

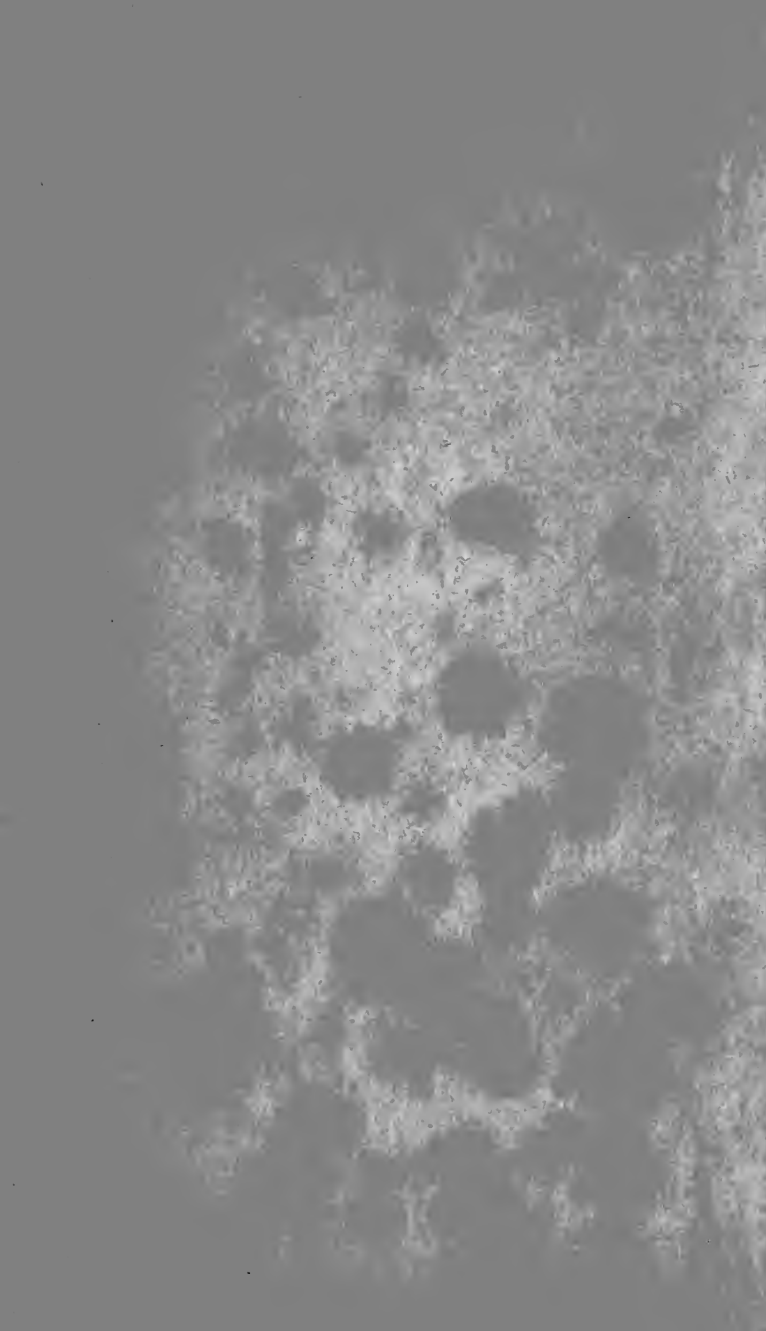


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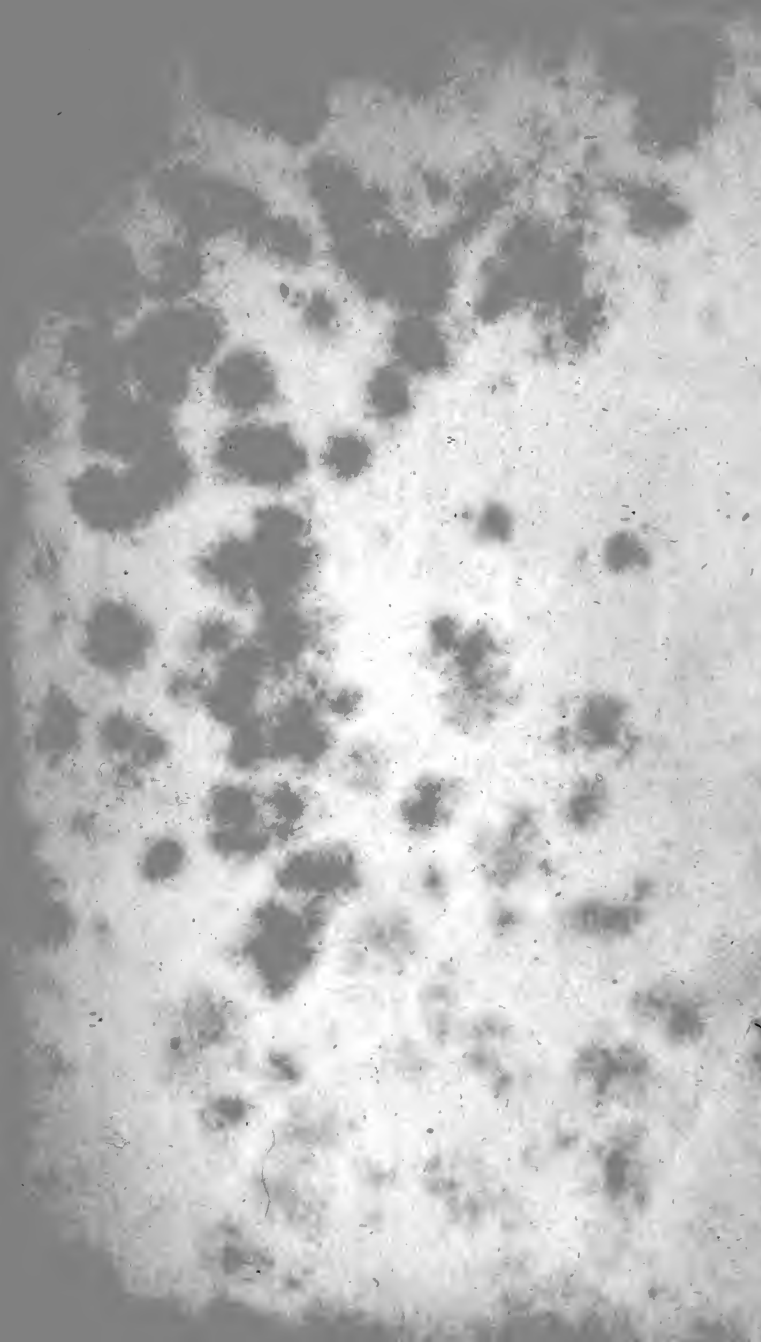
Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

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OPEN COMMUNION.

BY

REV. L. ROSSER, A.M.

The love of truth is natural to man, and strong in every well-disposed mind. But it may be overborne by party zeal, by vanity, by the desire of victory, or even by laziness. When it is superior to these, it is a manly virtue, and requires the exercise of industry, fortitude, self-denial, candor, and openness to conviction.

REID.

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PREFACE.

MEN'S opinions on matters that are non-essential are as various as their characters. Thus, subjects which appear to one mind self-evident and of indispensable importance appear to another surrounded with insuperable difficulties and of minor importance. Reasoning regarded by one mind as conclusive and irresistible is considered by another as defective, inconsistent, and unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, there are certain fundamental doctrines on which all evangelical churches agree; and any one who should deny these would be deemed by common consent an infidel or a heretic. The Baptists differ from other evangelical churches mainly on matters merely non-essential, and, as will be found in this treatise, concede to them all that is truly essential to salvation. They assume that baptism is indispensably prerequisite to sacramental communion, and that immersion is essential to baptism. Let it be carefully observed that in this treatise I have nothing to do with *infant baptism*, nor with the *mode* of baptism; for if baptism is not made in the Scriptures indispensably prerequisite to sacramental communion, it is clear

that the mode and subjects of baptism do not enter into the discussion. Whether therefore the Baptists are right or wrong as to the mode and subjects of baptism is immaterial. I hope to show that all true believers have a right to sacramental communion with all the evangelical churches in the world.

In the greater part of this treatise I have employed weapons furnished by the Baptists themselves; and particular attention is invited to the chapter on Baptist concessions. I have had no wish to invent new doctrines or go beyond the plain meaning and evident spirit of the Scriptures. I have had *special regard to the wants of the age*, and have endeavored to *adapt the treatment of the subject to the circumstances of the times*,—using no arguments I considered unfair, doubtful, or uncertain, governed not so much by their number as their force and sufficiency, and omitting, on the other hand, the consideration of no material argument for restricted communion that has fallen under my notice.

With a solemn conviction that “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil,” and with an humble confidence in his providence, I commit this volume to the public.

L. R.

NORFOLK CITY, VA., March 25, 1856.

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OPEN COMMUNION.

CHAPTER I.

ARGUMENT FOR OPEN COMMUNION FROM THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

THE chief argument for open communion may be drawn from the *spiritual* unity of the church, which consists principally in two things,—namely, a common faith and brotherly love.

1. A common faith. This is a rallying-point of union, and embraces a few great fundamental principles, which are always and everywhere the same, and are vital to evangelical religion. A sound common faith forms the *doctrinal* bond of union of all the churches of Christ over the whole world, in all time, and is the basis of their communion and reciprocation of brotherly love and enjoyment of Christian privileges. Every man that has saving faith has the seal of God on his heart, which is inconceivably of more importance than any association of outward splendor or visible unity can be. To him belongs the spirit and the truth, the promises and the graces, the privileges and the advantages, of the gospel, because he belongs to God. He is united in

soul to Christ, and to his spiritual church, in all the world, in all time, and in heaven; and so long as he holds this union he is inaccessible to all outward disturbing causes, and to death itself,—like the silent, moveless, deep bosom of the sea, that cannot be disquieted by the winds and waves that agitate its surface, or like the high, blue expanse of heaven, with its countless sparkling worlds, blending their pure radiance, revolving and unchangeable, in an eternal calm above the clouds and thunders and jostlings of the earth below. The mistakes, misunderstandings, controversies, and schisms of the visible church do not dissolve the bonds that bind him to the spiritual church, and cannot do it so long as his “life is hid with Christ in God.”

The spiritual church of Christ, consisting in the invisible association of all who are united by the bonds of true faith, is scattered through the world, and is anterior to the formal constitution of the visible church. And hence every member of the spiritual church, by virtue of his union with it, is already in spiritual union and communion with the visible church, and has a right to the sacraments of the visible church. No power on earth, civil or ecclesiastical, can invalidate this right, though, in any case, the privilege of receiving the sacraments be violently or conventionally denied. The question of antecedence in receiving the sacraments, as we shall see, is a mere conceit. The right to the Lord's Supper is not founded upon baptism, but upon a spiritual nature, for a spiritual nature is entitled to both sacraments equally, without involving any formal and necessary antecedence in the observance of them. It is usurpation to deny any true believer either baptism or the communion. It is also usurpation to deny a true believer the communion merely because he has not been baptized. The Baptists abhor the arrogance of those who assert that there are no true Christians in any *other* church *but* theirs: let the

Baptist Church, then, conform her regulations to the constitution of the Kingdom of God.

All true churches hold the same right to the sacraments,—namely, by the grant of the Lord Jesus Christ; and hence the members of one true church have the very same right to the table of the Lord as the members of all other true churches. No particular church can invalidate a right bestowed by Christ himself upon all true churches in common. What Christ has established for the common use of all his members is the common right of all.

It is the duty of all true churches to observe the sacraments; for no church can be a true church which wilfully omits the sacraments. What is lawful and commanded in one true church cannot be unlawful and forbidden in another true church, unless it be assumed that the same duty which is binding upon all true churches respectively cannot be discharged in one true church as well as in another,—which is absurd; or unless it be assumed that what is acceptable and honorable in the individual members of one true church is unacceptable and dishonorable when performed by them in another true church,—which is also absurd. Fundamental evangelical laws govern every true church; and no particular church can raise a valid exception to these laws. A mere subdivision of Christ's church, organized under certain conventional regulations, can never set aside or modify the authority of these general laws, or invalidate the character and rights of the members of any true church of Christ. The divine law requires the evidence of Christian character as a qualification for communion; and no particular church can demand more. To demand more is to corrupt the institutions of Christ and substitute the will of man for the authority of God.

