* What these "some points" are, we are not left in doubt. The natural interpretation is, "any points in the Confession and Testimony." But is not this "to *connive* at the rejection of the truth?" Is not this "unfaithfulness in enforcing *all* that Christ has commanded?" "Is it not to be silent in enforcing *some truth* which God has made known to the church?" Especially if these persons continue in their *infantile* state for years, is this true.

To our mind, there does appear to be a want of perfect logical consistency in the several deliverances of these brethren. Dr. P. describes "babes" who should be "taken by the hand," and as we infer, received to membership, as those who dissent from certain "sublime doctrines." But the "Testimony" as expounded by the U. P. Assembly,* requires "adherence" to the

* Testimony, p. 39. * Act of Assembly, *Evan. Repository*, July, 1860.

eighteen "Declarations of the Testimony," as well as to the thirty-three doctrinal chapters of the Confession. This of course takes a much wider sweep than certain of "the more sublime doctrines." Again, Dr. P. proclaims large indulgence in favor of certain errors only in "the more *sublime* doctrines," and to all "babes" who manifest "a disposition to have their difficulties removed and to receive instruction, and who demean themselves in an orderly and peaceable manner." But the Assembly enjoins judicial process against all such "violations of law" as are wantonly persisted in; and this in the case not only of disbelief of sublime doctrines, but also of *the whole body* of divinity, and of rites, ceremonies and usages, inculcated in the "Testimony." And this latter view appears to be the received and acknowledged teaching of the United Presbyterian Church.

It is moreover obvious, that notwithstanding the extremely rigid theory taught by these brethren, they are not able or not willing to execute their own ordinances. Such "babes" as have been described, are no doubt quite common. In every congregation there will probably be found examples of these *infantile* dissenters, who through *a long life*, provided they are not guilty of "wanton practical violation of the Confession and Declarations of the Testimony," are constantly admitted to sealing ordinances, and even in the worst cases, "judicial process is to be the last resort." But such a state of congregational diversity and antagonism of sentiment is quite inconsistent with the doc-

trine that "union is the basis of communion."* If such a state of things in any church is not the same as "conniving at the rejection of truth," "a betrayal of trust," as Dr. P. expresses it, we are at a loss to know what would be a virtual abandonment of the rigid theory of "close communion." Thus even its authors are compelled to shrink from executing in detail their own avowed theory.

We have thus endeavored to state the "close communion" theory as it is taught by its advocates in their accredited standards and other writings. But it may be inquired, "Do you wish to lay aside church creeds?" By no means. That is not the question. The question is, has the church a right to require the adoption of all the minute points in a voluminous creed, of every one who applies for admission to the Lord's table? Creeds we hold are absolutely necessary, but not for such purposes. Again, it may be inquired, "Is not the church bound to teach the whole counsel of God, 'all that Christ has commanded;' or can she, without betraying her trust, 'be silent in relation to *any one truth* which God has made known to her?" We reply, the church is bound in faithfulness to her Divine Head, to teach all that Christ has taught in his Word. There is no dispute on that point. But the question before us is this, "Is the church bound to require of every applicant an assent to all the doctrines and usages taught in the Scriptures, or believed to be taught there, before she can scripturally admit him to

* Dr. P. on Church Fellowship.

the communion table." Or to confine our view to a more limited statement, "Is the U. P. Church bound in fidelity to her trust and to Christ, to require an assent to all the doctrines of the Westminster Confession, as also to all the 'declarations' of the 'Testimony,' of each and every one whom she admits to the Lord's table?" These are the points to be settled in this discussion. Again, it is inquired, "Do you wish to have the sealing ordinances of the church thrown open to all that *call themselves Christians?*"* By no means. That would indeed be a "desecration of these ordinances," as has been well observed. The safe scriptural doctrine of "catholic communion," is correctly stated in the following article of the "Basis of Union formed by the Secession and Relief Churches of Scotland," as reported in the *Evangelical Repository* for August, 1847. It is the sixth article :

"That with regard to those ministers and sessions who think that the second section of the 26th chapter of the Confession of Faith authorizes free communion, that is, not loose or indiscriminate communion, but the occasional admission to fellowship in the Lord's Supper of persons respecting whose character satisfactory evidence has been obtained, though belonging to other religious denominations—this church allows them what they enjoyed in their separate communions—the right of acting on their conscientious convictions."

This we take to be the safe and very consistent theory of the Holy Scriptures; *i. e.* "not loose and indiscriminate communion," extended to all who "call

*This objection is made editorially in the *United Presbyterian* paper of January 27th, 1864.

themselves Christians ;” but communion with those of “ whose Christian character *satisfactory evidence* has been obtained.” This “ evidence of Christian character” may be either personal knowledge, or it may be founded in an acquaintance with the correct, orderly scriptural usages of the denomination to which the applicant belongs ; or, it may consist of the recommendation of those of whose Christian integrity we have assurance from any other sources, &c. The editors of the *United Presbyterian* will thus perceive that they themselves “ have *caricatured* the principle they oppose,” *i. e.* by charging it with the absurdity of admitting to the Lord’s table “ all who *call themselves* Christians.” If there be one or more sects who practice this “ loose and indiscriminate communion,” we willingly consign them to the tender mercies of Drs. Kerr and Easton.

Having thus by a careful analysis of the official statements of the U. P. body, ascertained their precise views, we proceed to test their truth by Scripture and reason.

It may be proper to add, that though the discussion will have special reference to the views of our U. P. brethren, the argument will bear equally upon the exclusiveness of some other Christian denominations. Nor can we more appropriately close this chapter than with the following quotations from two leading Baptists, the first from the author of the “ *Pilgrim’s Progress*,” the second from the pen of the eloquent Robert Hall. Says Bunyan—

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

“There is no position,” says Hall, “in the whole compass of theology, of the truth of which I feel a stronger persuasion, than that no man, or set of men, is entitled to prescribe, as an indispensable condition of communion, what the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation.”

CHAPTER II.

A HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE SUBJECT.

WHAT saith the Scripture? Has the adorable Head of the Church taught the doctrine of close communion? While we cheerfully recognize the holy oracles as the authority of ultimate appeal, it may perhaps aid our investigations as to the meaning of Scripture, to inquire, first, what have been the views of those eminent men who have been at different periods greatly honored of God as the instruments of establishing or extending his church? How have they interpreted the revealed will of Heaven on these topics, and what has been their practice in accordance with those views?

1. CALVIN. It would be mere impertinence to ask or assign a reason why this name should head the list. Surely the greatest of the Reformers understood his own system. The following extract is from one of

his letters to Archbishop Cramer of the Episcopal Church, dated Geneva. April. 1552 :*

“ But this also is to be reckoned among the greatest evils of our time, that the churches are so estranged from each other that scarcely the common intercourse of society has place among them; much *less that holy communion* of the members of Christ, which all persons profess with their lips, though few sincerely honor it in their practice.” * * *
 “ As far as I am concerned, if I can be of any service, I shall not shrink from crossing ten seas, if need be, for that object. When the object sought after is the agreement of learned men, gravely considered and well framed according to the standard of Scripture, by whom churches that would otherwise be far separated from each other may be made to unite; I do not consider it right for me to shrink from any labors or difficulties.”

Let it be observed, that Episcopacy was established in England at the date of this letter, and these are the sentiments of a man who believed that Presbyterianism was of divine right, because clearly taught in the word of God. Referring to this letter, and quoting largely from “ Calvin’s Institutes” to prove the same doctrine, Dr. J. M. Mason, a prince among the Associate Reformed, adds—“ The voice of Calvin on this subject was the general voice of the people of God in that age.” †
 “ Nothing was further from his meaning than that the respective members of the (Protestant) churches would not commune with each other in all Christian ordinances as they had opportunity. Repugnancies on

* See the whole letter as lately published by the “ Parker Society” in England.

† Plea for Sac. Communion, p. 182.

that head were then confined to the *Lutherans and Anabaptists.*" "Calvin would have preferred a *joint-confession* as the bond of visible union and communion."* Diversities of sentiment not affecting the substance of religion, while there was union in the great essentials. faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance toward God. &c., were not considered as a scriptural bar to communion at the Lord's table. Such were the common sentiments of the Reformers generally, in the days of Calvin.

Again, when banished from Geneva by the state authorities, and unworthy persons put in his place. Calvin writes to Pignæus in regard to the lawfulness of communing with the Genevan churches. where errors were taught, as follows:

"Wherever Christ rules, there is a church, even if errors exist. There is a church wherever the truth is preached. and on this it stands as on a base. Even if the doctrine is mingled with some errors, I AM SATISFIED IF FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE IS MAINTAINED. And thus even in Geneva may the pious and the orthodox participate in the sacraments. Those who have a good conscience need not absent themselves on account of the abuses of others, provided the communion be solemnized agreeably to the Lord's word." He adds: "I will never be induced to be *the author of a schism*, until I shall have been convinced that the church has *undeniably departed from the worship of God and the preaching of his word.*"

Such were the views of the great Reformer of Geneva who has sometimes been called, though in a limited

* *Ibid.* p. 189.

sense, the father of Presbyterianism. In these large and liberal sentiments he harmonized with "the common voice of the people of God of that age"—as we are assured by men of the greatest intellect and most extensive learning. Such is the voice of history at the period of the Reformation.

2. JOHN KNOX AND OTHERS. Without troubling the reader with extended quotations to prove that the brightest and best of Scotland's early worthies were of the same mind with Calvin, it may suffice to present the following extract from the "Draught of an Overture," the work of a committee consisting of Dr. JOHN MASON (father of Dr. J. M. Mason), ROBERT ANNAN and JOHN SMITH, and which was prepared and published by order of the Associate Reformed Synod, May 16, 1787 :

"Our fathers, say this committee, never thought of pronouncing their communion unclean; *i. e.* the communion of regular, and orderly Protestant churches who have clearly expressed their orthodoxy in their confessions of faith, adhere thereto, and walk in the order of the gospel, although differing in some external modes and forms. Far less did they (our fathers) ever think of totally rejecting it. KNOX held communion with the foreign churches; WELSH with the Protestant church of France; MONCRIEF with the Church of Holland, when he studied at Leyden; RENWICK received ordination in the Church of Holland; and it is a fact that the Scottish commissioners *Rutherford, Henderson, Bailey*, and others, held communion with their brethren in England, while they attended the Westminster Assembly."

And referring to the original Seceders in Scotland.

the committee say:—"It was with the greatest reluctance the ministers of *the association* withdrew from the Established Church of Scotland." * * * "They still declared that they meant no separation from the Church of Scotland, but only from a corrupt party in that church; and they held communion with several ministers of that church for some years after their separation." "On the whole, add the committee, we never can, and never will embrace the principle that all the Protestant churches, *except our own party*, are unfit for Christian or holy communion." Again: "That a temporary, or what is called occasional communion with sister churches, may lawfully in some instances take place, is what no man of understanding who is not much pinched to support some favorite and false hypothesis, will deny." "We will not pretend to unchurch all the Protestant churches, or say that their communion is so impure that it would contaminate us to touch, taste or handle it in any case." Such, according to this committee, were the doctrine and practice of Knox, Henderson, Welsh, Moncrief and their noble peers of the early Church of Scotland.

3. Coming down to a later period, we find the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passing the following: "An Act concerning the receiving of strangers into church communion, and baptizing their children."* This act was adopted in May, 1711, and reads as follows:

"The General Assembly considering that all due encour-

* Acts of the G. A. of the Ch. of Scotland, p. 22, 23.

agement ought to be given to persons educated in the Protestant churches, who have come, or may come, to reside in this country, and may incline to join in communion with this church: *Therefore*, they hereby recommend to all ministers in whose parishes any such strangers may happen to reside, to show all tenderness to them when they come to desire the benefit of *scaling ordinances*. And if such strangers, being free of scandal, and professing their faith in Christ and obedience to him, shall desire baptism to their children, ministers shall cheerfully comply with their desire in administering the sacrament of baptism to their children, upon the parents engaging to educate them in the fear of God and knowledge of the principles of the Reformed Protestant religion."

Here let it be observed, that the whole extent of the requirements of this act is simply "a credible profession of faith in Christ and obedience to him," and a promise to educate their children—how? In the precise belief of *every doctrinal truth*, and every item of worship and order taught by the Church of Scotland? No; but "according to the *principles* of the Reformed Protestant religion," whether as taught in Holland, France or elsewhere.

From this and other forms of deliverance we learn how the venerable mother Church of Scotland viewed the subject of occasional communion:

(1.) "This act was passed for the purpose of facilitating communion with strangers who did not even *pretend to join* the Church of Scotland as complete members."

(2.) "The Church of Scotland at this period required nothing as a term of full communion with her

but what was common to the principles of the Reformed religion."

(3.) "A member of any Reformed Church in any part of the world, not acting unworthy of his profession, was entitled, *upon that ground*, to an equal participation with her own members in her most sacred, *i. e.* in her sealing ordinances."*

(4.) This shows how that venerable church understood the 26th article of her Confession, viz.: "Saints by profession are bound to maintain * * * communion in the worship of God, * * * * which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is *to be extended to all those* who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus." This article was framed by the Westminster Assembly, and still remains as a part of the adopted standards of the United Presbyterian Church in this country. That these brethren, by adopting their "close communion" theory, have greatly departed from "the old paths" in which our fathers walked — especially that they have misinterpreted this article of Westminster faith, can scarcely admit of a serious doubt.

4. THE FATHERS AND FOUNDERS of the Associate Reformed Church. From a historical sketch of that body "prepared by request of the General Synod," we learn that chief among these fathers were Dr. John Mason and Robert Annan, "men acknowledged to have been eminent for talents and learning."† Of these, in-

* These quotations are from Mason's Plea, p. 294.

† See *United Presbyterian of Cincinnati*, for 1850, pp. 145, 146.

cluding several others, Dr. M'Dill says, "They gave a character to the Associate Reformed Church for years," and he adds, "They placed the communion of saints as nearly on the true basis as we may expect soon to see it placed—on the only basis on which *catholic communion* can ever exist, if it be really what it should be, the communion of saints by profession."* And of the "Overture" quoted under our previous section, Dr. M'D. says, "I would invite the attention of brethren, ministers, elders and people, to this publication."†

In addition to the extracts already made from this "Overture," the doctrine of "occasional communion" is carefully guarded, thus: "By occasional communion we do not mean the admitting to our communion a person whom it would be sinful to continue in it, but a person who from his local circumstances cannot continue in it." Again: "It would be an unreasonable extension * * * to make it include *all pretenders to Christianity.*" "We would guard against the mistake as if we were pleading for a promiscuous or unhallowed communion."

Again, say the committee: "Nor is the question concerning any church or religious society whatsoever, that would impose any sinful terms of communion; or with whom even a temporary communion would involve us in a direct or implied apostasy from the testimony

* *Christian Instructor*, for 1855, p. 158.

† The "Overture" has been republished within a few years by Dr. M'Dill, and can be had in this city.

of Jesus and that holy profession of his name to which we have attained. Wherever even a temporary communion would do this, it ought to be avoided."

Again: "ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS have communion in Christ the Head." "They have all communion with God the Father, with Christ, and with each other in the truth. They all think as Christ thinks, on the *great foundation truths of the gospel*. They are all taught by the Spirit of God, who leads them into all truth." "Were it possible to get all true Christians throughout the world into one church, * * * there would be very little jarring among *them, probably none in the great truths and duties of the gospel.*"

From these extracts we learn the sort of *union* which these fathers proposed, viz., union in "the foundation-truths"—"the great truths and duties of the gospel." This is the "union" which they recognized as the "basis of communion." For they immediately add: "We must allow something to the different capacities of true Christians, their very various advances in knowledge, grace and holiness." "We may safely say, there is not a perfectly pure church on the face of the earth." And when the apostle addresses his first Epistle to the Corinthians, "to the church of God, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that *in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ*"—these fathers say the "apostle intended all such churches as that at Corinth, though several things were imperfect and wrong in it." Such were their divisions, saying, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Christ,—profanation of the Lord's Supper, &c.

The theory of communion taught by these "fathers" was evidently very different from that of Dr. P. in "Church Fellowship," viz., "The church as a teacher may not be silent in relation to ANY ONE TRUTH"—"and she is just as truly responsible to her exalted King for her fidelity in *ruling* as in teaching, in *enforcing* the laws of Christ's house as in giving instruction"—and then it follows, "She has no more right to receive into her fellowship one who rejects the truth (he means "any one truth," as before) or refuses to observe ANY THING which Christ has commanded (he means, which the church *thinks* "he has commanded"), than she has to disregard the authority of her Lord in teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*

It is evident too that Dr. P's. theory is rigid in the extreme (if not utterly impracticable and absurd), compared with that taught by an able writer in the *United Presbyterian*,† thus: "The *essential elements* of that union which the Saviour contemplates (John 17: 20-23) and after which we should labor, * * * are agreement in the *fundamental principles* of gospel truth." "The apostle, he adds, adverts to differences existing in the church at his day (the churches of Corinth and Galatia, for example) *far greater* than those which separate the several Scottish Presbyterian churches in this country"—and he might have added, "far greater" than divide all other Presbyterian bodies. Yet, he adds, "the apostle does not encourage separation, nor even (in all cases) recommend discipline, but exhorts to forbearance." Well may the same able writer affirm,

* Church Fellowship, p. 41.

† For July, 1851, p. 110.

“It is chimerical to expect union on the principle of agreement in *every thing* (which seems to be Dr. P’s theory), and the framing of a basis of union on that principle will be found to be lost labor.”*

To return to the “Overture:” An additional proof that we have correctly understood the view maintained by the Associated Reformed fathers, is the fact, that when the union of the Reformed and Associate bodies was constituted, several ministers refused to enter it, alleging as one chief reason, that the new Synod had taught and adopted the theory of “Occasional Communion;” and they demanded that “the privilege be confined in all ordinary cases to the members of our own church.”† To this it was remarked, that the Associate Reformed Synod never meant to allow it but in “extraordinary cases.” This was the view of the Synod; but it does not prove that such was the doctrine taught by Messrs. Mason, Annan and Smith, who prepared the “Overture.” It was probably a difference of sentiment on this topic which prevented its judicial adoption by the Associate Reformed Synod; but a resolution, recommending the Overture, was passed in the year 1790, a few years later. How these fathers observed the strict “close communion” theory in their practice, will be next shown.

* *United Presbyterian*, 1851, p. 110, 111.

† See Annan’s Ruling Elder.

CHAPTER III.

HISTORICAL VIEW—(Continued.)

THE FATHERS IN PRACTICE. The "union, which is the basis of communion," according to the understanding of United Presbyterians, is expressed in the following terms: "The very fact of membership (in the church) implies an approbation of the principles of the church." "If they are professors at all, and if their membership constitutes them professors, they are professors of ALL ITS PRINCIPLES; and of course have come under an implied, if not an express obligation to maintain them."* The same Testimony "*declares that the church should not extend communion to those who refuse adherence to her profession*"—meaning of course "profession of *all* her principles," as quoted above. This is the *milder* form of the required "union, which is the basis of communion." We have before shown that both "Church Fellowship" and the "Testimony" require much more than this, viz., union in "*all the truths* which Christ has made it the duty of the church to teach and profess."† But we now propose to inquire into the practice of the "Fathers" in relation to the former limited and milder view, viz., "union in *all the principles* of the church."

One of these "principles" of union and communion

* Testimony, p. 35.

† Testimony, p. 37.

of course is “*the Book of Psalms exclusively.*” Among the reasons given in the Testimony is this: “This inspired collection of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,” “which God has given to his church, are to be sung in his worship to the end of the world.” And in the argument we are told, “In making use of ANY THING ELSE, we are doing that for which we *have no warrant* and against the expressed will of God.”*

It is a fact familiar to all, that these brethren profess to make no use of any thing else “except the 150 psalms,” not even the numerous inspired songs of the other Scriptures. Was this the teaching and practice of “the fathers?” Listen to the Rev. ROBERT ANNAN, who was sole author of the “Overture:” “The congregation in Boston (of which he was pastor) were dissatisfied with the version of the Psalms used in the churches” (*i. e.* Rouse); “and Mr. A. had been constrained to introduce the version of Tate & Brady.”† Now what sort of a “version” was this of Tate & Brady? Was it at all more “true and literal” than the paraphrase of Dr. Watts? Judge from one or two specimens:

PROSE VERSION.]

TATE & BRADY.

He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet.

He left the beauteous realms of light,
Whilst heaven bowed down its awful head,
Beneath his feet substantial night
Was like a sable carpet spread.

And he rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. Ps. 18:9, 10.

The chariot of the King of kings,
Which active troops of angels drew,
On a strong tempest's rapid wings
With most amazing swiftness flew.

*Testimony, p. 46.

† Ruling Elder, p. 85, written and published by the Rev. Robert Annan. The versification of Tate & Brady was published in England about 1690.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Ps. 110: 3.

Thee in thy power's triumphant day
The willing people SHALL obey,
And when thy rising beams they
view,

Shall, all redeemed from error's night,
Appear more numerous and bright
Than crystal drops of morning dew.

I am weak, O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed.

Ps. 6: 2.

Touched by thy quickening power,
My load of guilt I feel;
The wounds thy Spirit hath unclosed
O let that Spirit heal.

We ask attention to the "gospel turns" in the last verse. Dr. Watts himself could hardly have been more guilty of "adding to the word of God"—attempting to mend it, &c., &c.

Truly a *mortal sin* this "father" must have committed! Where was his dread of the terrible fate of Nadab and Abihu! There was evidently no such fear before his eyes. "We testify," say these brethren, "for the book of Psalms in a faithful translation." But Tate & Brady is no more a "faithful translation" than Dr. Watts! "We testify," again they say, "against a loose paraphrase of these psalms." But Tate & Brady is quite as "loose" a paraphrase as Dr. Watts—at least in most of the psalms! But how long will it be before Dr. P. or Dr. K. or any other of these doctors of the "Testimony," will be found making such a record of himself, viz., "that his congregation, being dissatisfied with Rouse, he had been constrained to introduce the version of Dr. Watts"!! What a prodigious stir such an announcement would create among United Presbyterians! How soon would the thunders of discipline be leveled at the author of such a profane "sacrifice of a pig instead of a kid." Yet it is a fact

recorded by Mr. Annan, that the only discipline inflicted upon him by the Associate Reformed Synod, was this: their clerk was directed to transmit to the dissatisfied Bostonians the following resolution:

“That the congregation should, if Mr. Annan continued with them, admit the version of the Psalms used, and mode of singing God’s praise practiced in the Church of Scotland.”*

This was the extent of the penalty for the grievous crime of laying aside “an inspired psalmody” and “substituting” the compositions of uninspired men! And the punishment, be it observed, was inflicted not upon Mr. Annan, but upon his congregation.†

Now the ministerial offender in this case was certainly not one of the “babes” who, as Dr. P. expresses it, “are unable to give an intelligent assent to some of the more *sublime* doctrines of the creed.”‡ This was not the ground on which he was treated with such great indulgence. On the contrary, Mr. Annan is acknowledged by all to have been one of the most eminent of the original founders of the Associate Reformed Church. And as he was the penman of the “Overture”—Mason and Smith being joined with him in committee—we naturally look into that elaborate vindication of sound doctrinal Presbyterianism to ascertain whether the theory of himself and his associates differed essentially from his practice. In the 21st chapter, on *Religious Worship*, he says, “We are not afraid to assert and vindicate *the propriety* (not the

* Ruling Elder, p. 86.

† The Rev. McCune is not likely to escape so easily.

‡ Ch. Fellowship, p. 51.

exclusive necessity) of using the psalms and *songs* of the Old Testament in the praises of God." The next page shows what *songs* of the Old Testament he meant : "We are extremely sorry to have observed a growing disrelish in some churches for the Psalms of David and *other songs* of Scripture." This hits Dr. P. and his exclusive brethren a hard blow. But he is still more explicit, as follows :

"And we do not mean to say that *hymns of human composition* may not be lawfully used in any case whatever. But we think it safest generally to adhere to the scriptural psalmody"*—in other words, "to the *Psalms of David and other songs* of Scripture."

Such was the theory of religious worship, agreeably to which Mr. Annan, yielding to the wishes of the people of his charge, laid aside Rouse and put in its place Tate & Brady ; or, being interpreted by the U. P. "Testimony," laid aside an "inspired psalmody," and substituted "loose paraphrases," "the compositions of uninspired men !" And the Associate Reformed Synod censured neither the doctrine of the "Overture," nor the practice of its author ! A man of such "loose principles" could not now be admitted to the communion of the U. P. Church, much less into her pulpits !

It is but a lame evasion of this virtual sanction by the committee of the "Overture" of "hymns of human composition," to allege the meaning to be, that such hymns may sometimes be "read as pious poems." Surely this is to give the author of the Overture, and other members of a very intelligent committee, small

* Overture, pp. 97, 98.

credit for sense—for it supposes that they thought it needful to teach the people the “lawfulness of reading a pious poem!!” Could they have been the subjects of so great simplicity? Nor is it more to the purpose to allege that the committee merely mean that “hymns of human composition” may “lawfully be used in learning to sing.” It is sufficient to reply that the Overture is speaking of “religious worship,” not of “learning to sing.” And certainly Mr. Annan’s congregation was not merely “learning to sing.”

If anything further were necessary to demonstrate the precise meaning of the author and approvers of “the Overture,” we find it on page 8 of that treatise.

The writer says: “We can boldly declare there is not a *single point* of divine truth, in doctrine, *worship*, discipline and government, appertaining to the Reformed Church of Scotland, for which we do not contend.”

Now the writer of the Overture well knew that the “Reformed Church of Scotland” had authorized and used such “hymns of human composition” as those two by Addison, commencing: “When all thy mercies, O my God,” and “The spacious firmament on high,” as also several others of the same sort. He knew also that the Scottish General Assembly had authorized sixty-seven hymns called “paraphrases.” These it would be ridiculous to speak of as “inspired compositions.” They are founded on passages of the other Scriptures than the Psalms, but are not versions or translations at all. But the author of the Overture

says, there is not "a single point" in the matter of *worship*, as ordered by the Reformed Church of Scotland, for which "he does not contend." Of course he would *contend* for "the hymns and paraphrases" usually bound with the Psalms.

From these historical facts, what then are the obvious conclusions?

1. The views of Messrs. Annan, Mason and Smith on the subject of "close communion," were demonstrably very different from those of the U. P. brethren and the "Testimony." Both their doctrine and practice are in broad contrast with those of Dr. P. and these brethren.

2. If these "fathers" were now alive and members of the U. P. Church, they could not consistently be retained in it. The "Testimony" gives the reason, *viz.*, "If *professors at all*, and if their membership constitutes them professors, they are professors of *all its* (the church's) *principles*; and of course, have come under an implied, if not an express obligation to maintain them."* But the "principle of the book of Psalms exclusively," these fathers neither taught nor practiced. Not only "the other songs of Scripture," but worse than all, even "hymns of human composition," they pronounce not unlawful in some cases. And one of them, at least, practiced accordingly,

3. The remarkable facts above stated prove clearly that the wisest and best of the men who formed the Associate Reformed body, gave a very liberal construction to the article on Psalmody in their own

* See pp. 37, 38.

standards. Their "Directory for Worship" expressly states: "Nor shall any composure, *merely human*, be sung in any of the Associate Reformed Churches."* But Mason, Annan and Smith plainly intimate that such human composures may lawfully be sung, if not "in the A. R. churches," at least in other places of worship. Whether "Tate & Brady" was a merely human composition, we say not. And about ten years later (1796), in another publication illustrating the "government, worship and discipline of the A. R. Church, and which was sent down to the presbyteries for examination," it is said: "Besides which (the Psalms) *other songs* of Scripture may be added to the system of Psalmody, as the judicatories may find it for edification." Who were the authors of this paper, we are not informed. Though not mentioning "merely human composures," it does approve "other songs of Scripture" besides the 150 Psalms. The authors of this document, probably some of "the fathers" of the church, had been anticipated long previously by Messrs. Mason, Annan and Smith in their "Overture." And Mr. Annan, as we have seen, had used in his church in Boston such "loose paraphrases" as were little, if at all, more deserving of the name "inspired" than evangelical "hymns of human composition" deserve to be called "inspired."

4. If such were the large views, and such the acknowledged practice of these fathers and founders of the Associated Reformed Church, we may readily conclude that they did not require of others in order to

* Book 3, chap. 2.

be received to communion, *more than they themselves believed and practiced*. Thus it is demonstrated that such men could not assume the profession of Christianity in the United Presbyterian Church, for the plain reason that they could not be “professors of ALL its principles,” ergo, saith the Testimony, they could not be “professors at all.” Indeed, how could they be received to communion, since “in making use of ANY THING ELSE” (besides the 150 Psalms), they “were doing that for which they had no divine warrant, and against *the expressed will of God*.” So teacheth the “Testimony.”* Some further facts and illustrations of these truths are deferred to the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORICAL VIEW—(Concluded).

WE PROCEED with the evidence of the “fathers” against “close communion,” as developed in the formal proceedings of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church. This testimony is the more conclusive, because it was given, in part at least, whilst the Rev. John T. Pressly, the author of “Church Fellowship,” was a minister of that church. We shall show hereafter, from his own written declarations, that his views of “close communion,” and some other topics, were then the antipodes of his present notions.

*“This system * * * should be used exclusively.” So says Dr. Kerr, *U. P. Quarterly*, p. 135, Jan. 1860.

In the year 1811, the A. R. Synod met in Philadelphia, and the following resolution was moved and seconded, viz :

“ WHEREAS, it appears that Dr. J. M. Mason and Messrs. Matthews and Clark have joined in the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper with the Presbyterian Church; and whereas, it also appears that the Rev. John M. Mason has ministerially joined with said (Presbyterian) church in the use of Psalms, the composition of which is merely human, all which being contrary to the established order of the A. R. Church, and having a tendency to injure the cause of the Redeemer in their hands; therefore,

“ *Resolved*, That the Synod do declare their decided disapprobation of the deportment of said brethren in the premises, and command them to return to the established order of the church.”

Such was the resolution of censure; and in the final action, *one person*, besides the mover and seconder, voted *aye*. The *nays* were thirteen. Two were silent. This was negative testimony, but we have something still more decisive. A few days afterward the following resolution was presented :

“ WHEREAS, a diversity of judgment and practice has been found to exist among the ministers and members of this church, relative to the application of the doctrine of the Confession of Faith concerning the communion of saints; and whereas, the course of correct proceedings in this matter must depend in a great measure upon circumstances which cannot be provided for by any general rule; therefore,

“*Resolved*, That the judicatories, ministers and members of this church be, and they hereby are entreated and required, to exercise mutual forbearance in the premises; and in the use of their discretion to observe mutual tenderness and brotherly love, studying to avoid whatever may be contrary thereto; and giving especial heed to the preservation of sound and efficient discipline.”

This resolution was passed almost unanimously, there being only *three* votes against it.

Again, in 1814, resolutions of similar import, enjoining mutual forbearance, &c., were before the A. R. Synod, at Greencastle. They are more full than that adopted in 1811, and especially guard against any “practice which (as they express it) throws open the door to promiscuous communion with all *who rank under the general denomination of Christians*, or to the admission of erroneous doctrine into our pulpits.” These excellent resolutions were largely discussed, but for some reason “were laid over for future action.”

So also in 1816, measures were taken toward forming a closer union with the Dutch Reformed body. Among the articles agreed upon by committees of the two churches, was one which proposed to receive their respective ministers, candidates for the ministry and private members, *to free and full communion* as the Lord shall afford opportunity, * * * admitting them to sacramental fellowship.” Certainly this is not the same theory of communion which requires “pro-

fession of ALL *the principles* of the U. P. Church,"—in order to become "professors at all."*

But it is an important inquiry, where were "the fathers" during these proceedings? Especially what was the course pursued by such leading ministers as the members of the Committee on the "Overture" and others of like standing? Mason, the elder, had gone to his reward; and of Smith we know nothing further. But Mr. Annan lived through all these *enormities*, this declension in church discipline, "his eye not dim, nor his natural force abated." Did he enter his solemn protest against these sad departures from primitive purity, and which "gave such countenance to the corruptions of the doctrines and institutions of Christ?"† The "father" who published concerning himself that he had so far yielded to the *dissatisfaction* of his congregation as to drop "an inspired psalmody," viz., Rouse's, and adopt an *uninspired* one (Tate & Brady), ‡ was not likely to make opposition to any such movements. Indeed, so early as 1802, the Rev. E. Dickey, pastor at Oxford, Pa., writes to Dr. Mason concerning a "union between our (the A. R.) Synod and the O. S. General Assembly: It is the opinion of Mr. Annan, which he has openly expressed, and frequently to me in private conversation, that such a union ought to be brought about."‡

Nor should it be forgotten that this series of acts in favor of "catholic communion," extending from 1811 to 1816, preceded by several years the separation of a

* See the Testimony, p. 37.

† Testimony, p. 34.

‡ Life of Mason, p. 420.

number of the presbyteries composing the General Synod of the A. R. Church. Formed in 1782, it was not till 1820 the Synod of Scioto, being dissatisfied with these proceedings, withdrew from the General Synod. And it was not until the year 1821 that the Synod of the Carolinas erected itself into an independent body. It was to this latter Synod the Rev. John T. Pressly, now the "most *straitest*" of all close communionists, and author of "Church Fellowship," belonged. The avowed grounds of this dismemberment, including the separation "of the Synod of the Carolinas" from the General Synod, were "differences on the subjects of *communion and psalmody*." The General Synod had countenanced "a latitude in these particulars" which the Carolina Synod "regarded as unscriptural, and subversive of purity and order."* The part which the venerable author of "Church Fellowship" appears to have taken in this struggle for "purity and order," will now be shown.

6. Testimony against "close communion," by REV. JOHN T. PRESSLY.

In the year 1818, only three years before "the Synod of the Carolinas" renounced the General Synod and became independent, this gentleman was residing at Abbeville, S. C. From a letter written to his former preceptor, Dr. J. M. Mason, we make the following extracts, having a very direct relation to the troubles, the latitudinarian principles and practices which threatened to divide the General Synod. After informing Dr.

* Historical Sketch of the A. R. Ch., *United Pres.*, Aug. 1850, p. 147.

Mason of the church of which he had become pastor, he proceeds :

“I have some trouble occasionally with *extremely good people*, (the italics are his,) who have great attachment to what they term the ‘good old way,’ but which might as fitly be called ‘*the traditions of the elders.*’ There are three bones of contention which have already been often picked, but yet are not likely to be laid aside till some of our fathers are removed to the land of silence, viz., Is it lawful to omit the observance of a fast preparatory to the Lord’s Supper? Is it scriptural to extend our Christian fellowship beyond the limits of our own church? Is it right to use any other than a *literal* version of David’s Psalms in public praise to God?”

Observe the contemptuous style in which Dr. P. could then speak of these “traditions of the elders,” and “the *extremely good people*” who gave him “trouble” on these points. He continues :

“When I inform you that it has been customary on sacramental occasions, to hear those anathematized who would dare to believe the affirmative on either of these points, you will be prepared to understand somewhat of the spirit which we have to meet. A large portion of this congregation, however, have searched the Scriptures, and think rationally on these subjects.”

It thus appears, that “the extremely good people” who did not “think rationally on these topics,” were only a minority of his charge. But we have something still more to the present purpose :

“Some time in the spring of this year, I commenced an exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians, not with any intention to enter upon controversial points, but because this Epistle abounds with rich gospel truth, in the first place clearly

established, and then applied to practice. I soon found that the principle of the church's unity occupies a conspicuous place in the doctrinal part. This (the church's unity,) being admitted, the doctrine of CATHOLIC COMMUNION seemed to be an irresistible consequence, and therefore I thought it my duty to utter it.*

This is plain enough. But it is sad to reflect that this stern advocate of "catholic communion" was but as "a light shiuing in a dark place," for he proceeds :

"Some of our brethren talk of a separation (*i. e.* from the General Synod). I have endeavored to remonstrate against it, and I believe not altogether in vain. I have urged them to send a representation to the General Synod, but to no purpose."**

We pause a moment to contemplate the relative position of the parties. The "fathers" of the General Synod had for a series of years given more and more countenance to "latitudinarian" principles on "communion and psalmody," as practiced in the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed Churches. During these departures from "purity and order," the Synod of the Carolinas became more and more discontented, until at length, forbearance ceasing to be a virtue, the ministers and other "extremely good people," not "thinking rationally on these subjects," sundered the ties that bound them to the general body, and set up for themselves. In the midst of the agitations and commotions which led to this result, the Rev. John T. Pressly wrote the letter from which we have made the foregoing extracts. How then could he consistently remain in that connexion for a number of years? He was

* See the whole of this remarkable epistle in "Mason's Life," pp. 489-488.

certainly not one of the "babes" toward whom he enjoins tenderness and forbearance. On the contrary, he answered minutely to the description which he himself has given, viz., of those "against whom the church should close the door of her fellowship;" "unruly and disobedient children," to whom "she should apply the rod!"* As he expresses it, he was one of those who "have embraced and hold principles which are opposed to the testimony of the church." "They assume the attitude of opposition to that form of sound words which the church has adopted as her testimony, &c.;" and therefore, he adds, "the church, as a prudent mother, * * * must deprive them of distinguishing privileges."

It is very plain, therefore, that in remaining for a length of time a member of the Synod of the Carolinas, whilst he was writing and acting in scornful and bitter opposition to their views, Dr. P. demonstrated that in his own case at least he was very willing to escape "the rod," though himself one of the "unruly and disobedient children!"

It is no apology for this conduct to allege that the Rev. J. T. P. was in strict harmony with the lax, latitudinarian principles of the General Synod, and thus protected by her broad shield; she being the representative and exponent of the whole A. R. body. This will not shed much light on the darkness, for the author of "Church Fellowship" assures us that the "fathers" of the General Synod, "who prepared and adopted our (his) ecclesiastical standards, * * *

* Church Fellowship, pp. 51, 52.

did not profess the doctrine of catholic communion." "As *honest men*, he adds, it is to be supposed their practice was in accordance with their principles." And then he quotes the Act of the General Synod of 1790, which speaks upon the subject of what he says is "now commonly designated as catholic communion," which "Act," he assures us, "expressly repudiates that scheme of communion (the catholic) as subversive of the very design of the Confession," or as otherwise worded, "having a natural tendency to promote error and extinguish zeal for many of the important truths of the gospel." Now this "Act" was of date 1790, and here was the Rev. J. T. P. in 1818 contemptuously setting at nought the "Act of the General Synod," as well as the common voice of his own particular Synod, and in no mild or measured terms avowing that his "practice was not in accordance with his principles"—principles adopted under the solemn obligations of ordination vows. Is not this strange, very strange?