The church of God, we repeat, is one, in all ages of time and in all parts of the world. “As the body is one, and hath

many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." (1 Cor. xii. 12-14.) Neither variety nor multitude is any impediment to unity where the life of Christ, the head of the church, pervades all, both individual members and individual churches. The Spirit of Christ, as the central source of life, is the same in all the churches of Christ, and consequently they have all an equal right to the sacraments of Christ; the claim of one to the sacraments can no more be invalidated than the claim of another,—the children of God all having the same right to a seat at his table, whenever and by whichsoever of his churches it may be spread; and no church of Christ can be denied admission to his table without grieving the Spirit of Christ, who presides in the church so rejected. It seems that some in the Corinthian church arrogated to themselves a peculiar pre-eminence and sanctity, because they were endued with superior gifts; and this vain-glorious temper the apostle severely reproveth, and demonstrates to be unreasonable and invasive of the unity of the church; since they were all *one* body and derived their gifts from the *same* Spirit. So, when the Baptists assume the exclusive right to administer the sacraments, by giving an undue importance to a peculiar form of baptism, they involve themselves in the very error which the apostle condemns. The evil which he wished to cure in the Corinthian church, and anticipate in all ages of the church, is a party feeling, which, wherever it exists, must disturb the unity and interrupt the intercommunion of the churches. He enjoins mutual co-operation, and remonstrates against a schismatic spirit: "that there be no schism in the body." He shows that the very

constitution of the church includes a communion of interests,—that individual members should cherish a sympathy of feeling toward each other,—and that they should practise a reciprocation of benefits: “that the members should have the same care one for another, and whether one member suffer, that all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.” (1 Cor. xii. 25–26.) How forcibly this illustrates the unity of the church, and exemplifies the intimate communion of all true believers, must appear to every impartial reader:—“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” (v. 27.) These certain and indisputable principles were not only particularly applicable to the Corinthian church, but they are *general*, and so are applicable to the vital relations which all true churches individually sustain to the unity of the whole church. For one church, therefore, to disown other churches, is to disown the members of Christ’s body and sever the bonds of Christian communion.

The apostle proceeds further with the argument. The nature of the Christian church is such that, provided its doctrines and institutions be substantially and practically maintained, non-essential diversity of opinions, habits, customs, manners, condition, and government should not disturb the unity of the church or prevent Christian communion. “By one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free,” &c. God is “no respecter of persons,” and Jesus Christ “tasted death for every man;” and he designs to gather his church from “all nations;” and, in accomplishing this merciful plan, non-essential, circumstantial matters weigh nothing in his judgment. Persecution, intolerance, bigotry, ecclesiastical establishments, and spiritual despotism may indeed prevent the visible communion of the churches, but they cannot destroy the right to it in a single case. And so any one

Christian church may so hedge itself about with requisitions as to prevent effectually other churches from communing with it; nevertheless, the right exists, and it is a very grave matter not to recognise it. Indeed, this repudiation is an unequivocal and practical condemnation of a right which God himself, by a thousand indubitable evidences, has accepted, sealed, and confirmed. Let our Baptist brethren suspend their prejudices for a time sufficient calmly and candidly to review their grounds of exclusiveness and consider the claims of other churches to all the privileges of the church of God, and, if they discover not that those claims are as clearly and strongly supported as their own, then in despair we must surrender the hope of sacramental communion with them, and be content to agree to disagree.

2. The second fundamental principle in the unity of the church is *brotherly love*.

“*Let brotherly love continue,*” is an injunction that originates in the nature of God, and is the law that binds his angelic and ransomed family together. Brotherly love is the principal proof of reconciliation and communion with God; for “we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” It is the safeguard of the church against hatred, envyings, strifes, clamors, jealousies, discords, malice, whisperings, backbitings, evil surmises, vain-glory, wranglings, schism, bigotry, proselytism, and every other ungracious temper and action which alienate and divide the church of God. It is the parent of gentleness, kindness, long-suffering, meekness, mercies, and the whole assemblage of personal and social graces. The very object of the doctrines, precepts, prayers, promises, example, tears, and death of Christ was to establish the empire of love among men. “For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. But God is love; and he that dwelleth

in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. He that loveth not knoweth not God. Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The violation of this holy affection is a practical renunciation of Christianity itself.

The most exalted grace of the Christian character, and the most convincing and admirable proof of the purity of a Christian denomination, is charity,—a grace that legitimately admits of no defect and is capable of no excess. All else is but semblance, self-righteousness, self-deception, and utter worthlessness in the sight of God. Knowledge that comprehends all languages and all mysteries, the gift of prophecy, faith that removes mountains, the virtue of alms-giving that exhausts the last earthly possession, zeal that glows even in the fires of martyrdom, all are nothing, and profit nothing, without this exalted heavenly grace. It would seem to be impossible for these religious appearances to exist separated from charity; but it is possible for humanity to be so affected by the knowledge and so improved by the initial grace of God as to produce these semblances of true religion, while the heart is under the control of a corrupt and rebellious will and destitute of the holy principle from which they should spring. Natural talents, unsupported by charity, may acquire and avow possession of these magnificent gifts. Ambitious, self-righteous persons, from the desire to gain renown, may subject themselves to the most painful exercises of self-denial and laborious works of formal piety; and they may even go self-deceived down to the grave and up to the judgment. Our Lord shows that many such evil characters do exist. "Many will say to me, in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" &c. His approval and blessing will be

granted to nothing but that which springs from his pure, unselfish love. This to man in this life is the only fully-convincing proof of the new creature; and the least evidence of a destitution of it is sufficient to excite the suspicion that a profession of religion is founded in deception or hypocrisy, or that he whose bosom may have been animated by its presence and expanded by its power has been transformed into the gloomy and disdainful bigot. It is the strong inward tendency and direction of regenerated real self toward God; it is the positive outpouring of the richest, tenderest regards to man. It is a celestial passion that destroys the depraved principle of isolation from God and his family, and which, so far from hindering in the least degree the communion of the churches, or invading their unity, exerts its whole energy in strengthening and perpetuating their fellowship to the last sigh, and glows with an ardor proportioned to "the love of God shed abroad in the heart." The body of Christ is one; and every member of this body, no matter to what evangelical church he belongs, has a divine right to spiritual union and formal communion with every other evangelical church; for he has a spiritual birthright under the everlasting covenant to all the privileges and provisions of that covenant. And consequently every evangelical church is placed under solemn obligation by divine authority to recognise this relation and right in every one who she believes "has received Christ Jesus the Lord, and is walking in him," and to extend to him cordially the tokens of this recognition by admitting him to sacramental communion. The denial of this right by any church is an assumption of power, an exercise of authority, which the gospel does not justify, founded on the conceit that there is no true church but herself, though she calls the rejected disciples of Christ "brethren beloved," "dear brethren," "precious saints," "children of God,"—

acknowledges their gifts and graces and rejoices in their successes,—all the while, no doubt, sincere, though it is rather an incongruous way of expressing sincerity and love. How they can fairly discriminate between the character of Christians, which they admit in others, and the consequent right of such to all the privileges of the church, which they deny they have, it is impossible to conceive, especially when other evangelical churches hold their right to all the blessings and privileges of the everlasting covenant by the same tenure,—that is, upon the same evangelical ground substantially on which they hold theirs. If such sects had existed in the days of the apostles, their arrogance would have been considered as a violation of the rule of brotherly love which united the apostolic churches in one common communion, and as an invasion of the social order and harmony of the Christian church.

Thus, all varieties of opinion and observance which do not subvert the foundation of evangelical faith, nor corrupt the substance of the common institutions of Christianity, nor impair brotherly love, do not prevent reciprocal communion among the churches of Christ. Difference in rites and customs in worship, which vary according to the diversity of place and people, but which do not infringe the peace and unity of the church, nor are contrary to the one faith and good morals, and have a tendency to promote religion and the glory of God among men, is no barrier to sacramental communion. The apostolic churches had not all exactly the same form of government; and it is evident from ecclesiastical history that the churches immediately succeeding the apostolic times gradually altered their government from the apostolic form in some places sooner than in others, and in some more than in others; and yet all this variety in opinion and in practice did not produce *separate communions*, nor burst the bonds of *common union*,

nor cut asunder the harmony of *brotherly love*. Rites and ceremonies change, but faith, the everlasting covenant, Christ, and his word, change not. Variety of church-governments, therefore, if they be not repugnant to the word of God, can never be a just ground for a separate communion; for true religion does not consist in external rites, ceremonies, or forms, but in spiritual benefits,—in righteousness, faith, love, joy, peace, and true worship. This rule is applicable in all ages of the church. Nor are differences in *subordinate points of doctrine* sufficient ground for separate communions. By subordinate doctrines are meant all that may be believed or doubted without sacrificing any fundamental principle or vital truth of evangelical religion. There is no necessity here for nice and subtle distinctions. The plainest mind can distinguish with sufficient accuracy what is essential for every experimental and practical end.

And so we infer by what the unity of the church may be broken. It may be broken by *schism*,—which is the rupture of *brotherly harmony*, and hence is a violation of unity and Christian fellowship; for love permits no schism, cherishes no faction, is the bond of union, does every thing in harmony, and is the source of evangelical reciprocity. But schism impedes the progress of the gospel, shakes the faith of some, causes others to apostatize, grieves the strong, weakens the power of the church, and merits the severest condemnation of God. The unity of the church may be broken also by *the renunciation of the fundamental faith*; for the very principle of the being of the church is her *faith*, and renunciation of any fundamental doctrine of Christianity is a blow at the very foundation of the church, for she is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together,

groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. ii. 20, 21.) That is, the revelation made by Christ and his inspired prophets and apostles is God's testimony concerning that "eternal life which he has given to us in his Son," and which is addressed to *the FAITH* of his church; and thus the church exists by faith, and faith alone. The denial of any capital article of the Christian faith is to mar the symmetry and destroy the unity of the church. And so also the visible unity of the church is broken by *withdrawing wholly from her communion*. A sect does this by setting up a *separate and restricted communion*; and this the Baptist Church, to some extent, has done. It is inconceivable how a part of the *one* church can be separated from her *one* visible communion and yet be a part of the *one* visible church, as it is inconceivable how a branch can be dissevered from a tree and yet be united to the tree, or a stream can be cut off from its source and yet be connected with its source. Union is the basis of communion. How then can particular churches, which are parts of one whole and constitute but one body, constitute separate and restricted communions, without invading the visible unity of the church? What paradox can be more palpable than that different parts of one whole, having the very same original and divine means of life, health, and vigor, should have no sacramental fellowship with each other, and should regard such fellowship as "unwholesome, unholy, and unlawful"? *Different communions exclude the idea of visible unity. Two churches, refusing communion with each other, thereby renounce their relation to each other as parts of the one visible church of Christ. The visible unity of the church cannot consist with such divisions. The church that disturbs this unity alone is culpable, and is culpable to the extent to which it renounces communion with other true churches of Christ.*

We also infer by what means the visible unity of the church may be preserved and promoted. It may be preserved and promoted by *an inflexible adherence to the one faith*. This is to be embraced and professed by all true churches the world over, and then there can be no *doctrinal* ground of difference. It may be preserved and promoted by *conforming to the customs and usages of worship* in any particular church in themselves not inconsistent with the plain word of God or clearly deducible therefrom. Forms of worship or of church-government that do not affect the *substance* of the *one* faith, nor disturb the peace of the church, but which tend to promote Christian fellowship, should not prevent the members of one branch of the church from communing with another branch of the church which they may happen to visit. Local or national peculiarities, or things indifferent, should not be permitted to clash with the terms of communion: certain rites and usages in worship, in themselves indifferent, and forms of ordination, and the form or mode of baptism, are matters of this kind. The visible unity of the church may be preserved and promoted by *respecting and supporting discipline*, by whatsoever true church administered. All the parts of the one true church are invested with equal authority to administer discipline according to the gospel; and hence a member justly expelled from any particular church is expelled from the one church of Christ, and other particular churches should so regard the expelled member. The sentence of one court of Christ's kingdom is to be held valid and sacred by every other. Not to do this is to reject the ministry and ordinances of Christ. One church of Christ can never innocently interfere with the judicial acts of another, or release from censure or condemnation each other's offenders. Thus they declare their social union, impart mutual strength, and maintain the dignity and purity of the church of God.

The visible unity of the church is further preserved and promoted by *ministerial and Christian communion with one another* as opportunity offers. Ministers and private Christians in good standing in other churches, and of irreproachable lives, should be received into communion by one church as fully and cheerfully as she receives her own. And ministers and private members of one church should as solemnly feel it to be their duty, and make it their practice, to commune with other true churches the world over, as occasion offers, as with their own; for the obligation to obey God is the same in all his churches. The *one* church of Christ, scattered over the whole earth, should have but *one* communion. And he, whether minister or private member, who is in communion with one part of the church of God is in communion with every other part of it, and should be so acknowledged and received by every other part of it. Not to do this "is to make new boundaries of Christian communion, and a new Christianity, and a *new gospel*, and new rules of Christ's kingdom; and in effect to dethrone him, to rival him in his highest prerogative,—viz. : the establishing the terms of life and death for men living under his gospel. It is to confine salvation, in the means, to such or such a party, such a church, arbitrarily distinguished from the rest of Christians,—as if the privileges of his kingdom belonged to a party only; and that, for instance, the Lord's table were to lose its name, and be no longer so called, but the table of this or that church, constituted by *rules of their own devising*. For, if it be the Lord's table, they are to keep it free, to be approached upon the Lord's terms and not their own. In the mean time, what higher invasion can there be of Christ's rights? And since the Christian church became so over-wise above what is written, in framing new doctrines and rules of worship,

how miserably it hath languished and been torn in pieces they cannot be ignorant who have read any thing of the history of it.”*

A church that refuses to hold communion with any other assumes at least that she alone is pure, and that the rest are too corrupt to commune with her. Before a church takes this lofty position, she should be *certain* that offences are not concealed in her own bosom; that she does not connive at abuses in her own members; that her rites, ceremonies, usages, forms, modes, opinions, doctrines, practices, *only* are scriptural; that she *only* is pure and spotless; that *she only is the true church, and the whole church, of God on earth*. Otherwise she runs the extreme hazard of offending against the visible unity of the church of God, and so of violating the commands of Christ to cultivate that unity. No *separate and exclusive* communion can be acquitted from serious imputation. The learning, talent, piety, extensive usefulness, charity, and convincing evidences of God’s sanction and support of other churches must greatly enhance the imputation. Such an assumption in any church is, in effect, to unchurch other churches, and to declare that they are no churches, and that their ministers and members are not the ministers and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, or that they are so corrupt as to render communion with them *unlawful*. This is the spirit of bigotry without disguise and the spirit of excommunication in disguise,—wanting nothing but the form and power to constitute the sect which it governs an excommunicating church,—a conclusion from which the pious heart, in these palmy days of tolerance and charity, recoils with fear and horror. In this virtual denial of the visible Christianity

* Howe’s Works: Sermon entitled “Peace, God’s blessing.”

of other churches, in this refusal to commune with other churches, in this virtual unchurching and excommunicating all other churches, we may acquit the Baptist Church of *intention*; but such is the consequence of her *arguments* and the tendency of her *practice* as far as it goes; for, in excluding other churches and Christians from communing with her, what more does she deny to them than to the infidel, the profane, the profligate, the heretic, and the idolater? The Baptist Church, in denying the visible Christianity of other churches, or—which is the same thing—in withholding the communion from and refusing to commune with them, virtually assumes to be the only true church of Christ on earth, and so virtually inflicts excommunication—the heaviest penalty in the kingdom of God—upon all the rest, which, we joyfully believe, will not be ratified in heaven. Though the Baptists, in denying us the holy communion, treat us as open unbelievers, we hope our reasons for receiving it at other hands will be found valid, and ourselves acquitted at the tribunal of God. And we may remind the Baptists that they should review their ground as those “who shall give account.” They cheerfully receive into their fold, whenever occasion offers, and admit to communion, the fruits of our ministry; and in this they have received from us no small accession to their number and strength. It seems that consistency and justice require that they reciprocate this Christian service at the table of the Lord, where so many of the signs of our ministry and Christian integrity are recognised as the children of God and true members of the “household of faith.” That the mere *mode* of baptism (immersion) should give these converts a title which their spiritual fathers do not possess, is, in fact, an argument that sacrifices the *substance* to the *sign*, and constructs a *separate communion* upon the destruction of the visible unity of the

very church from which the Baptists derive so much of their strength. May the flimsy sophism speedily yield to the common sense of America as it is yielding in England and Canada!

CHAPTER II.

REPLY TO THE ARGUMENT THAT BAPTISM IS PREREQUISITE TO SACRAMENTAL COMMUNION.

THE Baptists assume *that baptism is indispensably prerequisite to the Lord's table*, and their argument is the following:—No one has a right to the Lord's table who is not a member of the visible church. No one is a member of the visible church who has not been baptized,—that is, immersed. Therefore, no one has a right to the Lord's table who has not been immersed. This argument they endeavor to sustain, first, by the commission of Christ to his apostles, and, secondly, by the practice of the apostles. That is, they deduce from the commission of Christ, and the practice of the apostles, such a dependence of the sacraments upon each other as renders baptism indispensably prerequisite to the Lord's table. This is their whole argument for *close communion*.

The proofs on which the Baptists mainly depend for separate communion are thus stated:—"It is to the commission—the law itself—that we refer you as the authority on which our practice is founded."* "While we appeal to our Lord's commission as our primary authority, we consider the example of the apostles as an important auxiliary, both

* Fuller on Communion, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 238.

as an inspired explanation of the law and a pattern of obedience evidently intended for our imitation."* Here the Baptists take their stand. When driven from every other position, they halt in these last entrenchments, and, though stormed and levelled to the ground, they vainly and repeatedly endeavor to rebuild and repossess them. The argument against the Baptists on this point is invincible.

1. That faith in an unbaptized adult should precede baptism there can be no doubt. This the great commission settles. That this is the law of adult *baptism* we are all agreed. But this is not the question. The true question is, Is baptism indispensably prerequisite to sacramental communion? On this particular point *not one word is found in the great commission*; and hence an invariable order in the observance of the sacraments cannot be founded upon the great commission. If it can be shown that sacramental communion in all cases depends upon baptism, as it can be that sacramental communion depends upon faith, we give up the cause. Or if it can be shown that sacramental communion depends upon baptism, as it can be that an unbaptized person should believe before he should be baptized, we give up the cause. Circumcision, it is true, under the Jewish dispensation was indispensably prerequisite to the Passover, because it is expressly stated, "No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof." But it is nowhere stated in the New Testament, No unbaptized person shall partake of the Lord's Supper; and Mr. Fuller admits that it is "nowhere, certainly,"† so stated. The Baptists have a very convenient way of arguing from the supposed order in which things occurred in apostolic days when it suits their case, but never otherwise. The mere fact, in some cases,

* Fuller on Communion, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 246.

† Ibid. p. 239.

that baptism succeeded the profession of faith, is no proof that this was always the case. We can argue nothing from the *external order* which the apostles pursued, unless they expressly and plainly enjoined that order as an invariable standard for the church in all ages. *This they have not done in one single particular.* If Christ and his apostles had expressly and plainly enjoined that baptism should in all cases precede sacramental communion, controversy would be at an end. But nowhere can this injunction be found in the Bible; and therefore the question in this case cannot be settled by the commission of Christ or the *practice* of the apostles, as in other cases—admitted on all hands—the church has since very properly varied from the practice of the apostles.

The reason why baptism ordinarily preceded sacramental communion and every other church-service in the apostles' days is found in the *circumstances of the times*, and not in any essential relation which the two sacraments hold to each other. In their day, ordinarily, *immediately* upon the profession of faith it is probable the subject was baptized, and hence no period elapsed in which the believer might observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper or any other institution of Christianity. It is not so now; it is not probable that it was always so in apostolic times. Now often necessarily a considerable length of time intervenes between conversion and baptism; and during this time no positive duty (and sacramental communion is such a duty) should be neglected. That is, in the enactment of positive laws, *the time* of their enactment cannot give precedence to one over another in the mere order of their observance, for all are equally binding, and each is to be obeyed as opportunity offers; so that a law enacted thousands of years ago should be obeyed repeatedly before one enacted yesterday can be obeyed for the first time. For example:—the Sabbath was

instituted at the creation, and it may be observed often, after faith, before an opportunity occurs to be baptized; or one may be baptized, or he may partake of the sacred supper, *before* he for the first time *properly* observes the Sabbath, though baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted thousands of years *after* the institution of the Sabbath. Unless *antecedence* in the observance of laws and ordinances is positively and expressly enjoined, it cannot be required as a matter of invariable duty. Mr. Hall has laid down this principle in the most forcible manner. "In the details of civil life, no man thinks of regulating his actions by an appeal to the respective dates of existing laws, but solely by a regard to their just interpretation; and, were it once admitted as a maxim that the particular law latest enacted must invariably be last obeyed, the affairs of mankind would fall into utter confusion. It is a principle as repugnant to the nature of divine as it is to human legislation. It appears from the history of the patriarchs that sacrificial rites were ordained much earlier than circumcision; but no sooner was the latter enjoined than it demanded the earliest attention, and the offerings prescribed on the birth of a child did not precede, but were subsequent to, the ceremony of circumcision."* Mr. Fuller employs a sophism in reply to this. He assumes that baptism and the Lord's Supper are to be "*observed in a certain order,*" and appeals to the great "commission" as proof;† whereas the *Lord's Supper is not even mentioned* in the great commission, *much less* enjoined as an observance invariably to succeed baptism.

The statements of Dr. Howell on this branch of the argument admit of easy refutation. "That the order in which the several duties are enjoined in the commission is

* Hall's Works, vol. i. pp. 367, 368.

† Fuller on Strict and Mixed Communion, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 238.

divinely prescribed is thus conclusively established by the commission itself.”* Not one word respecting the Lord’s Supper is contained in the commission: how, then, can the order of its observance be “*prescribed*” in the commission? If the duty of observing that ordinance had not been prescribed elsewhere in the Bible, the church would have felt no obligation to observe it at all; and, consequently, the commission enjoins no order but what may be prescribed elsewhere, and nowhere in the Bible is the necessary dependence of communion upon baptism specified. We reiterate the call for the proof, and reiterate in vain. A brief consideration, however, of his argument from “the design of the two institutions” may amuse the reader:—“Baptism being the emblem of the reception of life, and the eucharist of the food by which we are sustained, the metaphorical representation requires that baptism should always be received as a condition of communion, since we must necessarily live before we are capable of receiving the food by which life is supported.”† If this argument be sound, then baptism is the necessary condition of spiritual life,—that is, we must be baptized “before we are capable of receiving the food by which life is supported;” which is not only the *ex opere operatum* dogma of heretical Rome, but is refuted, as we shall see, by the concessions of the Baptists. Besides, as “the eucharist is the emblem of the food by which we are sustained,” it must be admitted that the relation of the emblem to the substance is such that he who possesses the substance is entitled to the emblem; or we must assume the absurdity that the relation of the emblem to the substance is merely nominal and immaterial. If the eucharist were an emblem of baptism, then there would be a necessity that baptism—the substance—should

* Howell on Communion, p. 42.

† Ibid. p. 47.

precede the eucharist. But this is not pretended; and hence, as there is no necessary dependence of one emblem upon another, we can only conclude that he has a right to an emblem who possesses the substance with which that emblem is associated. That pious Pedobaptists have the substance signified by the Lord's Supper the Baptists themselves admit; and we need go no further to establish the right of the former to the Lord's Supper.