From these facts it appears an irresistible conclusion, not only that the author of "Church Fellowship" was at that time a decided and zealous (we had almost said, *violent*) advocate of "catholic communion"—not only was he a contemner of the doctrine of "close communion," denouncing it as the feeble device of those who did not "think rationally"—but more than this; by remaining for years afterward a member in full communion with the Carolina Synod, he practically ignored and trampled on the doctrine which he now teaches, the doctrine of the "Testimony," viz., "If

they are professors at all, and if their membership constitutes them professors, they are professors of ALL its (the church's) principles." By his own showing, he was *no such member* either of the particular or the General Synod.

More than this: we are assured by the author of "Church Fellowship," that "the church has *no right* to receive into her fellowship one who rejects the truth," "*any one truth* which the God of the Bible has made known to her." "For she must teach faithfully all under her control to believe and observe ALL THINGS whatsoever Christ has commanded," and "she is just and truly responsible to her exalted King in *ruling* as in teaching, in ENFORCING THE LAWS of Christ's house, as in giving instruction." And he further represents any neglect on the part of the church to carry out these principles, as "rendering herself liable to the charge of unfaithfulness;" for he says, "she cannot connive at the rejection of *any one truth* contained in the revelation of the will of God."* Such is the law of "union" in order to communion which Dr. P. now propounds. He does not mean merely that the church should require all her members to believe *every statement* taught in the Bible to be true, for none but infidels deny this. He obviously teaches that with the single exception of "babes," the "union which is the basis of communion," must be a union in every particular truth taught in the Scriptures, including of course the *interpretations* which the church puts upon

* See Church Fellowship, pp. 40, 41.

each of those truths. This the church must demand of every applicant for communion.

Now did ever any denomination of Christians, from Adam to the present day, attempt to enforce so impracticable and absurd a scheme of communion as this? And as to the author of "Church Fellowship" himself, we need not add, that while residing in South Carolina he treated such a scheme with the utmost contempt, and very justly denounced it as the creature of those who do not "think rationally on these subjects."

Such then is the voice of history in regard to the views of the leading minds of the Associate Reformed Church, on the subject of catholic communion. The "fathers" of that body, no less than some of the "sons," have evidently left on record a decided testimony against the extremely rigid theory of communion taught by the United Presbyterian Church. We next call witnesses in opposition to "close communion," from the Associate body, one of the two branches which united to form the U. P. Church.

7. Certain FATHERS *and others* of the Associate Church. We find among the "Declarations" of the Testimony, to which "an adherence is required of those seeking communion with us," the sin of slaveholding, which is pronounced "a violation of the laws of God, and contrary both to the letter and spirit of Christianity." But if it be proper and obligatory upon a "faithful" church to enforce this "Declaration" by refusing membership to all who do not adhere to it, it is manifestly no less a violation of

“purity and order” to *retain* such persons in communion as openly reject it. For, says “Church Fellowship,” “*those only* should be received into her fellowship whom the church is bound to receive into her membership.” Now, if such as reject the “declaration on slaveholding” could not be received, could they be *retained* in fellowship without grievous apostasy from the truth and order of Christ’s house? Certainly not, for the “Testimony” expressly states that “slaveholding is a sin, and consequently a *disqualification* for membership,” and, of course, the same is true of those who apologize for this sin and plead for its toleration among the members of the church. Such is the theory of close communion as taught by the United Presbyterian Church in relation to slaveholding. We proceed to show that it was not the theory of the Associate body.

In the *Evangelical Repository*,* the organ of the Associate Church, appeared the following statements:

“The last prominent and direct act of our supreme church judicature (the Associate Synod) condemning slavery and making it a term of communion in our church, was passed at Canonsburg, May 20th, 1831. Against *this act* of Synod, six fathers and brethren deemed it their duty to enter their solemn *protest*. ‘A Protest,’ we are told in our book of discipline, ‘is a more solemn declaration [than a *dissent*] of the nature of an oath, of deliberate disagreement with a decision of a court, testifying against it as an erroneous judgment,’ &c. The protest of these six fathers and brethren, with their reasons, was laid before Synod, at the next annual meeting, after one year’s opportunity for deliberation.”

* For Jan. 1848.

This *protest* of the "nature of an oath," was signed by Messrs. Andrew Herron, James Ramsey, James Adams, A. Anderson, Thomas Allison and William M. M'Elwee. Yet these six fathers and brethren were not excommunicated, but things went on just as before. They charge the Associate Synod, as the writer remarks, with doing in this Act against slavery, "what is not only *without a warrant in the word of God*, but what is *contrary to it*, and that to attempt to carry it into effect, would not only be *harsh and cruel* toward the negroes, but *highly unjust and injurious*." In view of this state of things, the writer then puts the following emphatic inquiries :

"Is this right or is it wrong? If right, why should we make any difficulty about closing a union with Christians of other denominations, where the disagreement is not more solemnly or strongly expressed, nor on any more important or practical points. The foundation of the protest is disagreement in judgment—difference in sentiment or opinion between the protestor and the court. Our Synod, by their practice, say then *that want of unanimity or agreement in opinion or sentiment is not a sufficient cause* to break off or interrupt church fellowship. If so, should it prevent it?"

But lest any one should suggest that this matter of slavery was not worth dividing about, the writer adds :

"Now I challenge any one to produce any other individual sin so frequently and so strongly condemned in the word of God as that of oppression. I am persuaded that it will not be found in those points of doctrine or practice that are or ever have been made grounds of difference between any of those denominations [now endeavoring to form an organic union.— I will go further, and say that I am not

aware of any such point of difference between *any of the denominations* holding the fundamental and leading doctrines of the Reformed Churches of Holland and Scotland, and probably I might add others."

Hence the inference is obvious that the Associate Synod tolerated among themselves men holding certain great errors, whilst at the same time they were testifying against and excluding from communion *large bodies of Christians for what are admitted to be "less errors."* Nor were these protestors obscure men; far from it. "They have nearly all," adds this writer, "been honored with the special confidence of the Synod. One was continued for *many years a professor of theology*, the authorized instructor of the principles of the church, to those preparing for the work of the ministry. Another was continued clerk to Synod, as long as he remained in the fellowship of the church. Another has been recently chosen by Synod to the office of *professor of theology*, and the other has been honored with the special confidence of Synod, to negotiate the terms of the proposed union. And not one of these has ever withdrawn his protest, or intimated to Synod a change of sentiment."

The conclusion to which the writer is led is then stated as follows:

"Now, to me it appears, and I think, to all who will take a candid view of this matter, that consistency both on the part of the Synod, and more especially on the part of these protesting brethren and fathers, would require them not to suffer matters of minor importance to prevent a union, so far as we are concerned, while we overlook matters

of the greatest importance. Or else, we should dismiss all attempts to unite with others, and set about reconciling these contradictory views among ourselves. Let us not 'be straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel.' "

Another illustration in the Associate Church, is brought to our notice in the following paragraph. Says the same writer :

" At the meeting of (the Associate) Synod held in Xenia, O., May, 1845, the question was raised whether Christians could, consistently with a proper discharge of their duty, vote for men of *known immoral character for civil offices*. A committee was appointed to bring in a report on this subject. This committee reported by their chairman, Mr. Joseph Seroggs, which report was read, considered, amended and adopted by the Synod, without a dissenting voice recorded against it. Hence it is to be regarded as expressing the principles of the Associate Church on that subject. The report will be found at large in the *Evangelical Repository*, vol. 4, pp. 36, 37."

This solemn act of the Associate Synod, we are assured, was utterly disregarded in the Associate Church by many, "both ministers and people." It is declared to be a "notorious fact," that they voted for the vilest characters, "profane swearers, Sabbath breakers, duelists, murderers, whoremongers, gamblers, &c." Yet, as in the case of the forementioned protests, these persons remained in undisturbed quiet in the communion of the church, while, if the same persons should venture to sing, in family worship, one of "Dr. Watts' Psalms," they would at once be brought to trial, and if persisting in their sin, *excommunicated!* This able writer saw, in some measure, this glaring inconsistency. "Can it be shown," he inquires, "by

any passage, more plain and unequivocal, that it is contrary to the Divine mind to sing in praises to God other psalms and hymns than what we find in the inspired volume, than that it is to vote for immoral and wicked men for our civil rulers? I have no doubt myself, that both are wrong. But if I were called to express an opinion which were the greater of the two errors, I could not hesitate in deciding that voting for, or choosing as civil rulers, immoral men, *was palpably the greater of the two.* To make the less error a term of communion, while the greater is overlooked, is very like what is meant by straining at a gnat, &c."

The same able writer acknowledges great differences on the subject of Temperance—the widespread crimes of manufacturing and retailing as a beverage "liquid poison," thus murdering both soul and body.* On such topics he says: "The Associate Church have for many years tolerated among themselves the widest differences, leading to '*protests*' and severe denunciations. Yet they continued to commune together, while at the same time they made '*less errors*' a term of communion, and on the ground of those '*less errors*' excluded from the table of the Lord large bodies of the professed disciples of Christ!"

Of these less errors, he particularly mentions "the singing of other psalms and hymns than those we find in the sacred volume."

The remarkable facts which have been presented

* We regret to say that the U. P. "Testimony" is entirely *silent* on this dreadful topic—the fearful cry of *thirty thousand* souls every year perishing around them. "Secret societies" are bad, and against them they testify—but had they no compassion for the poor victims of intemperance?

are specially important, because they are "the wounds of a friend." They demonstrate how easy it is for bodies of men, even of professed Christians, to make a large show of disciplinary *rules*, while at the same time in practice they utterly ignore and despise them. Whether these "protesters" against the Associate "Act making slaveholding a term of communion," several of whom entered the United Presbyterian body at its origin, were required to repudiate their *protest* and concur with "the Declarations" of the "Testimony" on the same topics, we know not. But the fact which is most important to our purpose is this: That for years the protestants, who were undeniably not to be regarded as "babes," were not merely tolerated in full communion, but several of them placed or kept in the most honored, responsible and influential offices in the Associate Church! From 1831 to 1848, when the foregoing facts were made public—and we may add, until 1858, when the Associate Synod united with the Associate Reformed to constitute the United Presbyterian body, the voice of the Associate Church was *any thing else* than in strict conformity with the professed "principles" of the United body. Whether the same laxity of discipline shall continue in the United Church—the same rigid, cast-iron pretensions in *words*, and the same looseness in *conduct*, time alone will demonstrate.*

* Rev. David R. Kerr informed the public in 1869, that the United Presbyterian Church "administers it (the Declaration of the Testimony on slaveholding) as a term of communion." *U. P. Quarterly*, Jan. p. 149. This was two years after the organization of the United body. If this was so, it was very different from the course pursued by the Associate Synod.

Such then is the "great cloud of witnesses" against the dogma of "close communion:" John Calvin, John Knox and his compeers, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Fathers and others of the Associate Reformed Synod, John T. Pressly, author of "Church Fellowship," or "Close Communion," and the Associate Synod in its long forbearance with the open and solemn "protest" of some of its greatest and most honored ministers, the very pillars of the body—a *protest*, be it observed, *against* making slaveholding a term of communion.

As to the present position of the Presbyterian churches of Scotland and Ireland, the following is the testimony of the Rev. R. D. Harper, D. D., of the U. P. Church, when some years since traveling in those countries. He says: "None of these churches are identified with us in principle or practice on the subject of communion, or secret societies, or covenanting. There is, in fact, but one point of strict identity, so far as our distinctive principles are concerned, and that is slavery."

Of course those churches know nothing of the Procrustean bed of the "Testimony."

As to psalmody, Dr. H. says: "In all the congregations in which we have worshiped, both in Scotland and Ireland, with the single exception of Dr. Cook's church, of Belfast, the paraphrases and hymns have been sung."

CHAPTER V.

APPEAL TO SCRIPTURE AND REASON.

LET us now proceed to examine the merits of the close communion theory in the light of Scripture and Reason. "Fathers" were but fallible men—Synods may err—but God's word, interpreted by sound reason under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, cannot deceive us. "To the law and to the testimony."

We have seen that a "credible profession of saving faith in Christ," or as it is sometimes expressed, "visible Christianity," or "visible discipleship," with the corresponding fruits, as opportunity is afforded, is the foundation of the doctrine of the O. S. Presbyterian Church; and our pastors and sessions invite all such visible Christians, or disciples of Christ, to partake with us of the affecting memorials of his dying love, on the ground that it is the "Lord's Supper," not *our* supper—that it is spread for his friends, the children of the same family of which he is the elder brother; and when such friends and followers of Christ, who make a credible profession of love and obedience to him, seek to sit with us in these "heavenly places,"—honored disciples whom he, so far as we can judge, tenderly loves—we dare not reject whom he has received; we dare not say, "Stand back, for we are more fit for this service than you; and we cannot suffer you to come to his feast, nor to obey his dying command."

This concise statement of the true scriptural doctrine of communion, as we understand it, at once dispels much of the mist in which it is sometimes involved, and exposes sundry strange misstatements on the topic. For example, in replying to a correspondent of the *Presbyterian Banner*, Dr. D. Kerr represents our doctrine as teaching that “sealing ordinances of the church her highest privileges and observances, are *to be thrown open to all who call themselves Christians.*”^{*} This, as he truly observes, would admit the grossest errorists, even Socinians and Universalists. But we reply, do such persons exhibit “a credible profession of saving faith in Christ?” Have they a “visible discipleship with proper fruits?” Dr. Kerr’s statement is plainly highly injurious to a sister church, a mere caricature of the truth.

Again, the same writer in attempting to vindicate his rigid theory of communion in the presence of the U. P. Synod of Scotland, against what he calls “the spirit of independency,” “which, he says, is dominant in this country, even in churches theoretically Presbyterian,”—justifies his rigid exclusive principles, because they are opposed to those which, he says, “appear to have *as much respect for error as for truth*”—“and virtually make every man *the judge of his own qualifications for church privileges*, and make the discipline of the church the sport of individual and popular caprice.”

Now we need not say to any intelligent, well informed person, whether in or out of the Old School Presbyte-

^{*} *United Presbyterian*, Jan. 27, 1864.

rian connexion, that these statements, especially as publicly made in a presence where no defense could follow, were very gross misstatements, so far at least as our church is concerned. Our theory, as stated above, is "a credible profession," "visible discipleship." "Visible" to whom? To each applicant for himself? Certainly not—but to the proper officers of the church; "credible" to those whose province it is to guard against the profanation of divine ordinances. How amazing then that even good men should permit themselves to talk in this random style, apparently ignoring that scriptural characteristic of the pious, that "he back-biteth not with his tongue, nor taketh up an evil report against his neighbor."

The simple statement of the true theory of communion, as given above, also neutralizes and exposes the charge made in the "Testimony," if, as we suppose, it refers to the O. S. Presbyterians, viz., "that many who profess the Presbyterian name * * * admit to occasional communion the members of other Christian churches, * * * *simply on the ground of their membership in said churches.*"* But this is a great mistake—for our theory is, not "membership in other churches," but "visible or credible discipleship." A man may be "a member of another church;" but if his character and conduct do not give *credibility* to his profession, our theory, by *its very terms*, excludes him from occasional communion.

In the same short and easy way, viz., by a simple statement of the truth, we solve what seems to Dr. D.

* Testimony, p. 29.

Kerr a very great difficulty, which he presents as follows :

Suppose a member of the Presbyterian Church had been adjudged guilty of heresy, and formally excluded from its membership. He might be an Episcopalian ; he might be an Arminian ; or he might be even a Universalist or Unitarian ; but what matter ; although by the judicial authority of the church he had been declared unworthy of her membership, all he has to do is to connect himself with another denomination, and go back at his pleasure and enjoy the highest privileges of the church from which he had been formally cut off. Is that good order ?**

But the good Dr. goes quite too fast. A "credible profession of saving faith," "visible Christianity or discipleship," is our theory. Does Dr. Kerr teach that this admits "the Universalist or Unitarian" to the Lord's table ? Suppose that any errorist of any sort had been "declared unworthy of membership" in our churches, would the mere fact of his having been received into another communion make his "profession a credible one ?" On the contrary, the mere fact of his exclusion by one of our sessions, while it stands unrepealed, must be an insuperable bar to his reception among us to the Lord's Supper. Thus this disciplinary *puzzle*, with which the Dr. seems so greatly pleased, vanishes in the light of a simple statement of truth.

The only other example of these loose and injurious misstatements, to which we now direct attention, is found in the volume on "Church Fellowship." Thus Dr. P. tells us, "The advocates of the theory of

* *United Presbyterian*, Jan. 27, 1864.

catholic communion, maintain that *all evangelical churches* * * * * should unite in the participation of the Lord's Supper." Again, he quotes an Act passed in 1790 by the "fathers who prepared and adopted the standards" of the U. P. Church, and which, he says, *condemns* "the scheme now designated as 'catholic communion,'" *i. e.* the Act condemns "the scheme of communion called Latitudinarian, which unites *all parties of professed Christians* in the fullest communion, on the footing only of those general principles that some distinguish by the name of essentials."*

Now we cannot receive these statements as a correct exhibition of the true doctrine of "catholic communion," because they are much too general. Our theory does *not* include "all parties of professed Christians." Nor does it embrace all who call themselves members of "evangelical churches." Far from it. Dr. P. himself, in the early part of his work, gives a much more accurate statement of our theory, thus:

"According to one theory, the church should receive into her fellowship *all* of every denomination, who *in the judgment of charity* are to be considered Christians."† To this statement of our doctrine we make no serious objection. But observe the qualifying clause: "in the judgment of charity." Of whose "judgment"—of whose "charity?" Their own? So

* Church Fellowship, pp. 56, 57.

† Church Fellowship, p. 31. In the first edition in the newspaper form, it reads as follows: "All who in the judgment of charity are to be considered Christians, regardless of any difference, &c." The words "of every denomination," are omitted,

says Dr. Kerr — “all who call themselves Christians” — “every man THE JUDGE of his own qualifications.” But the author of “Church Fellowship” was better informed; and though in a subsequent part of his argument he seems to have forgotten what he had said, yet in stating as above, near the beginning of his book, the “conflicting views” of the two bodies, he discriminates very fairly. Observe, too, that other qualifying clause, “*all* of every denomination who are to be considered Christians,” *i. e.* in the judgment of charity. This is very different from “all parties of professed Christians.” If any one or more of these “churches” should adopt the notion that the Lord’s Supper is a “converting ordinance,” as among the Congregationalists in the days of Jonathan Edwards; and on such grounds should invite all to partake, whether saint or sinner; or if any of these churches should encourage the ignorant, the scandalous, the profane, to become communicants; in such cases, “the judgment of charity” would, of course, not include in its embrace such “parties of professed Christians.” Here must interpose the lawful authority of the church officers; there must be a discrimination

With these explanations of the doctrine which we conceive to be taught in the Scriptures, we proceed to examine the theory of “Church Fellowship” adopted in the U. P. Church. As stated by Dr. P. it is this:

“The church cannot, without betraying her trust, receive into her communion those who are unwilling to

receive her testimony for the truth, and refuse to submit to her authority.”*

This dogma is further explained by the author to mean that the U. P. Church has “no right to receive into her fellowship one * * * who refuses to observe *anything* which Christ has commanded,” *i. e.* as Dr. P’s. particular branch of the church *interprets* his “commands.” “The church,” he adds, “may not be *silent* in relation to any *one truth* which God has made known to her.” “She should *enforce* the observance of *all* that Christ has commanded,” because “she cannot *connive* at the rejection of *any one truth*,” &c., &c.

These sweeping sentences of exclusion, we need hardly say, mean much more than the obvious truth taught by all orthodox Christians, *viz.*, that the church should diligently teach all the principles and precepts revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and, of course, she must teach them as she understands them. The point of difference lies in the practical *enforcement*, *viz.*, by exclusion from the Lord’s Supper.

ARGUMENT I.

It may be sufficient to show the utter impossibility of practically *enforcing* this dogma, simply to state its legitimate consequences. It excludes almost *everybody* — for scarcely any *two* persons agree in every “one truth” as taught in the Bible. As regards the U. P. Church, “it shuts the door in the face, not only of every Old and New School Presbyterian, but of almost every Scotch, Irish and English Presbyterian, as

well as nearly all of *all other denominations* in Christendom, by the single article in the Testimony forbidding the devotional compositions of uninspired men." And, indeed, it excludes Dr. P. himself, for he sings Rouse, which is in large part uninspired. More than this, we have the testimony of one of the most active and talented of the United Presbyterian ministers, declaring that some of themselves "do not believe the Westminster Confession in the chapter on creation in its geological bearings—others do not believe every item of that Confession on the subject of marriage—others disbelieve it on millennialism—a large majority do not believe the doctrine taught on 'social covenanting'—many believe and practice contrary to the 'Testimony' on psalmody." And while *some part* of the Confession and Testimony is believed by every member, not ONE-HALF of the U. P. Church *believe every part* of them. Thus, this doctrine, if rigidly enforced, would exclude a large proportion of the United Presbyterian Church herself. And the theory as advocated by Dr. P. requiring the adoption of every "one truth" in the Bible, would inevitably reduce the membership of the U. P. Church to *one* solitary self-righteous soul (or at best, to a *few* such souls), which it is presumed would be the closest communion conceivable."* These are the declarations of a "friend," a minister of Christ, in regard to the situation of things in his own denomination. And they show most conclusively how easy it is for men in their excessive zeal for certain peculiari-

* See Rev. W. C. McCune's Review of Church Fellowship, p. 24. Mr. M'C. is the pastor of a U. P. church in Cincinnati.

ties to draw the bands so tight that they snap asunder like flax before the fire.

The "Testimony," as before shown, is rather more guarded, requiring of members a "profession of all *its* (the church's) *principles*, if they are professors at all."* And it is due to candor to say that in several places of "Church Fellowship," Dr. P., though very inconsistently, seems to teach the same limited theory. Thus, he says, the "church presents her creed"—"the form of sound words, to such as desire to enter her fellowship"—"a summary of what she understands to be the great doctrines of the Bible." Again, he speaks of "her Confession of Faith," "this testimony for the truth," "the creed of the church, a summary of the faith once delivered to the saints," and he adds, "she is bound to welcome him who unites in this testimony for the truth to the enjoyment of her fellowship." How it is possible to reconcile these statements with the high-toned theory which requires union in every "one truth," the *enforcement* of the observance of all truths taught in the Bible, as Dr. P. elsewhere teaches, we do not pretend to explain. It is impossible to hold both these forms of the "close communion" theory. For surely "the Westminster Confession, which is *the creed* of the U. P. Church," does not include every "one truth" taught in the Holy Scriptures.

The "Testimony," too, argues upon the absurdity of holding that "there *are some truths* which Christ has made it the duty of the church to profess, though she may not *exercise her discipline* in maintaining

these truths." This would seem to cover Dr. P's. broadest ground. But as its framers seem to come down from this high theory, and settle upon the theory of union in "all the principles," we propose to accept this as the acknowledged doctrine of the U. P. body.

CHAPTER VI.

APPEAL TO SCRIPTURE AND REASON.

(Continued).

IS the U. P. theory of "close communion" taught in the Holy Scriptures? We concede that the *principle*, if true, is equally applicable to all denominations of Christians—but for the sake of distinctness we limit the argument to the U. P. body.

ARGUMENT II.

We derive our second argument from the example of our Lord in the original institution of the supper. Much is said, in defending "close communion," on the importance of "the preservation of the purity of the church," and it is alleged to be very inconsistent to admit to her communion those who are not "professors of *all* her principles," for it is "the duty of the church to profess the truths (*all* the truths) of Christ, and exercise *government and discipline* in maintaining them."*

*See the Testimony.

The author of "Church Fellowship" is equally explicit. Thus he says, "Where men are *not agreed* in relation to the faith once delivered to the saints, * * they *cannot* hold communion in the profession of the truth." "Those who refuse adherence to her profession," (viz., as elsewhere explained,) "of *all* that Christ has commanded"—"to receive *them* into her fellowship would be unfaithfulness to him, &c." Again, "to maintain her purity, * * * it is the duty of the church to see that those whom she admits to her fellowship receive and hold fast the doctrines which are wholesome, &c." "She may not be silent in relation to *any one truth*, &c." "She is just as truly responsible to her exalted King for her fidelity in ruling as in teaching—in *enforcing* the laws of Christ's house, &c."

Such is Dr. P's theory. It enjoins extreme care on the part of the church to secure the profession of all the doctrines and precepts of Scripture, of those who are received into her fellowship, and to neglect these precautions is plainly indicated as conniving at a system of error, the church thus partaking of the sin of the communicant.

But were there any such minute, specific terms as these enforced at the original institution? We may affirm with perfect confidence that our blessed Lord has set us in this respect an example which, in principle at least, is highly instructive under all circumstances of the church. What, then, do we learn?

1. The disciples had not received *Christian baptism*.

It is probable (not certain) that they had received the baptism of John. But that was merely an introductory rite. It was not administered in "the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," because this would represent our Lord as having been baptized in his own name. Of course, the disciples when they partook of their first communion, had not received the *initiatory* seal of the covenant.

2. The disciples evidently had very incorrect views of "the person and work of Christ, and the way of salvation through him."* It is certain that they did not yet recognize him as a divine being, and in regard to his great mission as the atoning sacrifice, "the Lamb of God," as well as the method in which the sinner becomes united to him and partakes of the benefits of his death, their ignorance was very great. Many of our little children are better informed on these topics.

3. As a consequence, their notions of the nature of his kingdom were extremely contrary to the truth. They still clung to their old Jewish prejudices in regard to the temporal reign of their Messiah—that his mission was to re-establish "the throne of David" (literally), to subdue all the enemies of the Jews, to restore the golden age of Solomon, &c., &c. Of course, they were in great darkness on the subject of Christ's spiritual mission and kingdom, exhibiting a degree of ignorance on such topics as these, which

* Church Fellowship, p. 63. Dr. P. reasons "that such persons cannot call on the name of the Lord Jesus" in truth.

would be unbecoming in an ordinary member of almost any evangelical church of the present day.

Such, in brief, were the men* whom the best of all teachers, after three years of the best instruction, received to the Lord's table. The argument does not require us to affirm that church officers would now be justifiable in admitting to communion persons so greatly in error. Just as we would not press the example of our blessed Lord at Cana of Galilee, as an argument at the present day in defense of wine as a common beverage. But whatever may be conceded to the altered circumstances of the church, whatever may be due to the omniscience of Christ, it is impossible to conceal the broad contrast between his infallible example, and that theory which demands the adoption of *thirty-three* chapters of the Confession, with the addition of eighteen "Declarations of the Testimony." As to the teaching of "Church Fellowship," it is at the farthest antipodes from that of the Saviour, requiring, as we have seen, agreement in *all* revealed truth, "all that Christ has commanded." How does the unerring "pattern showed in the mount" frown upon such a scheme as the following. Speaking of one who "refuses to forsake a communion which is inconsistent with the

* Judas seems to have left the company before the Lord's Supper. Compare John 13:30, with Luke 22:20. On the nature of John's baptism as distinct from Christian baptism, Dr. Scott, on Matt. 3:5, says, "We should not consider John's baptism as the same with Christian baptism, but rather as an institution for the time being and an introduction to the change * * when the new dispensation should be openly established. We cannot suppose that Jesus was baptized in the name of the 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost.' Our Lord," he again says, "had spoken of his sufferings, death and resurrection; but the apostles were too blinded by carnal prejudices to understand his meaning."

profession which she (the church) makes," Dr. P. says :

"While he remains in such connexion, * * * the church that would be faithful to her Lord must regard him as one who in *some respects* does not call upon the name of the Lord Jesus in a scriptural manner—as one who in **SOME RESPECTS** walketh disorderly. * * * **THEREFORE**, the church may not be a partaker of *his sin* by receiving him into her fellowship."*

Observe the emphatic clauses. It is enough that any one, however otherwise exemplary in faith and practice, if he is guilty of "refusing to forsake" another connexion—that alone stamps him as in "**SOME RESPECTS**" unfit for a U. P. communion table. These "*some respects*" may be so imperceptible to the ordinary vision as to be purely microscopic—scarcely, if at all discernible, as in the case of the Reformed Presbyterians and some other denominations. But no matter, "the applicant chooses to adhere to a system which is, to a *greater or less extent*, inconsistent with the truth" (*i. e.* with our U. P. notions of the truth). Ergo, we "may not be partakers of *his sin*." Observe, "of **HIS SIN**"—"by receiving him into (our) fellowship." And as if this were not sufficient—as if to place himself and his theory as far apart from the example of Christ as possible, Dr. P., at the very opening of his book, seriously tells us, "Those only should be received into her fellowship whom the church is bound to receive into her membership." Hence, it follows, that as the obligation in both cases is co-extensive—as he would

* Ch. Fellowship, p. 68.

exclude from occasional communion all of other denominations who in "some respects" differ from his system, so for the same reason, such persons could not be received into membership. Surely the scheme of "close communion" of which these are the distinguishing features, was never learned from the lips of the "Great Teacher," nor has it the remotest resemblance to that which is enforced by his example. It is some alleviation, however, to know that the theory is one thing—the practice in the U. P. body a very different thing. When Old School Presbyterians, Covenanters and others, make application, as is sometimes the case, for admission to a U. P. church, the *theory*, like the unfortunate prophet, is speedily thrown overboard.

The teaching of our Divine Master obviously views the church as a school of heavenly instruction, and her members as "*disciples*," *i. e.* *learners*, as the word signifies. The divine theory is in direct antagonism to that which bars the entrance to the church and her ordinances with *fifty-one* chapters of propositions, many of them quite complex and difficult, far better suited to the capacity of the mature Christian than to the young beginner. "If they are professors at all," says the Testimony, "and if their membership constitutes them professors, they are *professors of ALL its* (the church's) principles."* Yet this extravagant doctrine is in flat contradiction to that of the "Historical Sketch" of the Associate Reformed Church on "the admission of members." For there we read, "While persons should strive to be well acquainted

* Testimony, p. 37.

with the truths of the gospel, yet GREAT KNOWLEDGE *is not demanded*, provided the applicant entertains just views of his condition as a sinner, and of Christ as a Saviour, and shows a teachable spirit, &c.* “Great knowledge is not demanded,” but does it not require “great knowledge” to embrace intelligently *fifty-one* such elaborate chapters of propositions as those of the Confession and Testimony—in other words, “ALL the principles” of the U. P. Church? The doctrine of the late Associate Reformed Church agrees with truth and good sense, but it is the poles apart from the U. P. theory, especially as developed by Dr. P. in “Church Fellowship.”

ARGUMENT III.

The example of the Apostles will furnish our *third* argument against the teachings of the Testimony on “close communion.”

In receiving persons to sealing ordinances, did these inspired men settle any principle which affords so much as the shadow of an argument in favor of the U. P. doctrine? Let us examine.

1. When Peter (Acts 10) went down from Joppa to Cesarea, he found Cornelius, with his kinsmen and near friends, waiting to receive him. To them he preached the gospel; and as he preached, “the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” * * Then answered Peter, “Can any man forbid water,

* *United Presbyterian*, Aug. 1850, p. 157. The “Sketch” was published by request of the General Synod.

that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" "The reason assigned here," says Dr. Addison Alexander, "is that those who had received the baptism of the Spirit must certainly be fit for that of water." Why should the sign be withheld from those who were possessed of the thing signified? "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." In other words, being "satisfied with the work of the Spirit" in their hearts, he admitted them to the church.

Now it is hardly necessary to pause to observe that there was in this case nothing to give countenance to the theory which requires "union in ALL the principles" of the U. P. creed—which shuts the door of the church against all who differ in "some respects" from certain *fifty-one* chapters of propositions.

2. The remarkable case of Simon, the sorcerer, (Acts 8) is equally instructive. "Then," says the sacred historian, "Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, &c." Of Simon, the author of "Church Fellowship" truly remarks, "He professedly embraced Christianity. On the *ground of this profession* (observe, "on the ground of professing to believe") he was received into the fellowship of the church." For once Dr. P. has hit upon the true doctrine of communion. But what did Simon profess to believe? In the previous verse we read of others of the Samaritans who "were baptized, both men and women," that "they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Then Simon believed also."

Here, again, we have the simple theory and prompt decision of an inspired teacher, the Evangelist Philip. He demands "faith in the name of Jesus Christ" as the Saviour of men, and they thus become citizens of his spiritual kingdom. He does not attempt to try the heart even of a Simon Magus—he requires only "a credible profession of Christianity," which, as Dr. P. well observes, "in the sight of man, gave him *the right*" to membership. "The condition," says Dr. P.: "on which the church receives a person into her fellowship is, * * * that he makes a credible profession, and *therefore* in the sight of man has a *right* to be regarded as a brother in the household of faith."* But surely this is a very different mode of receiving men to sealing ordinances from that of the Testimony, viz., belief of *fifty-one* complex chapters—or "ALL the principles" of the U. P. Church.

In his remarks upon the case of Simon, the author of "Church Fellowship" has thus conceded that the example of the primitive church is altogether hostile to his theory of communion, even in its more mitigated form. In fact, he states in precise and accurate terms the doctrine of "catholic communion" as follows: "The ground on which Philip received Simon into the communion of the church, was not that he was a *true* believer, for that he was not; but because *he made a credible Christian profession.*" "THEN SIMON BELIEVED:" there is his record. But if that "profession" was sufficient for apostolic times, why depart from the inspired pattern—why insist on "all the U. P. prin-

* Church Fellowship, pp. 46, 47.

ciples" being adopted by the communicant, especially why demand a belief of every "one truth revealed in the Bible," as Dr. P. sometimes teaches in his book?

"The creed," "the summary of the faith"—which Dr. P. says "the church has a right to demand of those who desire to enjoy her fellowship,"* was obviously a very short one in Simon's case, and the same is true in all the other recorded instances where persons were received into fellowship. This Dr. P. admits. "In the primitive days of Christianity," he says, "the creed of the church was *brief and simple*, embracing a few of the leading fundamental doctrines of the Bible."† Thus he candidly concedes that the U. P. Church has altered the divine pattern—*improved* upon the inspired mode of admission to sealing ordinances. If a "few of the leading fundamental doctrines" was all that was required in connexion with "a credible Christian profession," what right has Dr. P. or any other man or set of men to impose their *fifty-one* chapters in doctrines and morals as the only right terms of communion? He thus candidly acknowledges that apostolic example is against him. When he thus makes large *uninspired additions* to the brief and simple creed—"a few of the leading fundamental doctrines"—of the primitive church, as propounded in the terms of communion by men "who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," we can have little difficulty in deciding where our preference should be given, whether to the inspired pattern or to the teaching of Dr. P. and the Testimony.

* Church Fellowship, p. 47.

† Ibid., p. 8.

3. The reasoning just employed is equally applicable to the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch, Acts 8. The creed proposed by Philip was, "If thou believest with all thine heart;" and he answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."* "And he baptized him." No *fifty-one* chapters there. So in the Pentecostal baptisms. "Repent and be baptized," repentance being one of the fruits of faith. So in the case of the Jailor, and of Lydia, and many others. The creed was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"—not believe a whole system of theology, and eighteen declarations of a "Testimony" on the top of it.

It should be observed that the question is not in regard to the qualifications of those who are about to become public teachers in the church. After years of diligent study, searching the Scriptures and comparing the views taught by great and good men. such persons are properly subjected to a pretty severe test of their orthodoxy as well as of their morals. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, as well as other parts of Scripture, warrant such a use of an extended "form of sound words." But this is a very different use of a creed from that which requires the intending communicant to swallow a "formula of faith," consisting of more than *fifty* solid chapters. Yet Dr. P. says, "this must be required of those who are received into the fellowship of the church."

* Dr. P. well remarks, "The Eunuch signified his belief not simply of the lively oracles as a revelation from God, but of the fundamental distinguishing doctrine embraced in the creed of the church," which creed he admits to have been "brief and simple," "a few leading fundamental doctrines." *That is our theory.*

It is no valid objection to the reasoning employed in the cases of Philip and the Eunuch, that a Unitarian and a Universalist might make the profession, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." These errorists regard Christ as a mere creature—and to "believe with all the heart" in Christ, is equivalent to receiving him in his divine character as our loving Saviour, "the Lord our righteousness," as Philip had expounded from Isaiah 53. This was Philip's demand—and this the Eunuch's faith. Paul elsewhere tells us, that "no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." It was thus the Eunuch professed to "believe with all his heart," and this was all that was required. Doubtless men may deceive, as Simon Magus did, but so they may falsely profess to believe the *fifty-one* U. P. theological chapters, and besides be hypocrites in morals. Dr. P. well observes that it is "not the prerogative of the church to try the heart."

The author of "Church Fellowship," while admitting that the apostolic "creed was brief and simple, embracing only a few of the leading fundamental doctrines," attempts to evade the conclusion which seems necessarily to follow, by asserting that *we* cannot "determine precisely what doctrines revealed in the Bible *are* essential to salvation," in other words, which are "fundamental" to Christianity.* But why not? Can you not determine the doctrines which the Apostles comprehended in their creed, and which you describe as "leading and fundamental?" This you can surely do, if you can understand the Scriptures, and thus you have

* See p. 49.

all that the inspired pattern required in order to fellowship, in connexion with “a credible profession.” The position that Dr. P. assumes, viz., that “as errors were multiplied, it became necessary that the (apostolic) creed should be enlarged”—of course he means the creed used in receiving intended communicants—involves the corrupt and despotic, perhaps we might say *impious*, principle of “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,” viz., the right to make laws at her pleasure to govern the church. Concede this principle, and you throw open the door to all the trumpery of Popery.

The great doctrines, therefore, which are “fundamental” to Christianity, as well as “the credible profession” of it, are easily definable to candor and common sense, where the Holy Scriptures are read and studied in the right spirit. Extreme cases may occur in which it will be difficult to mark a distinct line between some of the most exemplary men of the world, and some of the most doubtful professors, who may nevertheless be Christians; but these are the exceptions. The general scope of apostolic instruction takes for granted, that the essential conditions of true faith and piety can be distinguished in the Holy Scriptures. If we cannot know by this means who are credible professors, what mean all those exhortations to self-examination whether we be in the faith, to prove our own selves, as well as to love and honor each other as brethren, to rejoice with them that rejoice, &c., &c. Yet we cannot tell who these persons are!

From these selected examples of the terms of fellowship in the apostolic church, we learn what the Divine Teacher demands of those who desire to enter his great school of Christian faith and morals — not that they are to be ripe scholars at their entrance, but that in the character of “little children” they should come to the fountains of true knowledge, in order that they may ultimately reach the loftiest summit of all spiritual attainments.

“In the time of the apostles,” says Dr. Killen, of Belfast, Ireland, “those who embraced the gospel were immediately baptized; * * * but about the middle of the second century * * * candidates were not admitted to the ordinance until they had passed through a certain probation.” And in the case of backsliders who professed penitence, he quotes Tertullian as saying that in the third century, “they were required to lie in sackcloth and ashes, to hide the body in filthy garments, * * * to fast, to groan, to weep and to moan day and night, to throw themselves on the ground before the presbyters, and to fall on their knees before (those) beloved of God.”* Let these and similar examples admonish us how easily and rapidly, if we once open the door to human improvements on divine ordinances, superstition will rear her hydra head and spread her deadly venom, until, in a short time, the inventions of men will smother and supersede the institutions of God, as in Popery.

It is universally conceded that the true church is one, as saith Paul. “The body is one, and hath many

* Ancient Church, pp. 492, 493.

members, and all the members being many, are ONE BODY.* “The efficiency of the members consists in their mutual co-operation as parts of a common whole—this union being the foundation of all the value, beauty and excellence of the members in their respective places;—so that there should be no schism in the body,” v. 25. “SO ALSO IS CHRIST.” Paul is reasoning and remonstrating with the Corinthians on account of their schismatic spirit, “I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, I of Christ.” “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?” he indignantly exclaims. But let it be observed, “Scandalous as their schisms had been, they had not proceeded to separation, nor did they dream of breaking communion. The apostle very sternly rebuked their divisions as inconsistent with the unity of the church. But he does not even hint that they had proceeded so far as to burst the bonds of church fellowship, thus virtually disowning each other as members of the one body of Christ.”†

CHAPTER VII.

DOCTRINE OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

THE argument from the Sacred Records ought of itself to settle the whole question. But as we properly and scripturally defer to the wisdom of age and

* 1 Cor. 12: 12-14.

† Mason's Plea, pp. 10, 12.

eminent piety and usefulness in the church—and as it is especially interesting to know that persons of this character, who had made these topics a life-long study, have taken the same views of the teaching of Scripture that are now prevalent among Old School Presbyterians, we derive our fourth argument against “close communion” from the 26th Article of the Westminster Confession.

ARGUMENT IV.

The Westminster divines did not teach the modern doctrine of close communion. We have already alluded to the 26th Article of the Westminster Confession in connexion with some remarks on one of the Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.* But a few further explanations may be useful. The 26th Article, Sec. II., is as follows:

“Saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification. * * * Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.”

It is a curious fact that this Article is *verbally the same*, not only in the O. S. Presbyterian Church and the U. P. Church in this country — which differ so widely in regard to its meaning — but it is also the same in all the Presbyterian Confessions in Scotland and Ireland, and their practice agrees with ours. Thus the Rev. R. D. Harper, of Xenia, O., as before

* Chapter II., p. 25 of this volume.

quoted, tells us, "None of these churches are identified with us (U. P's.) in principle or practice on the subject of communion—there is but *one point* of identity, and that is slavery." Hence, it follows, that all Scotland and Ireland reject as false the U. P. interpretation of the Article. This is rather a suggestive fact to begin with.

Again: the "Overture" reported by Mason, Annan and Smith, of the Associate Reformed Church, says, "It is a fact that Rutherford, Henderson, Bailey, &c. held communion with the brethren in England, while they attended the Westminster Assembly."* These were the Scottish commissioners to that Assembly.

"There was one great and even sublime idea brought somewhat indefinitely before the Westminster Assembly—the idea of a Protestant union throughout Christendom, * * * in order to purify, strengthen and unite all Christian churches. * * * This truly magnificent and Christian idea seems to have originated in the mind of that distinguished man, Alexander Henderson." For this purpose letters were "prepared by the Assembly, by direction of Parliament, and sent to the Protestant Churches of France, Holland, Switzerland and other countries."† The time for this grand idea to be fully developed had not yet come. But let us hear Rev. Dr. David Kerr's comment on this magnificent idea of a union of all Protestant Christendom. Speaking of this or a similar movement in the Assembly of Divines, he says :

* See p. 119, Rev. R. Annan's Overture.

† Hetherington's Hist. West. Ass., p. 290.

“Establishing, or *intending* to establish a church with branches of the same order *in other countries*, THEIR COMMUNION WAS PROPERLY THROWN OPEN to them; and not improperly at such a time * * * to individuals of credible profession *in other than what were known as Reformed Churches*, who might be driven by persecution, or cast by any cause temporarily among them.”*

This is a very remarkable statement, considering the source whence it proceeds.

(1) What did the Westminster Assembly mean by the phrase, “which communion as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all in every place who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus?” Dr. Kerr tells us, “their communion was *thrown open* to the Reformed Churches in other countries;” and he approves of it—says it was done “properly.” In other words, the Assembly “*intended* to establish branches of the Presbyterian order in France, Switzerland, Holland, &c.” And on this ground they THREW OPEN (a very expressive phrase) their communion to those persons from other countries where they *intended to plant* those branches. This was certainly a very singular sort of “close communion.” Just as if Dr. Kerr should *intend* to convert an Old School church into a U. P. church, and for this reason should receive them to communion.

(2) More than this: Dr. Kerr says the Assembly “THREW OPEN their communion to others” who were not known as Reformed Churches at all, “individuals of credible profession.” refugees from other lands, driven by persecution to Britain, “or cast *by any*

* *T. P. Quarterly Review*, 1860, p. 137.

cause temporarily among them." And this, he says, "even the strictest sect would admit was done *not improperly* at such a time." This is Westminster "close communion" No. 2, and Dr. Kerr approves of it.

(3) When Dr. K. proceeds to say, "that to suppose the Westminster divines intended to *throw open* the communion of their church to all who in *their own judgment* 'called on the [name of the Lord Jesus,]' would be to give a construction to their history in which they would be stultified,"* we entirely agree with him. They meant no such foolish thing. Because that would admit scores of errorists, such as Universalists, Unitarians, &c., who think they call on that name in some sense. If Dr. K. means to say that Old School Presbyterians thus stultify themselves, he is greatly mistaken.

(4) When Dr. K. informs us that the Westminster Assembly "not improperly *threw open* the occasional communion of their churches to individuals from abroad" who had never "belonged to Reformed Churches," he expressly refers to those called Lutheran Churches, in distinction from the Reformed or Calvinistic Churches in Europe.

Where persons, he tells us, were not such as had come to reside permanently in England, "but were cast temporarily there," yet making "a credible profession," the Westminster Assembly, Dr. K. assures us, "*threw open* their communion to them." Thus the 26th Article of the Westminster Confession, in

* *U. P. Quarterly*, p. 158.

“extending communion to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus,” was designed, if Dr. Kerr gives the correct interpretation, to admit to occasional communion both Calvinists and Lutherans “cast temporarily for any cause” in England. We have no doubt that Dr. K. is right—but then what becomes of the “Testimony,” which says “the church should not extend communion to those who refuse * * * subjection to her government and discipline, or who refuse to *foretake a communion* which is inconsistent with the profession that she makes.” Will Dr. Kerr please inform us where he learned that all these occasional communicants, Lutherans as well as Calvinists, made any such renunciation of their former church connexions as they existed on the Continent? He admits that no such requirements were imposed upon them in England, before they were allowed to approach the Lord’s table. There is no reconciling the “Testimony” with the Westminster Confession in this particular. If a Lutheran from Germany or France was fit for communion on the ground of “a credible profession,” why is not a Presbyterian or Covenanter equally fit, coming from a neighboring State or county and present at a U. P. communion?

When we apply this 26th Article as interpreted by Dr. K. to the logic of the author of “Church Fellowship,” the confusion and trouble greatly multiply. Speaking of those “who adhere to a system to a *greater or less extent* inconsistent with the cause of truth,” *i. e.* as the U. P. understands it, Dr. P. says,

“The church that would be faithful to her Lord must regard such persons as those who *in some respects* do not call upon the name of the Lord Jesus in a scriptural manner—who *in some respects* walk disorderly.” “And *therefore*,” he continues, “so long as they choose to remain in connexion with *a system of error*, the church may not be a partaker of *their sin* by receiving them into her fellowship.”* Now, apply this doctrine to the case of the Lutherans, of whom Dr. K. speaks, who had “a credible profession.” Did the Lutheran Churches in Europe hold correct views upon the subject of the presence of Christ in the sacramental elements? Were they not “in connexion with a system of error in some respects” on consubstantiation? Were they sound Calvinists such as were the Westminster divines? Were they strictly Presbyterian in their views of church government? It is well known that in some countries their church is Episcopal—in others they have a *Consistory*, with subordination of inferior clergy to their superiors, altogether different from the purity of Presbyterianism.

Such were the persons to whom Dr. Kerr tells us the Westminster Assembly “THREW OPEN the communion of their churches.” Such was the meaning of the 26th Article of their Confession, “extending communion to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.” But if we understand Dr. P. correctly, the Westminster Assembly in so doing were “unfaithful to their Lord”—“were partakers of *the sin*” of these Lutherans, &c. They certainly “in some

Ch. Fellowship, p. 63.

respects walked disorderly," and instead of "*throwing open* their communion" to such *errorists*, the Assembly, on U. P. principles, should have closed it fast, just as Dr. P. shuns partaking of the sin of Old School Presbyterians.

The fact which is thus asserted, viz., that the Westminster Assembly "*threw open* the communion of their churches to the Reformed (Calvinists) and to the Lutherans," their great opponents, sheds light also upon another subject. One chief reason dwelt upon by Drs. Kerr and Pressly, as rendering absolutely necessary "close communion," is that "the church is now divided into sects." "a state of things unnatural and improper." And as the very existence of these different organizations presupposes a diversity in theological doctrines, they cannot *walk together* even so far as to sit at the same communion table, because *they are not agreed*. "All are bound to contend earnestly," says Dr. P., "one endeavoring to propagate doctrines which another rejects, &c."* Ergo, say these brethren, we dare not be unfaithful to the Lord—we dare not "partake of the sin" of such disorderly Christians as the Reformed Presbyterians and Old School Presbyterians, by admitting them occasionally to our fellowship.

Now how different all these theories from the theory and practice of the Westminster Assembly. The Lutherans held that "the body and blood of Christ are *materially present* in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper." Do Old School Presbyterians and Covenanters teach any such monstrous and impious ab-

*Ch. Fellowship, p. 29.

surdity as this? The Lutherans of 1643 held to “the use of images in churches, clerical vestments, wafers in the Lord’s Supper, exorcism in baptism—as useful rites and institutions.” They were a distinct denomination, and far from sound Calvinism on the subject of decrees.† Yet Dr. K. tells us the Westminster Assembly THREW OPEN the communion of their churches to such errorists as these. And then as to the use of “other songs” than the “Psalms of David,” and of instrumental music, every one knows that they were quite as *corrupt* as Old School Presbyterians—perhaps more so. Yet to these same errorists, Dr. K. tells us, the Westminster divines THREW OPEN the communion of the Lord’s Supper. But to allow an orthodox Calvinist, under the name of Covenanter or Old School Presbyterian, to partake of such fellowship in the U. P. Church, would be unfaithfulness to covenant vows, partaking of the sin of such a person, &c.

Let it be observed, moreover, that this “extension of communion” to Lutherans, who in so “*many respects* were walking disorderly” (as Dr. P. hath it), was not merely through sympathy for their sufferings from persecution. It was extended to those who, as Dr. K. says, “from *any cause* resided temporarily” in England. All this he decidedly approves. And if Dr. K. is correct, as we have no doubt he is, we can have little difficulty in interpreting the 26th Article of the Westminster Confession: “which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.”

† See Mosheim, *Life of Luther*, &c.

We have still another striking proof that ours is the true interpretation of this 26th Article. In 1711, only about *sixty* years after the dissolution of the Westminster Assembly, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed an Act, which, as before quoted, expressly extends communion in sealing ordinances "to persons educated in the Protestant Churches (both Reformed and Lutheran), strangers, free of scandal, and professing their faith in Christ and obedience to him, &c.)* There is nothing said about requiring such *strangers* to forsake former communions, as the "Testimony" hath it. Indeed, this Act of 1711 is merely an expression in plainer terms of the Westminster article of 1643. Dr. Harper, a U. P. clergyman of Xenia, O., assures us that there is no "close communion" practiced in the Churches of Scotland and Ireland at the present day; and we are told by the historian of the former church, that "the full arrangement of the Confession, Form of Government and Discipline as they EXIST AT THE PRESENT DAY, was completed in 1647," when the Scottish Assembly ratified those symbols as they came from the hands of the Westminster Assembly—the "Government and Discipline," says Hetherington, *as they now exist*, of course including the 26th Article on communion." As to any departure from the strict interpretation of the 26th Article, the historian is silent. Writing in 1860, he refers to the Act of 1711; and following the record back to 1647, we there find the origin of what the historian calls "the Second Reformation of the Scottish Church." But there is no

* Chapter II., p. 23.

hint of a great backsliding from the attainments of 1643, or criminal loosening of the bands of discipline in the matter of "communion" as ordained by the Westminster forefathers.* So also that eminently pious and laborious minister of the Free Church of Scotland, Rev. Robert M'Cheyne, than whom few have left a more grateful savor of a holy life and distinguished usefulness, very clearly indicates the common sentiment on the subject of catholic communion. He says :

"The early Reformers held the same view. Baxter, Owen, and Howe, in a later generation, pleaded for it; and the Westminster divines laid down the same principle, in few but solemn words: 'Saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God—which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.' These words, embodied in our Standards, show clearly that the views maintained above are the very principles of the Church of Scotland. Such were the principles of the Reformers."

Again, M'Cheyne remarks :

"I believe it to be the mind of Christ, that *all* who are virtually united to him, should love one another, exhort one another daily, * * * pray with and for one another, and sit down together at the Lord's table. Each of these positions may be proved by the Word of God. * * * Upon this I have always acted, both in sitting down to the Lord's table, and in admitting others to that blessed privilege."

In illustration, he adds :

"I was once permitted to unite in celebrating the Lord's

* Hetherington's Hist. Ch. of Scot., chap. 6.

Supper in an upper room in Jerusalem. There were fourteen present, most of whom, I had good reason to believe, knew and loved Jesus. Several were godly Episcopalians, two were converted Jews, and one a Christian from Nazareth, converted under the American missionaries. The bread and wine were dispensed in the Episcopal manner, and most were kneeling as they received them. * * * We felt it to be, not the confusion of Babel, but the sweet fellowship with Christ and the brethren.*"

He then quotes the remark of Roland Hill, who when certain Baptists told him, "You cannot sit down at *our* table," replied, "I thought it was the *Lord's* table."

We have copied these extracts from the lamented M'Cheyne, not merely because of the argument they contain, but as apt illustrations of the sort of views which are cherished by the most gifted men of the Free Church. Did any body ever bring charges against M'Cheyne for holding and publishing these *dangerous* sentiments? Such a proposition would doubtless have been treated with derision. The heart of the Scottish Church was with him, and he well knew that he stood on safe ground.

On these and similar grounds, we feel safe in affirming that the judgment of the Westminster Assembly is on the side of the Churches of Scotland and Ireland, the Old School Presbyterians of this country, and in a word, the great mass of all true Protestant Christians in the world.

But to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the Westminster Assembly did not intend to teach the

* See vol. 2 of his Life.

doctrine of "close communion," we add this fact, that a letter of date Nov. 30, 1643, was addressed to the *Dutch, French and Swiss Churches*, and signed by all the members, including the Scotch commissioners. This letter styles these churches "dearly beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, our much honored brethren," and states that the object of the Assembly was to originate and commend such a platform of church government "as may be most agreeable to God's Word, *nearest in conformity to the best Reformed Churches*, and to establish unity among ourselves." Now these churches thus affectionately addressed were all "catholic" on the matter of communion.* One of them indeed declared that "she should be guilty of NEFARIOUS SCHISM, should she withdraw from communion with other churches of the Reformation."

It is obvious, therefore, to adopt the language of Dr. John M. Mason, that "like the *Dutch, French and Swiss Churches*, the Westminster Assembly and the Evangelical interest generally throughout Europe, were desirous, that the right to communion should rest upon the *broad foundation of the common faith*, without regard to minor differences. This," adds Dr. M., "is one of the most incontestible facts in all ecclesiastical history." From all which our *fourth* argument against "close communion" is placed upon a firm footing, viz., "the Westminster divines taught no such contracted doctrine, but the direct opposite." And the example of the *Lutherans* proves beyond controversy, that they

*This is proved by published documents. See Mason's Plea,

did not mean to exclude all who could not subscribe to their Confession — to say nothing of the eighteen declarations of the U. P. Testimony.

CHAPTER VIII.

INCONSISTENCIES OF CLOSE COMMUNION.

THE brethren who wrote and circulate the volume called "Church Fellowship," admit that "in the present state of imperfection, there will always exist *some diversity of opinion* among the members of the church." They seem to open the door of their fellowship to "babes" who cannot "intelligently assent to some of the more sublime doctrines of their creed." They also speak respectfully of the "different sister churches," separate from whom they feel bound to maintain a "distinct organization as faithful witnesses for the truth," *i. e.* for those truths, as they regard them, in defense of which they stand aloof from others. They also profess toward us O. S. Presbyterians "feelings of the kindest fraternal regard and wishes of abundant success, &c." On such premises as these, we found

ARGUMENT V.

The doctrine of close communion practically *excommunicates* all other denominations but the U. P. body, though acknowledged to be the friends and followers of Christ.

It is a fact perhaps not generally known, that the Westminster Assembly, whose Confession is said to teach this narrow theory, remained steadily in fellowship with the English Established Church, although they justly complained of grievous abuses and corruptions in her discipline, worship and government. Nor did they forsake that communion until they were driven out by the Act of Conformity. Then they arrived at the extreme limit of forbearance. Submission was no longer a duty.* Baxter tells us in his Life that they were at the time of assembling at Westminster, “all conformists, save about eight or nine and the Scottish commissioners.”

In this the divines of Westminster doubtless acted on the principle that to refuse communion with a church is virtually to pronounce her *excommunicated*, and her members no followers of Jesus. It declares her so very *corrupt* that her communion is *unlawful*—a sin against God. But this is a virtual denial of the visible Christianity of her members. It may be disavowed in words, but such is its plain meaning. These brethren, we admit, shrink from the full, practical results of their own doctrine; but it is obvious that they thus class “sister churches” professing certain minor differences from themselves, with such as maintain “heinous violations of the law of God and such errors in principle as unhinge the Christian profession, which are the only scandals for which sentence of excommunication should be passed.†

* Mason's Plea.

† Discipline of the A. R. Church. Of Excommunication.

In harmony with these reasonings, the Rev. J. A. Sloan, a minister of standing in the Associate Reformed Church, writes as follows :*

“This exclusive communion principle, which has been adopted by many as a rule of God’s house, rests on no higher authority than the ‘traditions of men.’ You wish,” he tells his brethren, “to hold to an old usage which has no higher sanction than the customs of the fathers of the church. I wish to leave this, come back to the Bible and Confession of Faith. You desire to keep brethren in a state of continued separation; I desire to unite them closer together by the holiest tie.”

Again, says Mr. Sloan :

“We have examined the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, and the Directory for Public Worship, and we have not found a word there teaching the position that only A. R. Presbyterians are to be admitted to the Lord’s table, unless we are prepared to take the unscriptural ground that *all* those outside of her rule are ‘ignorant and ungodly’ or ‘profane,’ as these are the *only* characters whom our standards exclude. Now, we will not be so uncharitable to any of our close communion brethren as to charge them with calling members of other Christian churches by the epithets, ‘ungodly,’ ‘ignorant,’ ‘scandalous,’ or ‘profane.’ Still, these are the *only* persons excluded by the standards from our church. No one of our close communion brethren would say that an O. S. Presbyterian was an ‘ignorant and ungodly’ person, or ‘profane.’ No, they will not dare to take this position in so many words; still, it is an old adage, that ‘actions speak louder than words.’”

Again:

“We have heard the ablest men in our Synod ‘fence the

* *Due West Telescope.*

tables,' and have never yet heard one of them attempt to defend the practice of *exclusive* communion on scriptural grounds; but, on the contrary, they have either evaded the point altogether, or defended it on the ground of *expediency* or policy."

"Faithful are the words of a friend." But it is in a far deeper and more solemn tone the writer of the following speaks, having reference originally to the divisions among several of the smaller bodies of Scottish origin. He says:

"Men should ponder well *the responsibility* assumed in maintaining existing divisions, by contending for minor peculiarities and urging them as terms of communion, to the exclusion of brethren who are one with themselves in all the *fundamentals of Christian doctrine, worship and order*. The day is coming when we must look at these things in the light of eternity, and sad will be our account, if, while we are set for the defense of the gospel, we shall be found to have cast, even though it be unwittingly through a mistaken zeal, the most serious impediments in the way of its progress."*

Let those who are striving with so much zeal to perpetuate these unnatural schisms in the body of Christ, look well to it lest "they be found fighting against God." It is a sad illustration of this schismatical spirit, that the "union" from which sprung the U. P. Church, resulted in the formal existence of *three* sects where there were previously only *two*. Such are the fruits of the policy which virtually says to all but the members of the U. P. Church, "Stand back. for we are holier than you."

* *United Presbyterian*, July, 1857, p. 113.

ARGUMENT VI.

The close communion theory involves its advocates in gross inconsistencies, approaching almost to profaneness.

These brethren employ in reference to this and similar topics, such solemn language as this: "Our responsibilities as a Presbyterian Church"—"faithfulness to our divine Master"—"faithfulness to the Lord"—"faithful as witnesses for the truth," &c., &c. Now, it is a sound scriptural principle, that "it is better not to vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay."* But to make and publish a set of ecclesiastical rules enforced with such solemn sanctions, while at the same time they are openly and without scruple violated, is certainly little less than immoral and profane.

In a former chapter we quoted from the *Evangelical Repository*, the organ in former years of the Associate Church, several examples of this great inconsistency in that branch of the U. P. body. These incongruities were in the matters of slaveholding, voting for adulterers, drunkards, gamblers, and other profligate and profane persons, intemperance, &c. This was of course before the union with the Associate Reformed and the origin of the U. P. Church. We now advert to a few illustrations of the same inconsistency among the Associate Reformed.

Many persons remember Prof. Dinwiddie, formerly colleague of Dr. Pressly in the Theological Seminary in Allegheny City. Here was a man taken from the

* Eccles. 5:5.

O. S. Presbyterian Church, placed at the very fountains of influence, installed as the teacher and model of young ministers. He had been in the habit of singing "Watts' Psalms and Hymns," and professed no repentance for this and similar crimes. Of course, he had been also guilty of violating the law of "close communion," and thus had done what the Testimony declares "was highly displeasing to God." Now, if the teachings of Dr. P. and the Testimony be true, was not this a solemn trifling with sacred things? Where were those dread "responsibilities" which Dr. P. professes to recognize toward the divine Master? Where was "the faithfulness to the Lord" which he professes as a governing motive? How could he venture thus to ignore his own conscientious convictions?

Another example: The late Rev. Mr. Buchanan, of Allegheny City, a co-presbyter with Dr. P., published in the *Presbyterian Advocate*, while the writer was the editor, several articles in opposition to "close communion." In these pieces, the argument against it from the Scriptures and from the 26th Article of the Westminster Assembly, was pointedly adduced. We have room, however, for only one or two extracts exhibiting the inconsistency of the practice with the professions of those who taught the restricted theory. Mr. B. exposes the multitudinous requirements imposed as a heavy burden upon plain people, thus:

"If we believe those who contend for close communion, we must swallow all their dogmas, *important* and *nonimportant*, *big* and *little*, before we dare to approach the table upon which

the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of Christ are placed. And how many of these are indebted to *subtle* and *metaphysical* theologians for their origin, I will not undertake to determine; a mass of indigestible food, all of which they require the communicant (whether he is possessed of a weak or strong stomach) to gulp down, or be denied the privilege of doing this in remembrance of his meek and lowly Master. Yes, they build such a high wall of peculiarities around the communion bread and wine, that none of the common people could ever get to it, if a great deal was not taken for granted without being understood."

"A great deal must be taken for granted without being understood!" A heavy charge, but not without reason.

Again, says Mr. Buchanan:

"It appears to me, as if those who are so very rigidly exact, 'strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.' They exclude from their communion many worthy members of Christ's household by their little distinctions and non-essentials, while they admit the gross violators of his law. Who has not seen this? Who has not seen a man with '*Thou art a drunkard,*' written in *flaming* characters upon his face, admitted to the communion table; while another, worthy in every respect, except this one point, viz., his faith and practice in regard to Psalmody, is excluded?"

The same blind admission of members is openly avowed in the new U. P. paper, the *Union Presbyterian*, of Cincinnati. Speaking of the utter "impossibility" of enforcing the adoption of the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as terms of communion in receiving members, a correspondent remarks:

“It will be said that we are only to require their assent, *in so far as they understand them*. Let us, therefore, inquire how far young converts understand these documents.

“Is the Confession of Faith ever taught in families? I have yet to learn of a single instance. Is it taught in Sabbath schools? Never that I have heard of. In rare instances, pastors meet with candidates, and read over the Confession, and require *assent*, but an *understanding* of it is never attempted, except in our Theological Seminaries.

“Turn now to the Catechisms. How many of *the ministry* ever read the Larger Catechism? Probably about half. How many of the membership under forty years of age? Possibly one in ten. The Shorter Catechism is more or less studied, or rather committed. How much of it is *understood* is quite another question.”

Indeed, how could it be otherwise? Says the same writer in the *Union Presbyterian*:

“The Confession of Faith is in itself a vast system of theology. It was formed by theological giants, at a time when the interest in theological discussion was all absorbing, not only among the ministry, but among politicians. The Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are almost a complete system of faith and practice. There is scarcely a point of Christian belief or duty that does not find a clear and concise expression in these admirable summaries. The Confession and Catechisms embrace the results of the study of the ablest men for sixteen hundred years upon the Word of God. Next we have the Testimony, explaining more fully the light in which the church views the Confession, and defining her position upon recent issues.”

From these and other similar facts, we feel safe in asserting that a large proportion of the U. P. Church are practical unbelievers in the *minutiae* of their creed

The stream will not rise higher than the fountain. Indeed, the Rev. Mr. M'Cune assures us that "not *one-half* of the members of the U. P. Church believe every part of their Confession and Testimony."*

We next present a very remarkable case in the bosom of the United Presbyterian Church. The Rev. William Davidson, D. D., of Hamilton, O., published several years ago, in one or more of the U. P. papers, his decided opposition to the theory of "close communion." The conditions which their General Assembly had attached to the Lord's Supper, he openly repudiated, because they *oppressed his conscience*, and he would not do it violence at the bidding of the Assembly.

That Dr. Davidson is entirely unprepared to submit to the *dicta* of his brethren on these points, is evident from the following extract from his article :

"I believe," he says, "I fully believe, that the sacred Scriptures, our Confession of Faith, our Catechisms, and the great body of Christian churches, in all time, conspire to declare that 'visible discipleship' entitles to membership in the church of God. I believe that the commission which, as a pastor, I hold from Jesus Christ, *requires* me to receive all such, and to fellowship them. In receiving members into the church, I cannot require more, nor accept less than this, without, as I conceive, violating the express language of the commission under which I act. (See Matt. 28 : 19, 20, &c.)"

In conformity with these large scriptural views, Dr. Davidson then avows that in total disregard of the deliverances of his brethren in the General Assembly

*Review of Ch. Fellowship, p. 23.

he had admitted to sealing ordinances persons who retain connexion with churches who hold to doctrines inconsistent with their "distinctive principles," and that he will do so again; that he has admitted members of secret societies to his church, though he himself is opposed to such societies, and that he will do so again.

Dr. Davidson, who is a minister of great earnestness and decision of character, seems to have anticipated that this free and frank avowal of sentiment, like *the torch* of the visitor to the interior of the Pyramids, would disturb *the dust* of time, and perhaps create considerable fluttering among a certain class of his brethren. He does not flinch, however, from any of his positions, nor hesitate to meet their utmost consequences. Thus he concludes :

"If, after this free and full confession, nothing is done with me, I shall feel free to pursue the even tenor of my way, and shall believe that I have violated no law of our church. If men are to be censured for doing as I have done, it is, perhaps, as well to begin with *me* as any other, and to *begin now* as at some future time. And I beg to declare most seriously, that I write this in no spirit of bitterness or defiance; with no design of provoking controversy or disturbance; but I do so because, after the above quoted action of our Assembly, I conceive common honesty requires these avowals."

Dr. Davidson had adopted sentiments on these subjects which seem quite in harmony with Presbyterian views, and we naturally inquire what was done with so rebellious a spirit? To the best of our knowledge,

nothing has been done—no process of discipline, no rebuke of any sort administered. He has held a good standing and an honorable position among his brethren for years, openly defying them to touch him if they dare! He certainly has not the apology of being of the number of the “babes.” He falls under the exact description given by Dr. P., viz., of “those who hold principles opposed to the Testimony of the church”—“who assume the attitude, * * * act the part of unruly children, and therefore it behooves the church, as a prudent mother, to *apply the rod* with a view to their reformation, and deprive them for the time being of the distinguishing privileges of the household of faith.”* But what has been the matter with this “prudent mother” for so many years? Are we to conclude “that her eye is dim and her natural strength abated;” and that the *rod* has fallen from her trembling hand?

Now, in view of such inconsistencies as those mentioned, we ask, where is that “fidelity of the church to Christ, her Lord and King”—that “faithfulness to the divine Master”—those “responsibilities for a most sacred trust,” &c., of which we read so much in “Church Fellowship” and the “Testimony?” Is it too much to say that such *practice*, as in open contrast with such solemn *professions*, becomes little less than a mockery—a trifling with a serious subject? “Consistency is a jewel,” especially in spiritual things; nor is it an inconsiderable flaw in the religious character of a church, when language appears to speak one

* Ch. Fellowship, pp. 51, 52.

thing, and the practical convictions and conduct quite another. The fault lies in professing extreme terms of communion which conscience and sound sense reject in practice. The church herself is thus brought into contempt.

And so it has always been. Dr. Mason tells us that in his day, a half century ago, his Associate Reformed brethren shrank from the practical application of their published terms of communion. He says :

“When a common person offers his name as a disciple of Christ, do they so much as *pretend* to measure his knowledge by the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of their public standards? They do not, not a man of them. If they did, they might resign their houses of worship to the bats at once.” He adds: “They receive their members upon a credible profession of faith in Christ—and in their inquiries into this profession, they *never* go into the *details* of their own standards.”*

These are hard sayings, but the worst is, *they are true*. Preaching and practice should go hand in hand, otherwise both lose their influence for good.

Such were some of the glaring inconsistencies between the profession and the practice of the two bodies which united form the U. P. Church. And from the example of the Rev. Dr. Davidson and others, it is plain that these statements are neither false nor slanderous, when alleged against the United body. Listen further to the testimony of some of these brethren themselves. In the new religious paper† published at Cincinnati, and edited by such prominent U. P. ministers as Dr.

* See his Plea, p. 357. . . . † *The Union Presbyterian*.

Davidson, Rev. D. M'Dill, Rev. W. C. M'Cunc and Rev. J. A. P. M'Gaw, we find the following in an editorial of date March 1, 1867. They speak of several topics, as,

(1.) *Psalmody.* These U. P. editors say :

"It is an undeniable fact that many United Presbyterians *in and around Pittsburgh* sing the 'devotional compositions of uninspired men' openly, loudly and repeatedly. All observant U. P. ministers who have enjoyed the advantages of a theological training at Allegheny within the last fifteen years are familiar with the fact. The learned U. P. editors and professors, and able and laborious pastors in the community, are not such monks, such theological Rip Van Winkles, as not to know it. They are not so disingenuous and hypocritical as to pretend that none of their members sing uninspired hymns when they worship in other churches. when they know very well that they do."

(2.) *Secret Societies.* The 15th Declaration of the "Testimony" expressly forbids membership in these societies. Yet these U. P. brethren say:

"It can be easily established, and we presume it will not be denied, that many members of the United Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia are members of secret societies, and consequently the fifteenth article of the Testimony is not enforced as law in that locality."

Again :

"It is a fact that this secret society article is not enforced as law in some of these Presbyteries on East, and these brethren must know it. Enlightened Philadelphia falls under the same condemnation with smoky Pittsburgh."^{*}

^{*} A correspondent of the Philadelphia U. P. paper, the *Christian Instructor*, in the number for March 16, '67 is equally *anti-Testimony* on the subjects of "close communion" and Psalmody. Thus, *inter alia*, he declares: "I do

(3.) *Public Social Covenanting.* The 17th Article of the "Testimony" treats of this subject. These U. P. brethren write as follows:

"The secret society article is not enforced as law in Philadelphia, nor the Psalmody article in Pittsburgh, nor is the public social covenanting article universally received as an article of faith out this way (viz., Cincinnati and the region roundabout), where we esteem ourselves decidedly more orthodox and consistent. These things are well known, and amongst intelligent men there is no question as to the facts. The great issue is, shall we have *liberty to state* these facts."

These alleged facts, which are proclaimed as notorious and undeniable by any intelligent member of the U. P. Church, require no comment from us. The Cincinnati editors, however, do not, as the reader will conjecture, counsel the immediate application of "the rod of discipline." They say in regard to these unruly members in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia: "We would not advise you to exclude them at once, as this might painfully deplete your own congregations, and crowd uncomfortably sister churches."

In a more solemn tone they then refer to those who hold the "keys of discipline," thus:

"They have read the Saviour's solemn denunciation, 'Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.' And they would not dare to cast men out of the church for not enforcing as law that which

not think it would much affect Christianity, as a system, whether 'close communion' or 'the exclusive use of the Psalms,' for instance, were voted up or down." Here is a call for "the rod" in another quarter, at the East, as well as at the West and in our smoky city.

they themselves do not enforce; as we must all so soon face death and judgment."

In conclusion of this topic: If these witnesses speak the truth (of which there can be no doubt), our argument is complete. It is not merely inconsistent—it is *morally wrong* to exhibit before a scoffing world such lofty pretensions of religious "responsibility," in direct and violent contrast with such "lame and impotent conclusions." And the theory which demands and receives such costly sacrifices from otherwise good and conscientious men, must be a false theory. "The tree is known by its fruit."

It is proper to add, that the "Adopting Act" under which the two Synods were united in the U. P. body, contains the following clause: "That forbearance in love as the law of God requires, shall be exercised toward any brethren who cannot fully subscribe to the Standards, so long as they do not *determinedly oppose them, &c.*" This is very well—but as regards Dr. Davidson and others, they have for years "*determinedly opposed*" close communion, &c. Neither the "Testimony," however, nor Dr. P. on "Church Fellowship," gives the smallest hint of the existence of any such "forbearance act" toward any but "babes who cannot give an intelligent assent to some of *the more sublime doctrines of the creed.*" The "Testimony," says, Dr. P., "declares that the church should not extend communion to those *who refuse adherence* to the profession (viz., of *all* her principles) which she has made." Why the Doctor so mercifully abstains from "the use of the

rod" upon the rebellious in and around Pittsburgh, we cannot tell. Surely these numerous "disorderly ones" are not all "babes!" Neither do the Pittsburgh errors pertain to "the sublime doctrines."

CHAPTER IX.

PROOF-TEXTS EXAMINED.

THE author of "Church Fellowship" quotes several passages of Scripture, which he interprets so as to exclude from communion all who do not adopt the U. P. Confession and Testimony, "babes" excepted. Such a text he thinks is the third verse of Jude:

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

This passage would undoubtedly settle the whole question, if several things were first proved, such as, (1) if there were no way of "contending for the faith" but by exclusion from the Lord's Supper and from baptism; (2) if the "faith once delivered" meant all the particular teachings of the Confession and Testimony; and (3) if it were certain that the Apostle had reference to those differences which exist among real Christians—whereas the very reverse is the obvious truth. He refers, as the immediate context proves, to "*ungodly men*, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and *denying* the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

We have already shown what sort of a "creed" the Apostles *contended for* when admitting persons to sealing ordinances. "If thou believest with all thine heart?" Believe what? "That Jesus Christ is the Son of God." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." A credible profession of heart-felt faith in the primitive "creed," which Dr. P. says "was brief and simple, embracing a few of the leading fundamental doctrines of the Bible"—was the apostolic method of admitting to sealing ordinances. We follow their example, and believe that Dr. P's. interpretation tortures the text from its true and obvious meaning.

Of the same sort of misapplication is the appeal to Rom. 16:17: "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses among you, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." The next verse shows what sort of persons the apostle alluded to: "They serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches *deceive* the hearts of the simple." But did these persons make "a credible profession of faith in Christ?" "Whatever they professed," says the judicious Dr. Scott, "they did not serve Christ or seek his glory in what they did, but *rather sought the indulgence of their appetites*, and advanced or zealously contended for their peculiar opinions, *in order to support themselves and live in plenty without labor.*" Now we cordially agree with Dr. P. that wherever he finds such persons, he should "avoid them," *i. e.* "have no fellowship with

them." Such *deceivers*, if found in the church, should at once be put out of it. But what has this to do with the exclusion of the most pious and eminently devoted members of those which even Dr. P. calls "sister churches?" He might about as reasonably quote Christ's denunciation, "Woe unto you, lawyers," to prove that no member of the bar should be received to the Lord's Supper! And as regards the crime of "causing divisions," the Rev. Mr. M'Cune has clearly proved that the rigid enforcement of Dr. P's. theory of communion would lead to the legitimate consequence, that "no church could be organized on earth with so many as two members"*—for the plain reason that no two persons in the world agree in their interpretation of every thing taught in the Scriptures. Even Dr. P. admits that "there will always exist some diversity of opinion in the church," and "a great diversity in the degrees of their gracious attainments"† But at the same time he strongly denies "the right of the church to receive into her fellowship one who rejects the truth or refuses to observe *any thing* which Christ has commanded"—or "which Christ has revealed in his word."