2. There is nothing in the *nature* of the sacraments that should render the reception of baptism prior to that of the Lord's Supper. If baptism was instituted for the remission of sins, (as the Campbellites maintain,)—if baptism were necessary to regeneration, (as the Puseyites and Roman Catholics maintain,)—then there would be strong reason why baptism should have priority in order. But these dogmas both the Baptists and evangelical Pedobaptists reject with abhorrence. But faith is the only condition of remission of sins and regeneration, and there is no reason why the believer should invariably receive one of the sacraments before the other. Each of the sacraments has its own nature and design, and should be received at the earliest convenience, without regard to priority in order. If we must follow strictly the apostolic practice, then, as the apostles ordinarily did, the Baptists must baptize in the "day" and "the hour" their converts believe. But this they fail to do; and, while they are delaying to administer baptism, shall their converts be refused sacramental communion?

Consider a moment the nature and benefits of the Lord's Supper. Its nature: it is a sacrament or oath of a most solemn nature, denoting affection, zeal, and inviolable fidelity to Jesus Christ. It is called the *Lord's Supper*, because it was instituted in the evening by him, at the close of the Jewish passover; because he partook of it with his

disciples; and because it sets forth the bread of life which we receive by faith. It is called the *communion*, because therein we have communion with Christ and his people. It is called the *eucharist*, because at the institution of it Christ gave thanks, and we, in receiving it, also give thanks. It is *commemorative*, because in observing it we remember the person, love, and death of Christ. In it we *confess* our sins and wants. In it we *profess* our faith in Christ, our love for him, and our hope of his coming again. It is a *standing* ordinance, to be observed by the church till the end of time. Its benefits: it is a means of strengthening faith. It affords consolation. It increases love and joy. It instructs in spiritual things. It produces aversion to sin and grief for sin. It excites and strengthens all holy desires and resolutions. It revives the liveliest sense of obligation to Christ. It binds all Christians in the tenderest bonds of a holy brotherhood. All these blessings flow sweetly from a proper observance of the sacred supper; and should any true believer be denied them?

To consider more at large the nature and use of the sacraments, and to whom they are to be administered. First,—they are signs and seals of the everlasting covenant of grace. Hence, all believers, everywhere and in all time, having the *thing signified*, have an equal right to the *sign*. Secondly,—the sacraments represent Christ and his benefits. Hence, all believers, being spiritual partakers of Christ and his benefits, have a right to those ordinances that sacramentally confirm their interest in him. Thirdly,—the sacraments visibly set forth the difference between those that belong to the spiritual church and the rest of mankind. Hence, all believers have a right to this badge of discrimination; and, consequently, any particular church that refuses to distinguish true believers from the world corrupts the very substance of the sacraments. Fourthly,—the

sacraments solemnly bind all true believers to the service of Christ according to his word. Hence, no true believer can innocently omit wilfully the sacramental oaths, and consequently no particular church can innocently exclude from communion true believers of another particular church. Fifthly,—where there is identity in internal principle, it is puerile to insist on difference in form as a ground for a *separate communion*. The internal principle of baptism is the same in the judgment of the Baptist and evangelical Pedobaptist churches, and hence the mere mode or form of baptism cannot be a just ground for a separate and restricted communion in the Baptist Church. As soon as we lose sight of internal principle we lose sight of land, and the harmony of the visible church is broken. It is the internal principle that invests the form or mode with value and impressiveness; and thus any mode of baptism, in itself not repulsive or inappropriate, is invested with the sanctity of religion, and excites in the subject or beholder reverence for the Author of the internal principle. While the evangelical Pedobaptist churches have the substance of Christian baptism, and repose on the solid and precious foundation, the Rock of ages, no argument can set aside their right to sacramental communion. Sixthly,—the question in controversy is not about the *substance*, the vital principles and virtues of the gospel, which constitute the transcendent glory of the church, and which are the seal of God's eternal Spirit, but about *accidents, mere forms, peculiarities, and imperfections*, which neither destroy the unity nor being of the church nor impede her efficiency in the world. The lawfulness of sacramental communion reposes on the footing of the *common faith*, and grows out of *doctrine*, and not out of external and non-essential *circumstances*. The communion of Christ embraces all his visible members. All believers have a spiritual fellowship with Christ and each

other, and their external distance and repellent divisions are inconsistent with this union, are founded upon principles and causes not contained in the gospel, and are such as can never be a substitute for the visible fellowship which the ordinances of the gospel are designed to display.

The sacraments are not *party-ordinances*,—the secret watch-words, signs, or badges of a particular *sect*; nor are they the oaths of any secret fraternity. They have in them no sectarian mark or quality, nor can they without sacrilege be transferred to any sectarian temple whatever. The holy table is the badge of no party but the whole church of God. At this table all who “know his name and put their trust in him” unite in homage and fealty to Him who “loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood.” Here Christians of every name put off the *sectarian* and say to each other, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God.”

The test of Christian union involved in sacramental communion has greatly annoyed the Baptists; and, to break the edge of this argument for open communion, Dr. Howell denies that such a test is contained in the design of the Lord's Supper. “That sitting down with them [communicants] at the Lord's table should be considered as the criterion of our love to individuals or to any Christian community does not appear from the word of God. It is a memorial of God's love to us, and of Immanuel's death for us, in memory of whom it is received.”* This argument, he admits, he borrows from Booth. A sufficient answer to this is, sacramental communion, in the nature of things, is a test—the most solemn and impressive test, though not the only test—of Christian union and brotherly love. If it is not, among other things, a formal and solemn indication of

* Terms of Communion, p. 105.

the union of all the children of God, what is? The death of Christ is the common source of all the privileges, blessings, and hopes of Christians in time and eternity; and, while it is true that sacramental communion is primarily a commemoration of God's love for us, it is also true that the love for his people, which we derive by faith in the death commemorated, is vindicated. The very idea of *communion* demonstrates this. How did it happen that the word ever came into use? Why has the doctor written a treatise on "sacramental communion"? Would the doctor admit any one to the communion who he had sufficient reason to believe was destitute of *brotherly* love? Do not pious Baptists, every time they surround the Lord's table, feel and indicate a love for each other? Would not the exclusion of one believed to be holy indicate the want of love for him? The eucharist is called "the Lord's table" and "the Lord's Supper," and the idea of *a table* and *a supper* involves social love, which in the Christian sense is but another term for Christian union and brotherly love. Singing and prayer have immediate reference to God and indicate our love for him and confidence in him; but do they not also indicate our love for one another? Baptism has immediate reference to our relation to God and his relation to us; but does it not also indicate our relation to each other as members of the same body? But the doctor himself, in another place, asserts all for which we contend. "Baptism, preaching, singing, prayer, and every other department of religious worship, are no less forms of communion than the sacrament in question, and a united participation in them [is] equally expressive of *Christian fellowship*."* Surely that cause which requires a serious abridgment of the import of the eucharist for its support must occupy a slender foundation,

* Terms of Communion, p. 115.

especially when one of its warmest advocates, by a single concession, overturns the superstructure. Besides, Professor Curtis (a Baptist writer to whom we shall refer again) entertains the proper view on this point, and is opposed to Mr. Booth and Dr. Howell. "It [the Lord's Supper] is not only committed to their care, but is to be administered among them as a symbol among other things of that fraternity which they bear to each other as such. Other things are no doubt signified also, but this none the less."*

3. If baptism be indispensably prerequisite to the discharge of the Christian duty of sacramental communion, then it is indispensably prerequisite also to the discharge of every other Christian duty. That is, a Christian must neglect every Christian duty till he is immersed. We are not to pray, nor engage in the praise of God, nor read his word, nor hear it preached, nor observe the Sabbath, nor exercise self-denial, nor perform acts of benevolence, nor do good of any sort or in any form; nothing of the sort is to be done till we are baptized or immersed! A dead pause in the discharge of religious obligations must intervene between faith and baptism, no matter how long the interval is! This cannot be true. Very well: why should the duty of sacramental communion *only* be made to depend upon the antecedent reception of baptism, especially when no such thing is enjoined as an exception in the Bible? In other words, does baptism specifically refer to the observance of the Lord's Supper any more than to the discharge of any other Christian duty? In receiving the Lord's Supper the communicant does not indicate that he has been *immersed*. There is nothing in the Lord's Supper that signifies the antecedence of baptism in any form; nothing that holds the relation of one duty *necessarily subsequent* to another duty;

* Progress of Baptist Principles, pp. 303, 307.

nothing requiring an invariable order in discharging Christian duties. The premises therefore involve too much, and so fall by their own weight.

4. But this position of the Baptists—a prescribed and invariable observance of commands according to the chronological order of their enactment—is refuted by their own conduct. Prayer, praise, and preaching were instituted before baptism: and yet the Baptists themselves unite with Pedobaptists in these services when opportunity offers, which, on their own showing, is a violation of the rule. And if they feel justified in violating their own rule,—as they undoubtedly are justified,—why not carry their *practice* through, and unite with their Pedobaptist brethren at the Lord's table? Or why not carry their *rule* out in all its applications, and decline communion with all other churches in prayer and praise and preaching, which, Mr. Fuller admits, “were duties *before* the formation of a single Christian church, and would have been duties to the end of time had no such institution existed”?* And Mr. Fuller even affirms, “In uniting with Pedobaptists in prayer and praise, and preaching the gospel, and acts of benevolence, we cultivate such a union as evidently is our *duty*.”† But prayer and praise and preaching were instituted before the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ordained: therefore, it is the *duty* of the Baptists to unite with Pedobaptists in sacramental communion,—Mr. Fuller being judge.

5. The nature of faith is opposed to this imagined invariable order. Faith gives a title to both baptism and the Lord's Supper: how then can baptism give a title to the Lord's Supper, when the right is already included in faith? or why should the Baptists make one sacrament prerequisite to the other, when the title to both is included in faith?

* Fuller on Communion, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 243.

† Ibid. p. 243.

The sacraments are signs and seals that belong to one and the same person. How then can one sign be made conditional of the other, when the believer has already a right to both signs? There is no more reason why baptism should precede the Lord's Supper than the Lord's Supper should precede baptism; and man has no right to determine arbitrarily which should have antecedence. One does not depend on the other, but both on faith and a spiritual nature.

The Romish and the Baptist Churches make baptism indispensable to communion, but for a different reason,—the one maintaining that regeneration accompanies baptism, and the other that God has so commanded. If the Romish opinion of the efficacy of baptism were right, then there would be a reason why baptism should be required in order to the Lord's Supper; but, as the reason supposed does not exist, the Romish view must be rejected. If the Baptist view of the connection of the two sacraments be correct, there must be some reason for it, and none is offered but the assumption of a positive divine command; but we call in vain for such a command, and the presumption is that no such connection exists in the nature of things, since the believer, without baptism, is qualified spiritually to observe the communion; or, if such connection does exist, the presumption is that pious Pedobaptists have been properly baptized, and the Baptists are wrong in the dogma of exclusive immersion, for pious Pedobaptists are spiritually entitled and spiritually qualified to partake of the communion.

6. But the fact in the case is against the position of the Baptists, and we only refer to the fact to set aside their position, and not as the ground of a rule for the invariable practice of the church. The fact is, the Lord's Supper was instituted *before* baptism. It was instituted by Christ *before* his death; baptism was instituted *after* his death. The only reply to this is, that John's baptism was Christian

baptism, and therefore Christian baptism was instituted before the Lord's Supper. But the Baptists have been so often completely routed on this field, and especially by their own elegant and accomplished Hall, that we need not stop long to review the ground.

We observe that when a dispensation ended its seal ended with it. The Jewish dispensation was *preparatory* to the Christian, and it had its outward seal,—circumcision; John's dispensation was blended with the Jewish, without the abolition of any of its rights and ceremonies, and thus it became also *preparatory* to the Christian dispensation and had its characteristic seal. Now, when the mixed dispensation of Moses and John ended, as it did on the death of Christ, *both circumcision and John's baptism ended with it*, and all that was retained by Christ of John's baptism was, not its form and meaning, but the element of *water*, with the application of which Christ connected a new form and a new meaning. John's baptism was no more Christian baptism than circumcision was a Christian sacrament. And therefore the Lord's Supper was instituted before Christian baptism, since the former was instituted *before*, and the latter *after*, the death of Christ.