Certainly Dr. P. and those who agree with him, are by pre-eminence "those who cause divisions." Well might Dr. Mason say, that if such a theory were enforced, "there would be no place in the church for one Christian in ten thousand. And were the example universal, not a church of God would be left standing from

* Review of Church Fellowship, p. 29.

† Ch. Fell., p. 33.

the rising to the setting sun.”* Dr. M. of course does not mean that a true Christian will knowingly reject “any truth which Christ has revealed”—for only infidels do that. But he does mean that if such a creed as Dr. P. prescribes for receiving to sealing ordinances were put in practice, no *two persons* could unite to form a church! For if there were no other difficulty in the way, it would require a little lifetime for any two persons to compare their views on *all* the teachings of the Scriptures, in order to ascertain whether they were agreed or not!

The friends of catholic communion maintain as strenuously as Dr. P. can do, that the church is bound to “teach (though not as terms of communion) all things whatsoever Christ has commanded”—or as otherwise expressed, “the apostles’ doctrine.” But as he admits that there always will be “a diversity of opinion in the Church,” the question is this: “In order to communion, must there be perfect harmony, where he admits there always will be ‘diversity?’” With the single exception of “babes,” does Dr. P. really believe that the U. P. Church is bound to exclude from communion “all who reject *any one truth* of the Bible;” reject it, not because it is “a truth,” but because they cannot agree with him and others that it is revealed in the Bible? There is the gist of the question. If his language was designed to bear the usual meaning, Dr. P. answers this question in the affirmative—viz., the U. P. Church must, in faithfulness to her Head, refuse fellowship to

* Plea, p. 357.

every one who, in the U. P. sense, "rejects *any one truth* which Christ has revealed in his word."

If Dr. P. should have even a few applicants for communion on these terms, he will have plenty of work on his hands, both for himself and his session.

How strongly in contrast with this rigid theory is that of Paul, Rom. 15:17, "Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Christ received disciples limited in knowledge and imperfect in practice. Another rule is found in the 14th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, first verse: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Let no such points as true Christians differ about, keep you from receiving each other.

The charge, therefore, that all who differ from the U. P. Church on this and other subjects, are guilty of "causing divisions," directly recoils upon the author of "Church Fellowship." He takes the ground that his church, having adopted their Confession and Testimony as terms of communion, it follows, he thinks (as has been well said), that all those who *will* not come up and receive them, "cause divisions." So Rome thinks of all Protestant denominations. But who cause the divisions? Those who make unwarranted terms of fellowship, or those who are willing to commune, agreeing to the great rule laid down by Paul, Phil. 3:15, "And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto you;" agreeing in great essentials, and waiting until God shall reveal the truth on

minor points. This distinction, and rule of action, was adopted by the Reformers and others, until the "Uniformity scheme" was started, which has kept the church divided, not as different branches of one great family, who commune together "as God offereth opportunity," but divided, by schismatic exclusion from the "Lord's table."

Another text which is tortured into the service of close communion, is Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" which, being interpreted by U. P. hermeneutics, means this: "No two sincere Christians can scripturally commune together, unless they first agree in the truth and meaning of 160 sections of the *thirty-three* chapters of the Confession, as well as an indefinite number of propositions in the *eighteen* "Declarations" of the "Testimony!" But how was it at the original "Supper," where the Lord himself ministered? Did not Christ distribute the elements of bread and wine to those who were not minutely *agreed* with him on such points as his divine character and spiritual mission, &c., &c. Had not these "walked together" for several years? These questions answer themselves, and utterly explode this argument of the author of "Church Fellowship." The agreement which the inspired pattern requires, is in that "brief and simple creed," as Dr. P. styles it, viz., "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." They evidently taught that all could *walk together* in church-fellowship who were agreed in the "few leading fundamental doctrines" which Dr. P. says "were embraced in this creed."

Again, we are referred to 2 Thess. 3 : 6, as proof of close communion: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us."

The "disorderly" persons here described are subsequently marked as those who "would not work," but were "busy bodies"—wishing "to eat other people's bread for nought." Such idlers, says Paul, though professing to be soldiers of Christ, the great Captain of salvation, were in truth base cowards, had "quitted the ranks and deserted their post"—for this is the meaning of the original Greek term rendered "disorderly." They appear to have been those, says Dr. Scott, the commentator, "who made religion a *pretense* for indolence and for subsisting on the liberality of their brethren, without working at their own trades or occupations"—"they expected to be maintained in idleness"—"would contract a sauntering gossiping habit"—"would intermeddle with other men's concerns, to the disturbance of families, excite suspicions and jealousies among neighbors, to the injury of men's characters."

Now we need hardly say that from such persons all Christians should withhold church fellowship. But how can such a fact give countenance to the theory which requires Dr. P. to *withdraw himself*, in the ecclesiastical sense, from Reformed and O. S. Presbyterians, whose Christian character is orderly, whose morals, to say the least, are equally fair and unblamable with his

own? Thus the simple statement of the facts of the case shows how cruelly this text must be put to the torture in order to make it testify in favor of Dr. P's. theory of communion. But as the passage appears to be a favorite proof-text with him, let us examine it a little more closely.

1. It is remarkable that in several pages of comment upon this case, viz., of him "who would not work," Dr. P., like a prudent special pleader, gives not the least hint of the *dark shades* of character which the context attaches to the "disorderly person." If he had quoted the comments of the eminently pious and judicious Scott, they would have made his argument look very small.

2. Dr. P. informs his readers, that the "individual in question is not supposed to be one who is living in open and flagrant sin." But is it not an "open and flagrant sin" to steal — "to seek to live at other people's expense and in idleness." "by which such persons were liable to become useless and mischievous, and their families to be reduced to great distress" — they "expecting to be maintained in idleness by their brethren?" Surely Dr. P's. notions of "flagrant sin" differ very widely from those of Dr. Scott, the commentator.

3. The author of "Church Fellowship" further attempts to strengthen his case, by stating that the "disorderly" one was not "a heathen man nor a publican" — "is not said to be an unbeliever." No, not in so many words. But had he not "quitted the ranks" of the Christian host, and "*deserted* his post?" So says Scott — and we need not describe the doom of the *deserter*!

4. Dr. P. further relieves the dark coloring of the picture of the worthless idler, who sought to live upon his Christian neighbors (a species of stealing), by assuring us that he “was wanting in *some of the characteristics of the disciple*”—“there was *something* either in his faith or life, or it may be in both, which was so defective that it became the duty of the church to testify against *his fault, whatever it might be.*” Here we agree with the Doctor! There certainly must have been “something”—the “disorderly” person, beyond all question, had “*his fault, whatever it might be!*” What a mincing of terms there is here? Who would ever suspect, until he went to his Bible and examined for himself, that the Apostle was speaking of one whose aim and object was to live in idleness and mischief, by fraud upon his Christian neighbors!

5. Dr. P. further declares that this “disorderly” person “is supposed (of course by the Apostle) to be a Christian brother”—and he repeats, “He is supposed to be a brother”—“a brother that walketh disorderly.”* From the phraseology used he thinks it undeniable that the “disorderly” person was a Christian, hopefully so at least—or as he expresses it, “not chargeable with something utterly inconsistent with Christian character.” But Dr. P. is certainly mistaken in this judgment. We concede that Paul gives him the title “brother.” But no canon of sacred criticism is more familiar than this, viz., “that assertions of this sort are often made in the Scriptures, that refer only to *exter-*

* For the case as stated by Dr. P. see Ch. Fell., pp. 53-56.

nal character and profession."† This man *professed* Christianity and is called "brother"—just as Jerusalem, though compared by Isaiah to Sodom and Gomorrah, is called "the holy city," into which the saints, having risen from the grave, went and appeared unto many, after the crucifixion. Matt. 28:53. Thus too pharisaic pretenders are called by our Blessed Lord "righteous:" "I came not to call the righteous." Matt. 9:13. So Paul speaks of the preaching of the gospel as "the foolishness of preaching"—so considered by the proud Greek. The Bible abounds with similar examples.

Now it is in this *apparent* sense Paul calls the "disorderly" one "a brother"—just as Christ promised "twelve thrones to the disciples, Judas being one of them.

In this sense Paul applies the term "brother" to the "disorderly" deserter from the Christian ranks, who desired to eat the bread of idleness, at the expense of the church — he was so *professedly*, as Judas was one of the *twelve* who were to "sit on thrones."

That Paul's calling him "a brother" does not prove that he regarded the "disorderly" one as a true disciple of Christ, nor even as a credible professor, is further shown by the parallel passages. Thus 1 Cor. 5:11. Paul admonishes the Corinthians "not to keep company, if any man that is *called a brother* be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one no not to eat." Dr. P. will

† McClelland on Interp., p. 208.

hardly maintain that such persons were "Christian brothers," or even credible professors.

So likewise in 2 Thess. 3: 14, 15, "If any man *obey not* our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a *brother*." But if a man "obey not"—refuses obedience to the gospel as taught in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, is he to be regarded as a true disciple of Christ, or even as exhibiting a credible profession? In the same spirit Paul exhorts Timothy (1 Tim. 1: 5) "to *withdraw himself* from those who teach otherwise than the doctrine which is according to godliness; who were *proud, knowing nothing*"—"men of *corrupt minds*, destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness." This was the sort of "brothers" Paul meant. Dr. P. will hardly mince his matters so nicely in these cases as in the former one; he will scarcely say, "these *Christian brothers* were wanting in *some* of the characteristics of the disciple"—"there was *something so defective* that the church was required to testify against their fault, *whatever it might be*." Is it of this sort of palliation of gross sins Mr. M'Cune speaks? "Account for it as we may," he says, "some of those who have the most rigid theories about the terms of membership in the church * * * are often disposed to connive at the violation of plain commandments. With them it is often more important to subscribe the creed, than to obey the gospel."* The charge is a grave one, but it comes from that side of the house, not from ours.

* Review of Ch. Fell., p. 74.

From such considerations as these it appears very obvious, that when Paul commanded the Thessalonian church "to withdraw themselves" from a certain class of "disorderly" persons, his meaning was to exclude them by the use of discipline; those persons having already been admitted to church fellowship. One or more deceivers, hoping thereby to live a life of indolence at the expense of the church, had, Simon-Magus like, professed faith in Christ and been received on that credible profession. But having, like the same Simon, betrayed their idle, worthless habits, Paul directs that such "disorderly" drones be cast out of the church. If they refused to obey his solemn admonitions, they must, as the pious Henry expresses it, "come under the censures of the church." Thus it will be plain to every one, that there is not the smallest allusion to the terms on which persons are to be received to sealing ordinances. The case is that of the enforcement of the discipline of the church against "disorderly" members — a case so plain and clear that in deciding it no two faithful pastors could disagree; not even Dr. P. himself would find fault with the judgment of an Old School minister. It seems highly probable, also, that Paul's directions included an avoidance of familiar and social intercourse with persons of the character described. We need scarcely add, that the passage gives no support to the theory of "close communion," which excludes the most pious and exemplary of all denominations, except "OUR OWN!"

One of the strangest misconceptions in all that Dr.

P. has written on this subject, is seen in his reference to such passages of Scripture as the following in defense of "close communion." He says :

"We are solemnly commanded in the word of God to 'buy the truth and not sell it ;' to be well 'established in the truth ;' and carefully to guard against being 'carried about by every wind of doctrine.' 'Hold fast,' says one apostle, 'the form of sound words which thou hast received.' 'Whosoever,' says another apostle, 'abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.'"

On the ground of such texts as these Dr. P. proceeds to misrepresent the doctrine of catholic communion as *contradicting* such plain precepts of Scripture "requiring ministers *to be silent* in relation to some truth revealed," "to remain *silent and hold back* those truths by means of which God sanctifies his people, &c., &c." So he puts in flaming capitals the apostolic injunction—"I charge thee, **PREACH THE WORD**"—meaning that no minister who practices catholic communion can faithfully "*preach the word,*" but must be silent, &c.

Now the easiest way to expose this sort of logic, is to take an example, thus : An O. S. minister allows a pious, exemplary Calvinistic Baptist to sit with his people at the Lord's Supper. Must he therefore never *preach* on infant baptism or against the exclusive necessity of immersion ! What folly. The same minister invites to the communion a godly United Presbyterian : does it thence follow that "*he must be silent*" in relation to the duty of singing other songs than the book of Psalms ? How absurd in Dr. P. gravely to publish

over his own signature such a sentence as the following :
 "According to the theory of catholic communion, *all distinctive principles* MUST BE DROPPED."* It would have been equally true if he had said, that according to that theory our church doors must be closed against all but O. S. Presbyterians!!

When Philip baptized the Eunuch on the profession of a belief with the heart in Christ as the Son of God, he surely did not oblige himself "to be silent" ever after on all other great truths of the Bible.

But perhaps it may be said that Dr. P. simply means by "remaining silent, &c.," that the advocate of catholic communion, in the case of the Baptists for example, cannot press the doctrine of infant baptism as a term of communion upon the intended communicant. To such a statement we reply, that we cannot tell what Dr. P. *means*, except by what he says. We have quoted his own language above. If he merely meant that such a distinctive principle as infant baptism must not be thrust forward as a term of communion in deciding the right of a pious Baptist to an occasional seat at the Lord's Supper, he is certainly correct. But this is merely *stating our doctrine*, not refuting it. The *silence* in this case only proves that we copy apostolic example.

* *United Presbyterian*, March 20, 1867

CHAPTER X.

FALLACIES DETECTED.

IN the foregoing investigation we have purposely limited the argument to the subject of "communion in sealing ordinances," viz., baptism and the Lord's Supper. This has been chiefly for two reasons. (1) Because the author of "Church Fellowship" admits that persons "in connection with different ecclesiastical organizations can hold communion in reading and in hearing the word of God, in prayer, * * * * * and in such like devotional exercises."* "This communion," he adds, "is founded on union in the common Christianity"—and "may be enjoyed by those not formally connected with any part of the visible church." It is only in regard to "fellowship in sealing ordinances" that he takes the bold position, "that those who refuse to *forsake a communion* inconsistent with the (U. P.) profession," "in *some respects* walk disorderly"—"in *some respects* do not call upon the name of the Lord Jesus in a scriptural manner," and thus "remaining in connection with *a system* of error, the (U. P.) church may not be *a partaker of their sin* by receiving them into her fellowship"—viz., to baptism and the Lord's Supper.† It is pleasant to find

* Ch. Fell., p. 30.

† Ibid., p. 68.

Dr. P. admitting that such Christians as the Covenanters and Old School Presbyterians "can hold communion" with the U. P. body in anything — even so far as "in reading and hearing the word of God."

This is certainly something gained — for Mr. M'Cune tells us that "some of the ministers and members of the Associate and Associate Reformed Churches, who in the past opposed catholic communion, did also * * * peremptorily *forbid their members to hear the gospel* preached by ministers of other evangelical denominations."* We are glad to indulge the hope that Dr. P. is not like-minded with such exclusives.

(2) The second reason for confining the discussion to baptism and the Lord's Supper is, that the U. P. Testimony (Art. 16) seems to indicate a somewhat similar limitation — "The church should not extend communion in *sealing ordinances* to those who refuse adherence to her profession, &c., &c." It must be acknowledged, however, that a subsequent clause of the "Article" has a strong squinting toward the old exclusive practice exposed by Mr. M'Cune. Thus we read — "Nor should communion in *any ordinance of worship* (reading, hearing, prayer, &c.) be held under such circumstances as would be inconsistent with the keeping of those ordinances pure and entire, or so as to give countenance to any *corruption*, &c." This will bear a very wide interpretation — so wide as to include at least the Reformed Presbyterians and the O. S. Presbyterians. Dr. Kerr too assures us that the Westminster divines intended "as a general rule, to

*Rev. of Ch. Fell., p. 100.

make communion and uniformity of profession co-extensive;" and with this he entirely agrees.† Now as both the Covenanters and we Old School Presbyterians "refuse to forsake our *systems* of error" and unite with the U. Presbyterians; and as thus we refuse "uniformity of profession," it follows that to worship with any of our churches would of course "give countenance to our *corruptions*," and should be conscientiously avoided.

In the same spirit the author of "Church Fellowship," in a subsequent passage, inculcates the same sentiment, at least so far as regards the matter of *praise*. For he plainly tells us (p. 59) "that when one believes that it is proper to worship God in the use of uninspired songs of praise, while another regards the use of these songs in such worship as a *corruption*, they *cannot* have fellowship in this part of religious worship." If this be true, there must be a large number of the members of the U. P. churches who "*cannot* have fellowship in this part of their worship," even *in their own churches*. For we have the authority of the U. P. editors of the *Union Presbyterian*, that many of their members are guilty of using these "corruptions" in public and social praise—and that too in and around this centre of unity, orthodox Pittsburgh! They not only believe such a practice "proper," as Dr. P. hath it—but worse still, they *practice* what they think right. How it happens that Dr. P. continues "to hold fellowship" with these *corrupters* of a Christian ordinance, is for himself to explain.

† *U. P. Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1860, p. 139.

Dr. Davidson and the other editors of the *Union Presbyterian* insist that he does this wicked thing *knowingly*.

The *Presbyterian Witness*, a U. P. paper, denounces the "use of uninspired songs of praise" as *idolatry*, because it is a breach of the second commandment! Other writers have said the same. Of course it follows, that in retaining these "corrupters of worship" in his church, Dr. P. holds fellowship with "idolators!" But this is a digression.

It is assumed by these brethren, that to partake of these "sealing ordinances" in a scriptural manner with any church, necessarily implies agreement in "all the principles" of that church — or as Dr. Kerr interprets the Westminster Assembly, "communion and uniformity of profession must be co-extensive." But no one would ever suspect that this was the meaning of the Assembly from their definition of "a sacrament," viz., "A holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to *believers*." Did they mean, *believers* in the one hundred and sixty complex sections of the thirty-three chapters of their Confession of Faith; to say nothing of as many "Declarations" of a "Testimony" as any church might see fit to issue against the supposed errors of their fellow Christians! Can any person of sound judgment believe this? Thus too the Assembly say — "Baptism * * is to be administered to such as *profess their faith* in Christ and obedience to him." Again: "The Lord's

Supper is a sacrament * * * worthily received by *faith*—“the worthy receivers must examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord’s body, of *their faith* to feed upon him, of their repentance, love and new obedience; which are the fruits of faith.” All this is merely the full and obvious requirement of the Evangelist in reply to the question. “What hinders that I may be baptized?” Philip said, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” The action then follows: “They went down both of them into (to) the water; and he baptized him.” “Believing with all the heart,” is only another expression for “faith in Christ and obedience to him,” as the Westminster divines have it. It was largely proved in a former chapter, that those honored fathers imposed no such impracticable terms of communion as the “Testimony” prescribes.* “Communion is indeed an

* Since the above was written, we find in the *Union Presbyterian*, a U. P. paper, the following extract from the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Church, as adopted in 1782. Referring to the 26th chapter of the Westminster Confession on Communion, the A. R. Synod in the 7th Article say,

“But as occasional communion, in a divided state of the church, may produce great disorders, if it be not conducted with much wisdom and moderation, they (the Associate Reformed Synod) esteem themselves, and the people under their inspection, inviolably bound, in all *ordinary cases*, to submit to every restriction of their liberty which general edification renders *necessary*.”

To this expression of their views on occasional communion, the editors further say, that the A. R. Synod add a foot-note, declaring that “the principle thus expressed is not new;” that it “is set in a very strong light in the 26th chapter of the Confession, which largely describes the communion of the *catholic* church,” and that “the article containing it is not to be construed as a license to hold *unscriptural* communion with other churches.”

It will be observed that these are the same views of the meaning of the Westminster Confession which a few years later were embodied in the “Overture” by Mr. Annan, as was shown in a former chapter of this work.

act and an expression of union." "Christians and Christian churches *are* united. They are one in interests infinitely more valuable, in bonds infinitely more strong than all the other interests which subdivide them. For sectarian communion you must be united in a *sect*; but for Christian communion, you must be *united to Christ*."* This is the "union" which apostolic precept and example clearly require. All beyond this is mere human device, a yoke which no church has any right to bind upon the necks of those who are credible professors of faith in Christ — which even Dr. P. acknowledges O. S. Presbyterians and others to be. He indeed ventures to *improve* the apostolic pattern by adding, "they must submit to her (U. P.) authority."† But in this he merely assumes that he is wiser than his Maker! This is of a piece with his declaration of the office of a creed, viz., "to state them ("the great truths of the Bible") in plain, intelligible language." From this we infer that the Scriptures are not written in "plain, intelligible language." This is good Popery, but nothing better. The chief office of a creed is to comprise in

* Mason's Plea, p. 259.

† Though Dr. P's. book on Church Fellowship was published by the U. P. Board of Publication at Pittsburgh, it is gratifying to find that a correspondent of the *Christian Instructor* (a U. P. paper), of Philadelphia (Dec. '66), speaks of Dr. P's. theory as "an extreme view," "a piece of High Churchism," "more rigid and exclusive than is warranted by the Bible, &c." This is a voice from the East, as Mr. McCune and others have sounded the alarm from the West. It has been estimated that the Westminster Confession, Catechisms and U. P. "Testimony" contain not less than *seven thousand* propositions in theology and morals. These constitute "the creed," "the principles," "the terms of communion" of the U. P. Church. How it is possible to enforce such a creed, when youth and other comparatively uneducated persons apply for privileges, is a difficult question.

brief for the use of the church, the great truths which are *plainly* and *intelligibly* taught in the Scriptures. The Bible is not a regular *system* of truth, constructed according to a certain logical order. It combines almost every species of composition. The creed arranges the scattered teachings of a large volume, and condenses the whole for convenient use. The word of God would poorly perform its great work "as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path," if it were not, to say the very least, equally "plain and intelligible" with a certain human "Testimony!"

It is curious to follow the author of "Church Fellowship" in his varied and multiplied efforts virtually to show that *the word of God* (in this matter of terms of communion) *needs to be mended!* Apparently he was unable to satisfy himself with any one or two statements of his doctrine. Hence he iterates and reiterates it in such forms as these: "It is the duty of the church to see that those whom she admits to her fellowship, receive and hold fast the doctrines which are wholesome"—"unite with her in professing and maintaining the truth"—"the Apostle's doctrine," &c., &c.* Now it must be plain to every intelligent mind, that whilst these statements of "the duty of the church" are in general perfectly true, indeed quite common-place

* Similar expressions are frequent in "Church Fellowship:" "She (the church) may not be silent in relation to any one truth which the God of the Bible has made known to her"—"may not hold back any part of the counsels of God"—"may not connive at the rejection of any one truth in the revelation, &c." No Christian will deny any of these common-place statements, viewed in the abstract. They are all true—but how do they prove the apostolic terms of communion defective? That is the question.

and obvious when relating to the members of the church; yet when designed as an argument to enforce the belief of the 160 sections of the Confession (to say nothing of the Testimony) upon all applicants for baptism or the Lord's Supper — they then become neither more nor less than practical attempts to *amend* the sacramental record of the Saviour and the Apostles. The Holy Spirit, by those infallible teachers, has repeatedly stated the only terms of admission to “sealing ordinances;” and neither Dr. P. nor any other man or set of men has a right to impose pre-requisites which the Head of the Church has not prescribed, either by direct precept or obvious inference. It is certainly very remarkable, indeed quite unaccountable, that an author who has written so largely in defense of a strict adherence to “a literal *inspired* psalmody,” should make so light of the inspired record in the present instance.

Similar examples of this inconsequential mode of reasoning are such as these: “They who are associated together in the capacity of a church must adopt the *same great* principles, and walk by the same rule.” “The same *great* principles!” All Christians believe this to be true, understanding these *great* principles to comprise just what Dr. P. says “the creed of the primitive church” contained — viz., “a *few* of the leading fundamental doctrines of the Bible.” But when he builds on this apostolic foundation the doctrine that imposes a belief of some hundreds of theological and disciplinary propositions, many of them very complex

and abstract, as indispensable to the proper reception of baptism or the Lord's Supper, his premises are quite too narrow for his conclusion — his argument being what logicians call a *non-sequitur* — “it does not follow.” We ask with confidence — Where did you learn “that it has become necessary to enlarge the primitive creed” in this matter of admitting credible professors of faith in Christ to sealing ordinances? Popery pleads for this liberty, because she is *infallible*, and is not bound by scriptural law. But Protestants ought to know better.

In the same strain of false logic, the author of “Church Fellowship” attempts to strengthen his cause by an appeal “to a right, which, he says, is common to all other societies, which have their constitution or creed,” “the right of self-preservation.” But all intelligent Christians will admit that the only way of safety to the church, the only true law of self-preservation and extension, is a strict observance of the instructions of her Divine Founder. If Dr. P. will show us in the records of “primitive Christianity” a creed larger than the “brief and simple” one which he says embraced “a few leading fundamental doctrines of the Bible,” then, on that condition, the church will have an unquestionable *right*, nay, she will be *bound* in fidelity to her adorable Head, to require its belief and reception of all applicants for sealing ordinances, *provided* such a use was made of such creed “in the primitive days of Christianity.” Thus it is obvious that the analogy drawn from “other soci-

eties" utterly fails. They may organize under any rules they think wisest and best, but the Church is of divine appointment, and is limited by divine statute in all that pertains to the essential pre-requisites of membership.

Much use is made by Dr. P. of the deplorable fact that "the church exists in a divided state," which he pronounces "unnatural, and in every way improper." "A separate communion" he admits, "ought not to exist; but this, he adds, is the result of a previously existing evil, which must first be removed, and then the latter, as a matter of course, will cease." "It (division) is the result of the imperfection of our knowledge and the remaining depravity of our nature." All this has a very plausible sound, but it simply means, that in relation to "terms of communion," until all credible professors agree to adopt in full the U. P. Confession and Testimony, and unite with us, "the *brief and simple* creed of primitive Christianity" must be laid aside, sunk in utter oblivion as to terms of communion, and *our multifarious* proposition creed take its place! In other words, owing to "remaining depravity," we United Presbyterians will discard Christ's primitive creed in admitting persons to sealing ordinances, and substitute one of our own!

The logic of Dr. P's. formal display of words is truly exquisite. The particular question before us, is this: "Ought the U. P. Church to receive to her fellowship such credible believers as Reformed Presbyterians and Old School Presbyterians, who are acknowledged to be

true Christians?" "Certainly," replies the Doctor, "so soon as they abate 'the evil' of division, and come and join us!" "Is it the will of Christ that members of these and other Christian denominations should enjoy with us the privilege of the Lord's Supper?" "Undoubtedly," responds Dr. P., "if they 'first remove the evil' by renouncing their 'errors' and become one with us!" Which is just the same as to argue *that all United Presbyterians may commune together!* This is the remarkable conclusion arrived at through pages of very grave and formal ratiocination, clothed in stately forms of expression.

The "divided state of the church" is further enlisted in the service of "close communion," thus: "If a particular portion of the church has *a right* to exist as a distinct organization, it is her duty to require of all who desire to enjoy her fellowship, that they unite with her in the reception of her testimony for the truth (*i. e.* all revealed truth,) and in subjection to her authority." But this is mere assertion, a begging of the question. From this we are not to infer, however, that Dr. P. believes all the several evangelical denominations "have *a right* to exist," *i. e.* a right from Christ. This we understand him to deny; for he says, "the existence of such a state (of division) is inconsistent with the *nature and design* of the Christian church"—"it is in *every* respect unnatural and improper." But if some other denominations "have no right to exist," then by his own argument it follows, that they have no scriptural *right* to require applicants

for communion "to unite with them in the reception of the truth," as they hold it. In other words, his argument proves that "close communion" is not a duty among such churches, because such churches "have no divine right to exist," and of course have no right to enforce "close communion." This argument cuts deep; it virtually unchurches all such denominations; for they "have no right to exist!"

But admitting that in some way not explained, the other evangelical denominations, according to Dr. P., "have a right (from Christ) to separate existence," though in a condition "inconsistent with the very nature and design of the Christian church," it follows, by the same authority, that "it is the duty" of each of these sects to "require of all who wish to unite with her, the reception of the truth," *i. e.* as they conceive it to be taught in the Scriptures. But see what this will lead to. "Christ has given the *right*, and made it the *duty* of his church to require the reception of directly opposite doctrines, when persons are applicants for membership." One sect "requires the belief" of rigid Calvinism, another of low Arminianism, as the final fall and perdition of some true Christians, sinless perfection, &c. The U. P. is in *duty bound* to require the exclusive use of the 150 Psalms and close communion, and all the other "declarations" of the Testimony; the O. S. Presbyterian is equally obliged "in fidelity to the truth," to exact a belief of the opposite doctrines, and so on indefinitely. Thus "the existence of what is error" is perpetuated, and its inculcation is

made obligatory upon the conscience! Can any one in his sober senses receive this as in accordance with "the brief and simple creed of primitive Christianity?" But we forget that it "was found necessary to enlarge the primitive creed" which was used by the Apostles in admitting to baptism and the Lord's Supper. At least so says Dr. P. All evangelical denominations can unite in the Apostolic Creed, for it was "brief and simple." But it is far different with the Confession and Testimony.

But perhaps it may be replied, that the same difficulty occurs in the application by different sects of an extended creed in receiving and ordaining ministers. This is a mistake. We do not concede that Christ even gave the *right* or taught the *duty* of the various denominations to exact a belief of opposite doctrines, one sort of which must be false. Truth is one, not diverse. And though men may fancy they discover Arminian and similar errors in the Bible, our blessed Lord never made it obligatory to impose *them* upon candidates for any privilege or office in the church.

One word further as to the right of "a particular portion of the Christian church to a separate existence." If a church is constructed agreeably to the scriptural law of organization, she has a *right* to exist, not otherwise. But even such organizations have no right to enforce anti-scriptural laws. And as regards the duty of teaching what each church believes, it is binding only so far as they *believe the truth*. No circumstances can prove that Christ has made it a duty

to teach falsehood. The fact that a society of professing Christians have received error as truth, affects not the merits of the question, nor alters the nature of moral obligation. This is so plain as to be almost self-evident.

Another of the plausible fallacies put forth by the author of "Church Fellowship," is this: the different sects must maintain "close communion," otherwise, they virtually acknowledge their "separate existence to be unwarrantable, and its continuance must involve the guilt of schism."*

The continued separation of an individual professor or a number of them from the visible church, is always and unquestionably a very serious step. Luther was long in arriving at the conclusion that he must "come out" even from idolatrous Rome; and what is much more impressive as an example, we know that our blessed Lord and his Disciples, as also many other eminently pious persons, remained in communion with the Jewish Church until the organization under the New Testament form, though the old church had fearfully apostatized, and in fact was little better than a "den of thieves." Still it seems to be generally admitted, that cases may and do occur which justify such separation and the continued existence of distinct organizations. But it may be well for those who are so strenuously upholding these ecclesiastical divisions, to consider prayerfully these questions: "Is the diversity of faith and morals which keeps them separate from other bodies of Presbyterians, so great as the ig-

* Church Fellowship, p. 33.

norance and error of the Disciples, whom our Saviour formed into the New Testament organization?" Are the errors of the brethren from whom you stand aloof to be compared with those of Peter, who rebuked Christ because he had said he must go to Jerusalem and be hung upon the cross, and which caused his Master to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan?" Probably few Christians of the present day would be willing to belong to a church composed entirely of persons so deeply in error as to the divine character, mission and sacrificial work of Christ, as were the eleven Disciples. Yet the Master himself formed them into his New Testament Church. And can any doubt for a moment, that such pious Jews as Simeon, Anna and others, if they had been present at the Passover, would also have been welcome to the subsequent eucharistic feast, though their views of certain points might have been very obscure and defective?

These facts may perhaps prepare the way for an answer to Dr. P's question, "Why does division in the church become a necessity?" But whatever may be said of such clear cases as that of Luther, the previous question should be with all true Presbyterians, "Is there such a necessity?" Dr. P. says "the *necessity* arises from what is regarded as *error* among the professed disciples of Christ." But it is notorious to all well informed persons, and has been abundantly demonstrated in our former chapters, that most of THE ERRORS *in other bodies* of Presbyterians, FOR WHICH HE DEFENDS THE SEPARATE COMMUNION OF THE

U. P. CHURCH, EXIST AMONG THEMSELVES. The very supposed *errors* against which as a needful protest he maintains the *necessity* of a separate organization and a separate communion table, these IDENTICAL ERRORS, he and others sanction, according to the showing of their own ministerial brethren, by admitting those who hold them to sealing ordinances, and to other privileges and honors of the U. P. Church! Of course Dr. P's. "protest against error," for example, in the matters of Psalmody and close communion, thus becomes a nullity, a shadow without the substance.

These reasonings, if we mistake not, clearly prove the case as stated by the author of "Church Fellowship," to be his own, viz., "that there is no cause why intercommunion should be forbidden between the parties" (we mean of course, such Christians as O. S. Presbyterians and U. P's.), "and that therefore a continuance of separation must involve the guilt of schism."* Whichever of the two bodies prevents their union, is the schismatical party.

We might press the argument still further, thus: Recognizing the deplorable fact of separate organizations, why must "close communion" exclude all who belong to all other sects? If we were even to grant that the Covenanters and O. S. Presbyterians are as deeply steeped in gross "error" as the old Jewish Church, were there not a Simeon, a Joseph, an Anna and a Mary in that corrupted body? Why not "of some have compassion, making a difference," after the

* Church Fellowship, p. 33.

example of the Apostle Jude? Why not distinguish the precious from the vile? Why not authorize U. P. sessions to receive such Old School *Simeons* and *Annas* as they might have knowledge of, being occasionally present at communion seasons? Why so rigidly enforce the Testimony, which requires such devout persons first "to forsake a communion which is inconsistent with the (U. P.) profession?" This is about the same as to say, "we will commune with you, although you hold certain *errors*, *provided* you come over to our church. But if you will not join us, we protest against those *errors* (though common among ourselves), by excluding you from the Lord's table!" How irreconcilable is all this with the simple record of inspiration, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he baptized him."

Another specimen of loose logic. The author of "Church Fellowship," in meeting the argument that those whom Christ in heaven receives as his dear friends and brethren, any church on earth may receive—"if they are in communion with Him, they certainly may commune with us"—alludes to the case of David, who "though a member of the church invisible," yet for gross crimes, "might justly be excluded from visible communion." The mistake here consists in applying the conditions of a case of obvious discipline to the question of admission to ordinary or occasional membership. No advocate of catholic communion desires adulterers and murderers, even though they were eminent as David, to be admitted to sealing

ordinances ! But how does it thence follow that godly *Simeons* and *Annas* of other denominations, however pure in morals, must be excluded ?

Dr. P. admits "that there will always exist some *diversity of opinion* among church members. It was so, he says, in the days of the Apostles." In other places we have formerly shown that he demands minute uniformity and agreement in *all revealed truth*, in order to communion ; and one chief reason is, that it is not possible to decide which are essential, and which non-essential doctrines. Only "babes" are excepted from this general statement.*

He freely admits that "there are certain great doctrines of Christianity * * * which are relatively of greater importance than others." By these he no doubt means "those few leading fundamental doctrines of the Bible," which he says formed "the primitive creed of the church." But in order to show that "a credible profession of these fundamental doctrines" is not sufficient to give a professed believer a right to communion at the present day, he inquires—"Who will presume to determine precisely what doctrines in the Bible *are essential to salvation*, or what amount of

* In the *Institutes*, b. 4, chap. 1, sec. 12, Calvin draws the true line of distinction among doctrines, thus : "All the articles of true doctrine are not of the same description. Some are so necessary to be known, that they ought to be universally received as fixed and indubitable principles, as the peculiar maxims of religion. There are others, which are controverted among the churches, yet without destroying the unity of the faith."

Calvin had no difficulty in deciding what doctrines were *essential* to the unity of faith and what doctrines "destroyed" it. For he immediately adds : "A diversity of opinion respecting these *non-essential* points ought not to be a cause of discord among Christians."

error may consist with the reality of the Christian character?" But to this as a question of the right to communion, Dr. P. himself has given the true answer, viz. "the brief and simple creed of primitive Christianity," "those few leading fundamental doctrines of the Bible." Have you any serious difficulty in *determining precisely* what they were? Surely not; otherwise you would not have said they were "leading and fundamental"—for how could you know that, if you could not distinguish them? On the platform of this "primitive creed," admit Covenanters and O. S. Presbyterians to occasional communion—and then you need not give yourself or anybody else the least trouble to inquire what amount of error may consist with the reality of the Christian character of such communicants. They comply with the apostolic requisitions, and that should satisfy you and every body else. As to your fears that you would thus "*connive* at the rejection of certain other truths in the word of God"—we suppose that the Apostles understood that matter at least as well as any of us moderns. If they found no such difficulty in the application of their "brief and simple creed," we may throw our fears to the winds.

* Since the foregoing was written, Dr. P. has published over his own signature the following: Speaking of the O. S. and U. P. Churches, he says—"We are free to admit that these 'two bodies' hold substantially the same views in relation to the *great doctrines of Christianity*." But how could he say this, if he "could not presume to determine" what these "great doctrines of Christianity" are? And if he can settle this point so easily, why should he make any difficulty on the question of *essentials* and *non-essentials*, in deciding the right of O. S. Presbyterians to the communion? Surely "the great doctrines of Christianity" are "the essentials"—and Dr. P. must know what they are, if his own statement is a correct one.

CHAPTER XI.

MORE FALLACIES.—A REMEDY FOR DIVISION.