Besides, if John's baptism was Christian baptism, it is singular that the Lord's Supper was not instituted sooner, since it was not instituted till *three years* at least after John commenced baptizing. What a state of things for the *Christian church*,—*three years* with but *one* sacrament! Three years in the visible church of Christ before admitted to sacramental communion! Three years in the visible Christian church before its foundation—the death of Christ—was laid!

Moreover, John's baptism is spoken of as something different from Christian baptism. Matthew, Mark, and Luke speak of it as “the baptism of John,” “the baptism of

repentance," "the baptism of water;" Peter calls it "the baptism which John preached;" Paul calls it the "baptism of repentance;" and Paul caused several of John's disciples to be *rebaptized*. Two institutions thus represented as different cannot be the same.

Again, if John's baptism was Christian baptism, by the same reasoning the Jewish passover was the Lord's Supper, for John celebrated the passover as well as administered baptism. But as the passover was different from the Lord's Supper, so was John's baptism different from Christian baptism. And so, as the Lord's Supper is to be dated from its first celebration by our Lord, Christian baptism is to be dated from the commission given by our Lord after his resurrection. Thus, the Lord's Supper was instituted *before* Christian baptism, which subverts the foundation on which the Baptists rear the whole superstructure of their argument for close communion.

But this is not all. The twelve apostles had not received Christian baptism when they partook of the last supper with Christ. These at least were without Christian baptism, and Christ himself admitted them to his sacred supper. And what are we to say of the "seventy disciples," of whom the Baptists boast so much? We hear not a word of their rebaptism, and certainly they were admitted to the Lord's table by the apostles. Besides, the Baptists assume that these "seventy disciples" aided the apostles in baptizing the "three thousand" on the day of Pentecost; and thus they attempt to remove a difficulty to immersion. But they extricate themselves from one difficulty but to be involved in another; for how could these "seventy" baptize others when they were not baptized themselves? And then there are the "five hundred brethren" of whom Paul speaks: we hear not a word of their rebaptism. They were "brethren," and consequently

belonged to the apostolic or Christian church, and therefore were admitted to the Lord's Supper without Christian baptism. Now, here are facts directly in opposition to the opinion that baptism is indispensably prerequisite to sacramental communion; and they are facts that occurred under the eye of Christ and his apostles.

But we proceed further. If John's baptism was Christian baptism, then the Baptists do wrong in requiring repentance and faith *before* baptism, for John's baptism *preceded* repentance and faith. Let the Baptists abandon the false idea of John's baptism, or renounce the true doctrine of Christian baptism. They must either grant that the Lord's Supper was instituted before Christian baptism, or they must invert the order of their indispensable prerequisites to the Lord's Supper and make them *baptism*, repentance, and faith: in the former case they relinquish the invariable order they require in the administration of the sacraments; in the latter they overturn their church as evangelical. Again: if John's baptism was Christian baptism, and John's baptism was required *before* repentance and faith, then the apostles were baptized (if they were baptized at all) *before* they repented and believed. Why, then, if John's baptism and Christian baptism are the same, did they *invert* the order, and teach repentance and faith in adults *before* baptism? Besides, if the modifications made by Christ in John's baptism did not change it into Christian baptism so as to make it a new and distinct sign and seal, then the modifications made by Christ in the Jewish passover did not change its nature and meaning so as to make it a new and distinct Christian sacrament; and, therefore, the Lord's Supper being identical with the Jewish passover, the Lord's Supper was instituted *long before* Christian baptism, for it was instituted by Moses in the wilderness long before John's baptism was instituted. Moreover, if John's

baptism was Christian baptism, why did Christ strictly charge his disciples before his ascension to tell no man that he was the Christ? This caution was absurd if John and Christ's disciples disclosed this great secret every time they baptized. Finally: if John's baptism was Christian baptism, then all who received Christ under John's dispensation rejected him under the Christian dispensation,—that is, became *apostates*. But, in the first place, "he came unto his own, and his own received him not." And, in the second place, neither the prophets make the remotest allusion to this apostasy, nor do the apostles remind the Jews of their baptismal vows assumed under John's dispensation, "and of their unspeakable impiety in crucifying the divine person to whom they had previously dedicated themselves in solemn rites of religion."* And Mr. Hall observes, "Since it is manifest that the baptism of John did not supersede the Christian ordinance, they being perfectly distinct, it is natural to inquire, Who baptized the apostles and the hundred and twenty disciples assembled with them at the day of Pentecost? My deliberate opinion is that, in the Christian sense of the term, they were not baptized at all."†

In replying to the argument on this topic, Dr. Howell furnishes an example of how much truth may be sacrificed in support of error. Says he, "If it was *not* John's, then it was certainly the Christian baptism; if it *was* John's baptism, then John's baptism issued from the *personal authority* of Christ. In either case Christian baptism was administered before the death of Christ, was an institution prior to the eucharist, and had been received by all who were admitted to the Lord's Supper."‡ That "John received

* Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 388.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 303.

‡ Howell on Communion, p. 74.

his commission from *Jesus in person*," the doctor affirms, "no one contends."* How then? Why, because "Christ is *God*," and as such is "head of the church,"† therefore John's baptism "issued from the *personal authority* of Christ." Very well: then the Mosaic dispensation, with all its rites and ceremonies, was the *Christian* dispensation, because it issued from the personal authority of Christ as God and as the head of the church. But Christ abolished by his death the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation: therefore he abolished *Christian* rites and ceremonies by his death! The radical and fatal defect in the doctor's premises is the total want of discrimination between the different dispensations of the covenant of salvation, all of which issued from the personal authority of Christ as *God*. And thus as the Mosaic was different from the Christian dispensation, so John's was different from the Christian baptism. Had John received his commission from Christ in person, it would not have necessarily followed from this fact that his baptism was Christian baptism, unless Christ had specified it as such; but since he did not so specify it, and as, from the reasons already given, it is seen to be different in several essential particulars from Christian baptism, the premises of the doctor must be abandoned as wholly untenable. No truth is more evident than that a common origin of laws and institutes does not necessarily constitute them the same. They may be enacted at different times and for different purposes, though they are all invested with the same divine authority, and are suitable and proper no longer than exigencies require. Thus, the two Christian sacraments are invested with the same authority, and are of perpetual obligation; but no one will pretend that they are the same. To use the quotation of

* Howell on Communion, p. 72.

† Ibid. p. 72.

the doctor from St. James, "there is *one* Lawgiver;" but his laws and ordinances are not by consequence necessarily the same.

It may be added that the distinction between John's and Christian baptism is maintained by all the ancient fathers who have written on the subject; "nor would it be easy to discover a single divine, previous to the Reformation," by whom it is not made; "and since that period it has received the sanction of a Grotius, a Hammond, a Whitby, a Doddridge, a Chillingworth, and a multitude of other names of nearly equal celebrity."* Thus, the supposed identity of the two dispensations and of the two baptisms is a modern innovation, and the innovation may be fairly ascribed to the ingenuity of the Baptist Church to support its claims.

7. In the case of the *sick*. If baptism be indispensable to communion, and immersion be indispensable to baptism, then the sick on a dying bed cannot be baptized, and so must be deprived of the precious privilege of commemorating the death of their Lord and of deriving a gracious consolation from the pious service. Mr. Remington, in his popular little Baptist pamphlet, admits this. "I know it may be argued that the sick would, under these circumstances, be often deprived of the privilege of communion while upon their dying beds. The great question is, Have we Bible authority for the practice? If we have not, then we should submit with pious resignation. It is a very great attainment to submit patiently to suffer the will of God concerning us. The hour of affliction and death, of all others, is the one when we should rely upon Christ alone. The fewer forms we have to attend to *then*, the better."† Is it possible that "the Bible" can deny a Christian the pri-

* Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 387.

† Restricted Communion, p. 72.

vilege of communing upon a sick or dying bed? What! "submit with pious resignation" to be disinherited of a most sacred privilege upon a death-bed? Is this "suffering the will of God concerning us"? This "a great attainment" in grace,—to consent to be deprived of grace? The "fewer forms" in the sick chamber, or on the death-bed, "the better"? Then have done altogether with singing, and prayer, and reading God's word, and instruction, and encouragement, in the sick-room! Christ instituted and partook of the sacrament *a few hours* before his death; and why may not his dying saints do the same? Would not the Baptists administer the sacrament to a sick or dying member of the Baptist Church? Most assuredly. Alas! the religious system must be radically defective in the particular that involves such severity under the pretext of "pious resignation."

We conclude this chapter. The whole controversy turns on the necessary dependence of the Lord's Supper on baptism. If such a dependence exists, it must be either in the *inherent connection* of the two sacraments, or it must be made by *positive law*,—neither of which, we have seen, is the fact. We have denied that immersion is essential to baptism, and hence have assumed that Pedobaptists have been baptized, and so are members of the visible church, and therefore, upon the supposition of the necessary antecedence of baptism to the Lord's Supper, they have a right to the latter ordinance. We shall not stop to prove that Pedobaptists have been properly baptized: we have gone upon the supposition that they are not, though we believe they are in the truest scriptural sense. To assume that they are would be foreign to the ground we take in this treatise, and would be an end of the controversy: besides, it is a matter of no concern to Pedobaptists, for they believe that they are baptized. But, admitting that formal association

with the visible church depends upon baptism, we deny that there is such a dependence of the Lord's Supper upon baptism as that the involuntary neglect of baptism destroys the right, or annuls the obligation, to observe the Lord's Supper. This shall be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

INVOLUNTARY NEGLECT OF BAPTISM NO BAR TO SACRAMENTAL COMMUNION.

THE doctrine of close communion is founded upon a misconception of the import of baptism, and so is a misapplication of one of the sacraments to the abuse of the other. This is easily demonstrated.

Baptism signifies obligations and rights *already* existing in the subject. Mark this. It gives no right and imposes no obligation that does not already exist in the subject. With respect to the believer, we are all agreed; and the question before us refers to the believer only, for believers only have a right to the communion. The believer, though unbaptized, has a right to the communion *before* he is baptized, and therefore baptism cannot give him a right to the communion: baptism only signifies the believer's right to the communion. And hence a person baptized in infancy has no right to the communion till he has believed. Infant baptism involves *prospectively* faith as prerequisite to the communion. In all cases, then, the right to the communion is obtained by *faith*, and not by baptism. Admitting, then,—which we do not by any means,—that infant baptism is a nullity, and that immersion is essential to baptism, the *believer* has a right to the communion *before* he is baptized. This is clear.

Next: the obligation of the believer to observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper exists *before* he is baptized: baptism only signifies this obligation as *already* existing,—does not originate it, since it cannot originate what already exists. Infant baptism involves this obligation *prospectively*; that is, upon the exercise of faith. In all cases, then, the obligation to observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is involved in faith and not in baptism. Admitting, then,—which we do not by any means,—that infant baptism is a nullity, and that immersion is essential to baptism, the believer is under obligation to observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper *before* he is baptized. This also is clear.

Now, setting aside infant baptism altogether, and admitting that immersion is essential to baptism, the believer has a right to the Lord's Supper, and the obligation to observe that sacred ordinance exists, *before* he is baptized. The Baptists themselves must admit this. Very well. But does the want of the sign, in all cases, invalidate a right and absolve from an obligation already existing? If so, then faith also is destroyed; for faith gives the right and imposes the obligation. But pious Pedobaptists do yet believe, and that, too, till they die, the Baptists themselves being judges. Therefore their right to the Lord's table is not invalidated, nor are they absolved from obligation to observe that sacred ordinance, though in the opinion of the Baptists they have never been baptized. If such is their right and such their obligation, then baptism in all cases is not indispensably prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. That is, a right and obligation existing before baptism cannot be set aside in all cases by the want of baptism. To say that pedobaptism is no baptism at all does not meet the difficulty; for with pious Pedobaptists the right and obligation still exist, for they yet believe. True, if the believer knowingly and deliberately neglect baptism, he

sets aside his faith, and in doing this he forfeits his right to the Lord's table and violates his obligation to observe that sacred ordinance; for it is the solemn and positive duty of the unbaptized believer to be baptized. But candid Baptists have never directly charged wilful neglect upon pious Pedobaptist churches,—never; and it can never be justly alleged against them. Then, whether pious Pedobaptist churches have been baptized or not, they have a right to the Lord's table and are bound to observe that sacred ordinance. If so, the Baptists cannot justly repel them from sacramental communion, since no human authority can transcend divine authority or clash with rights secured and obligations imposed by divine authority. The Baptists may involuntarily and conscientiously oppose the authority of God, and clash with the rights and obligations of their pious Pedobaptist brethren; but they cannot justly do either.