THE author of "Church Fellowship" teaches that it is just as inconsistent with the *nature* and *design* of the Christian church that divisions should exist among her members, as that the members of the human body should be divided one from another. "Where these divisions exist,"—he adds, "there must be something wrong—they originate in *some sinful cause.*" Of course he can not mean that the body to which he belongs stands separated from other Presbyterian churches for "a sinful cause"—for that would be to confess himself and his brethren guilty of schism—for "they have no right to exist." It is self-evident that Christ has not given the U. P. Church a right to exist "for a sinful cause!" His meaning obviously is this: We United Presbyterians have a right to separate existence; but other Presbyterian churches have no such right, because they "originated in something wrong"—"some sinful cause." But if the Head of the Church has not given these other Presbyterian bodies "a right to exist," what right can they possibly have to enforce "close communion?" Dr. P. tells us, moreover, that "to assemble at the communion table *all the different* portions of the Christian church," "would convert her into a Babel,"* But if

* Ch. Fell., p. 34.

this were ever so true of "ALL the different churches," is it a good reason for excluding the most exemplary and excellent of the Covenanter and O. S. Churches? Or does Dr. P. really think that by authorizing the members of the U. P. Church to sit down at the table of the Lord with those of other denominations which he calls "sister churches," "toward whom he expresses feelings of the kindest fraternal regard, and wishes them abundant success in all their works of faith and labors of love"—does he really think "the church would be thus converted into a Babel?" These are the really practical questions. The organic union of all real Presbyterians is what we desire—a consummation devoutly to be wished—and until we can reach some practical conclusion on this point, we may safely postpone the question of "assembling at the communion table *all the different portions* of the Christian church." To mingle in the discussion of the only really practical topics, those which are merely theoretical, has too much the air of special pleading. "One thing at a time"—is a sound practical maxim. When Presbyterians of the different tribes have healed their own "sinful" divisions, they can consistently inquire into the question of communing with all other sects. Then will be the suitable occasion to discuss the point, whether by admitting other bodies than Presbyterians and Calvinists to our fellowship, we will "convert the church into a Babel."

The remedy for these "sinful" *divisions*, not obscurely indicated by Dr. P., is that all the other Christian

denominations should break up, renounce their "errors," and join the U. P's. Dr. D. Kerr, however, suggests the practice of "close communion" in all the different sects, as a likely method of healing these breaches. He says the theory of catholic communion "deplorably tends to reconcile the church to her present unnatural and sinful state, and so to perpetuate division."* "Close communion," on the other hand, if universally practiced, he thinks would "exhibit schism in its true light"—"make more clear and palpable the deformity and disabilities it has brought upon the church."

But suppose the other evangelical denominations should each for itself adopt the close communion theory as taught in the U. P. Church? Of course it would be done conscientiously; and the result follows, viz., that the conscientious adoption of exclusive communion would be the most likely method to convince each of the sects that they were wrong—living in a sinful schismatical separation from other Christians. Is this a very probable result? There is doubtless such a thing as an individual plunging so deeply into a course of profligacy, that conscience is suddenly startled from its slumbers, and he becomes a reformed man. Whether Dr. K's. remedy for schism is expected to operate on some such principle, we cannot say. The idea of promoting cordial harmony of faith, feeling and practice among brethren of different professions, by building the walls of separation so high, as to amount to total exclusion from sealing ordinances, seems to

**U. P. Quarterly*, 1860, p. 147.

our mind rather problematical. Dr. K. himself, having had long experience of this method of promoting union, can possibly speak of its results from actual trial. But he poorly exhibits the good fruits of his own theory.

Again : We are not to suppose that this good brother means to admit that *he* has been living in "the enormous sin of schism," and therefore needs, as he says, "to realize it, that it may be repented of." Of course not. The U. P. Church is not schismatical, by any means ! It follows, therefore, that *his remedy* for schism is intended only for the other Christian denominations. *They* are the schismatics, and Dr. K's remedy of "close communion" is recommended to heal their "sinful" propensities to division ; or to right the great "wrong" in which they have had their schismatical origin.

It all then comes to this — that if these several sects will adopt this one of the U. P. "principles," that will be one step out of schism and toward scriptural union. And if they will only be wise and conscientious enough to adopt the remainder of the U. P. Confession and Testimony and unite with *us*, "the enormous sin of schism" will cease. Of course this will indicate that it has been "repented of" before it was forsaken. Dr. K. does not in so many terms preach this gospel, these glad tidings of peace and fraternity ; but we believe we have correctly stated the substance of his remedy for schism. It appears to harmonize very well with that of the author of "Church Fellowship : " Cease to

differ from us; unite with our body: then schism will come to an end. Or as Dr. P. aptly expresses it: "Let error"—(of course he means *other people's errors*) "let error, which is the cause of division, be removed"—(*i. e.* by a full and formal agreement with us U. P's.) "and then, as the natural result, division will cease." Nothing could be more logical and conclusive. Let all professing Christians become "United Presbyterians," and there will be no schism — but a church, that is one and indivisible.*

How strongly in contrast with all this is the remedy for divisions recommended by Dr. Mason, the "prince of American preachers:" "Let us show our fellow Christians that we embrace them in the bowels of Jesus Christ — that we do not consider 'the children's bread' on their tables as 'cast to the dogs.' Let us show it not merely by profession, but by facts — let us eat of their bread when they invite us; and welcome them in turn, to eat of our own. One year of love will do more toward setting us mutually right when we are wrong, than a millennium of wrangling"—and he might have added, "than a thousand years of exclusive, anti-social worship."

Is there then NO REMEDY for these "enormous sins of schism?" Is there no common ground, on which all Calvinistic Presbyterians at least, may unite in one body, and from which they may go forth in unbroken

*There is not a sect on earth, however small, that would disapprove of Dr. P's. penance for curing schism. They all offer similar accommodating terms, viz., "All you people adopt our standards and join us, and away with your foolish and wicked divisions, the enormous sins of schism!" The variety, however, might occasion some embarrassment where to fix the choice.

phalanx to meet and conquer the foes of our common Christianity! Must we forever waste our strength and resources in these hateful divisions, instead of combining all our energies in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom — in spreading the triumphs of the Cross to the remotest limits of the habitable world? Such a common ground, we think, is embraced in the following truths and principles.

I. "We may safely say there is not a perfectly pure church on the face of the earth." "In the present state of imperfection, there will always exist some diversity of opinion among the members of the church." "They (true Christians) all think as Christ thinks on the *great foundation-truths* of the gospel." (1)

II. "Were it possible to get all true Christians throughout the whole world assembled into one church, while none others were admitted, there would probably be very little jarring between them, probably none in the *great truths* and *duties* of the gospel." "It is chimerical to expect union on the principle of agreement *in everything*, and the framing of a basis of union on that principle will be found to be lost labor." (2)

III. "The only basis on which 'catholic communion' can exist, if it be really what it should be, is 'the communion of saints by profession.'" "The apostolic creed of primitive Christianity embraced a few of the leading fundamental doctrines of the Bible." (3)

IV. "That a temporary, or what is called 'occasion-

(1) Dr. McDill in the "Overture," and Dr. Pressly

(2) Dr. McDill in both extracts from "Overture."

(3) Drs. McDill and Pressly.

al communion,' with sister churches. may lawfully in some instances take place, is what no man of understanding, who is not much pinched to support some favorite and false hypothesis, will deny; * * * if otherwise proper care be taken to guard against an unhallowed communion." "We never can and never will embrace the principle that all the Protestant churches, *except our own party*, are unfit for Christian or holy communion." (4)

V. "The Bible is their (Associate Reformed) Testimony. They are afraid of publishing too many Testimonies — because they may tend to turn away our attention from Holy Scripture to *human compositions*." "They (Associate Reformed) offer no other Testimony to their churches than the Bible, as explained in the Confession of Faith." (5)

VI. "We are *far from disapproving* of 'Rouse's Version,' commonly called the old Psalms." "We are extremely sorry to have observed a growing disrelish in some churches for the Psalms of David and *other songs* of Scripture." "We do not mean to say that *hymns of human composition* may not be lawfully used in any case whatever." (6)

VII. "The Church of Christ in this country is miserably divided. The bad consequences are many and great — inability to support ordinances, or even an *appearance of a Christian church*; a relaxation

(4) Dr. McMill in the "Overture."

(5) Dr. M'D. in the same.

(6) The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and the Overture by Mason, Annan and Smith.

of discipline; a contempt of the ministry, and the rapid progress of ignorance, infidelity and vice. These are heart-piercing evils; and might in part be prevented by the united exertions of the friends of religion and virtue." (7)

VIII. The diversity of sentiment among the different Calvinistic denominations is not greater than the differences among their own individual membership. And there is just the same reason why these different churches should excommunicate many of the best of their own members, as that they should refuse intercommunion in their organic character. "Not *one-half* of the members of the U. P. Church believe every part of the creed which it professes." "Is it not proper to make terms of communion as few, comprehensive, clear and scriptural as possible?" (8)

IX. "The principle of the church's unity occupies a conspicuous place in the doctrinal part" (viz., of "the Epistle to the Ephesians"). "This admitted, the doctrine of catholic communion seemed to be an irresistible consequence." "That unity which marked the primitive church, when the followers of Christ all went under one name, consisted in their agreement in fundamentals." (9)

Here then is a PLATFORM OF PRINCIPLES on which all Christians, who adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith, can harmonize. We are not acquainted with

(7) "The Ruling Elder," by Rev. R. Annan, an Associate Reformed minister.

(8) Rev. Mr. McCune and Annan's "Ruling Elder."

(9) Rev. Dr. Pressly's Letter to Dr. Mason, and *United Presbyterian* for July, 1851.

a solitary Old School Presbyterian who would object to anything contained in these articles. Our brethren in their "Testimony" profess to be deeply impressed with "the solemn responsibilities of their present state of separation from other Presbyterian churches." They also "deplete the divisions that exist in the church of Christ, and especially among those who have the same Confession of Faith." These divisions they denounce "as highly dishonoring to Christ, tending to harden the enemies of truth in their opposition to it—to promote improper feelings among brethren—to counteract the exercise of discipline, and to retard the grand and avowed design of Christianity." All this, and more, is true of the detestable antipathies which the father of evil has so long contrived to kindle and keep alive among sound Calvinistic Presbyterians, the friends and followers of a common Lord. How long shall those who love and honor the same Saviour thus work into the hands of the powers of darkness; and by their foolish and hurtful separations contribute to swell the fearful tide of ruined souls as it rolls onward to the pit of destruction? "O Lord, how long!"

APPENDIX.

IN Chapter III. of this volume, some facts are stated in relation to the views of the REV. ROBERT ANNAN, our honored father, which will probably surprise certain of our U. P. brethren — especially those of them, who, like Dr. P., have published the author of this work as “a *slanderer* of his own father” — “guilty of *atrocious slander, &c.*” On the testimony of the facts as there stated, we are very willing to abide the candid judgment of all good men in regard to that point. It must be very evident that Mr. ANNAN was neither a *psalm-singer* nor a *close-communicant* of a certain hard, cast-iron type. He had his preferences — but they were those of a mind which, as Dr. P. expresses it, “could think rationally on these subjects.”

A few remarks may be proper in this connection, in regard to the *reception* which “the Vindication of the Letters on Psalmody” has met from the several critics, who claim that in singing *Rouse* “they sing the inspired word of God.” The remarkable acerbity in some of these judgments proves that they have been influenced more by *temper* than any thing else. The *Banner of the Covenant* kindly says, that “the book is written in a Christian spirit,” but Dr. Sproull (Old Side Covenanter) compares it in part “to the writings of Renan and Colenso” — who are practical infidels! And yet another very recently, in the columns of the *United Presbyterian*, judges that “much learning” or something else has made the author *mad!* A similar compliment was

paid to the Apostle Paul on one occasion. Astronomers tell us of certain "disturbing forces," which often spoil their most accurate calculations. These brethren, some of them at least, seem to have been greatly *disturbed* by something! Of course we must make due allowance for these influences.

The *Evangelical Repository*, a magazine edited by Drs. Cooper and Barr, of Philadelphia, notices the "Vindication" in as fair and candid a spirit as could perhaps be expected from our U. P. brethren. Drs. Barr and Cooper concede that "the author shows a very intimate acquaintance with the subject in controversy." Very well! Then of course Dr. P. misrepresents the author, when he says that he chiefly discusses "the exclusive use of Rouse,"—"and represents the great matter in dispute to be what *version* shall we use." Dr. P. can settle it with Drs. Cooper and Barr.

Again: The *Repository* says further, "that the author of the 'Vindication' has evinced no *little ability* and *acuteness* in vindicating his 'Letters on Psalmody' and the *principles* stated in those Letters." "He evinces more than ordinary skill in polemic tactics." Very well, again. Dr. P., however, can think of no more appropriate term for our "ability, acuteness, and polemic skill," than "*the hallucinations* of the author of the Vindication!" According to the *Repository*, the *hallucination* is all on the Doctor's side.

Once more. The "most unkindest cut of all" is this: Drs. Cooper and Barr tell their readers, "that in some instances the "Vindication" seems pretty effectually to succeed in getting Dr. P. in what seems to be A TIGHT PLACE!" This may perhaps satisfactorily account for the fact that Dr. P., as he himself informs us, "had resolved to take no notice of the Vindication." This *prudent* resolve, however, he was at length brought to reconsider, the motive therefor being as follows: Dr. Hodge, editor of the *Biblical Repertory*, had so far

fallen under Mr. A's. *hallucination* as to assert in a notice of the book that "Mr. Annan's arguments had not been, and could not be refuted." This statement from the pen of the venerable editor of the *Repertory* seems to have greatly disturbed Dr. P. But instead of taking up the real questions, as stated in the book, and pointing out the fallacy of the reasoning, he labors through a long argumentation in trying to make the impression that Mr. A's arguments were "chiefly directed against the *exclusive use* of Rouse's paraphrase!" But this is proved incorrect by the title of the "Letters on Psalmody," by the "propositions" stated for discussion, and by the whole course and tenor of the volume. Our arguments were *not* directed against "the exclusive use" of Rouse or any other versification, but against "*Rouse as an inspired system of Psalmody*;" as also against "the exclusive use" of the 150 Psalms. These facts Dr. P. might have found plainly stated in the "Vindication." And it seems strange that he should have been ignorant of them, if he had read the book he professes to criticise. Yet strange to tell, over his own signature he ventures, in a variety of forms, to misstate and caricature the argument of the Letters and Vindication as against "the exclusive use of Rouse!" Such spasmodic struggles as these indicate very clearly the existence of what Drs. Cooper and Barr call "the tight places" in Dr. P's. controversial experience.

Such being the evasive method which Dr. P. has chosen to follow, it becomes altogether needless to pursue him through all the windings of his course. He still calls Rouse's paraphrase "a version," "a poetic translation"—but he appears to have *come down* somewhat from the lofty terms of his book "on Psalmody." He does not now say, "a *true and literal* version," as he used to do—nor affirm that "as a true and literal translation of the original, it (Rouse) is *decidedly* supe-

rior to any other in the English language!"—and of course *superior* to our prose version, *more true, more literal!* Yet he does say, "We read the word of God in the prose translation, and we sing the songs of inspiration (*i. e.* the word of God) in our poetical version." Of course he must still believe that "Rouse's paraphrase," or "Rouse's Psalms," as the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland calls it, is an inspired paraphrase! But he does not attempt to prove that any person of sense ever called our "prose translation of the Bible" a paraphrase.

Referring to the "Letters on Psalmody" and "Vindication" for the conclusive evidence which disproves his strong assertions, it must suffice to exhibit a few specimens of Dr. P's. *latest* demonstrations of logical skill.

1. He argues that because our O. S. supreme judicatory have decided that they are "*far from disapproving*" of Rouse's Psalms—*therefore*, they must have *approved of their errors*; such for example as "that man hath *perfect* blessedness"—which implies of course *perfect* holiness—for only the sinless are "perfectly blessed." Dr. P., however, hoots at the idea of there being *any error at all* in the line just quoted from Ps. 1. Yet in the *new version* adopted by the U. P. General Assembly, his own church have changed it into, "How blest the man"—which is Dr. Watt's versification almost verbally; and avoids the error of "sinless perfection."

2. In his second number Dr. P. remarks—"Whether the author of the Vindication is willing to admit that we have divine authority *for the use of the Psalms* * * *is somewhat doubtful.*" "*Somewhat doubtful!*" Yet Dr. P. had in his hands the book which on p. 61 speaks as follows: "We have Divine appointment for the use of the Psalms in praise to God. The author of 'the

Vindication' never had the *least doubt* on that subject." Similar statements are found on p. 29, and elsewhere—and such a denial of the "use of the Psalms" is pronounced by the author both "silly and wicked." Is there anything *doubtful* about these statements?

But perhaps the strangest of these later errors which Dr. P. has permitted himself to utter, is the following:

3. To prove that the "Vindication" teaches that we "have no divine warrant to use them" (the Psalms), he quotes the following: "The principle which assumes a divine warrant for singing a *literal version of the whole book of Psalms*, we regard as both false and injurious to the best interests of the church under her present dispensation." The obvious meaning intended by the author of the "Vindication" may be shown in a few particulars:

(1.) Dr. P. himself *practically admits* the truth of the statement, "that we have no *divine appointment* for a literal version of the whole book of Psalms." For he sings no "literal version," but a mixed paraphrase, with five hundred lines and parts of lines of human amendments of *the thoughts* of the inspired writers. This fact entirely explodes the idea of a "literal version"—and convicts him, on his own theory, of habitually violating "divine appointment," as he understands it.

(2.) Dr. P. does not sing "the whole book"—for he "lays aside as useless" nearly all the inspired titles, because he says they "are under the veil, and unintelligible." Yet they are integral parts of the Psalms. Besides, he rejects Ps. 72:20; and parts of Ps. 128:2, 136:15, &c., &c., &c. Thus he attempts to *improve* upon the divine pattern. As regards the inspired titles of most of the Psalms, Dr. Kerr says, "they were never intended to be sung." Of course the *principle is false* which requires THE WHOLE BOOK to be

sung, and if *false*, "it is of course" injurious "to the interests of the church."

(3.) The obvious intention of the "Vindication" in denying divine appointment for singing the whole book in a *literal version*, is not to question the divine warrant to use the Psalms in praise, but to question the expediency of using *some* of them literally. Dr. P. himself *explains* the *Psalm*, because he thinks it needs it, and then he allows the people to sing it. *He* explains in very plain prose. *We* explain some of the Psalms in very good poetry. The author of the "Vindication" gives this as in part his meaning in the very same section from which Dr. P. extracts the above statement, which he thinks so very objectionable. Whether Dr. P. or *ourselves* is the greater *sinner*, we submit to common sense.

A DEFENCE

O F

“Close Communion Tested,”

Against the Strictures and Objections of Drs.
Pressly and Sproull.

B Y

WILLIAM ANNAN.

Prove all things.—*Paul.*

W. S. Haven & Co., Printers, Pittsburgh.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
PREFACE, - - - - -	4
CHAPTER I.	
The state of the question. Extreme view of terms of Communion taught in "Church Fellowship," disavowed by U. P. Ministers—but not the main question to be discussed, - - - -	7
CHAPTER II.	
The Reviewer substitutes a side issue in the room of the real question discussed in "Close Communion Tested." The main question fairly stated—the nature and the amount of the truth to be received as conditions of communion. Irrelevant topics introduced by Dr. P., - - - -	11
CHAPTER III.	
The Reviewer plays fast and loose. Maintains and abandons his principles at pleasure. Calls hard names—"thou hypocrite," &c, - -	16
CHAPTER IV.	
The doctrine taught by "The Fathers." Calvin's view. Knox, Welsh, Moncrief, Renwick. Doctrine taught in "The Overture." Examination of a certain Act of A. R. Synod. Views and practice of "Father Annan." Dr. P.'s charge that this father disregarded his ordination vows, - - - -	22
CHAPTER V.	
More about "The Fathers." They sanction the use of "human compositions." Their views of stated fellowship. Act of the Church of Scotland in 1711. Dr. P.'s defence of "Catholic Communion" in 1818, in letter to Dr. Mason,	32

CHAPTER VI.

The Associate "fathers." Dr. P.'s theory impracticable—evaded by himself. Direct argument. Example of our Lord at the first supper. Disciples had not received Christian baptism, &c., - - - - -	39
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

Argument from Apostolic Example. Peter Baptizing Cornelius. Cases of the Eunuch, the Philippian Jailor, &c., - - - - -	50
--	----

CHAPTER VIII.

Doctrine of the Westminster Assembly. Fatal admission of the "U. P. Quarterly" when Dr. P. was one of the editors. Teaching of Hetherington, the historian of the Scottish Church,	60
--	----

CHAPTER IX.

Practical Excommunication of all churches who hold Catholic Communion. Great Inconsistencies in the U. P. Body, - - - - -	67
---	----

CHAPTER X.

Examination of Dr. P.'s Proof Texts. Amos 3 : 3 ; Romans 16 : 17, &c., - - - - -	70
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CHAPTER XI.

The Primitive Creed. A Credible Profession. A great objection, &c., - - - - -	75
---	----

CHAPTER XII.

Dr. Sproull's objections, - - - - -	84
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P R E F A C E .

IN preparing this Defence, the writer has aimed to correct the chief misstatements and fairly meet all the objections to our views made by Dr. Pressly. How successful he has been in this, he leaves others to decide.

We confess, however, to great surprise at one feature of the Dr.'s review--that in which he seems to *complain* of the publication of our former volume on Communion. His book on "Church Fellowship," he says, "uttered not an unkind word in relation to the views of any particular branch of the church." But this is not quite correct. For although the Presbyterian Church is not named, her doctrine of Communion is very distinctly assailed. And what is more, her doctrine is misrepresented as "uniting all parties of *professed* Christians in the fullest Communion." See *Ch. Fell.*, p. 57. This is said to be "Catholic Communion." But this is a very gross misstatement—for "all parties of *professed* Christians," of course include Unitarians, Universalists, &c.! Yet Dr. P. claims that he is not the assailant, "utters no unkind word!"

More than this: If Dr. P. has read the *United Presbyterian*, he must have seen there such caricatures of Catholic Communion as the following: It includes "all parties of *professed* Christians"—"all who *call themselves* Christians"—"all who in their *own judgment* are Christians." These and similar misrepresentations we consider very *unkind*; indeed we might use a much stronger term.

For reasons such as these, Dr. P. has no right to represent the author of this treatise as "a man of war," and as "warring against the Testimony, &c.," in order to produce the impression that we are the assailants, and he simply the defender of certain sentiments. When Dr. P. uniformly speaks of the views presented in our former volume as "Mr. Annan's doctrine"—as though they were altogether different from those of the Presbyterian Church—he practises a small piece of *strategy* hardly worthy of him. If

it were not that it would savor of egotism, we would quote at length a few of the very flattering notices of "Close Communion Tested." Certainly such journals as the *Presbyterian*, the *Presbyter*, the *North West Presbyterian*, the *New York Evangelist*, the *American Presbyterian*, the *Presbyterian Banner*, and others of the same prominence, are not ignorant of the doctrine of our Church. "Any one," says the *Presbyterian*," desiring light on this subject, (Close Communion) would do well to procure this volume." Another says—"the argument is overwhelming." Another—"His work is done thoroughly and well." Another—"He hunts down the heresy of exclusiveness to all its hiding places." Let these suffice to prove that the doctrine of "Close Communion Tested" is the acknowledged doctrine of the several branches of the Presbyterian Church represented by these journals.

We wish it to be understood that when, in the following treatise, we speak of "Dr. P.'s doctrine," we take for granted that in general he correctly states the prevailing sentiment of his Church.

In the matter of literary responsibility, Dr. P. must not expect exemption from its ordinary laws. He published a book, and added in its defence a long series of articles; in both which he severely reflects upon the sentiments of his neighbors. His writings are thus public property, and it is idle in him to utter *complaints*, when they are subjected to rigid criticism. Besides, his own "Testimony" "beseeches all seriously to consider the ground of the controversy with brethren of the Presbyterian family." P. p. 7, 46. This we have endeavored to do in our book on "Close Communion," and in this defence, viz: "to consider the grounds of the controversy."

ALLEGHENY CITY, March 17, 1869.

A DEFENCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE STATE OF THE QUESTION.

IN the spring of 1867 the writer published the volume entitled "Close Communion Tested by Scripture and Reason." Dr. P. has thought it necessary to put forth a long review of that volume—and to this we now propose to make a rejoinder.

Dr. P. denies that he teaches the doctrine of "Close Communion." He holds, he says "what may, with propriety, be termed Catholic Communion; that is, communion among all the household of faith on Scriptural principles." This statement being interpreted by his practice means just this: that his doctrine of Communion is so very "Catholic" as to embrace *the whole of the U. P. denomination*, with some thousand communicants. This is quite a novel meaning of the word "Catholic," *i. e.*, universal! It merely excludes a million or two of other acknowledged Christians.

Again: He says he does not hold that the creed, which the Church must "enforce" in receiving persons to Communion, should be "an exhibition of *every one truth* of the Bible." Very well. We are glad to hear it. But what he believes is one thing: It is another and very different thing to affirm that his book on "Church Fellowship" does not teach in the plainest terms that very doctrine, which requires of intending communicants "a belief of *every one truth* of the Scriptures."

To prove this to be Dr. P.'s doctrine, we quoted from his book as follows: "Not only," he says, "is the Church required to teach those whom she receives into her fellowship ALL that Christ has *revealed in his word*; it is moreover requisite that she *should enforce* the observance of ALL that Christ has commanded." "She may not be silent in relation to *any one truth* which the God of the Bible has made known to her." "She has no more right to receive into her fellowship one who *rejects the truth* or refuses to observe *anything* which Christ has commanded than she has to disregard the authority of her Lord in teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Again: Dr. P. argues that a person should not be received into the fellowship of the Church on the ground of the truth which he professedly receives; also that he should be excluded on account of what he rejects, though not essential to salvation—and he reasons as follows: "The Church cannot, without rendering herself liable to the charge of unfaithfulness, connive at the rejection of any one truth contained in the revelation of the will of God."

These are specimens of the teaching of "Church Fellowship." But as Dr. P. says he did not mean to avow the extremely absurd doctrine which *seems* to be taught in these and other similar passages, it would be discourteous to charge him with it. It may be observed, however, that in his recent review of our book, he says, "The theory of Church Fellowship is, that the Church should ENFORCE the observance of what Christ has commanded," or, as he elsewhere states it—"the observance of all things whatsoever Christ has commanded." "And consequently," he adds, "if men will not receive the truth which she is bound to teach, and refuse to submit to her authority, she cannot consistently receive them into her fellow-

ship." But is it not one of Christ's "commands," that men should believe "every one truth of the Bible?" Of course it is. It follows, therefore, that by his own showing, Dr. P. must hold the extreme doctrine that every intending communicant must profess to believe "every one truth of the Scriptures!" It is one of Christ's express "commands that men should so believe," and Dr. P. says the Church should "enforce the observance of all his commands." "She has no right (he frequently assures us) to receive into her fellowship one who rejects the truth or refuses to observe ANYTHING which Christ has commanded." P. 41. Of course he means, as the Church *understands* those commands.

It may appear most remarkable that a person so trained to controversy should express himself thus, and yet positively deny that he teaches what his words plainly indicate. Equally singular is the mode in which he escapes from the dilemma. He does not attempt to explain the terms of his various statements—but merely contents himself with a denial.

It is obvious, too, that the Dr.'s extreme doctrine, as understood to be taught in "Church Fellowship," is most odious to not a few of his own ministerial brethren. Thus a correspondent of the *Christian Instructor*, of Philadelphia, the leading U. P. paper, of date Dec. 8, 1866, says of Dr. P.'s book: "The chief objection we have to it is, that it advocates a theory of Church Fellowship much more rigid and exclusive than is warranted by the Bible and laws of the U. P. Church." This correspondent charges Dr. P. with unchristianizing all the members of all the churches but our own—"a harsh and exclusive theory, &c.," "a dead fly in the ointment, &c." So the Rev. Mr. McCune, while still a minister of the U. P. Church, in "reviewing Dr. P.'s book, says, "It teaches that a

small fraction of the Universal Church is guilty of “unfaithfulness” to God and her trust, if she is silent in her creed concerning her interpretation of *any one truth* in Divine Revelation, and this creed must be fully subscribed by every member of the church, babes excepted.” P. 35.

Admitting, however, on the strength of his own positive denial, that Dr. P. does not teach this extremely absurd doctrine of Communion, it is equally plain that he has expressed himself so as to make the impression on many, even of his own brethren, that he does hold and teach it, or something of the sort. Similar unintelligible writing may be found in his book on Psalmody, when (p. 117) he says of “Rouse’s paraphrase,” “that as a true and literal translation of the original, it is *decidedly superior to any OTHER IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*”—and again, he says, “the great question is, have we Divine appointment for the use of the devotional compositions of uninspired men in the worship of God?” The first of these statements is a monstrous exaggeration, exalting Rouse as superior to our English Bibles—and the second decides that all Dr. P.’s prayers and sermons “in the worship of God,” are without “Divine Appointment!” For surely they are “the devotional compositions of an uninspired man;” and therefore on his own showing are destitute of “Divine Appointment.”

It is proper to say, further, that the extremely absurd doctrine of Communion, which was understood by us and many of the U. P. brethren to be taught in “Church Fellowship,” is not the one discussed in our recent work. In his second number Dr. P. tries to make this impression upon his U. P. readers—but it is entirely unworthy of him. That was merely a collateral question, a side issue, involving Dr. P.’s personal accuracy. The real question as stated on the

very page which he quotes, is altogether different. It is true "the Testimony" in arguing "the right of persons to church membership," utterly repudiates the doctrine that "there are some truths which Christ has made it the duty of the Church to profess, yet she may not exercise her government and discipline in maintaining these truths." This is declared to be "a palpable inconsistency" But this sweeping argument is not consistently carried out, as we proceed to show.

CHAPTER II.

THE REAL QUESTION DISCUSSED IN "CLOSE COMMUNION."

THE author of "Church Fellowship" may wear all the laurels he has won by his misstatement of the question; but the real point in controversy as proposed on p. 17 of my book is this:

"Is the U. P. Church bound, in fidelity to Christ, to require an assent to all the doctrines of the Westminster Confession, as also to all the "Declarations" of the "Testimony," of each and every one whom she admits to the "Lord's Table" or adult baptism?"

It is a curious circumstance that amidst his various accusations of "shameful misrepresentation," "inexcusable perversion," and other equally Christian and gentlemanly phraseology, Dr. P. carefully avoids quoting to his U. P. readers this our own statement of the true question. On the contrary he quotes our mere collateral statement of the absurd teaching of his book, a side issue exposed in our former chapter, as the main question in debate! In his second number he tells us: "In the (U. P.) Testimony we have

the following plain and explicit declaration: "The Church should not extend Communion in sealing ordinances to those who refuse adherence to her profession or subjection to her government and discipline." *There*, for reasons best known to himself, he abruptly stops; but the "Testimony" adds—"or who refuse to forsake a Communion which is inconsistent with the profession that she makes, &c." Yet he ventures to ask—"why does not he (Mr. A.) meet the question fairly and state the question as it is exhibited," &c. Of course he means to insinuate that we purposely misrepresent the real points under discussion.

In the "Declaration," as quoted partially by Dr. P., three several conditions of Communion at the Lord's Table, are stated as follows:

1. The U. P. Church "should not extend Communion in sealing ordinances to those who refuse adherence to her profession."

2. Nor to those "who refuse subjection to her government and discipline."

3. Nor to such as "refuse to forsake a Communion which is inconsistent with the profession she makes."

Now let any person of ordinary intelligence who is not blinded by prejudice, compare these three statements of the U. P. conditions of Communion with our formula at the commencement of this chapter.

First, "adherence to her (U. P.) profession." Well, what is that "profession?" Our formula says, it is "the doctrines of the Westminster Confession and all the Declarations of the "Testimony." Is not that true? Hear the Testimony itself. (p. 7.) "An adherence to the Westminster standards and to the 'Declarations' contained in the Testimony, will be required of those seeking Communion with us." Yet Dr. P. says, "why do you not meet the subject fairly?"

Will he be so very good as to point out what *unfairness* there is in this part of our statement?

Secondly: The U. P. Church requires "subjection to her government and discipline." Very well. Does not our formula include "an assent to the Declarations of 'the Testimony;'" and does not one of these "Declarations" include just this "subjection?"

Thirdly: The U. P. Church has bound herself, in faithfulness to Christ, to exclude all who "refuse to forsake a Communion inconsistent with her profession." This too our formula expresses in the fact that it includes "all the Declarations of the Testimony"—and this is part of "the 16th Declaration," p. 34.

In view of this parallel, we are constrained to say that Dr. P.'s kind and fraternal charges of "glaring misrepresentations, &c.," merely prove that he has no better argument, and therefore displays too much temper. But we must now quote his own statement of the question as embraced in "the Declaration of the Testimony," thus: "The question then is, do you maintain that the Church ought to admit to her fellowship those who reject the truth which she has embraced, and refuse to be subject to the authority which she is bound to exercise under her Lord?" "Those who reject the truth!" (Of course he means "the truth" taught in Scripture, not truth of science and art.) But this is mere trifling with the real merits of the subject. Your own "Testimony" says, those who commune with the U. P. Church must adhere to the Westminster Standards and the 18 "Declarations of the Testimony." But according to Dr. P.'s "question," the man who should say he was not acquainted with such "truths" as these: "A Homer is the tenth part of an Ephah." "The asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost,"—and therefore could not receive them: Such a man does not receive "the truth"—ergo, the Church

ought not to admit him to her fellowship. These "are truths which the Divine King has taught and requires the Church to teach;" ergo, "she is [not under obligations to receive such a rejecter of "truth" into fellowship." So teaches Dr. P., if his language before quoted has the ordinary meaning. We, on the other hand,—if the intending communicant is sound in the great fundamentals (of which repentance toward God and faith in Christ are essentials), and is leading a serious moral life—we receive him, though he may know nothing about the questions of "Saul's asses," and many another "truth" taught in the Bible, and which "the Church is required to teach."

It must be plain, therefore, that the real point of the doctrinal controversy relates to *the amount* and nature of "the truth" which Christ has commanded the Church to demand of applicants for sealing ordinances. Dr. P. and his Testimony say, "the truth" includes "the Westminster Standards and the 18 Declarations contained in the Testimony,"—and that "an adherence to these must be required." (P. 7.) Presbyterians on the contrary believe that there are some hundreds of truths in those Standards and "Declarations," as well as some *untruths* in the latter, the reception of which no Church has a right from Christ to make "a term of communion."

We trust that it is now obvious to the dullest comprehension, that the great question is this: "Does Christ require the U. P. or any other Church, to make adherence to the Westminster Standards and the 18 Declarations of the Testimony" their "terms of Communion?" This is the main question discussed in our book on "Close Communion." Yet the Dr. affirms more than once, that "the 33 chapters and 160 sections" of the Confession, "are things which have really nothing to do with the merits of the question!"

And the same is said of "the 18 Declarations of the Testimony." "Nothing to do with the question!" Astonishing! The very creed which you subscribe, and "adherence" to which you "require of those seeking Communion" with the U. P. Church, has nothing to do with the question of Scriptural "terms of Communion!" It would have been nearly as true if he had said "the Bible has nothing to do with the question!" It is the binding of this "creed" of 160 sections and 18 Declarations upon the necks of those who are applicants for sealing ordinances, that we regard, and we trust have *proved*, to be an unchristian usurpation of a right which Christ never gave to any Church. This is the question discussed in our book.

The statements now made also prove how unmeaning and irrelevant are such questions as these: "But Mr. A., do Timothy and Titus teach that the people may reject any truth which the ministry are bound to believe and teach," "that the people should be required to receive only the foundation truths of the Gospel, and let the remainder take care of themselves." But this is extremely frivolous. No one is so absurd as to say that "the people may innocently reject any truth" of the Scriptures. All except infidels believe all that the Bible teaches, so soon as it is fully and fairly presented. The question of communion has reference to those "disciples" *i. e.*, *learners*, as the word signifies, who ask for admission to sealing ordinances. We teach that no church has a right to exact "an adherence" to 33 chapters and 160 sections of the Westminster Confession, containing several thousand theological and moral propositions, and besides 18 chapters of "Declarations," of those who apply for communion, provided they profess the foundation truths, and give Scriptural evidence of saving faith and true repentance. We are willing to let many truths of the Bible, such as that relating to

“the Ephah and Homer,” &c. await further instructions. But this is not to say that only “the foundation truths” should “be received by the people.” Far from it. So when Dr. P. says: “According to the theory of Catholic Communion, all distinctive principles must be dropped:” “Ministers are required to be silent, and hold back those truths by which God sanctifies his people,” &c., he merely exposes himself, not the doctrine of Catholic Communion. He seems to think that when Presbyterian ministers admit a U. P. to Communion with them, they must ever after “be silent” on the duty of using other songs besides the Book of Psalms: and that, if we admit a pious Baptist, we must necessarily be silent forever after on the duty of infant baptism!

CHAPTER III.

DR. P. PLAYS FAST AND LOOSE WITH HIS PRINCIPLES.

WE have now sufficiently exposed Dr. P.’s controversial *skill* in putting a mere side issue as stated in “Close Communion Tested,” in the room of the main question as frequently propounded in that volume. Let us now look fairly in the face Dr. P.’s doctrine as taught in the “Testimony.”

The 16th “Declaration” contains, as before quoted, three distinct disqualifications, as terms of Communion,” viz: “a refusal to adhere to the (U. P.) profession”—“a refusal of subjection to the government and discipline” of that church—and “refusing to forsake a Communion which is inconsistent with her profession.”

Are these “terms of Communion” taught in the Scriptures, or consistent with truth? In order to answer this question we of course must first ascertain carefully

what is meant by the phrase, "the profession that the church makes." Here "the Testimony" is very explicit: "If they (private members) are professors at all, and if their membership constitutes them professors, they are professors of *all* its (the church's) principles, and of course have come under an implied, if not an express, obligation to maintain them." But what is included in the phrase, "all the church's principles?" The "Testimony" answers: "an adherence to the Westminster Standards," and to the "Declarations" in the following Testimony," will be required of those seeking Communion with us." Such is the general rule—the only exceptions are the "babes," "who because of weakness of faith or smallness of attainments, or difficulties on some points," should not be excluded.

It is obvious, therefore, by the express teachings of the "Testimony," that the "principles" to which "an adherence" is required are the Confession, including the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, which are part of "the Standards"—and to these we must add the 18 Declarations of "the Testimony." The creed, therefore, to which Dr. P. and "the Testimony" require "an adherence" of intending Communicants, is as follows: 33 chapters, and 18 "Declarations," and 196 questions of the Larger Catechism (to say nothing of the Shorter), such are "the terms of Communion" of Dr. P.'s "Testimony."