In this argument we have proceeded upon the admission that immersion is essential to baptism, and therefore that pedobaptism is no baptism. But this indeed we do not admit; and assuming—which we do—that pedobaptism is valid baptism, then, if baptism is indispensably prerequisite to sacramental communion, pious Pedobaptists have a right to it obtained by faith and signified by baptism. In a word: on the one hand, if baptism be *not* indispensably prerequisite to the communion, the Baptists must show that Pedobaptists are not believers before they can deny their right to the Lord's table; but the Baptists admit that Pedobaptists are believers. On the other hand, if baptism *be* indispensably prerequisite to the communion, the Baptists must prove that pedobaptism is no baptism before they can deny the right of pious Pedobaptists to the Lord's table; but this they have not done. Thus, whether pedobaptism be right or wrong, pious Pedobaptists have a

right to sacramental communion, and they are bound to observe it.

If the involuntary neglect of one ordinance does not necessarily involve the forfeiture of the thing signified by another ordinance, then there can be no necessary dependence of the latter upon the former. That is, if Pedobaptists have the thing signified by baptism, and in the involuntary neglect of baptism yet retain what is signified by baptism, and forfeit not what is signified by the Lord's Supper, there can be no necessary dependence of the latter upon the former. The involuntary neglect of the sign in one case does not result in the forfeiture of the thing signified in either case. The involuntary neglect of baptism does not destroy the right to baptism, for the thing signified by baptism still remains; and of course, the right to baptism still remaining, God consequently regards his injunction of baptism as having been virtually and substantially, though not formally, obeyed. If, however; the neglect of baptism is voluntary, and proceeds from a criminal motive, and is accompanied with a clear conviction of its divine authority, in this case the right of the person to communion is denied; for thereby his right to baptism is forfeited, because the thing signified in both sacraments is forfeited. But, when the thing signified in both sacraments is not forfeited by an involuntary neglect of one of the sacraments, no argument can prove that the person has not a right to the other sacrament, unless it can be shown that the involuntary neglect of the sign in one sacrament results in the forfeiture of the thing signified in both sacraments,—which the Baptists do not pretend, and never can prove, is the case with pious Pedobaptists. What, then, is signified by each of the two sacraments? and have pious Pedobaptists the thing signified in each of them? Baptism is the symbol of inward and spiritual purification: pious Pedobaptists have this. The

Lord's Supper is the pledge of the Savior's love : that pious Pedobaptists enjoy this no one questions. It is the evidence of the perpetuity of the Savior's presence with his people : that Christ is with pious Pedobaptists the Baptists themselves do not deny. It is the symbol of the vital communion of Christians with the Savior: that pious Pedobaptists enjoy this communion in the largest sense the Baptists themselves admit. In a word, that pious Pedobaptists possess, whole and entire, the things signified in baptism and the eucharist, the Baptists themselves cheerfully concede. Now, if the involuntary neglect of the sign in one case does not involve the forfeiture of the things signified in either case, (and the Baptists concede that the facts evince that it does not,) it follows incontestably that there is no necessary dependence of one of the signs upon the other, unless the absence of the sign in one case necessarily involves the absence of the substance in both cases,—which the Baptists do not pretend, and never can prove; is the fact with pious Pedobaptists.

The divine sanction of sacramental communion by the Pedobaptists is a convincing proof that Pedobaptists are properly baptized, or, if they are not baptized, a convincing refutation of the conceit that baptism is divinely prescribed as an indispensable condition to sacramental communion. "Communion," says Dr. Howell, "has its laws, by which it must in all respects be governed. To violate them in its observance is a *contempt* of the authority from which they emanated; and, in consequence of such *dereliction*, where it exists, this part of sacred devotion ceases at once to be an act of either faith, obedience, or worship."* Here we join close issue with the doctor. Would it not be infatuation to say that the Holy Spirit would confer his blessing

* Terms of Communion, p. 116.

upon an act of devotion that was a "contempt" of Christ, a "dereliction" of duty, and destitute of "faith, obedience, or worship"? And would it not also be infatuation to say that the Holy Spirit does not in a signal manner confer his blessing upon Pedobaptists in sacramental communion? The strictest Baptist in Christendom, whose opinion is worthy of consideration, will not assert either of these. If, then, "communion has its laws, by which it must in *all respects* be governed," it follows that the Holy Spirit sanctions, in the case of pious Pedobaptists communing, a contempt of Christ, a dereliction of duty, and an act destitute of faith, obedience, and worship, or that Pedobaptists are properly baptized; or, if they are not baptized, baptism is not an indispensable condition to sacramental communion.

The Baptists assume that in excluding Pedobaptists from communion they do as the apostles would have done. This amounts to a claim to infallibility, though they do not attempt to evince their possession of this extraordinary gift.

Suppose Jesus and his apostles should now appear among men, and on a sacramental occasion in some pious Pedobaptist church this blessed company should surround the sacred table with the members of this church, and Christ and his apostles distribute the elements to the happy and grateful recipients. A Baptist—the most pious and "loyal" Baptist in the land—enters and beholds the scene. There is Christ, who gave "the commission;" there are the apostles, who received, preached, and acted under the commission; there is Paul, the chief of the apostles,—all communing with "unbaptized" Christians! Christ invites the wondering Baptist to a place at his table and a seat among his apostles and disciples. The Baptist for a moment hesitates, and inquires, "Am I deceived? No; I cannot be. That is Christ, those are his apostles; for I have just seen and communed with them in my own church. If I

am mistaken now, I was mistaken then. They are as really here in this Pedobaptist church as they were with us in the Baptist church. They said nothing about this intended visit to the Pedobaptist church; and, while I expected to find them in the preaching, praying, and singing in this place, I did not expect to find them engaged in celebrating the Sacred Supper with these Christians. One thing to my mind now is certain: either these Pedobaptist Christians have been properly baptized, or baptism is not, as I supposed, an indispensable prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. No matter which: I will doubt, hesitate, no more. Though they are not of 'our faith and order,' Christ and his apostles of a truth are with them. That is enough: I will join them in the sacramental service, teach my church as it may."

Say not that this is fancy, for it is all as *spiritually* true as if it had transpired before us in open day. Baptists have been present as spectators on sacramental occasions in pious Pedobaptist churches; and what have they beheld? Peace, and joy, and comfort, and love, diffused around the happy family and beaming from many a bright countenance. Tears and smiles of joy were mingled, and shouts and songs were blended. The tide of gushing rapture swelled and overflowed all its bounds, and thrilling praise burst from every lip. The scene was solemn, the place was awful, the service holy and blessed. This is wonderful. The pious Baptist exclaims, "This is wonderful. Surely God is in this place. Christ must be with this people. The Holy Spirit must be with this people. They have the spirit of the apostles. Am I mistaken? No; I am not mistaken; for this is just such a scene as I have witnessed around the sacramental table in my own church. If I am mistaken now, I was mistaken in my own church. Christ is as really here in a spiritual manner and power as he is with us in

the Baptist Church. These Christians here are as sincere as we are: this is no hypocrisy. No; 'in the Pedobaptist churches there are some of the noblest lights and ornaments that adorn Christianity.'* 'Their zeal, devotion, and efficiency fill me with admiration and joy.'† 'They are knit together with me by a union *not imaginary*, but most sweet and dear and imperishable, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. I delight to feel myself one with them, one in spirit, one in aim, one in "a good hope through grace," one in *Christ*, one in a fellowship of soul with soul, one in a *spiritual* communion, which neither *walls, nor mountains, nor oceans, nor ages*, can separate.'‡ No; they are not deceived. 'I cherish for them, as the people of God, the sincerest affection: we preach, pray, and labor together; consult and co-operate for the spread of the gospel; and take pleasure in being associated with them "in every good word and work."''§ Yes; they are as sincere as I am. Though Christ is not with them in person as he was with his disciples when he instituted the eucharist in Jerusalem, he certainly is with them in his Spirit as really as if he were present with them in person before my eyes. If Christ is not here in his Spirit, then I know not that he is ever present in the Baptist Church or anywhere else in the world on sacramental occasions; and hence what avails the force of the indispensable prerequisite which my church teaches? I see no advantage in it in this case. It is nothing in this case. One thing to my mind is now certain: either these Pedobaptist Christians have been properly baptized, or baptism is not, as I supposed, an indispensable prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. No matter which: I can doubt, hesitate, no more. Though they are not of 'our faith and

* R. Fuller on Baptism and Communion, p. 238. † Ibid. p. 246.

‡ Ibid. pp. 220, 221.

§ Howell on Communion, p. 23.

order,' Christ of a truth is with them. That is enough: I will join them in the sacramental service, teach my church as it may." Well done! that is consistent,—consistent with the merits of the Pedobaptists and the concessions of the Baptists. You may innocently hold to immersion if you see proper; but you cannot on that account innocently repel or refuse commune with those who before your eyes have the presence of the Son of God in obeying his command, "Do this in remembrance of me." If my sect required otherwise, *I* would regard the requisition as wrong and the ground of the requisition false. I must place Christ first, all the way and all the time. My conduct, whole and entire, must be shaped and governed by his clear and undoubted indications, however "painful" it may be to me to clash with the "faith and order" of my sect. I should rather consider it "painful" to resist Him than to vary from useless and inconsistent rules of my sect. I will not consider myself dishonored, or as bringing a reproach upon his church, or as condemnable in the sight of God, by being found with Christ *anywhere*, on *any* occasion, in *any* service, or with *any* people, however poor, obscure, and despised by the world. No human authority shall hold me responsible to dishonor Christ, or his people, or his cause, under any pretence or assumptions whatever; and, if others venture to do otherwise, the final settlement is with God, who superintends his cause and his people.

"If it still be contended that the two cases are so parallel that the proceeding of the apostles in this particular is binding as a law, we would once more ask such as adopt this plea whether they themselves form the same judgment of the present Pedobaptists as the apostles would have entertained of such as continued unbaptized in their day? If they reply in the affirmative, they must consider them as insincere, hypocritical professors. If they answer in the

negative, since, by their own confession, they look upon the persons whom they exclude in a different light from that in which the party excluded by the apostles was considered, what becomes of the identity of the two cases? and what greater right have they to *think differently* of the state of the unbaptized from what the apostles thought than we have for *treating* them differently?"* Were the apostles present, and should they inform pious Pedobaptists that they are in error on the subject of baptism and that the Baptists are right on that subject, they would correct their error; but, if they are in error, they have at present no means of information beyond what they have already faithfully and conscientiously used, with all the lights the Baptists have so sedulously furnished. Imagine a similar case before the apostles in their days. Mr. Hall proposes the case:—"Many whom you exclude from your communion as unbaptized you acknowledge as Christians, and, without hesitation, express your confidence of meeting them in glory. Did the apostles entertain the same judgment respecting such in their day? Were they prepared to recognise them as brethren, and to congratulate them on their eternal prospects, while they repelled them from communion?"† If it be affirmed that the case of pious Pedobaptists never occurred in the times of the apostles, then the Baptists cannot plead apostolic precedent for excluding pious Pedobaptists from communion? Or, if it be admitted that the apostles would not have excluded such a case from communion, then the Baptists stand self-convicted of opposition to apostolic principles. Or, if it be assumed that the apostles would have excluded pious Pedobaptists from communion, then it behooves the Baptists to show on what

* Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 410.

† Ibid. p. 411.

ground the apostles would have regarded genuine Christians as unworthy of communion.

We close this chapter with a quotation from Mr. Hall :—
 “Say, did the apostles refuse the communion of good men? Did they set the example of dividing them into two classes,—a qualified and a disqualified class,—and, while they acknowledged the latter were objects of the divine favor equally with themselves, enjoin on their converts the duty of disowning them at the Lord’s table? Are any traces to be discovered in the New Testament of a society of *Purists*, who, under the pretence of superior illumination on one subject, kept themselves aloof from the Christian world, excluding from their communion myriads of those whom they believed to be heirs of salvation?”*

CHAPTER IV.

INVOLUNTARY NEGLECT OF BAPTISM NO BAR TO SACRAMENTAL COMMUNION, (CONTINUED.)

WE continue the subject of the preceding chapter.

If baptism is indispensably prerequisite to the Lord’s Supper, then, we repeat, it remains to be proved that Pedobaptists are not baptized before they can be excluded from the observance of that ordinance. But, waiving in this treatise all discussion on this topic, we will admit that the Pedobaptists are not baptized, and then assume that their involuntary neglect of baptism is not a just ground of exclusion from the Lord’s table.

The amount of the offending of the excluded pious

* Hall’s Works, vol. ii. p. 222.

churches is this:—*They do not believe as the Baptists do in regard to baptism.* They differ from the Baptists only with respect to the *mere mode* of baptism. What they do they do in the spirit of sincere obedience and love, as their lives and labors abundantly prove. If they believed that *immersion* is indispensable to baptism, they would practise it; or that infant baptism is an evil, or that it is not sustained by the Bible, they would abandon it. They cannot conscientiously embrace immersion as the only mode of baptism. If in error on the subject of baptism, they have involuntarily committed the error; and that such a mistake or misconception of duty is not a sufficient ground for exclusion from sacramental communion, we appeal to the Scriptures.

1. "Let not him who eateth despise him who eateth not; and let not him who eateth not judge him who eateth; *for God hath received him.* To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; *for God is able to make him stand.* Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ hath received us to the glory of the Father." (Rom. xiv. 3-4, xv. 7.) This is the law of mutual toleration among Christians and Christian churches who may differ on account of religious scruples, prejudices, and errors that do not involve any thing essential to salvation. "God is able to make" all such "stand," so that they shall not essentially err, and so may be continued and recognised as members of his church. "God hath received him; God is able to make him stand;" and therefore he should be "received" by his brethren "to the glory of the Father," because it is honoring God to receive those whom he receives.

Mr. Fuller replies:—"Christian churches are to receive all whom God has received, who are conscientious, and whose peculiarities are not subversive of any existing divine law. But what then? Does this rule enjoin the reception of

pious Pedobaptists? Let us examine. Has God received them? He has. Are they conscientious? They are. Is their peculiarity subversive of any existing divine law? In the opinion of every Baptist, it is. Consequently, their reception into Baptist churches would be, on the part of the receiving members, a deviation from the principle."* But it is impossible for God to "receive" and hold up any "whose peculiarities are subversive of" any "existing divine law" essential to salvation; for this would be saving man in opposition to the divine government. But "God has received," and "is able to make," pious Pedobaptists "stand,"—Mr. Fuller being judge. Therefore "the peculiarities" of the Pedobaptists are *not* "subversive of any existing divine law" essential to salvation. Besides, the reception of pious Pedobaptists to sacramental communion in the Baptist churches would not be subversive of any existing law essential to salvation in the Baptist Church; for the Baptists do not hold that *immersion* is essential to salvation, since they admit that God does "receive" and "is able" to save pious Pedobaptists without immersion. And, further, they might receive pious Pedobaptists to sacramental communion without subverting any existing law in the Baptist Church, since they might still maintain and practise immersion among themselves as a favorite and non-essential peculiarity; for favorite indeed it is, and that it is not essential to salvation they admit. In this argument we have proceeded upon the admission that pious Pedobaptists are the weak in faith "whom God has received" and whom he "is able to save;" but this is the ground the Baptists assume, and which we have admitted only to prove from it the right of pious Pedobaptists to sacramental communion in Baptist churches. It is not maintained that pious Pedo-

* Fuller on Communion, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 267.

baptists have a right to the conventional privileges of the Baptist Church, but only to those privileges which are common to all Christians without distinction of name or party. The Baptists make that a term of admission to the Lord's table which they admit is not essential to admission into heaven. They render access to the Lord's table more difficult than access to the Lord himself, and association with "the general assembly of the church of the first-born and spirits of just men made perfect." They surround the Lord's table with an enclosure impassable to those whom God will welcome to his presence. Pious Pedobaptists, then, have the sanction, favor, and pledge of God: that is enough.

"Receive him to the glory of God." On this injunction Bunyan comments:—"To the glory of God is put on purpose to show what dishonor they bring to God who despise to have communion with them who yet they know have communion with God. For how doth this man or that church glorify God, or count the wisdom and holiness of heaven beyond them, when they refuse communion with them concerning whom they are by the word convinced that they have communion with God?"*

2. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature; and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." (Gal. vi. 15.) The argument of the apostle is this: Under the gospel system no outward observance avails any thing with God, but a new creature; and he who is a new creature is entitled to the peace and mercy of God. This is the rule; and, where this rule is conformed to, involuntary error respecting baptism, consequently, can be no barrier to the peace and mercy of

* Bunyan's Complete Works: Reasons for Practice in Worship, p. 218.

God; and so the want of baptism in this case can be no barrier to sacramental communion.

3. "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God." (Rom. xiv. 22.) That this admits of difference in opinion, and does not exclude from sacramental communion, is evident from the following considerations. No one that has this faith is bound to bring others who have the same faith over to his opinions in order to their communing with him or his communing with them. If this were so, then those of this opinion might form one church, and those of that opinion might form another church, and each claim to be the one church to the exclusion of the other,—which is absurd: each claiming to be in "the unity of the Spirit," and yet one saying, We will not commune with you, and the other saying, We will not commune with you, and yet we will live in "peace,"—which is absurd, since Christ's church cannot have two spirits, nor his body two Heads. Further: a new opinion is started, and becomes the foundation of a new division, and so on, till presently the one church must be dissolved into as many churches as there are individuals in the church,—for no two men on earth are of the same mind in all things. No force can prevent an endless variety of opinions in erring and speculative man; and, if the principle of strict communion be admitted, endless strifes and janglings must arise, and "altar be set up against altar" without end. A church so divided would be an easy conquest to the enemy, and where it tends to this state it is tending to dissolution. A house so divided cannot stand; and churches so related, though they now practise ordinary Christian intercourse, will in time renounce even that; for emulations and bitter zeal will soon result in an entire separation. The sure defence against all these evils is the one saving faith, that admits of reciprocal communion independent of difference in opinion. If men agree in faith,

are united in faith, have all this saving faith, in a small or larger degree, no matter for variety of opinions, they are all equally entitled to sacramental communion. This argument is rendered the stronger by the consideration that the opinions, in themselves, which are made the ground of divisions, are harmless, compared with the evils of mutual renunciation and opposition. "Hast thou faith? Have it to *thyself before God.*" Leave opinions in themselves not fundamental, and hence not fatal to those who have faith in God, to others, and, on faith as a common ground, engage in sacramental communion with them. Sacramental communion cannot impair the faith of either party, but must promote it, especially when there is no difference of opinion as to the nature and design of *that* ordinance, the Lord's Supper,—both parties, all parties, meeting and harmonizing in faith and opinion in the observance of *that* ordinance. It may be observed that those churches which impose the fewest and simplest terms of communion besides what are fundamental come nearest the prescription of the apostle, and those which impose no terms of communion but what are fundamental conform fully to his prescription. In the latter case the command of the apostle may be fulfilled by every believer on earth,—not excluding the weakest believer in the church. Schism is then at an end. Those involuntarily in error may then learn better in time, and, if opinions are not rectified, it will be of no great consequence, since errors in themselves not fundamental can finally hurt no one who involuntarily and sincerely embraces them. But if I am required to embrace an opinion which I do not believe to be true, or I must be excluded from the communion, then to be admitted to the communion is to affirm what I conscientiously believe to be a falsehood, and, though it may be true, I am guilty of hypocrisy in the sight of God. An opinion which may be believed by

others, and in itself may be true, I may believe to be false; and unless my belief in that opinion, as preliminary to sacramental communion, be waived, it is easy to see that schisms without end may become necessary; and the responsibility for the consequences lies upon those churches in whose constitutions the severe exactions are made, because the reception of one to the communion whose opinion was not fundamental would not have necessarily made any schism in the church; and the smaller the difference in opinion the greater the sin and the shame, for the less is the reason for separate communions. And where agreement in the great fundamentals of religion is complete, or nearly so, and Christian fellowship actually, or at least confessedly, extends to every particular, except in the observance of a solitary observance, and a difference—and that but a slight difference—respecting the mere *mode* of observing a duty is made by one church the ground of exclusion from sacramental communion, no justification in reason or in Scripture can be found for the requisition; and that church is justly chargeable with the consequences of excluding from communion the rest of the Christian world.

4. "Do this in remembrance of me." Is it conceivable how Christ calls by his Spirit and blesses with his grace those whom he repels from his table? Does he not invite to his table those whom he calls by his Spirit? Does he command those to partake sacramentally of his supper whose faith he has accepted and whose nature he has regenerated? Does he command this as a duty, and yet forbid it as a privilege? Does he grant unto any the blessings of his sacrificial death, and yet prohibit their sacramental celebration of his death? Is a grateful remembrance of his death essential to the new and spiritual nature of believers, and yet are they to be prohibited a grateful and formal observance of the ordinance that symbolizes that death?

How can gratitude be essential to religion and yet the exercise of that noble grace be interdicted at the Lord's table? Christ has bidden all mankind to come to him for life, and he bids those who have come to him to come also to his table; and, if any have involuntarily erred on the subject of baptism, he does not regard this as annulling his invitation to his table,—since, as the Baptists concede, they are yet accepted of God, and what does not divest them of salvation does not disqualify them for the Lord's table.

Other passages of Scripture equally in point might be adduced; but we will conclude with a single one:—"Blessed are they which are called to the *marriage-supper* of the Lamb:" and we run no hazard in saying, the number already there who have never been immersed is greater beyond all calculation than those who have been immersed.

CHAPTER V.

CONCESSIONS OF THE BAPTISTS.

IF baptism be an indispensable prerequisite to sacramental communion, the concessions of the Baptists are inconsistent with such a doctrine. Indeed, it will be found in this chapter that the concessions of the Baptists, when fairly interpreted, not only prove the doctrine to be false, but utterly refute the dogma of exclusive immersion on which it is founded.

If it be true that, according to the gospel, baptism is indispensably prerequisite to sacramental communion, and immersion only is baptism, then pious Pedobaptists have no right to sacramental communion among themselves, for they have not been immersed. But the Baptists concede, "*They*

do right in partaking of the Lord's Supper, though in our opinion unbaptized;”* and “There is no reason why we should breathe a murmur against them because they take the Lord's Supper in their own churches.”† Thus, in the first place, baptism is not indispensable to sacramental communion; and, in the second place, immersion is not essential to baptism: and thus the concessions of the Baptists subvert the very foundation of the Baptist Church. For, if it is “right” for the Pedobaptists to partake of the Lord's Supper without immersion, there is no reason why the Baptist Church should require *immersion* of her own members as indispensably prerequisite to sacramental communion within her own fold. And consequently the following dogmatic asseverations amount to nothing:—“That there is a connection between the two positive institutions of the New Testament is manifest from the word of God; and that one of them must be prior to the other in the order of administration is evident from the nature of things.”‡ “Baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to the communion.”§ “Baptism is a prerequisite to the supper; and we cannot admit to the supper those whom we regard as unbaptized.”|| “If God requires baptism before the supper, who will dare to dispense with it?”¶ “God orders that the baptized only shall communicate: who will dare to abrogate this order?”** “The apostles constantly required baptism as a preparation for the communion.”†† Baptism is one of the “divinely-ordained and unchangeable terms of *sacramental com-*

* J. G. Fuller on Communion, Bap. Lib., vol. i. con. iii.

† Curtis on Communion, p. 190.

‡ Booth's Vindication of the Baptists, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 48.

§ J. G. Fuller on Communion, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 238.

|| R. Fuller on Baptism and Communion, 2d ed., p. 236.