The author of "Church Fellowship" is very explicit in regard to these "terms of Communion." Hear him: "How is the church to determine whether the individual who desires to enjoy her fellowship does make a Scriptural profession such as is required of all who "call upon the name of the Lord Jesus." His answer is this: "In her Confession of Faith, the Church has declared what she believes to be comprehended in a Scriptural profession; and if he is prepa-

red to unite with her in this testimony for the truth, viz: the Westminster Confession and the "Testimony," she is bound to welcome him, &c., p. 61. "But if he (the applicant) rejects her Testimony," adds Dr. P., she is under equal obligations to regard him as one who "walketh disorderly;" therefore to withdraw from ecclesiastical fellowship with him." Observe the language here employed: "If he rejects her testimony"—no distinction is made between those great essential doctrines which lie at the foundation of all saving faith and true piety, and those of less importance in the way of salvation. No distinction is even hinted between such parts of "the Confession" as teach that "the Old Testament is in Hebrew," "and the New Testament in Greek," &c., and the great essentials of the Divinity of our Blessed Lord, justification by faith, &c. These all are "her Testimony"—and Dr. P. says if the applicant rejects the church's "Testimony," she must reject *him*.

But here a favorite piece of controversial strategy is practised by Dr. P. thus: According to "Church Fellowship," he says the creed of the church contains a summary of the *great doctrines* of the Bible. And he reasons thus: "If an individual declares that there are *some of the doctrines* of the creed that he rejects, is the church under obligations to receive him?" Of course he answers in the negative. But these passages obviously mean that all the several thousand doctrines of the Confession are "the *great doctrines* of the Bible." And the rejection of *some* of these doctrines, viz: of "the Confession of Faith," disqualifies for Communion. The author of "Church Fellowship" puts a plausible face on his narrow exclusive doctrine, which he repeats many times, and which requires "a belief of the *great doctrines* of the Bible." But when we inquire what he means by these "*great doctrines*," we are referred to the "Confession of Faith," in which "the church has de-

clared what is comprehended in a Scriptural profession." Then he falls back upon the 33 chapters, 160 Sections, &c., of the Westminster Standards.

Dr. P. evidently feels the pressure of the argument at this point. Hence he seeks to escape from the plain inferences by such evasions as these: He says he would "deal tenderly" with those who "are unable to give an intelligent assent to some of the *more sublime* doctrines of the creed." Again, he says. "If his difficulty consists in the acknowledged want of ability fully to comprehend them, *i. e.*, some of the doctrines contained in the system of theology"—"while there is no disposition to reject them, nor unwillingness to receive instruction," the church will deal tenderly with him and will assist him, &c.," Observe with what studious care he shuns, both in his book and in his review, the fair following out of these limitations of his theory. He does not plainly say that such dissenters and doubters should be received to the Communion table. No: that would be directly in the teeth of his own "Testimony," viz: IF THEY ARE PROFESSORS AT ALL, they are professors of ALL its [the Church's] principles." Again: an adherence to the Westminster Standards and to the "Declarations of the Testimony" WILL BE REQUIRED of those seeking communion with us." Thus he "plays fast and loose" with his "principles." If he really means to say that he would receive to sealing ordinances such doubters who cannot "give an intelligent assent" to some of the principles of the Confession and Testimony, why not say so openly and fairly? But this would be to fly directly in the face of his own "principles." Interpreted by the "Testimony," this would be to receive to Communion persons who "*are not professors at all.*" We concede, however, that both Dr. P. and the "Testimony" have thus left a very wide door open for a large class of ecclesiastical infants—

many of them very old "babes," who sit down at the U. P. Communion tables, while habitually rejecting some of his great principles, and therefore "not professors at all." This is the practice of the Dr. and others, as will be shown hereafter. The class of "babes" who require to be dealt with *tenderly* is quite numerous on the subject of Psalmody, to say nothing of some of the other "great doctrines."

This may be as good a place as any other to notice another of Dr. P.'s ingenious turns in logic. After referring to the Old School Confession containing, as it does, 33 chapters and 160 sections of moral and theological truth, he quotes that volume thus: "Ministers are directed to require parents to instruct their children in the principles of our holy religion, an excellent summary of which we have in the Confession and Larger and Shorter Catechisms." On this he comments as follows: "Of course it is understood that those who are received into the communion of the Presbyterian Church profess their faith in these principles." What "is understood?" Do you mean to say that our rule for admitting persons to communion, requires them to profess their faith in all the truths taught in the Confession and Catechisms before they are received? This you must mean, if your argument has any application to the question at issue. But this, you ought to know, is not true. In the very volume you were reviewing are the following statements by our General Assembly: "We have ever admitted to our communion all those who in *the judgment of charity*, were the sincere disciples of Christ." "We require nothing more than faith, love, and obedience to Him." "We admit to fellowship in sacred ordinances all such as we have ground to believe Christ will at last admit to the kingdom of Heaven." These extracts Dr. P. had before his eyes. Yet he ventures to charge our

Church with holding a doctrine of communion similar to his own! What a wonderful logician is Dr. P? Presbyterian parents "are recommended to instruct their children in the principles of the Confession and Catechisms." Ergo, no person can be admitted to communion in the Presbyterian Church, who does not adopt the several thousand propositions of those standards! Our readers must characterize this sort of logic as they please. It is quite *unanswerable*. Yet, on the strength of such reasoning as this, Dr. P. ventures to apply to the author of "Close Communion Tested" the awful language of our Saviour to the Pharisees, "Thou hypocrite! First cast the mote out of thine own eye, &c!" He means, that while disapproving of his theory, *we ourselves* require the adoption, as terms of communion, of the 33 chapters and 160 sections of the Confession and 196 questions of the Larger Catechism, of all whom we admit to have children baptized! Therefore he says, "Thou hypocrite!" Well might Drs. Cooper and Barr, of U. P. *Evangelical Repository*, say that Dr. P. gets himself into various "tight places." This we think is one of the tightest of all.

Our ministers are directed "to exhort the parents to the careful performance of their duty"—viz: "to teach their child to read the word of God, and instruct it in the principles of our holy religion as contained in the Scriptures"—and the "excellent summary in the Confession, &c., is *recommended* to them" [observe, *recommended*, not bound upon them as terms of communion,) "for their direction and assistance in the discharge of this important duty." Dr. P. is in a "tight place," for he interprets "a recommendation to teach the Confession, &c." as an actual "term of communion!" and on such grounds as these, he exclaims, "Thou hypocrite!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE FATHERS ON CLOSE COMMUNION.

LEAVING out of view the single exception of "babes," let us see how the reviewer disposes of the arguments of "Close Communion Tested," against the GENERAL RULE which he has adopted.

In the "Historical View" (pp.19—55) the first authority adduced by us was CALVIN. Among much other pertinent statement by the Prince of Reformers, our book cited this: "Even if the doctrine is mingled with some errors, I AM SATISFIED IF FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE IS MAINTAINED." This is the result of his reasoning, and he adds: "Thus even in Geneva (from which he had been banished) may the pious and orthodox participate in the sacraments." "I will never be induced to be the author of a schism until I shall have been convinced that the Church has undeniably departed from the worship of God and the preaching of His word." In this last clause he doubtless points at the corruptions of Popery. In these views, Dr. Mason assures us, "he harmonized with the common voice of the people of God!"

Now test Dr. P.'s narrow exclusiveness by these noble utterances of the great Reformer. Is the Doctor "satisfied if fundamental doctrine is maintained?" Does *he* exclude the Presbyterians and Covenanters from the Lord's Table, because, to use Calvin's words, "They have undeniably *departed* from the worship of God and the preaching of His word." On the contrary, when Dr. P. is in one of his kindly moods, he calls these Churches "different sisters composing the household of faith"—expresses toward them feelings

of the kindest fraternal regard, and wishes them success in all their works of faith and labors of love"—p. 69. Yet he refuses to commune with them! So obvious is it that the views of Calvin on Communion were as different from those of Dr. P. as light from darkness.

But what has the author of "Church Fellowship" to say to this argument? *Nothing!* In all the vast columns of his review of "Close Communion Tested," the name of Calvin is not mentioned, nor his authority once alluded to. Surely this is "expressive silence." We find large discourse about "the necessity and importance of a Creed, the value of truth and the obligation of the Church to teach and defend the whole truth of the Scriptures"—which nobody denies. Nay, Dr. P. even discourses upon the "prevalent neglect of expository preaching," and sundry other common places, thus, like certain commentators, proving himself "great on the easy passages," but of Calvin and his authority he has nothing to say.

The next authority quoted in the "Historical View" is that of John Knox and others of the noblest of the Scottish worthies. "The Overture," prepared by authority of the Associate Reformed Synod in 1787, by such leading minds as John Mason, Robert Annan, and John Smith, is quoted thus: "KNOX held communion with the foreign Churches; WELSH with the Protestant Churches of France; MONCREIF with those of Holland; RENWICK received ordination in the Church of Holland. And it is a fact that the Scottish Commissioners (viz: to the Westminster Assembly) Rutherford, Henderson, Bailey and others held communion with their brethren in England." Of these "regular and orderly Protestant Churches," the Committee say, "Our fathers never thought of pronouncing their communion unclean," "far less did they ever think of totally rejecting it."

Now if Dr. P. has mentioned any one of these great Scottish names in his review, it has escaped our notice. The only part in which he seems to refer to these and other similar cases is his quotation from the "Overture:" "There is a surprising harmony between the Confessions of all the Protestant Churches," viz: "when they came out of mystical Babylon." This is no doubt true—but does the Dr. really think those early churches were more nearly agreed with each other than the U. P. Church and the 'Covenanters' of this country?" Yet he refuses to commune with the latter, or to permit his members to sit with them at the Lord's Table! This shows how little of the spirit of JOHN KNOX and his Scottish brethren is found in the author of "Church Fellowship." Thus it is evident to common sense that he stands in direct antagonism to the following from the "Overture:" "We will not pretend * * * * to say that the communion of all the other Protestant Churches is so impure that it would contaminate us to touch, taste, or handle it in any case." When we come to speak of the meaning of the article on Communion adopted by the Westminster Assembly, we will demonstrate how far the Churches of the Reformation were agreed on "Psalmody," as Luther, the great "composer of Hymns," understood that subject, as well as some other topics of importance.

But there is one very knotty point in the "Overture" of Mason, Annan, and Smith, which the reviewer is careful *not to quote*. In the chapter on "Religious Worship" they say: "We are not afraid to assert and vindicate the *propriety* (observe "the propriety," not the exclusive necessity) of using the psalms and songs of the Old Testament in the praise of God." And to show what "songs of the Old Testament" are meant, they add: "We are extremely

sorry to have observed a growing disrelish in some churches for the Psalms of David AND OTHER SONGS OF SCRIPTURE." Will the reviewer please give his attention for a few moments? He teaches in his book on psalmody that we have "NO AUTHORITY to use [in praise] any other than the [150] songs contained in the Book of Psalms." And he threatens us with the fate of "Nadab and Abihu," if we venture to use any other, because without Divine authority, and we thus virtually offer "a pig instead of a kid." Yet the Committee of "The Overture" say, "we are EXTREMELY SORRY to observe a growing disrelish"—for what?—for worship for which, says Dr. P., "there is no Divine authority, and which exposes to the terrible fate of Nadab and Abihu." Whether the fathers of the Committee or Dr. P. be the more worthy of confidence is easily decided.

Nor is this all. The following extract from the "Overture," made very prominent in "Close Communion," Dr. P. is equally careful not to quote, viz: "We do not mean to say that HYMNS OF HUMAN COMPOSITION may not be lawfully used in any case whatever. But we think it safest generally to adhere to the Scriptural psalmody," viz: as above described, including "other songs of Scripture," as well as the 150 psalms. This is what a Committee consisting of the most learned and distinguished FATHERS of the A. R. Church say in regard to "Religious Worship." So that it is demonstrated that Dr. P. has abandoned the Scriptural ground of those fathers.

But Dr. P. quotes an act of the A. R. Synod, which was passed, he tells us, when the REV. ROBERT ANNAN, the author of these extracts from the "Overture," was its moderator. Part of this act reads as follows: "It is the will of God that the sacred songs of Scripture be used in his worship to the end of the world." "The

sacred songs of Scripture?" Is that the same as to say with Dr. P., we have NO AUTHORITY to use any other than the 150 psalms?" So that the Dr.'s own quotation condemns himself. Will he venture to affirm that there are no "sacred songs in Scripture" but the Book of Psalms?

So when the act condemns "the *substitution* of devotional songs composed by uninspired men in the place of these sacred songs of Scripture"—what Presbyterian in his right senses desires to make any such "substitution." Dr. P. is guilty of something of this sort; for he *substitutes* a part of "the songs of Scripture" in the place of the whole; the 150 songs of one book, in the place of "the other songs of Scripture." Worse still, he *substitutes* large parts of song "composed by an uninspired man" [Rouse] in the place of the inspired songs. Here are a few out of hundreds of examples:

PROSE VERSION.	DR. P.'S INSPIRED SONGS.
I delayed not.	I did not stay nor linger long <i>As those that slothful are.</i>
I thought on my ways.	I thought upon my former ways, <i>And did my life well try!</i>
Rose up against us.	Rose up in wrath <i>To make of us their prey.</i>
The moon to rule by night.	Also the moon so clear <i>Which shineth in our sight.</i>
Unto Thee.	To Thee my help alone, <i>For Thou well understands All my complaint and moan.</i>

Now the question is this: What right has the Dr. to "substitute" all this "human composition" in the room of the inspired text in the first column? Thus again he condemns himself.

Another clause of "The Act" calls Rouse a "safe translation." Now if by "translation" be meant "in-

terpretation," which is one of Webster's definitions, it is probably safe enough except in a few instances. But here again "The Act," as quoted by Dr. P., condemns himself. For on page 117 of his Book on Psalmody he calls Rouse "a true and literal translation of the original, and as such DECIDEDLY SUPERIOR TO ANY OTHER IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE." Of course he must believe Rouse to be not only "safe" but "more true and literal" than the prose version of our Bibles, which is in the English language! But this is monstrous. For our part we greatly prefer the phraseology employed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in their "Act" adopting Rouse, viz: "Rouse's Paraphrase," which they repeat twenty times with slight variations. RALPH ERSKINE certainly knew the meaning of the word "paraphrase" when he wrote his "Paraphrase of the Song of Solomon." Did he mean "a true and literal translation?" No: the single line, "Draw me; we will run after Thee"—is versified into twelve lines; and so of the rest. This is what the Church of Scotland meant when she used the terms, "Rouse's Paraphrase," "Rouse's Psalms," &c., but avoided the term *version*.

So also when Messrs. ANNAN, MASON, and SMITH say in "The Overture," that "there is not a single point in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church of Scotland, for which we do not contend"—they of course included the sixty-seven "paraphrases" and five hymns used in that Church: such hymns, for example, as those of Addison, "When all Thy mercies, O my God;" "The spacious firmament on high," &c., &c. But Dr. P. could not see this expression of the views of "the Fathers"—at least he takes no notice of it. It did not suit him.

But Dr. P. also informs us that "father Annan," the author of the "Overture" which teaches so much

heresy, was Moderator of the A. R. Synod which adopted "the Act" aforesaid. This he is careful to tell us more than once. But this is rather against, than in favor of, his notions of the views of that honored "father." He well knows that according to Presbyterian usages, the Moderator seldom takes any part in the discussion; and especially he has no vote, except in case of a tie among the members. Of course there is no evidence that "the father" favored "the Act," except that he signed it as presiding officer, to give it the sanction of the Synod—which he was bound to do, whether he approved of it or not. Thus again the Dr.'s logic is sadly at fault.

Of the same inconsequential sort of logic is the assertion that "father Annan" must have "concurred with his brethren" in the "Act," because (says Dr. P.) "he was a prominent member of the Synod." But this is a miserable subterfuge. If Dr. P. will look at pages 39 and 40 of "Close Communion Testèd," he will find a series of "Acts" of the very same A. R. Synod, passed in 1811-16, in which a resolution censuring Drs. Mason, Clark and Matthews for communing with the Presbyterian churches of New York WAS VOTED DOWN, only one person besides the mover and seconder being in its favor! In this emphatic mode did the Synod refuse to "declare their disapprobation of the deportment of said brethren." Now will Dr. P. please observe, that "Father Annan" was "a prominent member" of the A. R. Synod whilst these enormities were enacted! His death did not occur till 1819. Thus by his own showing that "Father" must have approved of "Catholic Communion," as practised in New York by Mason, Matthews, and Clarke! It is a painful illustration of Dr. P.'s candor and fairness, that these expressions of "Father Annan's" views on "Catholic Communion" are not

so much as alluded to in the vast columns of his review of our book on Close Communion!

Now on the basis of these notorious facts and the inevitable inferences derived from them, we appeal to all intelligent and candid men, whether it be not true, as stated in our "Close Communion," that the views of "the fathers," and especially of our honored parent, author of "the Overture," were "demonstrably in broad contrast with those now held by Dr. P." The very "Acts of Synod" which he has adduced to overthrow our statement to this effect, are directly against him, when they are fully and fairly brought out.

And so when Mason, Annan, and Smith say in the "Overture," "There is not a SINGLE POINT in doctrine and *worship* of the Church of Scotland for which we do not contend"—which of course includes that Church's *sixty-seven* "human compositions" called "paraphrases," and five other hymns, several of them from the pen of Dr. Watts—what a broad contrast between this expression of the "fathers" and this from Dr. P.'s Testimony," viz: "In making use of ANYTHING ELSE (besides the Book of Psalms) we are doing that for which we have no warrant, and *against* THE EXPRESS WILL OF GOD." In the broadest contrast with this narrow exclusiveness, the "fathers" of the "Overture" say, "We are EXTREMELY SORRY to have observed a disrelish," for "the other songs of Scripture," as well as "for the Psalms of David!" And further, these "fathers" add—"We do not mean to say that "hymns of human composition (including the seventy-two used by the Church of Scotland) may not be lawfully used in any case whatever." This is the teaching of "the fathers" in regard to "the worship of God." Yet Dr. P. tries to make the impression that they held his notions!

To cap the climax of this whole argument, look for

a moment at the practice of "Father Annan," author of the "Overture." In his pamphlet, entitled "The Ruling Elder," p. 85, he tells us: "The congregation in Boston (of which he was pastor) were dissatisfied with the version of the Psalms used in the churches," (Rouse.) And what was his course at this juncture? "Mr. A. (*i. e.* himself) had been constrained to introduce the version of "Tate and Brady." We have room for only two specimens from this *version*, referring to chapter XI for other illustrations:

PROSE VERSION.

He bowed the heavens and
came down, and darkness was
under his feet.

I am weak, O Lord, heal me,
for my bones are sore vexed.

TATE AND BRADY.

He left the beauteous realms of
light,
Whilst heaven bowed down its aw-
ful head:
Beneath his feet substantial night
Was like a sable carpet spread.

Touched by thy quickening power
My load of guilt I feel;
The wounds thy spirit hath un-
closed,
O let that spirit heal.

This is the sort of "sacred songs" Father Annan substituted in the room of "an inspired psalmody," "a true and literal version"—which Dr. P. says he sings! Tate and Brady is certainly very far from "a faithful translation," which the "Testimony" demands. Dr. P. "testifies against a loose paraphrase of the psalms." But Tate and Brady in many parts of the psalms, is even more loose than Dr. Watts! If Dr. P. had been a member of the A. R. Synod when this matter was referred to, he would doubtless have used "his pig and kid" argument, and thundered in the language of "Pressly on Psalmody:" From the throne of the Eternal the declaration comes forth: "Whatsoever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt NOT ADD THERETO NOR DIMINISH FROM

IT."—Deut. 4 : 2. But what was the heavy censure imposed upon this erring "father" by the A. R. Synod. Here it is in his own words :

"That the congregation should, if Mr. A. continued with them, admit the version of the Psalms and mode of singing God's praise in the Church of Scotland."

Observe, not a word of rebuke of the offending minister. But Dr. P. ventures to say that if these statements of "Father Annan's" views and conduct are correct, he must "have been trifling with the vows which he had assumed at his ordination." But this also is a desperate resort. We will show presently that if this profane trifling be chargeable on "Father Annan," it is far more emphatically fixed upon a certain John T. Pressly, who in 1818 wrote a remarkable letter to Dr. Mason, in which he scoffs at certain doctrines and usages of his own church on these very subjects! We shall then see who was "trifling with the vows assumed at ordination!" The truth is, that whilst these "fathers" of the Overture had a preference for certain usages in Psalmody and Communion, their doctrine and practice were in broad contrast with those of Dr. P.; and this is what we have proved in our book on "Close Communion." They well knew the meaning and extent of their "ordination vows" and held no such narrow exclusiveness as characterizes the notions of Dr. P. since he *got converted* by coming from South Carolina to Pittsburgh. But more of this hereafter.

CHAPTER V.

MORE ABOUT THE FATHERS.

WHEN the “fathers” who composed the “Overture” say, “we boldly declare there is not a single point in doctrine, WORSHIP, &c., appertaining to the Reformed Church of Scotland, for which we do not contend”—they of course sanction, as before shown, the sixty-seven “paraphrases” then, as now, in use in that Church. Whether these “fathers” were aware that quite a number of those “paraphrases” were composed by Dr. Watts, we cannot say—but they certainly knew that Addison wrote several of the five *hymns* whose first lines we have quoted, and which they thus endorse as proper parts of “worship.” But this is shocking to Dr P.’s sensibilities.

But lest it should be thought that the 67 “paraphrases” are such true and literal translations of portions of Scripture as to be really “inspired compositions,” we quote the following from “the Reformed Presbyterian,” whose editor is THOMAS SPROULL, D. D. He says, in the No. for February, “We affirm that the “imitations” of Dr. Watts are *much nearer* to a literal version of the Psalms of David than the (67) paraphrases are to a literal version of the “passages (of Scripture) alleged to be paraphrased.” Dr. Sproull is unquestionably right—and here again Dr. P.’s sensibilities must receive a severe shock. Just think of it! The Church of Scotland uses in praise (and the “fathers” approve that use) “paraphrases” of other parts of Scripture *more loose* than Dr. Watts’ “Imitations”—“paraphrases,” adds Dr. S., “to all intents and purposes uninspired compositions!” Here again the “fathers” are in broad contrast with Dr. P. and the “Testimony”—for *he* assures us “we have NO AUTHORITY to use any other than the (150) Psalms.” This is one of “the great truths” to

be "enforced" by the church. And further, the "Testimony" utterly condemns the use of "loose paraphrases," even of the 150 Psalms. Dr. P. well knew that all this was contained in the "Overture" of the "fathers"—but he passes by on the other side.

The decisive facts thus developed show what "our fathers" meant when they approved of "occasional communion." "The question," they say, "is concerning the regular, orderly, Protestant Churches who have clearly expressed their orthodoxy in their Confessions of Faith, adhere thereto and walk in the order of the Gospel, although differing from us in some external modes and forms." Dr. P. holds that among the "external modes and forms" which exclude from communion, is the use of such "loose paraphrases" and "hymns of human composition" as the Church of Scotland authorizes. Of course he must say, "Stand back—I am holier than thou!" You Scotchmen reject one of the "great doctrines of our creed"—ergo, we cannot commune with you. We dare not offer to God a "pig instead of a kid."

But Dr. P. quotes with great confidence "the terms of stated fellowship" from "the Overture." The first two are the ones which bear on this discussion, viz: 1. "That the profession of the faith in Christ in said church be full and pure. 2. That her worship be Scriptural, all Christ's ordinances being purely administered." "A full and pure profession." But do not the Covenanters make a "profession" at least as pure as the Church of Scotland? Do not the Old School profess the faith in Christ, by adopting "the Westminster Standards?" Yet Dr. P. says of both churches, "Stand back!" As to the second term, "a Scriptural worship:" Are the Covenanters guilty of any thing worse than singing the 67 "paraphrases" and five hymns of Watts, Addison, and others? Do the "Presbyterians profane Di-

vine worship more than our Scottish fathers" in this respect? The whole question turns on this—what did "Father Annan" and the others mean by "a pure profession," and "Scriptural worship?" If Dr. P.'s interpretation be the true one, "Father Annan," who was ordained in Scotland, must have regarded the "worship" of that church, with her "paraphrases" and hymns, as so impure that he could not stately commune with her! But he says the direct contrary in the Overture. He knew what he was doing when he wrote, "We do not mean to say that hymns of human composition may not be lawfully used (in "religious worship") in any case whatever." "We agree with the Church of Scotland." So when the "Fathers" add, "that in admitting a new member to communion"—"it is requisite that he have a *proper degree* of knowledge, be sound in the faith, &c."—the question is, what is "a proper degree of knowledge?" Dr. P. answers—"In her Confession of Faith" (including 33 chapters, 160 sections, the Catechisms, and the 18 articles of the "Testimony") "the church has declared what she believes to be comprehended in a Scriptural profession;" and when the "Testimony" adds that "in making use of ANYTHING ELSE than the (150) Psalms, we are doing that for which we have no warrant and *against the express will of God*"—it is demonstrated that the "Fathers" of the Overture were not in concord with these views, and that Dr. P. has departed from their "full and pure faith and Scriptural worship." And so of the phrase "sound in the faith"—Dr. P. and the "Testimony" include *soundness* in the belief that it is a sin to sing anything in worship but the 150 Psalms. But the "Fathers" of the "Overture" teach no such narrow exclusiveness. They say they contend for *every point* of "doctrine and worship" held, and taught by "the Reformed Church of Scotland," including the 67 "par-

aphrases" and five hymns, all "human compositions." But this shocks Dr. P.'s sensibilities most rudely.

These statements prepare us to examine the "Act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland," passed in 1711, and cited in "Close Communion," (p. 24), "concerning the receiving of *strangers into church communion* and baptizing their children." These "strangers" are described as "educated in Protestant Churches, and having come to reside in this country," *i. e.*, Scotland. It supposes them to "incline to join in communion with this church." Ministers are then enjoined to show all tenderness toward them when they come to desire the benefit of sealing ordinances. And if free from scandal and professing their faith in Christ and obedience to him, their children are to be baptized "upon the parents engaging to educate them in the fear of God, and the knowledge of the principles of the Reformed Protestant religion."

Observe: these "strangers" are required to educate their children in "the principles of the Reformed Protestant religion"—not in the peculiarities of doctrine and worship of the Church of Scotland. The Act was passed, as Dr. Mason has well observed, "for receiving *strangers* into communion, they continuing strangers, and not accounting themselves plenary members of that church."

Dr. P. however, in opposition to Dr. Mason, tells us, this Act merely means that ministers should receive *tenderly* such "strangers" to sealing ordinances, they having come from other Protestant churches "to reside permanently" in Scotland. But he thus supposes the General Assembly to stultify itself. Where was the necessity of any such special Act, if that be its meaning? There was no more need for such an Act than for a similar one for receiving their own children! Does Dr. P. require any Act of the U. P. Assembly to author-

ize him to "receive tenderly" to *sealing ordinances* the Scotch and Irish who come to settle in this country if they bring good credentials—"being free of scandal and professing their faith in Christ and obedience to him?" The Scottish Assembly must have thought their ministers a set of "*silly sheep*," if they imagined they had need of a special "Act" to direct them in so very plain a matter.

Observe, too, that the persons indicated are those "educated in other Protestant churches"—not exclusively *Calvinistic* churches. In 1711, when this Act was passed, Europe contained many large Lutheran churches and these are included in the very terms of the Act, as "of the Reformed Protestant Religion." In a word, as Dr. Mason states it, "a member of any Reformed church in the world, not acting unworthy of his profession, was entitled upon that ground to an equal participation with her own members in the sealing ordinances of the Church of Scotland." Thus Dr. P.'s notions about the necessity of "*enforcing* his creed, or a summary of the great doctrines of the Scriptures," including his doctrine of exclusive psalmody, were repudiated by the Church of Scotland. We shall show, when we come to speak of the views of the Westminster Assembly [1643], that Dr. David R. Kerr admits that that Assembly "*threw open* their communion" to those called "Lutheran Churches," who were not Calvinistic in doctrine, and were hymn-singers in worship. And if this was true of the Westminster Assembly, it was equally true of the Church of Scotland.

To crown this whole argument in regard to the views of the "fathers"—what are the present views of the Churches of Scotland and Ireland? Let Dr. R. D. HARPER, a prominent minister of the U. P. Church, give the answer. Hear him: "None of these Churches are identified with us in principle or practice

on the subject of Communion, or Secret Societies or Covenanting." "In all the congregations in which we have worshipped, both in Scotland and Ireland, with the single exception of Dr. Cook's, of Belfast, the (67) "paraphrases" and (5) hymns have been sung." This is the evidence of an eye-witness. Dr. P. thinks that in 1711 the Scottish Assembly held his "Close Communion" views. Of course that Church must have sadly apostatized before she could answer to Dr. Harper's description of her present condition. Is that a likely story?

Dr. P. also expressly admits it to be "TRUE," "that in 1711 the Church of Scotland required nothing as a term of communion with her but what was common to the principles of the Reformed Religion; nor was it necessary, he adds, to require anything more, since, according to Father Annan, the faith held by all the Reformed Protestant Churches WAS THE SAME." Indeed! "Father Annan" makes this remark of the period of "the Reformation from spiritual Babylon," and Dr. P. adopts and applies it to the period of 1711! Of course he teaches that the doctrinal belief of the Calvinistic and Lutheran Churches of 1711 was the same as those of the 16th Century. Thus he flounders on from point to point in his review. He quotes what "Father Annan" said of 1517, to prove the same thing of 1711! A mistake of only two centuries!

Of the same sort of loose logic is Dr. P.'s quotation of an act of the A. R. Synod in 1798, in which there is required of persons desiring membership "an approbation of the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, &c." Dr. P. comments thus: "At this time Father Annan was a prominent member of this Church." But Dr. P. forgets to add, that "Father A." was also a member of the same body

in 1811—1816, when only *one vote*, besides the mover and seconder, could be got in favor of a resolution to censure Drs. Mason, Matthews, and Clark for joining in the Lord's Supper with the Presbyterian Churches of New York! This indicates the more mature judgment of that honored "Father," as well as of the whole Synod, with three exceptions. It was about this period, as we are told by the late Dr. Dickey, that "Father A." expressed his desire for a union with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. So evident is it that the "fathers" of the Overture were far removed from the narrow exclusiveness of Dr. P.

But we have Dr. P.'s own testimony in regard to the large and liberal views of "the fathers" of that period. In 1818 he wrote a letter to Rev. Dr. Mason, in which he pronounces the question "whether it is scriptural to extend our Christian fellowship beyond the limits of our own Church," "a bone of contention often picked," and represents the affirmative as "one of the traditions of the elders!" Of the same traditional sort he declares the question, "whether it is right to use any other than a literal version of David's Psalms in praise to God!" A little further on in this important epistle, speaking of his having commenced "an exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians" he says: "This [the unity of the Church] being admitted, the doctrine of CATHOLIC COMMUNION seemed to be an irresistible consequence, and therefore I thought it my duty to utter it." So positive, indeed, was he of the correctness of his views that he represents those in his charge who differed with him, as not having "searched the Scriptures, and, therefore, not thinking rationally on these subjects."

Now we would not wish to assert that the Rev. J. T. Pressly, to use his own language, "was thus trifling with the solemn vows assumed at his ordination." He

was at this time a minister of the very Church which he represents as binding her candidates by solemn vows to teach the directly opposite of the views which he thus boldly declares. He now, indeed, assures us the "fathers did not profess the doctrine of Catholic Communion." "As honest men," he adds, "it is to be supposed their practice was in accordance with their principles." We leave him to apply this doctrine to his own case as thus developed. Our object is to show that in 1818 Dr. P. was so well satisfied that the "fathers" favored "Catholic Communion," that he ventures to speak sneeringly of the opposite narrow view as belonging to those who did not THINK RATIONALLY on the subject?" He knew very well at that period that he had nothing to fear from "Father Annan," Dr. Mason, and others, while he was thus scoffing at the doctrines of Close Communion, exclusive psalmody, &c.

But enough. We think we have demonstrated that the "fathers" held sentiments much more nearly allied to those of the Old School Presbyterians, than to the rigid, narrow views of Dr. P. and the "Testimony."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ASSOCIATE FATHERS—THE DIRECT ARGUMENT—THE EXAMPLE OF OUR LORD.

THE discussion of the views of the "Fathers" has thus far been confined to those of the Associate Reformed Church, which united with the Associate Synod to form the U. P. Body. We turn now to the "Fathers" of the Associate Synod, as their doctrines and practice are exhibited on pages 48—55 of our

former book, "Close Communion;" and as Dr. P. has not seen fit to notice this part of the argument, we shall be very brief, assuming that his "silence gives consent."

The Testimony of the U. P. Church pronounces "slaveholding a violation of the laws of God;" and makes an adherence to this view "a term of communion." But the *Evangelical Repository*, for Jan., 1848, tells us that when the Associate Synod, in 1831, framed an act of this sort, six of the "Fathers" recorded their solemn protest, "of the nature of an oath," against it. Their names are Andrew Herron, James Ramsey, James Adams, A. Anderson, Thomas Allison and W. M. McElwee. These fathers "protest" against the act as "without a warrant in the word of God, "harsh and cruel toward the negroes," "highly unjust and injurious, &c." Yet the Synod did not break off fellowship with these six "fathers." Surely this was at least as worthy a ground of interrupting communion with them, as the use of other songs of praise than the 150 Psalms. Yet one of these protestors was for many years Professor of Theology, another was Clerk of Synod, and in 1848 another had been recently chosen Professor of Theology.

Again, in 1845 the Associate Synod declared against "voting for men of immoral character." The *Evangelical Repository* says, "both ministers and people utterly disregarded the act, by voting for profane swearers, Sabbath-breakers, murderers, whoremongers, &c." Yet here was no breaking off communion with these sinners. But let one of the same persons venture to sing one of Watts' psalms—then comes the thunder of excommunication! The same authority assures us of the existence in that body of the wide-spread crimes of manufacturing and retailing as a beverage "liquid poison," thus murdering both soul and body. But all

that was not sufficient to interrupt communion. These facts demonstrate that the doctrine of "close communion," as taught in the Associate Synod, was found to be impracticable, and was laid aside at pleasure. It will be shown hereafter that the same inconsistency prevails extensively in the United Church.

Having now arrived at correct views of the authority of the "fathers," we proceed to examine the method in which Dr. P. meets the direct arguments of our book against close communion.

ARGUMENT I.

The theory of Communion taught by Dr. P., and the Testimony, is in its very terms impracticable. Think of the "lads and lasses," to use a Scotch phrase, of from ten to sixteen years, being required to adopt, of course intelligently, the several thousand doctrinal and moral propositions of the Confession, Catechisms, and "Testimony," before they can be received to Baptism and the Lord's Supper—required to adopt the Westminster Confession, that monument of genius and learning, a work which occupied for years the care and study of a body of divines second to none in the world—"which has condensed the literature and labor of their lives, and covers the whole ground of didactic and polemic theology." Dr. Mason tells us that the Associate Reformed Church of his day did not even pretend to reduce to practice this their own theory of communion. "They do not," he says emphatically, "not a man of them."

Dr. P. evidently feels the pinch of this reasoning, and he attempts to escape by virtually denying his own theory, thus: "If his (the applicant's) difficulty consists in his acknowledged want of ability to fully comprehend them (*i. e.* the several thousand proposi-

tions of the Confession), while there is no disposition to oppose or reject them, &c." And again, "the question is with respect to those who reject the truth, and avow their opposition to it, &c." But this is simply to say that whenever it is found convenient, the "close communion" theory of himself and the "Testimony" may be thrown overboard. "If they are professors at all," says the Testimony, "they are professors of all its (the Church's) PRINCIPLES." "An adherence to the Westminster Standards, and to the Declarations of the Testimony, WILL BE REQUIRED of those seeking communion with us." If this language does not demand an open approval of the whole of the Confession, the Catechisms, and the Testimony, no language could teach that theory. But see how Dr. P. softens these rigid terms—"if there is no disposition to oppose or reject, &c." Thus he virtually abandons his own theory as stated on p. 47 of his book, viz: "The Church has her creed, a summary of the faith once delivered to the Saints;" "by his professed approbation of this form of sound words, the person makes such a profession as the Church has a right to demand, &c." Put see how, under pressure of logic, he falls from the grace of "professed approbation," and says it means that there must be no "avowed opposition" to the Confession, &c. "The Church," according to this logic, "has a right to demand professed approbation," but that only means that she may abandon this "right" at her pleasure, and substitute "no avowed opposition!" This inconsistency in theory leads, as will be shown hereafter, to very extensive inconsistencies in practice. "For all practical purposes," says Dr. P. "a credible profession is a profession of faith in every doctrine revealed in the Bible." But it will be shown that practically Dr. P. himself has utterly abandoned this requirement of "a credible profession," even as he understands what is "revealed in the Bible."

ARGUMENT II.

The second direct argument against "Close Communion" in our book, is derived from the example of our Blessed Lord in the original institution of the Supper.

"Where men are not agreed in relation to the faith once delivered to the saints," says Dr. P., "they cannot hold communion in the profession of the truth." "Those who refuse adherence to her profession"—[viz: the whole Westminster Standards] "to receive them into her fellowship would be unfaithfulness to Christ, &c."

But were there any such minute and specific terms enforced at the first Supper, where our Divine Master officiated?

1. The first obvious point is, that we have no evidence that the disciples had received christian baptism. Jesus was baptized by John; and the probability is that the Twelve received the same rite, though we have no record of it. "Christian baptism" was not yet instituted. Thus Dr. P. in his book on Baptism, says that "having died for our sin and risen, our Lord invested his apostles with a commission to teach all nations, baptizing them, &c." "This institution," he adds, "derives *its origin* from the appointment of Christ." Dr. Dick says, "John's baptism was designed to serve a temporary purpose"—"it did not properly belong to the Christian dispensation, but was preparatory to it." John Brown, of Haddington, says, "our Saviour, and perhaps most of his apostles, *had no other* but the baptism of John." "It seems unquestionable," adds Dick, "that John's baptism and that of Christ were different ordinances." Scott the Commentator takes the same view; "It was introductory—not the same with Christ's baptism, but rather for the time being." "We cannot suppose that Jesus was baptized in the name of the

A Defence.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." So "the fathers" of the Overture—"John's baptism was only temporary." Here then is a fact for "Close Communionists" to ponder. Dr. P. concedes that "Christian baptism" was not yet instituted when the Lord's Supper was administered by Christ himself! Of course the Eleven had not received it. Yet they were admitted by the "Great Teacher" to the Sacred Supper. But what has Dr. P. to say to this admitted fact? Nothing! He dare not deny his own admission—but he alleges that it proves too much for the Presbyterian doctrine. We will attend to that presently.

2. The next point is, that the disciples "had very incorrect views of the person and work of Christ,—and of the way of salvation by his sufferings and death." As to his *person*, did they recognize him as a Divine Being? We think not, for the following reasons. Admitting that Peter calls him "the Christ, the Son of the living God"—in Mark 8:29, it reads, "Thou art the Christ," nothing more—This may mean, "Thou art the long predicted and prayed for Messiah, come 'to redeem Israel,' our national Deliverer." The phrase "Son of God," does not necessarily imply divinity, for Adam is called "the Son of God."

Again: It is very significant, that concerning the disciples, after Jesus had risen, we are expressly told that "they knew not the Scriptures—that He must rise again from the dead."—John 20:9. Now is it a likely story that they were so ignorant and stupid as to suppose that one whom they regarded as a DIVINE BEING could be confined to the grave! So we read in several places thus: "When they heard that he was alive, they believed not." "Jesus appeared unto them and upbraided them because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." So when he appeared unto them walking on the sea, "they were terrified and af-

frighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit." "Then (just before his ascension to Heaven) opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." As to unbelieving Thomas, who was one of the original Communions, we know that he could hardly be persuaded at all of Christ's resurrection. But if Dr. P. be right, their notions of an Omnipotent Saviour must have been singular enough—for they could not be persuaded that he had power over death and the grave! But, reasons Dr. P., the Saviour pronounced Peter "blessed," because he had said, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," &c., Yes, and just four verses farther on, Jesus says to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Doubtless Peter was "blessed" in being so far enlightened by "the Father" as to receive Jesus as the true Messiah long predicted by the Prophets, in opposition to the unbelief of the Jewish nation generally. But it does not follow that as yet he had correct views of the Divinity of Christ. The subsequent history of himself and the others proves just the reverse.

Look next at the great ignorance and error of those original communicants, in regard to the sacrificial and mediatorial work of Christ.

This is a delicate point, and Dr. P. manages to slip over it very adroitly. He does not attempt to deny our statement—that would be a serious undertaking. In commenting on the very passage in which Dr. P. supposes Peter to have avowed his belief in Christ's Divine nature, Dr. Scott says: "Peter was at this time greatly ignorant of many evangelical truths, and even prejudiced against them. He did not understand the plan of Redemption by the blood of Christ. He had a variety of carnal and vain expectations, &c." In proof, we find that a few verses further on, when Christ had told his disciples that "he must be killed at Jerusa-

lem and be raised the third day," this same Peter began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee." "It is probable," says Scott, "that the Apostles were at this time fully expecting their Lord appearing in external glory as the King of Israel, but on the contrary, he showed them that he must be put to death."

So when commenting on Luke, 24 : 13—31, "O fools, &c.," Scott says, "They appeared devoid of understanding, and incapable of forming a proper judgment in this great concern." "Our Lord," he says again, "had spoken of his sufferings, death and resurrection, but the Apostles were too blind by carnal prejudices to understand his meaning." "They had confidently believed him," adds Scott, "to be the promised Messiah." "But events had exceedingly distressed and perplexed them; for they could not see how his crucifixion could consort with his redeeming his people."

Now observe : these things are said of these original communicants, and that, too, long after the first supper had been celebrated. They prove also, if words have any meaning, that "the disciples" as our book declares, "had at the time of the first supper very incorrect views of the work of Christ, and of the way of salvation through his death." Contrast all this with Dr. P.'s terms of communion, the Confession and Testimony, the several thousand truths of the former, and the mixture of truth and untruth in the latter. Surely the example of our Lord does not give the least countenance to any such theory of communion

A third point, illustrating the qualifications required by the eleven original communicants, is this: "The disciples had "notions of the nature of Christ's kingdom which were extremely contrary to the truth."

They were in great darkness on the subject of Christ's spiritual mission and kingdom, exhibiting a degree of ignorance on such topics as these, which would be unbecoming in an ordinary member of almost any evangelical church of the present day.

They clung to the old Jewish prejudices, that Messiah's mission was to re-establish "the throne of David," literally to restore the golden age of Solomon, &c. Now what has Dr. P. to say to this fact, which the veriest sciolist is familiar with? He dare not deny it, but lifting his hands in holy horror, he exclaims, "Can you believe that our Lord welcomed to his holy table men of the character described?" And he makes a flourish about "reverence for the character of our Blessed Saviour, &c." An easy way to escape the pinch and pressure of an unmanageable argument. We think we show our "reverence" for our Lord best when we accept the plain and obvious facts of his history without vain jangling or doubtful disputation.

These several points, we trust, have been firmly established, viz: The eleven disciples who partook of the first supper had not received Christian baptism—did not yet recognize the divinity of their Master, and were in great ignorance as to his sacrificial work and the way of salvation by his sufferings and death; they were profoundly in the dark in regard to the spiritual nature of his mission and kingdom. Dr. P. may exclaim, "presumptuously affirmed, &c." But there stand the historic facts, not to be ignored by passion and prejudice.

The reviewer displays considerable controversial dexterity in escaping from these logical toils. He makes a great ado in regard to the fact that the original communicants did not recognize "the divinity of their Lord;" then amid the dust which he manages to stir up and collect around this *single point*, he very

quietly slips away from the others, viz: "That the Eleven were without Christian baptism, and were in great ignorance of the nature and method of the atonement, the way of salvation, and of Christ's spiritual mission and kingdom." But if we were to leave out of view entirely the point which he chiefly disputes, viz: "ignorance of Christ's divine nature," the other points are not at all affected thereby. The veriest novice in theology knows that the eleven original communicants were greatly in the dark concerning Messiah's sacrificial work, and the spirituality of his kingdom. But Dr. P. seems to think that the less said on these topics the better, so he says nothing, or nothing to the purpose.

For that's the only way,
When people nothing have to say.

To evade, in some measure, the condemnation which these facts pronounce upon his "close communion" theory, the reviewer argues that they equally condemn the Presbyterian doctrine; for he tells us, if Christ designed "to teach the church by his example, what are the proper qualifications" to be required of intending communicants; why not now admit persons who deny the divinity of Christ? &c., &c. The answer is obvious. Our Lord was omniscient, we are not. He could try the heart. He so arranged in his providence, that the traitor Judas absented himself from the communion table—but knowing that the Eleven possessed "the root of the matter," or were "born of the Spirit," he received them notwithstanding their ignorance and errors, and in this respect, the Presbyterian Church aims to copy the example of our Lord. We seek to ascertain, as far as we can, whether the applicant possesses the great moral characteristics of a saving faith and true repentance—and for this purpose we examine on the great essentials to salvation, as their marks are laid down in the Scrip-

tures for the use of those who are not able to try the hearts of men. Having arrived at these evidences of real piety, like our Blessed Lord, we bid such hopeful disciples welcome, without requiring "adherence" to the 33 chapters of the Confession, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and eighteen "declarations" of a "testimony." A very little discrimination is needful to decide which of these theories of communion most nearly copies the example of our Lord.

The reviewer intimates, though apparently afraid to positively affirm, that the example of Christ is of no obligation in this case. We have said, in "Close Communion tested," that "his example is highly instructive in principle." "But for reasons stated, it does not require our church officials to admit persons to communion who are so greatly in error as the disciples." Just as we do not press the example of Christ at Cana, as an argument in favor of the use of wine as a beverage, nor use his example as "the Great Teacher," in order to sanction such terrible appeals as he uttered when we preach the Gospel—such as "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers;" "ye hypocrites," &c. Yet in all these cases the pattern of our Blessed Lord is "highly instructive in principle."

The reviewer correctly quotes our Confession as requiring the unbaptized to receive baptism before being admitted to the Lord's table. This, of course, is highly proper as a matter of church order among weak and fallible men. But if the all-knowing Master himself were present, and a case should occur where an unbaptized christian had partaken of the supper, we can hardly suppose, in view of his own example, that he would severely condemn the action.

But if it still be asked, why do Presbyterians require a belief in the divinity of the Saviour and his spiritual mission, &c., if He admitted those who did not recog-

nize those truths? The answer is, because church officers not being omniscient, must use all means to arrive at the moral probabilities of the great inward change, of which faith and repentance are the fruits—and one of the best of those probable evidences is a cordial reception of the doctrine that Jesus is “Lord of all, &c.”

In view of these limitations, the chief of which were staring Dr. P. in the face in our book, how could he charge us with “injurious misrepresentation of Christ, &c., &c.?”

CHAPTER VII.

ARGUMENT FROM APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE.

THE example of the apostles is the next topic adduced to overthrow “close communion.” Let us examine whether our doctrine, or that of Dr. P. most resembles theirs.

ARGUMENT III.

In receiving persons to baptism, what sort of a “profession” did those inspired men require as “credible?” It was uniformly, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. “If thou believest with all thy heart.” This was a very different sort of “credible profession from the following:” Adhere to the Westminster Standards, containing several thousands of doctrinal and moral propositions of the Confession and Catechisms, to which you must add the 18 “Declarations” of our “Testimony.” “These are our principles, and if you are professors at all, you are professors of all these.” “Testimony,” p. 37.

The case of Peter, Acts 10, baptizing Cornelius and others at Cesarea, is first mentioned in "close communion." Dr. P. very truly says that Peter preached the Gospel to Cornelius and his followers, such truths as "Christ is Lord of all," his incarnation, sufferings and death, and his resurrection and coming to judgment. "Observe," remarks the Dr., "Cornelius expressed a desire to be instructed, not merely in the 'foundation truths' of the Gospel, but to hear 'all things that are commanded of God.'" The reviewer is great on such points, which no one disputes. But the true question is, what was the great test of fitness for the outward seals of discipleship, as they were proposed by Peter? It is summed up in v. 43. "Through his name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." The next verse tells of the Holy Ghost being immediately poured out; and in verse 47, Peter says: "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized."

Now let the candid reader look at this example. Peter preaches the great essential truths of the Gospel, Christ divine, Christ incarnate, dying, rising, coming to judgment. Then he preaches the necessity of faith, including repentance and the remission of sins. "While Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all those who heard the word." Receiving this public manifestation of the Spirit's power as evidence of the faith of his hearers, Peter at once, without any delay, "commands them to be baptized." On what ground? A belief of a whole system of theology, &c., &c., &c? No. "They have received the Holy Ghost," and they are believers; therefore "let them be baptized."

Observe, further, the rapid succession of these events; preaching, the offer to believers, receiving the Holy

Spirit, and being baptized, all at the same service. Is this Dr. P.'s method of receiving persons to baptism? According to his theory, the apostle ought to have held an examination to see whether these persons had correctly understood and received the whole system of theology, from the creation to the final judgment, especially as they were Gentiles, and of course had been ignorant idolaters.

But here Dr. P. raises an objection. "Suppose," he remarks, "that Cornelius had said, to your "foundation truths" I do not object, but some of your doctrines I utterly reject," &c. We reply that this of Dr. P. would be a proper inquiry, if Peter had held his notions, required an examination on several thousand doctrines of the system of theology, and demanded "an adherence" to them all. But the presence and power of the Holy Spirit producing faith and repentance satisfied Peter that Cornelius and others were taught of God, and therefore "he commanded them to be baptized."

In this, and other similar cases, the reviewer dwells with much apparent complacency on the direction of our Lord, Math. 28:20. After the commission to disciple and baptize "all nations," Jesus adds, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded." Dr. P. appears to wish to make the impression that Presbyterians dissent from this part of the Apostolic Commission, and do not consider it a duty "to teach to observe all things which Christ has commanded;" but that there are some things we choose rather to drop or omit to teach. The Dr.'s logic runs thus: Christ commanded the Apostles to teach "all things." He must have commanded, therefore, that these "all things," be taught and received before baptism, and as terms of communion. No one disputes the injunction to "teach all things;" the real question is this: "Must they be taught and believed as

pre-requisites to baptism? According to Dr. P.'s theory, our Lord meant to say, "Go, baptize all nations;" but before you "baptize" require them to learn and believe "all things," the whole system of theology, &c., &c. If Peter obeyed Christ's commission in this sense, he must have had a very short time to teach the several thousand propositions of the Westminster Standards to Cornelius and the others; and they must have been very apt scholars. How different the logic of that profound scholar, Dr. Addison Alexander: "The reason assigned," he says, "is that those who had received the baptism of the Spirit, must certainly be fit for that of water." "Not so," replies Dr. P.; "they must first believe 'the truth,' a summary of which we have in the Westminster Standards."

"The next example," says Dr. P., "which our author adduces in support of his theory, is that of the Ethiopian Eunuch." No, Dr., the "next example" is that of Simon the sorcerer, baptized by Philip, Acts 8, and it is not adduced in support of our theory, but against close communion. On this case, as Dr. P.'s review has slipped over it very lightly, we need make but few comments. The record is simply this: Simon had bewitched the people of Samaria, so that they regarded him as "the great power of God." But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized." Then, it is added, "Simon himself believed, and when he was baptized, he continued," &c., Simon was a hypocrite. But Dr. P. says: "On the ground of a profession of Christianity, he was received into the fellowship of the church." Here the simple question is, did Philip's preaching and the profession of Simon and the Samaritans, include all that Dr. P. calls "a summary of the truth," the whole system of theology, &c., &c. Philip does not pretend

to try the heart even of a Simon. The simple condition, as Dr. P. well expresses it, was "that he made a credible profession, and therefore in the sight of man had a right to be regarded as a brother," &c.

Next we take up the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch. The record is simply this: "Philip preached unto him Jesus; verse 35. The Eunuch said, 'What doth hinder me to be baptized?' Philip replies: 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.'" The Eunuch answers, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;" "and Philip baptized him." But according to Dr. P.'s theory, Philip should have first examined whether the Eunuch had given his "adherence" to the whole system of theology, extending from the creation to the last judgment. "The Church has her creed," he says, "a summary of the faith once delivered to the saints," and which she, as a faithful witness, is bound to teach. By his professed approbation of this form of sound words, the person makes such a profession as the Church has a right to demand," &c. This "creed," we are told, is "the Westminster Standards," &c. Whether there was anything like such a "creed" enforced in the Eunuch's case is not difficult to decide.

The reviewer makes a great effort to bring the knowledge of the Eunuch up as near as possible to his "terms of communion." Thus he says, "he was already a member of the Church." "He had received the sacraments of circumcision and the passover, believed in the Messiah, and was waiting for his appearance," &c. This is very doubtful. Dr. Jacobus, in his Commentary, says, "May he not have been 'a worshipper of God,' as Cornelius was a 'devout man' in that sense, though excluded by his physical disability [Deut. 23: 1] as the uncircumcised Gentiles were."

But suppose the Eunuch's intellectual acquaintance

with the scheme of divine truth to have been as extensive as Dr. P. imagines—that is not the question in dispute. The point is this: have we the smallest evidence that Philip required any such extended knowledge as a term and condition of baptism? Not the least. “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” He believed “with all his heart,” “and Philip baptized him.” That is the simple record. Certainly very unlike Dr. P.’s theory requiring “an adherence to the 33 chapters of the Westminster Standards,” &c., &c. Here the reviewer raises this objection: “If the Church, he says, has a right to require only “that a person should say, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,’ you must receive the Universalist and Unitarian, for they will make this profession.” Now, if this have any force, it is equally valid against the doctrine of Paul, 1 Cor. 12: 3: “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” Dr. P. may here object that the Universalist, &c., can say all this: ergo, Paul, your doctrine is not true!

But the reviewer’s objection is a mere man of straw. No Presbyterian is so absurd as to maintain “that all the Church has a right to require is that the candidate *should say*, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” To make his case as plausible as possible, Dr. P. misrepresents Philip; for his requirement is, “If thou believest with ALL THINE HEART, thou mayest.” Dr. P. perverts it so as to read, “If thou sayest that Jesus is the Son of God!” The two statements are as different as truth from error. To “believe with all the heart,” is “to believe unto righteousness,” as Paul tells us [Rom. 10: 10], but to say that “Jesus is the Son of God,” is to do only what the devils have done.

To show still further the utter futility of this objection of the reviewer as against our doctrine, take

his own statement of it as follows: "The Church should receive into her fellowship all of every denomination who in the judgment of charity are to be considered Christians." [Ch. Fell. p. 56.] Observe, "in the judgment of charity." Are Universalists to be "considered Christians in the judgment of charity?" The object of examination in the Presbyterian Church in regard to what Calvin calls "fundamental doctrine," and "the fathers," Mason, Smith, and Annan call "the great foundation truths of the Gospel," is to form this "judgment of charity" on Scriptural grounds. It is plain, therefore, that if Dr. P. has correctly stated our doctrine in his book on "Church Fellowship," this objection, in his review, is the merest quibble.

In a word, as stated in our book, "To believe with the heart" in Christ, is equivalent to receiving Him in his divine character as our loving Saviour, "the Lord our righteousness," as Philip had expounded from Is. 53. This was Philip's requirement, and this the Eunuch's faith. This, of course, Presbyterians require of all who make application for membership in the Church. But they cannot see that Philip's example makes it a duty to demand "an adherence to the Westminster Standards," &c., &c.

Look next at the example of the Philippian jailor. (Acts 16. To his inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul replies, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "And they [Paul and Silas] spake unto him the words of the Lord and to all that were in his house." "And he took them THE SAME HOUR OF THE NIGHT, * * * and was baptized, he and all his." "He rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

The reviewer will hardly pretend that this jailor was "a member of the Church," as he thinks the

Eunuch was. He was obviously a poor, ignorant heathen, hardly restrained from suicide. Now observe the order of the whole process of his conversion and baptism: Paul preaches "the word of the Lord" to him an awakened sinner,—he "believes on the Lord Jesus Christ," and the same hour of the night HE IS BAPTIZED. On this case Dr. P. says, "Instruction in the principles of the Gospel preceded admission into the Church." No doubt of it—"the principles of the Gospel." That is precisely our doctrine. We should be very sorry to admit to baptism an adult who was not instructed in "the principles of the Gospel!" But is that the same as the following: "If they are professors at all, they are professors of all the Church's principles"—which is interpreted to mean "an adherence to the Westminster Standards" [Testimony pp. 37: 7.] This poor heathen, enlightened by the Spirit of God, "believed with all his heart" in "Christ crucified," Christ divine, incarnate, suffering, dying, atoning, rising, reigning. These are foundation truths. These were the "principles of the Gospel" which he joyfully received, because, being convicted of sin, he felt his need of just such a Saviour. But do these facts correspond with Dr. P.'s theory, which sets up as "terms of communion," the whole "body of Divinity," Confession, Catechisms, and Testimony?" Surely the poor heathen "jailor and all his house" must have been apt scholars to receive intelligently a vast system of theological truth, as expounded in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, &c., "in the same hour of the night."

In this and similar cases Dr. P. adroitly changes the terms of our main proposition. We do not adduce these examples as arguments to "support our theory," as he alleges, but rather to confute the theory of "Close Communion." That is the express object of

our book; not to establish "Catholic Communion," but to overthrow "Close Communion." Indirectly, indeed, these cases do afford much support to our theory—but the direct and principal design of their use is against the opposite theory. "The Christian convert," Dr. P. tells us, "was required not only to declare with the Eunuch, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," &c. But here he misrepresents the sacred record; the Eunuch was required by Philip not "to declare" but "to believe with all his heart," which is a very different thing from "declaring." As before stated, the devils can, and do "declare" that "Jesus is the Son of God!" On p. 8 of his book, Dr. P. says, "The Eunuch signified his belief of the fundamental, distinguishing doctrine of the creed." That is true.

Equally fatal to the close communion theory is the example of Lydia. She "worshipped God"—"the Lord opened her heart so that she attended unto the things spoken by Paul;" such is the record. Then follows, "And when she was baptized," &c. And so of the Pentecostal believers: Peter preached Christ crucified, "the principle of the Gospel;" including of course the principle of "the shedding forth" of the Holy Spirit in virtue of Christ's atonement in his converting influences. Conviction of sin followed, and "THE SAME DAY" "three thousand" were baptized and added to the church. On Dr. P.'s theory these converts must have been apt scholars, if "the same day" they intelligently received and adopted any such vast system of theology as that of Westminster, to say nothing of "The Testimony!"

But Dr. P. makes short work of our argument on these topics. "These examples, he says, "are referred to in support of the theory that all we have a right to demand as the condition of membership in the Church is a profession of faith in Christ." Here the

Dr.'s first mistake is, in stating that these examples are adduced in "support of our theory." As before said, they are expressly designed as arguments against the close communion theory—which is the main position of our book, and stated in its very title-page. The second mistake of the Dr. is in substituting "a profession of faith in Christ," in the room of "believing with all the heart." Profession is one thing—"believing with the whole heart" is a very different thing. The Dr.'s third and principal mistake is this: He misrepresents our book as teaching that "all the Church has authority to require as the condition of membership is a profession of faith in Christ!" This "profession" he interprets for us to mean a simple dead faith, exclusive of such foundation truths as repentance, "the divinity of Christ, and his death as the substitute for fallen sinful men!" Having thus set up his man of straw, he of course is quite successful in beating it down. And to complete the caricature, he pretends to quote our book as calling this, his own absurd figment, "the inspired pattern!" To render this misstatement the more inexcusable, he had before him, staring him in the face, the following: "Can you [Dr. P.] not determine the doctrines which the Apostles comprehended in THEIR CREED, and which you describe as leading and fundamental? This you can surely do if you understand the Scriptures; and thus you have all that the INSPIRED PATTERN required in order to fellowship, in connection with a credible profession." Yet, with this plain declaration before him of what was meant by "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," he has the boldness to say that our "inspired pattern" rejects the fundamental doctrines of "the Trinity, universal depravity, and necessity of regeneration!" Is not this strange?

Of the same strange and unaccountable sort of mis-

statement is the following: "Unless you, Mr. A., can prove that the Apostles, whom Christ commissioned to teach 'all things whatsoever He had commanded,' were so unfaithful as to teach nothing more than 'the foundation truths of the Gospel,' this example [Pentecost] is fatal to your theory." But who disputes that the Apostles, in the discharge of their ministry, taught "all things commanded?" No one is so absurd. The real question is, "Did they require an intelligent belief of the whole system of Divine truth as a pre-requisite, or condition of baptism?" If they did, then, as before said, Paul and Silas must have had a busy time of it, and the Philippian "jailor and all his house" must have learned very fast "that same hour of the night!" And so with the others. As to Peter, he must have done wonders, if "on the same day" [Pentecost] he taught the whole system of theology, from Genesis to the final judgment!

Such, then, is the argument against "Close Communion" from the example of the apostles. No better evidence of its force need be given than the spasmodic struggles of the reviewer to escape from its grasp.

CHAPTER VIII.

DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINES OF WESTMINSTER.

WE next test the doctrine of "Close Communion" by the teaching of the Westminster Assembly.

ARGUMENT IV.

The Westminster Assembly did not hold the theory of close communion.

The 26th article of their Confession speaks of "a holy fellowship in the worship of God," and then adds,

“which communion, as God offereth opportunity is to be extended to all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.”

1. This article is verbally the same, not only in the Old, New School, and U. P. Churches, as also in both classes of Covenanters and the Associate Reformed Church of the South, but the same in all the Presbyterian Confessions of Scotland and Ireland. The practice of the Scottish and Irish Churches, as we are told by Dr. Harper, of the U. P. body, agrees with ours, and of course they interpret the 26th article as we Presbyterians do. It is rather singular that, according to Dr. P's view, those noble Churches from which chiefly spring ours in this land, should have so generally apostatized from the strict faith of the Westminster Assembly! Can the Dr. tell us when and how this “falling away” came to pass? We wait for a reply.

2. The Scottish Commissioners to that Assembly, Rutherford, Anderson, and Bailey, the very chiefs of the Scottish “fathers,” held communion with their brethren in England, while they attended that body, so we are informed by the “fathers” of the Overture, Annan, Mason, and Smith. On this principle might not Dr. P. innocently commune with the Covenanters?

3. A third stubborn fact: The Westminster Assembly remained steadily in fellowship with the established Church of England, although justly complaining of great corruptions in her worship, government and discipline. Baxter, a cotemporary, says in his life, that “the members were all Conformists, save about eight or nine, and the Scottish Commissioners.”

4. But the “most unkindest cut of all” is this: In the U. P. *Quarterly Review* for 1860, when Dr P. was one of its editors, we find, p. 137, the following in regard to the views and policy of that venerable Assembly:

“Establishing, or intending to establish, a Church with branches of the same order in other countries, their communion was properly at such a time thrown open to individuals of credible profession in other than what were known as Reformed Churches, who might be driven by persecution, or cast by any cause temporarily among them.”

Now observe: This U. P. *Quarterly* says the Westminster Assembly “threw open their communion,” to whom? Dr. P. now says it refers “solely to the regular orderly Protestant Churches, who have expressed their orthodoxy in their Confessions of faith, and adhere thereto, though differing from us in some external modes and forms.” These “modes and forms” he designates as “whether we begin public worship with praise or prayer, whether in baptism we sprinkle once or thrice, &c.” But is this statement of the views of the Assembly correct? No, it is not correct—certainly not, if we can place any confidence in his own “*Quarterly*.” The “*Quarterly*” says the Westminster Assembly “threw open their communion to other than those known as Reformed Churches.” What Churches were these others? The “*Quarterly*” says they were “those called Lutheran, in distinction from the Reformed or Calvinistic Churches of Europe.” And what sort of “orthodoxy” did these Lutheran Churches profess and adhere to? Did they hold correct views upon the sacramental presence of Christ’s body and blood. Did they not teach consubstantiation? Were they strictly Presbyterian in Church government? Every novice can answer these questions—and the true answer utterly condemns Dr. P.’s views of the meaning of the 26th article of the Westminster Divines. It is thus demonstrated that either his review of our book on close communion, or his “*Quarterly Review*,” have very greatly mistaken the real meaning of that Assem-

bly. The Lutheran Body, to whom those distinguished divines “threw open their communion,” “held to the use of images in their Churches, clerical habits, wafers in the Lord’s Supper, uninspired hymns in praise, and exorcism in baptism, as useful rites and institutions.” So says Mosheim. Yet if our reviewer is right, these must have been “orderly Protestant Churches, clearly expressing their orthodoxy in their Confession, &c.” For he now says, “it was only to such churches the Assembly of Divines extended their communion.” Perhaps he can tell us whether the Presbyterian Churches and the Covenanters of this country are quite as corrupt as those Lutherans were. Yet he utterly refuses to hold communion with us.

5. Observe further, that the clause of the 26th article—“which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus”—is interpreted by Dr. P. “as referring particularly to christian brethren of foreign churches, who in the providence of God might be temporarily sojourning among us.” Now apply the rule of the “Testimony” to those Lutheran foreigners: “The Church should not extend communion to those who refuse to forsake a communion which is inconsistent with the profession she makes.” Did these Lutherans forsake their old communion? Certainly not. They were admitted, Dr. P. says, as “occasional communicants,” expecting to return to their European Church connections.

6. Observe still further: the author of “Church Fellowship” speaks of those “who adhere to a system to a greater or less extent (he does not say how great or how small the extent), inconsistent with the cause of truth,” and adds this: “That the Church that would be faithful to her Lord, must regard such persons as those who, in some respects, do not call upon the name

of the Lord in a scriptural manner"—“who in some respects walk disorderly.” This description of “disorderly walking” certainly includes the Lutherans of 1643, at least as plainly as it includes Presbyterians and Covenanters of this country. But what follows? The Dr. adds: “Therefore so long as they choose to remain in connection with a system of error, the Church may not be a partaker of their sin by receiving them into her fellowship.” “May not be partaker of their sin!” What a wicked thing in the Westminster Divines to “throw open their communion” to such disorderly walkers as these Lutherans. Nor must it be supposed that all this was through sympathy for refugees escaping from persecution. Dr. David Kerr, the author of the article in the Quarterly, says “the Assembly extended communion to those who from any cause resided temporarily in England.”

That the Divines of Westminster were not “close communionists,” is virtually declared by Hetherington, the historian of the Church of Scotland. Thus, he says, “the full arrangement of the Confession, form of government, discipline of the Church of Scotland, as they exist at the present day, was completed in 1647,” when, as he tells us, “the Scottish Assembly ratified those symbols as they came from the hands of the Assembly.” He gives no whisper of any departure from their strict principles of communion, though the Churches of Scotland, with scarcely an exception, reject the “close communion theory” at the present day.

On the whole, we respectfully suggest that demonstration itself could scarcely make anything more clear, than that the Westminster Divines did not require “adherence to the 33 chapters and 160 sections of the Confession, and 196 questions of the Larger Catechism [to say nothing of the Shorter Catechism and the “Testimony”], as a pre-requisite to baptism and

the Lord's Supper. Think of those corrupt Lutherans, with all their sins of "human composition in the worship of God, &c., &c.," on their heads, yet welcomed to the Lord's Supper. The Rev. Dr. P. would certainly have considered them as "walking disorderly in some respects," and of course he could not have partaken of their sin.

On such broad principles as these, the Westminster Divines threw open their communion to the Lutherans, believing that such communion would not involve themselves "in a direct or implied apostacy from the testimony of Jesus, and that holy profession of his name." Believing, too, with "Father Annan," that "the doctrine that in no circumstances whatever is it lawful for one of their members to hold communion with any other Protestant Church is just the same as that of the Roman Catholics." Again he says, "If we were in Africa and Asia, we would always join with all Christians, holding the same fundamental testimony against Jews, Turks, and Pagans." These were the large and liberal views of a "father" who held Dr. P.'s "great doctrine" of exclusive psalmody so loosely that he wrote as follows: "We do not mean to say that hymns of human composition (*Proh pudor!*) may not be lawfully used in any case whatever!" By this, say some U. P.'s, he merely meant "that it was lawful to read a pious poem!" A very sage revelation indeed from a committee of the wisest and best ministers of the Church. Such, too, was the "father," who at the suggestion of his congregation, laid aside "an inspired psalmody" (Rouse) and introduced "the loose paraphrases of Tate and Brady. We beg leave to say, therefore, to Dr. P., that we have neither slandered nor misrepresented our "venerable father," as he charitably affirms. The fact of "Father Annan's" having substituted Tate and Brady in the room of "the

inspired psalmody of Rouse in public worship, is avowed by himself in his pamphlet, "The Ruling Elder," as also the further fact that the Synod passed no sort of censure upon him on account of this great offence!

But here Dr. P. interposes thus: "You, Mr. A., represent your venerable father as violating his solemn ordination vows." But Dr. P. seems to forget his own letter to Dr. Mason in 1818, in which he, a minister, bound by those same ordination vows, speaks in very contemptuous terms of the theory of a literal psalmody, &c., and announces that he had been teaching from the pulpit "the doctrine of Catholic communion as an irresistible consequence from the Church's unity." If "Father Annan" was so very guilty, what shall we think of John T. Pressly? See his letter in a former chapter. The plain truth is, that neither the "fathers" Mason and Annan, nor John T. Pressly felt under any obligation at that period to hold and teach the narrow, exclusive, sectarian notions which Dr. P. now exalts into "terms of communion." But when Dr. P. emigrated from South Carolina to our smoky clime, a great and sudden "change came over the spirit of his dream." The old classical poet said—*cælum, non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt*. But Dr. P. seems to have changed both his "mind" and his "skies," when he came to Pittsburgh.

CHAPTER IX.

PRACTICAL EXCOMMUNICATION. GREAT INCONSISTENCIES.



Fifth argument to disprove the "Close Communion" theory is as follows :

ARGUMENT V.

That theory practically excommunicates all other Christian bodies though acknowledged as "Sister Churches." On this topic the reviewer, so far as we have observed, is entirely silent. The chief authorities adduced in our book, are the Rev. J. A. Sloan, of the Associated Reformed Church, and a correspondent of "the United Presbyterian" for July, 1857. "Men should ponder well," says the latter, "the responsibility assumed in maintaining existing divisions, by contending for minor peculiarities, and urging them as terms of communion, to the exclusion of brethren who are one with themselves in all the fundamentals of Christian doctrine, worship and order." "All true Christians, say the "fathers" of the Overture, have communion with Christ and with each other in the truth—they think as Christ thinks—are all taught by the Spirit of God, "have all communion in the justifying righteousness and sanctifying spirit of Christ." "We will not pretend," they say, "to unchurch all the Protestant Churches." "We never can and never will embrace the principle that all the Protestant Churches, except our own party, are unfit for Christian or holy communion." To all this, "Father Annan" adds: "It is impossible that a Church can be in any sense a Church of Christ, if it be, in all supposable cases, unlawful to hold communion with her."

From these extracts, it is plain that the "fathers" regarded "all true Christians" as one in Christ, and

that to pronounce communion with "Sister Churches," who hold the fundamentals to be "impure and contaminating," is virtually to excommunicate, or unchurch them. Ruling Elder, p. 45.

ARGUMENT VI.

The theory of "close communion" involves its advocates in gross inconsistencies with their own professions.

Look for example at the expressions employed by Dr. P. "Faithfulness to Christ and the truth," "witnesses for the truth," "solemn responsibilities," "ordination vows, &c." Yet it is notorious that many of the "principles" in regard to which they use this solemn language, are constantly ignored by Dr. P. and other ministers and members of the U. P. Body.

1. Take the case of Prof. Dinwiddie, who, some years since, was colleague with Dr. Pressly in the U. P. Theological Seminary. He went from the Presbyterian Church—but did he ever repent of the sin of singing Watt's Psalms and Hymns? Of course he had been guilty of violating the law of close communion. Yet he was installed as the teacher and model of young ministers.

2. Then there is the case of Dr. Davidson, who has openly avowed that he has admitted to sealing ordinances persons who hold doctrines inconsistent with the distinctive principles of the U. P. Church, &c., and he says he intends to continue in this and other practices, in violation of the rigid theory of Dr. P. This course, he says, "his commission from Christ requires of him." Yet while thus openly defying his brethren to inflict discipline, he maintains a secure and honorable position among them.

3. And so on the subjects of "exclusive psalmody," "secret societies," and "public social covenanting"

Dr. Davidson, Rev. Mr. McDill, and Rev. J. A. McGaw who were editors of the *Union Presbyterian*, assure us that the "Testimony" is extensively disregarded by United Presbyterians; "even in and around Pittsburgh;" they tell us many of them sing "the devotional compositions of uninspired men loudly and repeatedly."

4. The *Christian Instructor*, of Philadelphia, publishes an article from a correspondent (March 16th, 1867), who says: "I do not think it would much affect Christianity as a system whether close communion or the exclusive use of the Psalms was voted up or down."

Now, if Dr. P. really maintains the doctrine that the rigid execution of his "principles" is required in "faithfulness to the Head of the Church," why does he suffer the thunders of discipline to sleep? Why exhibit before a scoffing world such lofty pretensions of religious responsibility, in violent contrast with these "lame and impotent conclusions?" It is not merely inconsistent—it is *morally wrong*. "It is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay." Ecclesiastes 5:5. The editors of the *Union Presbyterian*, themselves ministers of the U. P. Body, say, that to attempt to execute the rigid theory would "painfully deplete their congregations and crowd uncomfortably sister churches." Occasionally, indeed, we hear of a member or elder brought before the Session for joining in worship with a Presbyterian family while singing Watts' Psalms and Hymns, or some similar offence. But such discipline so shocks the christian sympathies of other churches that it is not often repeated. But as the reviewer does not deny the facts nor attempt to invalidate the inferences in this argument, we pass to other topics.

CHAPTER X.

EXAMINATION OF PROOF TEXTS.

LET us now examine some of the proof-texts in which "Close Communion" is supposed to be either directly taught or plainly implied.

Dr. P. introduces Amos 3 : 3 : "Can two walk together except they be agreed"—to establish and seal the following :

"If they are not willing to unite with her (the church) in professing and maintaining the truth, fidelity to her exalted King requires that she should close the door of her fellowship against them. 'How can two walk together, &c.' "

On this we said it was "torturing Amos 3 : 3, into the service of close communion." But Dr. P. denies that "the text was quoted by him to establish any theory of communion." But this is the veriest quibbling. Do you not quote that text (Amos 3 : 3) as an inspired proof, a Divine seal to your statement "that she (the church) should close the door of fellowship against them"—*i. e.* against those not willing to profess and maintain the truth?" And what do you mean by "the truth?" A few lines before you say it is "the creed"—"a summary of what the Church understands to be the great doctrines of the Bible." And it is to establish this use of your "creed" ("the Westminster Standards") that you quote Amos 3 : 3 : "How can two walk together except they be agreed." It is a poor evasion, therefore, to allege that you did not quote that text "to establish any particular doctrine."

But how extensive was this agreement at the first supper? Did not Christ and his disciples "walk together" for several years? And were they agreed upon such points as his Divine character, his spiritual mission, &c? Dr. P. hits the truth precisely when he

says, "In the primitive days of Christianity, the creed of the church was brief and simple, embracing a few of the leading fundamental doctrines of the Bible." This was the sort of creed imposed by Philip—"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." But Dr. P. employs Amos 3 : 3, to show that the church should exclude all who are not agreed in the 33 chapters of the Confession, &c., &c., &c.

Another text often referred to by Dr. P. is the 3d verse of Jude : "Ye should earnestly contend for the faith, &c." He says he intended it merely as "inculcating the duty of the church to maintain, defend, and propagate that system of faith which has been delivered to the saints." But as no one in his right mind denies that such is "the duty of the church," where was the use of quoting that text? If Jude had said, "Ye must 'earnestly contend for the faith' by requiring all candidates for baptism to give an intelligent assent to the several thousand propositions of the whole Body of Divinity," the text would have had great force. Of the same loose, illogical sort of writing is Dr. P.'s frequent quotation of such passages as, "they continued in the doctrine of the apostles;" "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, &c., &c." These texts have nothing to do with the question of "terms of communion." No one disputes the duty of instruction in all Christ's commands; the point is, how much was required to be intelligently adopted as pre-requisites to baptism?

Another strange specimen of confusion of ideas is this : Dr. P. positively denies that his book teaches the following : "The church must demand of all applicants a union in every particular truth taught in the Scriptures." But if his language has any meaning, he does teach precisely this doctrine in the same paragraph. Thus : "The church is under obligations to

teach every truth revealed in the Word of God." Very well. No one denies that. But he adds in the next sentence, "and is the church under obligations to receive into her fellowship one who rejects the truth which her Divine King required her to teach? Could she do so and be faithful to her Lord?" In other words, "She must teach every truth revealed," and she must "refuse fellowship" to one who rejects "the truth she is required to teach." If that does not mean that the church must require the applicant to receive "every truth revealed," what does it mean? Dr. P. often says things "in haste," which he is obliged to take back. We have already shown what sort of "a creed" the apostles contended for when admitting persons to baptism.

The author of "Church Fellowship" also cites Romans 16 : 17. "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences among you, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them." The next verse describes the persons referred to—"they serve not Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." "Whatever they professed," says the judicious Scott, * * * * "they sought indulgence of their appetites * * * in order to support themselves and live in plenty without labor." Now we cordially agree with Dr. P. that he should avoid such persons, and have no fellowship with them; and if found in the church he should put them out of it. But what has this to do with the exclusion from communion of the pious and devoted members of those which he calls "sister churches?" He might as well quote the text "Woe unto you lawyers," to prove that no member of the bar should be received to the Lord's Supper. As to "causing divisions," Dr. Mason has well said, that if Dr. P.'s theory were strictly enforced,

“there would be no place in the church for one Christian in ten thousand:” for how many of the professors of the present day could answer intelligently all the questions in the Catechisms, to say nothing of the 160 sections of the Confession, and 18 Declarations of the “Testimony?” In his recent review, Dr. P. takes no notice of our remarks upon his use of this text. The reason of this silence he knows best.

Another favorite text with Close Communionists is 2 Thessalonians 3: 6. “Now, we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us.” Dr. Scott says, the persons here marked were those who “would not work,” “busy bodies”—“they had quitted the Christian ranks, and deserted their post”—“made religion a pretence for indolence, subsisting on the liberality of the brethren”—“expecting to be maintained in idleness”—“exciting disturbance among families to the injury of men’s characters, and so their families were reduced to great distress.” This is the sort of “disorderly walking” which Paul here condemns, and from which he commands Christians to “withdraw themselves.” But what has all this to do with the question whether it is a duty to refuse communion with the pious members of orderly “sister churches?” Dr. P. indeed ventures to say that the person referred to “was not living in flagrant sin.” But is stealing not a flagrant sin? And was not the disorderly one seeking, as Scott says, “to live at other people’s expense, and in idleness?”

Dr. P. also says this “disorderly person” is supposed to be a Christian brother—“was not chargeable with something utterly inconsistent with Christian character.” “A Christian brother!” But it is a familiar canon of sacred criticism “that assertions of

this sort are often made in the Scriptures, referring only to external character and profession—just as Jerusalem, though compared by Isaiah to Sodom, is called “the Holy City.” Matth. 28 : 53. Thus Pharisees are called by our Lord, “righteous.” “I came not to call the righteous.” So Paul, “the foolishness of preaching;” and twelve thrones were promised to the disciples, including Judas. See also 2 Cor. 5 : 11. And as to “Christian character,” if Dr. P. had given his readers Scott’s Notes on the subject, they would have been amazed at his notions of “Christian character !”

So when Paul exhorts, in 2 Thess. 3 : 14, 15, “If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” Here this “brother” is described as one who “obeys not” the Gospel taught by Paul, and of course makes not a “credible profession.” So he exhorts Timothy “to withdraw himself * * * from those who were proud, knowing nothing—men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness.” These are the “brothers” from whom the Church was required to “withdraw herself.” The allusion is obviously to cases of needful discipline in order to exclude those who, having by some means been admitted to the Church, were found to be a scandal to religion. But what has this to do with Dr. P.’s practice of excluding Covenanters and Old School Presbyterians, the members of “sister churches.” It is remarkable that in his review, the author of “Church Fellowship” makes no attempt to vindicate this text (2 Thess. 3 : 6) from the objections made in “Close Communion.” Perhaps he was satisfied that the less said the better.

How striking the contrast with the close communion

theory is the doctrine taught in such passages as these: "Receive ye one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God." "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Dr. P. sets up his unscriptural "terms of communion," including the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, and the "Testimony," and then proclaims that the whole Protestant world must conform to his views, or be found guilty of "causing divisions," "rending the seamless robe of the Saviour!" "The Man of Sin" goes a step further, and denounces all Protestants as heretics!

We have thus demonstrated, if we mistake not, that the passages of Scripture to which Dr. P. makes his appeal, must be wrested from their true meaning before they can be made to prop his doctrine of close communion.

CHAPTER XI.

MATTERS MISCELLANEOUS AND CURIOUS.

BEFORE proceeding to a few other points in Dr. P.'s review, we must express our gratitude for the honorary title with which he has favored us, "THAT MAN OF WAR." As some small return for the favor, we had serious thoughts of dubbing Dr. P. THAT MAN OF PEACE. A list of the very pacific epithets he has employed in berating those who have ventured to question his logical skill, from the days of Dr. Ralston to the present, would be a literary curiosity. But we must not blot our page with any such specimens of peace-making. We assure the Dr., however, that we have no great objection to a title which the Scriptures several times apply to "the sweet Psalmist

of Israel." Even Paul exhorts, "Fight the good fight of faith"—and we are commanded "to be valiant for the truth." But to proceed:

1 *The Primitive Creed.* "In the primitive days of Christianity," says Dr. P., "the creed of the Church was brief and simple," &c. As this was said in a book on "Church Fellowship," it was natural to suppose that it had reference to the apostolic mode of receiving persons to communion. But he now says that by "the primitive days of Christianity" he did not mean "the days of the apostles." We had supposed "the days of the apostles" were in the highest and best sense "primitive days!" But it seems in the Dr.'s book, "primitive" means some time after the death of the apostles. "The apostles," he further says, "prepared no creed for the Church;" yet he admits that in receiving to baptism, "they acted upon the principle of a creed." But this is a distinction without a difference. For assuredly if the apostles required a belief of anything having a remote resemblance to the 160 Sections of the Confession and 18 Declarations of the Testimony, they must have used a pretty extensive creed.

2. *A Credible Profession.* Let us try to gather from Dr. P.'s various declarations, what are his precise views of "a credible profession." Thus he emphatically denies "that the man who professes to believe some of the truths of the Gospel (he means what the fathers of the Overture call the "foundation truths") while he openly rejects other truths, should be received as a true disciple." This virtually destroys the distinction between essentials and non-essentials to salvation. And a few lines farther on we read, "It follows that for all practical purposes 'a credible profession' is a profession of faith in *every doctrine revealed* in the Bible." But of these "doctrines revealed," "there

must," he says, "be some test, and that test is the Church's publicly acknowledged Confession of Faith." Thus, it appears, he utterly rejects what Calvin calls "fundamental doctrines," as the test of fitness for baptism, and goes to the full extent of the 160 sections, &c., &c., &c. But the absurdity of applying such a "test" to youth from ten to sixteen years of age, and to most others, has already been exposed. Besides, the Dr. must have thrown this rigid doctrine overboard when he admitted the late Rev. Mr. Dinwiddie to a professor's chair in his Seminary. Was he not "received as a true disciple?"

3 *Foundation Truths.* In attempting to destroy the distinction between essentials to salvation and non-essentials, Dr. P. inquires, "Will our author tell us where our Lord has distinguished between those "foundation truths" which the Church should require men to believe as the condition of Church Fellowship and those other revealed truths which they may reject, and enjoy this privilege?" This is a proper question, and we will try to answer it.

(1.) "The Fathers," Annan, Mason, and Smith say, "All true Christians think as Christ thinks, on the GREAT FOUNDATION TRUTHS of the Gospel." If this be so, then these "fathers" must have known what those "foundation truths" are—otherwise they stultified themselves in saying that "all true Christians" agree on them. Dr. P., however, inquires, "Who will presume to determine precisely what doctrines in the Bible are essential to salvation, or what amount of error may consist with the reality of the Christian character?" Well, is it not plain that "the fathers" did "presume to determine" this very point; since they speak of "the foundation truths" on which "ALL CHRISTIANS think as Christ thinks?" Besides, the fathers give us a very safe test of these "foundation

truths"—"true Christians think as Christ thinks." Will you say you cannot tell what "Christ thinks" on just these doctrines? But that is simply to say, you cannot understand the Scriptures, which is downright Popery.

(2.) When Dr. P. said in the "United Presbyterian," that the Old School and U. P. Churches hold substantially the SAME VIEWS in relation to the GREAT DOCTRINES of Christianity," did he not know what those "great doctrines" are? Surely he did not stultify himself by asserting what he did not know?

(3.) If, then, both the "fathers" and Dr. P. could so readily ascertain the "foundation truths," where is the difficulty in applying them as a condition of fellowship in the Church?

"Even if the doctrine is mingled with some errors," said the incomparable Calvin, "I AM SATISFIED if fundamental doctrine is maintained. And thus," he continues, "may the orthodox participate in the sacraments even in Geneva." On principles, such as these, every person of sense can distinguish between those essentials to salvation, and such non-essentials as the doctrine of "the Psalms exclusively," "Close Communion," "sinfulness of secret societies," "public social covenanting," and many other such doctrines. That the Apostles acted on this distinction has been abundantly proved in a former chapter.

4. *A great objection.* Suppose, says Dr. P., a man applies for baptism and should say, "I do not believe the doctrine of particular election; the doctrine of predestination I abhor;" and I regard the doctrine of a "definite atonement as dishonoring to God."

The Dr. inquires whether such a person is to be received on the ground of holding the "foundation truths?"

This question admits of an easy solution. Our the-

ory, as stated by the General Assembly, is "to receive all who in the judgment of charity are the friends of Christ." Of course, the great end of examination is to arrive at the evidences of true piety, friendship to Christ.

In the case mentioned by Dr. P., it would be necessary to ascertain whether his conceptions of those doctrines were agreeable to the teachings of the Bible; or whether he had formed his notions from the hideous caricatures published by certain enemies of our church. If his hatred to those doctrines, when correctly stated, appeared to arise from that native enmity which the natural heart always feels toward them, this would show that he did not "believe with the heart," the great "fundamental doctrine" of free, sovereign grace. Of course he would be rejected. If, on the other hand, it were found, as in most cases it would be, that the applicant's notions of election, &c., were founded in total misconception of the truth; then, if he were indeed a pious man, it would not be difficult so to enlighten his mind that he would admire and rejoice in those doctrines: of course he would then be received.

It is very evident, however, that the case stated by Dr. P. is of no practical importance. There are churches enough who deny the doctrines he mentions, and who would gladly receive such an applicant. Our Sessions are not likely to have any such person before them. Still we have explained to the Dr. how, in perfect consistency with our doctrine of "foundation truths," we would dispose of such cases.

5. *A frightful volume.* Dr. P. says, "Mr. Annan speaks of the Confession of Faith * * * as though it were a frightful volume." But the Dr., in this instance, makes a mistake similar to the one he fell into in regard to the phrase "Rouse's Psalms." At first he seemed to be quite horrified, pronouncing it

an exhibition "of ignorance or something worse." But when it was proved that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had used the same terms, he had nothing more to say. We have, we admit, said much to expose the *absurd use* which he attempts to make of the Confession and Catechisms as terms of Communion. But of the Confession itself we have the highest admiration, as one of the noblest uninspired works in the world, second only to the Word of God. Yet the Dr. says, "Just look at the contemptuous manner in which this man speaks of that admirable summary, &c." Not so, Dr.! If we have employed any such language, it was aimed, not at the Confession, but at your absurd mode of using, as terms of Communion, that noble summary, consisting, as it does, of several thousand doctrinal and ethical propositions, some of them very abstract, and challenging the most exalted genius to comprehend them, even in part. That is "the head and front of our offending."

6. *Ordinary cases.* "In ordinary cases," says Dr. P., "we are not at liberty to hold ecclesiastical fellowship with those churches which cannot unite with us in the adherence to that system of faith contained in our Creed." Applying this to individuals, the necessary inference is, that Prof. Dinwiddie was not one of "the ordinary cases." The Covenanters, too, "remain identified," as he expresses it, "with a system of error;" "consequently, if the church should receive such to Communion, she would be chargeable with unfaithfulness to Christ"—"partakers of the sin of such errorists!" These are "the ordinary cases." Yet the Dr. tells us, "the U. P. Church has not given any express deliverance with regard to the terms of occasional communion." We think since that Church has published his book on "Church Fellowship," the "express deliverance" is pretty plain. So, when the "Testimony"

denies Communion to "those who refuse adherence to her (U. P.), profession," "or who refuse to forsake a Communion inconsistent with that profession"—the "express deliverance" is obvious enough. Yet he says, "the Testimony does not forbid occasional communion!"

7. *Indifference to truth.* Dr. P. makes various efforts to prove that our theory of Communion leads to the conclusion "that it is a matter of no great importance whether we believe the truth or not." But this is a very small piece of controversial strategy. The church is the school of Christ. Church officers are the teachers in this school. A certain amount of knowledge is required as preparatory for the admission of disciples, *i. e.*, learners. Are the Professors in our Colleges "indifferent to truth," because they do not require a knowledge of the whole curriculum of study of those who apply for admission? After the same common sense pattern we receive disciples, that they may become acquainted with all the truths of the Scriptures.

8. *A remedy for our divisions.* All good men unite with Dr. P. in deploring the divided state of the church, especially of the various Presbyterian branches. On this topic he inquires, "Why does division in the church become a necessity? Observe that he assumes that there is such a necessity. But it is a notorious fact, that most of the errors for which he defends this necessity and stands aloof from other bodies, EXIST IN HIS OWN COMMUNION. But how does he propose to remedy this sad and deplorable state of a divided church? Let us hear him:

"That the church exists in a divided state, is unnatural and in every way improper." "A separate Communion ought not to exist; but this," he adds, "is the result of a previously existing evil, which must first be

removed, and then division will cease." But what does he mean by this "existing evil?" "Let error," he says, "which is the cause of division, be removed, and then, as the natural result, division will cease." But this is simply an identical proposition—that so soon as Christians agree, they will harmonize. Let "the cause" cease, and the "effect" will cease. Certainly no great discovery.

Again, when Dr. P. says, "let error cease"—of course he means "the errors" of other churches. We can hardly imagine his meaning to be, "Let our U. P. errors cease, and then division will cease." It is obvious, therefore, that his great remedy for divisions is simply this: Let all other denominations forsake their errors and adopt our views, and unite with us U. P.'s and then division will cease. Whether the great body of Protestant Christendom is likely to be charmed by so brilliant a prospect, and go over to the very small minority of United Presbyterians, is another question. To assume, as Dr. P. appears to do, that "WE are the people," and all other denominations are "errorists," from whom division is a "necessity"—is certainly not a very conciliatory mode of putting the case.

9. *What Dr. P. considers "a version."* As some palliation of "Father Annan's" offence in using Tate & Brady (instead of Rouse), Dr. P. says "it is a version of the Psalms." Take a few specimens:

PROSE VERSION.

He rode upon a cherub and did fly;
yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth.

TATE & BRADY.

The chariot of the King of Kings,
Which active troops of angels drew
On a strong tempest's rapid wings,
With most amazing swiftness flew.
Thee, in thy power's triumphant day,
The willing people shall obey;
And when thy rising beams they view,
Shall all, redeemed from error's night,
Appear more numerous and bright,
Than crystal drops of morning dew.

I may tell all my bones; they look
and stare upon me.

As the hart panteth after the
water brooks, so panteth my soul
after thee, O God.

How amiable are thy tabernacles,
O Lord of hosts.

My body's racked, till all my bones
Distinctly may be told;
Yet such a spectacle of woe
As pastime they behold.

As pants the wearied heart for cool
ing springs,
That sinks exhausted in the sum-
mer's chase;
So pants my soul for thee, great
King of Kings.

O God of hosts, the mighty one,
How lovely is the place
Where thou enthroned in glory
showst
The brightness of thy face-

These examples indicate what sort of a version or translation "Father Annan" introduced into public worship instead of Rouse. It is obvious that if there is no sin in singing such "a version" as this, there is no sin in singing Dr. Watts' paraphrases, such for instance, as that of the text last quoted. Psalm 84: 1.

How pleasant, how divinely fair,
O Lord of hosts, thy dwellings are.

This of Dr. W. is much more worthy of being called "a version" than any of those cited from Tate & Brady. So true is it that the author of the "Overture" was a "Psalm-singer" of a different sort from the author of Church Fellowship. And Dr. P.'s charge that we are guilty of "atrocious slander" toward our honored father, is about as true as most others of his statements on similar subjects. His theory requires "a literal translation" of the Psalms.

We have thus endeavored to present a fair statement, chiefly in his own words, of everything in the shape of reasoning in Dr. P.'s reply to our book on Close Communion. If his review is the best that can be done for that side of the question, the case is desperate enough. To say nothing now of the extreme weakness of his argument, where he does attempt to meet the positions of our book, we have just cause of com-

plaint of the partial manner in which he has exhibited the subject to his readers—viz: by selecting such topics as he seems to have thought would admit of some plausible reply, and leaving many other points which are equally effective, without the least notice. We have had frequent occasion to remark upon this feature of the Doctor's controversial adroitness; but it has been our aim "to return good for evil," and to give due consideration to all his arguments, great and small. As to the matter of christian courtesy, we regret to be compelled to say that, unlike the scriptural account of good wine, his style does not improve with age. We give him credit, however, for sincerity, even in his errors, and would be sorry to retort his own words, "thou hypocrite!" Good men are not always wise.

CHAPTER XII.

DR. SPROULL'S OBJECTIONS.

WE turn now to the strictures on our book in "the *Reformed Presbyterian*," the Old-Side Covenanter Magazine, edited by Rev. Thomas Sproull, D. D. Dr. S. is also the Professor of Theology of that denomination, just as Dr. P. is of the U. P.'s. Of course he is presumed to understand "whereof he affirms." We are the rather encouraged to notice his review of our book by Dr. Sproull's own invitation—for he says, "We would like to see a defence of it (our book) against the objections presented," viz: by himself.

1. "When Mr. A. writes again," says Dr. S. "let him attack the position that the church may not admit to her Communion any who disobey a command of Christ." To this I reply, that if Dr. S. means by

"commands of Christ," the whole system of doctrine and morals taught in the Scriptures, on that supposition no one could be admitted to communion, because there is "no man that sinneth not." All thus break "the commands of Christ." Even the command to practise "Close Communion," as he understands it, Dr. S. says, "is violated in all the churches, not excepting his own!" Of course they "may not be admitted to communion!"

Again. We concede that "the church may not admit to her communion any person who disobeys a command of Christ," provided it is done deliberately and persistently. Take, for example, the duty of infant baptism. If a person acknowledges the scriptural obligation, and yet violates it persistently, such refusal would seriously impair his evidence of "credible discipleship," and would exclude him. But if the person be an apparently candid, serious inquirer after his Lord's will, and known to be conscientiously searching the Scriptures to discover the truth on this subject, such a case would present a very different aspect. If I had other sufficient evidence of saving faith and genuine repentance, I would admit him to communion as a disciple, *i. e.*, a learner in the school of Christ; not doubting that he would soon be taught by the Holy Spirit all needful truth.

We all admit that the whole Scriptures are in a true sense "the word of Christ;" also that "the church may not be silent in regard to any one truth which God has made known to her in the Scriptures." Now, if any man should say, "I do not believe what the Bible says in a given place to be true," he would, of course, destroy his title to be viewed as a credible professor of religion. But that is quite different from the expression of a doubt whether infant baptism or some other truth not essential to salvation, is taught in the Bible.

2. Dr. Sproull tells his readers that "a (Presbyterian) Session is bound to admit to the Lord's table, any one whom they may judge to be a believer, whatever may be his profession or his practice." This is about the same as to say that our Sessions "are bound to believe the known habitual drunkard to be a sober Christian, &c." This is a monstrous misstatement of our doctrine. We teach that every one who by a credible profession of faith and a corresponding practice, gives scriptural evidence that Christ receives him, the church is bound to receive. Of the qualifications and pre-requisites to communion, the Session are the judges. And so in regard to doctrinal belief. Far be it from us "to destroy the distinction between truth and error," as Dr. S. charges. The Scriptures represent great errors to have belonged to Prophets and Apostles—thus Paul rebuked Peter for his misconduct, but we do not read that he questioned his possession of saving faith or true piety.

3. Equally unfounded is the charge that, according to our doctrine, "it is alike to the church whether her members hold truth or error on the points on which she does not require them to profess their faith." Our doctrine is this: The church must faithfully warn all against errors in points not essential to salvation, because they are hurtful to the highest prosperity of the soul. But she dare not, in the light of the pattern of Christ and the example of the Apostles, judge their subjects to be "out of Christ," and children of the devil. Knowing that such persons, holding certain errors in non-essentials, may nevertheless possess true saving faith, she dare not exclude them from the table spread for the friends of the Redeemer. She admits them for the purpose of training them as disciples, or learners in the whole "doctrine, which is according to godliness."

4. Dr. Sproull says, "There seems to be a studied disposition to avoid a plain statement of the point maintained." This he represents as "the policy of the friends of Catholic Communion." This serious charge I solemnly declare to be perfectly gratuitous. Such a course would be utterly unworthy of any honest and upright advocate of truth. If Dr. S. had read the book he undertakes to review, he would have found in various places, beginning with the Preface, our doctrine as plainly stated as language can make it. Nor have I any serious objection to the formula as he himself states it, thus: "While the church should have a comprehensive creed, * * * * she should receive into her membership persons who do not believe some of the truths taught in those formularies" ("the Westminster Confession and Catechism"); for at the close you add—"provided she (the church) thinks (rather *has scriptural evidence*) that the applicants are believers (*i. e. have saving faith*) in Christ." This doctrine you will find condensed as follows in my book, p. 60: "The church should receive into her fellowship all of every denomination who, *in the judgment of charity*, are to be considered Christians."

Dr. S. concedes that we profess to hold the same Westminster Standards with himself, but he rejects the obvious distinction between those doctrines which are fundamental, and thus essential to salvation (such as justification by faith in Christ, &c.), and many other truths taught in those Standards, such for example as "the books of the Apocrypha are not of divine inspiration;" "the Hebrew of the Old Testament was the native language of the people of God;" "it is lawful for Christians to execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereto," &c. Error in regard to hundreds of such truths does not prove the person fundamentally wrong, because they do not lie at the *foundation* of all true saving faith

in Christ. We do not think, therefore, if the applicant *hesitates* because he has serious doubts on such subjects, and at the same time gives all other scriptural evidences of being the humble friend and follower of Christ, sincerely inquiring for the truth, that such errors are sufficient to exclude him as "a disciple," *i. e.* a learner, from the Lord's table. We rather encourage him to come into the church, in order that he may *unlearn* these and other errors. The truth is, few persons have ever seen the Apocrypha, or know anything about the Hebrew. How absurd therefore to make the reception of these truths "a term of Communion."

II.

We have thus briefly explained our position on the subject of Communion, so as to comply with Dr. Sproull's demand—"Let us know exactly what it is."

It remains to present our "defence against the formal objections he makes"—for which he also makes demand.

1. His first objection is, that our doctrine "makes a creed utterly useless. This would be very true, if we could adopt your definition of a creed, *viz*: "a summary of truth, a profession of faith in which is a condition of membership." But our worthy friend will perceive that he here assumes the very point to be proved—the very point we deny, *viz*: that "a profession of faith in all the truths of the creed is the scriptural condition of membership." But while his definition thus takes for granted the question in dispute, and of course disarms his argument of all force—we Presbyterians think our Westminster creed "not utterly useless." We bind all our ministers and ruling elders at their ordination to receive and teach it, and as an admirable summary of Bible truth we teach it, in connection with the Catechism, to our children. We also recommend parents to teach the Catechism when they

bring their infants to baptism. Without, therefore, requiring a profession of all the truths of the creed as a condition of membership," we find very great use for our admirable creed. Even the *Methodist Quarterly Review* admits that it "has conferred the greatest boon on every Christian in our country—has perpetuated religious liberty, and stood as a bulwark against the onsets of Popery and every other form of seductive error." Certainly this Arminian did not denounce our use of this creed as "making it utterly useless."

Again, you say, "What is a profession of faith but a mere sham, when without it the enjoyment of church privileges can be obtained?" You mean, that a profession of faith in all the statements of the creed as a condition of membership is a sham, if privileges can be obtained without such a profession. In other words, to set up "a condition of membership" which you do not enforce, is no better than a mere sham. In this I entirely agree with you. But you candidly acknowledge that there is a great deal of this sham in your own church. Thus you say, "in all the churches, not excepting our own, there is a departure from the true ground, in close communion." But if you mean that a sincere "profession of faith" in Christ as the atoning Saviour—a faith which works by love and purifies the heart," is a "mere sham" unless it includes a belief of the several thousand theological and ethical propositions contained in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, then I must regard your statement as rash in the extreme, and unauthorized either by Scripture or reason. Faith in Christ as a divine Mediator is far from a "mere sham."

2. Your second objection is that to admit to communion in the Lord's Supper, as Presbyterians do, persons who reject some of the truths of the Westminster Confession, but who, at the same time, give

evidence of saving faith—is “to take away, in a great measure, the distinction between truth and error.” You concede that this does not include “what are called essential truths, that are kept out of the common ground.” Your objection then amounts to this: “That for a church to admit to sealing ordinances a person giving scriptural evidence of saving faith, without requiring him also to profess a belief in all the non-essential truths, including 160 sections and several thousand doctrinal and ethical propositions, of the Confession and Catechisms, is equivalent to saying, “that it is alike to that church whether her members hold truth or error, especially on those non-essentials.” This, you add, “is unmistakably plain.”

But here appears again your erroneous definition of a creed. If a profession of all those non-essential truths were a scriptural “condition of membership,” then indeed we would be bound to maintain and enforce the belief of them. And to neglect this would be to put a slight upon those truths. But when we find the inspired record in the case of the eunuch and many others to be simply this: “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,” we take that record as our guide. If a person “believes,” *i. e.* if he give scriptural evidence of saving faith in Christ, as the eunuch did when Philip baptized him, though but a babe in Christ, we receive him; not because he has adopted the whole body of divinity, but that he may be a learner, a disciple in the school of Christ, and thus become acquainted with more and more of the great and precious doctrines of his word. We earnestly maintain that the whole system of Bible truth is very important, nay, essential to the highest style of Christian character; but not indispensable to a young beginner, a mere babe in Christ, in order to baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We constantly urge our peo-

ple to a diligent study of the Scriptures, in order to acquire the knowledge they impart.

In view of these explanations, how utterly groundless your assertion that our doctrine involves and gives its influence to the "pernicious sentiment," that "it matters not what a man believes, provided he is sincere and his practice is right"—which is about the same as to say, that "it matters not whether a man be doctrinally a Jew, Mohammedan, Christian or Pagan, provided he be sincere," &c. We disclaim the smallest approach to any such monstrous absurdity. The man who should avow it in our church, would be charitably considered *non compos*, or cast out of it.

3. Your third objection to our doctrine, viz: that the church may scripturally receive into membership persons who reject some of several thousand "truths taught in the formularies," takes this shape: "Its tendency," you say, "is to break down the discipline of the church." Of course you mean, "discipline for errors in the truths which are non-essentials to saving faith." We admit that our doctrine discourages ecclesiastical discipline by formal trial for such sins as many of those which are properly forbidden in our catechetical standards; for example, "speaking the truth unseasonably"—"thinking or speaking too highly, or too meanly of ourselves"—"fond admiration"—"undue delay of marriage"—"distracting cares indulged," &c., &c., &c., and hundreds of others of the same general character. The duties required in these extracts, your doctrine makes "terms of communion" equally with true repentance and saving faith; and of course, you are bound to discipline all offenders on these points, and to exclude them from communion. We think it a high recommendation of our doctrine, that it "breaks down such discipline." There is no more reason, moreover, in requiring a perfect system of

doctrinal belief of all intending communicants, though mere babes in Christ, than there is in demanding a perfect obedience in morals of all those who are intending to become members of the church.

4. Your fourth objection to our doctrine: "It takes away an incentive to know the truth." To give point to this objection, you represent our theory as teaching that "there are some truths taught in the Bible that the church may ignore, and allow error to be held instead of them." Of course you mean, "the church may allow error" on these "same truths," without, on account of these errors, rejecting the apparently pious applicant for baptism and the Lord's Supper, though but "a babe in Christ." Thus, for example, such Bible truths as these, viz: "A homer is the tenth part of an ephah." "The asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost," &c., &c., &c. These are "truths taught in the Bible," and if the intending communicant is discovered to be sound in the great fundamental doctrines of salvation by faith in Christ, repentance toward God, &c., and leads a serious, humble, moral life, we think it only right to give him time to acquire such truths as the foregoing and many others of like importance. We do not reject him on this account. To this extent, your charge of "tolerating error" has any weight as against our theory of admitting to sealing ordinances those who, in the judgment of charity, are truly pious. We admit your charge to be true thus far, that we esteem "this whole class of truths to be of little value," as you express it, if viewed as indispensable terms of communion." But we are far from setting a low valuation, when used for the proper objects, on any thing which a gracious God has seen proper to reveal in his blessed word. All Scripture is profitable, but not to be employed for all purposes.

5. Your fifth objection: The doctrine of catholic

communion "is a hindrance to ecclesiastical union." To this I reply, we concede that our doctrine of communion is one hindrance to our worthy friend, Dr. Sproull, and his Covenanter brethren, from uniting with Presbyterians. But whose fault is it? The solution depends upon the right answer to the previous inquiry, viz: "Which body is scripturally right; which has the mind of Christ on this topic?" Under this head you say, "The members of the church should neither be allowed to hold error, nor to hold communion in hearing the word preached by those whose creed contains error. Whatever truth the church holds should be enforced by discipline." Apply this extreme doctrine to "some such truths taught in the Bible," as are quoted in the foregoing paragraphs, and see to what it will lead. There is probably not a solitary member of any evangelical church in the world, who is so familiar with the Bible, Confession, and Catechisms, as not to hold some errors, or at least some ignorance, on some of the non-essential points, such as I have stated above. If Dr. Sproull himself were examined on all those historical and other points, we have no doubt he would betray many such errors.

6 Your sixth objection: "Catholic communion is opposed to the teachings of the Bible." Your proofs are these:

(1) "The church is called 'the pillar and ground of the truth.'" 1 Tim. 3: 15. But several of the apostles are called pillars, Gal. 2: 9. You are aware, too, that the commentators give at least three other renderings of this text, either of which, if correct, entirely destroys its applicability in this discussion. Some say the phrase "pillar and ground," refers to Timothy, others to God; and still others, to "the mystery of godliness" in the next verse, as "the pillar and ground of the truth." Scott says, "It merely implies that di-

vine truth is upheld, professed and maintained in the true church ;” or, as another expresses it, “She is called ‘the pillar of truth,’ because she holds forth the mind of Christ as a pillar does an edict or proclamation ; and the truths of God are published, supported and kept from sinking by her.” Now as to this, we have not the slightest disposition to dispute the point. The church, we firmly maintain, does all this and much more than this. So she is sometimes said to be “the depository of the sacred oracles of truth.” But does that prove that she must not receive even a “babe in Christ,” unless he profess the whole volume of inspired truth, both doctrinal and preceptive? If Paul had proceeded to say, “And no pious person who holds any error of any sort, different in any degree from this system of truth, can be received into the church,” the matter would have been settled. But Paul says no such thing. You add, “This designation, ‘pillar and ground,’ &c., is utterly inconsistent with the toleration of error in the church.” So it would be, if “toleration” meant approval ; but Walker will tell you that toleration means “allowance of that which is not approved.” You will not charge our doctrine with approving error.

(2) Your second proof text, ‘I beseech you that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,’ 1 Cor 1 : 10—Scott interprets thus, “That whilst it seems impossible to avoid all difference of opinion,” “the rule and exhortation must not be changed on that account.” “A general agreement on all the essential doctrines of the Gospel,” says another, “is all the apostle has in view” “and this would be attended, in proportion to their humility and diligence, with harmony in sentiment and affection.” Paul’s entreaties that the Corinthians would aim to attain this perfection, viz ; in “speaking the same thing,

so that there should be no divisions among them," in no manner or degree militates against our doctrine. So Peter exhorts "all to be holy, for God is holy."* But this does not prove that all, even young beginners, must be excluded from baptism and the supper, unless they have learned and profess the whole system of doctrine and morals taught in the Confession and Catechisms, so as to hold all their propositions without error or fault. The same strain of remark applies to your three next passages in proof: "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel." "Hold fast the form of sound words." "Earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." These are no doubt great and very important duties inculcated and impressed upon church members. And if Paul had used this language when treating of the qualifications required of all candidates for baptism and the Lord's Supper, they would have been directly in point. But no such thing is pretended. According to Scott the commentator, Paul, in exhorting the Corinthians to be "perfectly" joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," enjoins that which, in our fallen condition, is an impossibility, just as really as the perfect observance of the moral law. Now if this be so, it follows that, according to your use of the text, Paul required of those who were candidates for sealing ordinances, a total impossibility! Can this be true?

In direct contrast with your misapplication, as we regard it, of these texts, we oppose the express example of the eleven disciples at the first communion, with Christ at the head of the table. Those original communicants were without Christian baptism—had not certainly received the "baptism of John"—believed

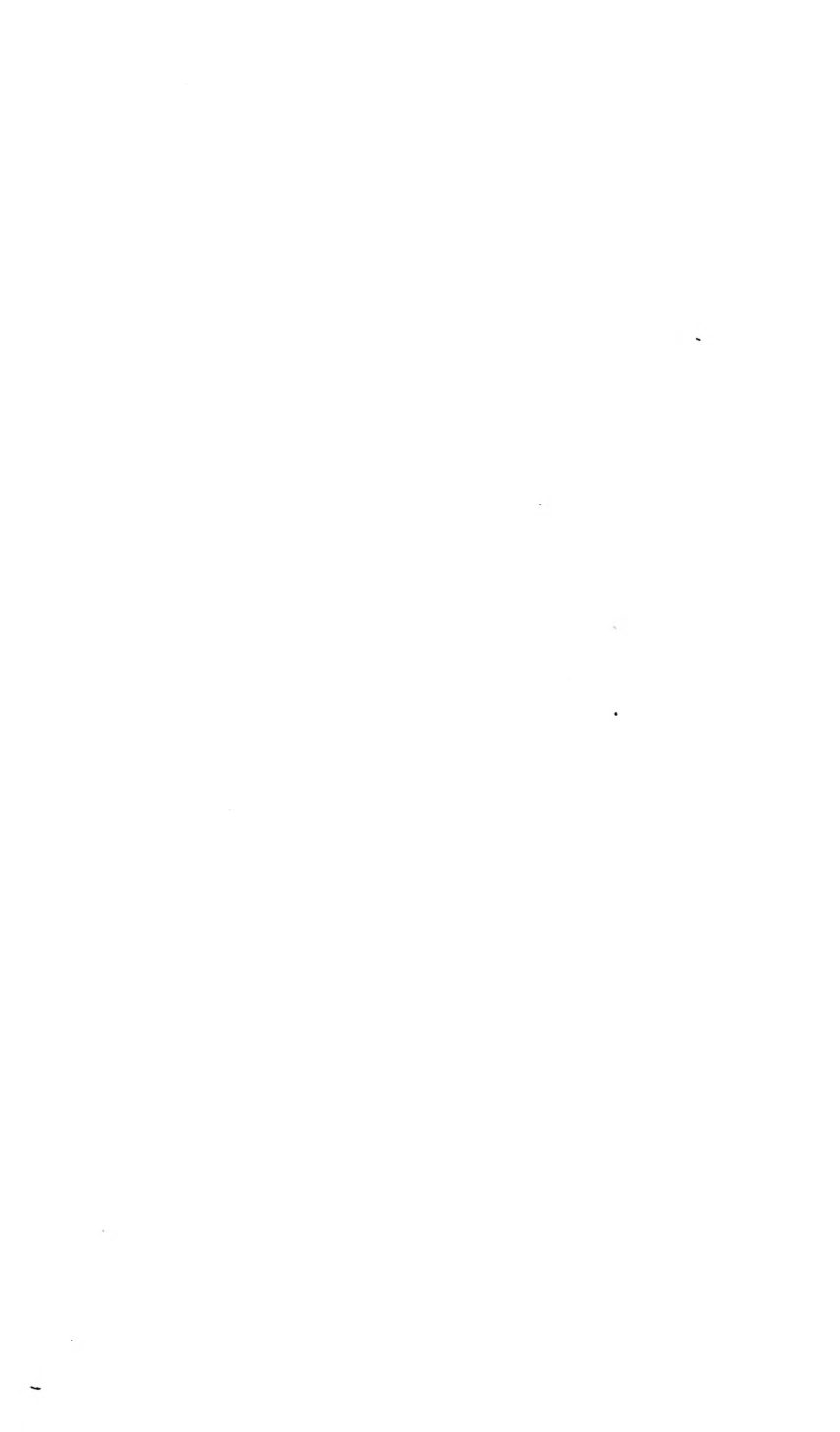
*Christ says, "Be ye perfect. even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5 : 48.

Christ to be a great temporal prince, his throne to be a literal throne, his kingdom to be a literal restoration of the golden age of David and Solomon, &c., &c. Again, we cite all such cases of baptism as that of the eunuch: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." "And Philip baptized him." So with the case of Cornelius (Acts 10), that of the jailor, of Lydia, &c. And even the case of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8), presents simply this record "Simon himself believed also, and when he was baptized," &c. Certainly in these instances there was nothing bearing even a distant resemblance to "a profession" of a creed containing one hundred and sixty sections of doctrinal and ethical truth, some thousands of catechetical propositions, and forty-seven pages of "testimony."

One word in conclusion, in regard to Dr. S.'s allegation, that we "have a fondness for controversy." Now if the Dr. alleges this as a *fault*, we beg him to remember that in this chapter we have only complied with his own request—"We should like to see a defence against our objections." If Dr. S. did not wish us to exercise our "fondness for controversy" in this direction, why did he make such a request? As to Dr. P. and his principles, as before said, we have only complied with the earnest "hope" expressed in the U. P. Testimony, viz: "that all Presbyterians may be brought seriously to consider the grounds of our (U. P.) controversy with those brethren from whom we are in a state of separation." *Testimony*, p. 46. In view of such earnest solicitations, why should we be reproached for simply complying with the wishes of the Doctors Pressly and Sproull?

In the language of the wisest of the fathers of the early church, we close:

"In necessariis unitas, in non-necessariis libertas, in omnibus charitas."





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