¶ Ibid. p. 242.

** Ibid. p. 243.

†† Howell on Communion, p. 45.

munion.”* “Turn and twist” the concessions of the Baptists as you will, these asseverations must go for nothing: the aqua-fortis of the concessions consumes the whole force of the asseverations and pretensions of the Baptists on the subject of close communion. For, in admitting that pious Pedobaptists “have a right to partake of the Lord’s Supper, though unbaptized,” and that “there is no reason why we [the Baptists] should breathe a murmur against them for doing it,” the Baptists virtually abolish the doctrine of baptism as they maintain it,—that is, immersion as essential to baptism. In their asseverations they say it is God’s will and commandment that none but the *Baptists* shall commemorate the Lord’s death; in their concessions it is no violation of God’s will and commandment for pious Pedobaptists “to partake of the Lord’s Supper.” In the one case they establish the Pedobaptist churches upon an immovable basis; in the other they overturn the Baptist Church. It is impossible to reconcile extravagant pretensions and honest concessions. The concession that pious Pedobaptists have a “*right*” to celebrate the Lord’s Supper in their own churches is a *death-seal* both to exclusive immersion and close communion; for it declares that such persons are qualified to receive the communion in the Baptist Church: and this seal is affixed by the Baptists themselves. “To do this”—that is, admit the unbaptized to the Lord’s Supper—“would be to declare such persons qualified for membership in our churches; which would be to admit members without baptism; *which would be to abolish baptism altogether.*”† And this abolition the Baptists as effectually accomplish by admitting “the right” of the unbaptized to sacramental communion in their own

* Howell on Communion, p. 50.

† R. Fuller on Baptism and Communion, 2d ed., p. 237.

churches as if they admitted them to the Lord's table in the Baptist Church. That the pretensions and concessions of the Baptists involve them in inextricable difficulties is incontestable. The claim of exclusive immersion, so long and sharply contested, is at length quietly and hopelessly surrendered. Baptism as a necessary qualification and indispensable prerequisite to sacramental communion is voluntarily abandoned. Retreat is universal, and the whole field with its spoils is left in the possession of the Pedobaptists. But one thing remains; and that is, that the Baptists leave the walls which they can no longer hold and open the portals which they can no longer guard without violating "the rights" which they concede to their Pedobaptist brethren. Roger Williams, Bunyan, Hall, Foster, the Haldanes, Carson, Noel, and other noble spirits, have done much within to shake the walls and open the portals; and Mr. Whitney, with a giant arm, hurls a well-directed bolt against the tottering edifice. "It seems to me neither more nor less than a downright tampering with the mind of God to regard baptism as a divinely-required preliminary to communion, and yet allow that persons do right to commune without it and that there is no reason why we should breathe a murmur against them for so doing. But if, as you say, they are *undoubtedly* entitled to it, and even do right in partaking of it, then you admit, in their case at least, that Christian baptism is not a necessary qualification, and, of course, not in itself a divinely-constituted qualification."*

But, admitting the doctrine of the Baptists to be true,—which we do not,—then the Pedobaptists have a right to sacramental communion; for they believe that they have been properly baptized. This is conceded by Mr. Fuller:

* Whitney on Communion, pp. 47, 48.

“It may be their [Pedobaptists’] *duty* to partake of the Lord’s Supper, since they believe they have attended to ‘the prior obligation,’ every man being required to act on his own principles.”* What! right to obey God in Pedobaptist churches, and yet wrong to obey him, in *the very same thing*, in a Baptist church? The sin of non-communication with the Baptists is not chargeable, then, upon the Pedobaptists,—the Baptists themselves being judges. If we already do our “duty,” though not immersed, then immersion is not indispensable to the discharge of duty in this particular; and the Baptists, though immersed, do no more than their duty in this particular; and therefore the Pedobaptists have as good a right to sacramental communion in the Baptist churches as the Baptists themselves have,—Mr. Fuller being judge; and he is high authority with the Baptists.

“It is frequently urged that, by our course, we at least unchurch all other denominations. But this is a complete error. We do not unchurch them. We will not deny the claims of any body of evangelical Christians, organized for maintaining social worship, to be considered a Christian church.”† Says Kinghorn, (quoted by Robert Hall,) “The New Testament does not forbid the unbaptized from receiving the Lord’s Supper.”‡ The reader will be surprised at the following concession of Dr. Howell, the author of the “Evils of Infant Baptism.” “Does a Pedobaptist honestly believe, after an impartial examination of the best evidences to which he can gain access on the subject, that he has received Christian baptism, and that he has truly

* Fuller on Communion, Bap. Library, vol. i. p. 243.

† Prof. Curtis on Communion, pp. 144, 190, 264, 280. Also Christian Review, vol. xiv. pp. 224, 225. Quoted by Whitney on Open Communion, p. 35.

‡ Quoted by Whitney.

entered the congregation of Christ in the way of divine appointment? Let him prosecute the course he has adopted. All the Lord's children have an undoubted right to his table, because whatever is his is theirs."* Again: "Yes; it is the Lord's table. All his children have an undoubted right to it, because whatever is his is theirs. We are not permitted to preclude them. We make no such pretensions."† "There is no reason why we should breathe a murmur against them because they take the Lord's Supper in their own churches."‡

The Baptists seem to have overlooked altogether the legitimate consequence involved in these concessions. If "Pedobaptists have a right to the Lord's Supper, and do right in partaking of it in their own churches," then either baptism is not indispensably prerequisite to sacramental communion, or the Baptists give too much importance to immersion. But if Pedobaptists have a right to the Lord's Supper, if they do right in partaking of it in their own churches, and if they are not baptized, then baptism is not an indispensable prerequisite to the Lord's Supper; for that cannot be right when that which is indispensable to it is wanting. But with the Baptists immersion is baptism. How then? Pedobaptism is right, or they have no right to the Lord's Supper. But if Pedobaptism is right, then immersion is not essential to baptism; for Pedobaptists generally are not immersed. Thus, in conceding that Pedobaptists have a right to sacramental communion and do right in observing it in their churches, the Baptists divest immersion of its imaginary importance, and so surrender a claim vital to their existence, as a distinct sect of Christianity.

* Howell on Communion, p. 99.

† Ibid, p. 107.

‡ Curtis on Communion, p. 190.

If it be right—as it is conceded—for Pedobaptists to obey a command in observing a Christian ordinance, how can it be wrong for the Baptists to engage with them in obeying the same command? or, if it be wrong for the Baptists to engage with the Pedobaptists in sacramental communion, why is it not still more wrong for the Pedobaptists themselves to engage in that sacred service? “When an action allowed in itself to be innocent or commendable becomes improper as performed in conjunction with another, that impropriety must result solely from the moral incompetency to that action of the party associated. Thus, in the instance before us, it must be assumed that Pedobaptists are *morally* culpable in approaching the sacred symbols, or the attempt to criminate us [mixed-communion Baptists] for sanctioning them in that practice would be ridiculous.”*

This suggests another remark. While the Baptists assume that it would be wrong for them to engage with pious Pedobaptists in sacramental communion, they never represent the Pedobaptists as incurring any guilt in celebrating the Lord's Supper. Innumerable and severe are the charges of criminality alleged by the Baptists against the Pedobaptists; but the offence of sacramental communion among themselves is never incorporated in the bill. Why do the Baptists allow this high crime to pass without a word of animadversion or a whisper of condemnation? The Baptist Vatican “lightens and thunders” throughout Christendom against the heretical and destructive opinions of the Pedobaptists on the subject of baptism; but a profound and inexplicable silence is observed respecting the profane abuse of the Lord's Supper by unbaptized Christians. Either this silence is culpable to the extent of the dependence of the eucharist on baptism, or the right to the eu-

* Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 342.

charist does not depend on the communication of baptism. Let therefore the Baptists censure the Pedobaptists for celebrating the Lord's Supper among themselves, or engage with them also in receiving the sacred symbols. It is not enough for the Baptists to attempt to justify themselves for declining sacramental communion with the Pedobaptists: they must demonstrate that sacramental communion by the Pedobaptists is wrong; and, until this be done, every argument adduced for restricted communion must be utterly futile. But the Baptists never recall our attention to this sin; and when a Pedobaptist is converted to their opinions they never demand of him compunction or repentance for having profaned the Lord's table. It is surprising that this internal conviction of the propriety of sacramental communion among Pedobaptists should not have led the Baptists to engage with them in that solemnity. What the Baptists cannot presume to condemn they ought not to decline to observe.

The Baptists admit—what cannot be denied—that all believers have a *spiritual* fellowship with each other, as living members of the one spiritual church of Christ, and thus that one church may spiritually commune with another. The evidences of spirituality in other churches are too many and weighty to admit of denial. This conclusion is forced upon the most obstinate resistance. All believers, then, are already in spiritual communion with the Baptists themselves. But what! a communion with the whole church,—a communion real, lawful, and sanctioned by God himself,—a communion *the basis* of external and visible communion,—not to be exemplified,—forbidden to be visibly expressed in ordinances instituted by Christ himself? Well, if this be so, then banish all external ordinances and forms—ministry, sacraments, and all else—from the church. Carry the doctrine through; obliterate the visible church from

the face of the earth; turn Quakers everywhere; have done forever with the subject of sacramental communion and visible Christian fellowship,—for fellowship in the *Spirit* will answer every end of the gospel of Christ! The Baptists cannot escape from the dilemma of either denying the spirituality of other churches, or convicting themselves of maintaining a practice subversive in effect of the visible church among men. What they deny to others—namely, *sacramental* communion—they might dispense with altogether themselves, since they and others are already in *spiritual* communion.

Nor is this all. The Baptists admit—what cannot be denied—that all believers have spiritual fellowship with Christ. Then certain is it that they cannot be lost, any more than believers among the Baptists can be. Then the Baptists cannot escape from the dilemma of either denying the spirituality of other churches, or convicting themselves of requiring of others what is not essential to salvation.

Nor is this all. The Baptists admit—what cannot be denied—that all believers have spiritual fellowship with Christ. Assuredly, then, they should obey every plain and positive command of Christ. Then the Baptists cannot escape from the dilemma of either denying the spirituality of other churches, or convicting themselves of sin in denying sacramental communion to other believers; for “Do this in remembrance of me” is a plain and positive command to every believer.

Nor is this all. The Baptists require immersion as essentially prerequisite to obeying Christ in sacramental communion. But they admit—what cannot be denied—that many, *many* believers have lived and died who were never immersed. Verily, then, the Baptists cannot escape from the dilemma of either denying that many believers have lived and died who were never immersed, or convicting

themselves of requiring what is not essentially prerequisite to obeying Christ in sacramental communion.

Nor is this all. The Baptists admit—what cannot be denied—that all believers have spiritual fellowship with Christ. Then other believers have as good a right to sacramental communion as the Baptists have. But as, above, immersion is not essential to sacramental communion, certain is it that the Baptists cannot escape from the dilemma of either denying the spirituality of other churches, or convicting themselves of having no right to sacramental communion.

The ground we maintain is, that all who give satisfactory evidence that they are united to the invisible spiritual church of Christ have, by virtue of that fact, a right to sacramental communion with the church. All we want is *the evidence that they have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit*; and, giving this, they have a right to commemorate with us in sacramental communion the sacrificial *death* of Christ on which his church is founded. This position is substantially admitted by the Baptists themselves. The reader will be surprised at the following admissions of some of the most eminent Baptist authorities:—

“The design of the great Institutor was that it [the Lord’s Supper] should be a memorial of God’s *love to us* and of *Immanuel’s death for us*. To give real evidence of that heavenly affection, [brotherly love,] there must be the exercise of such tempers and the performance of such actions as require much self-denial, &c. The reader, therefore, will do well to remember that the *true test* of love to the disciples of Christ is not a submission to any particular ordinance of public worship,—for that is rather an evidence of love to God and reverence for his authority,—but sympathizing with them in their afflictions, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and taking pleasure in doing them good,

whatever their necessities may be.”* It is undeniable that this “true test” is furnished by all evangelical churches; and therefore they have a right to the sacrament, which is “a memorial of God’s love to *them* and Immanuel’s death for *them*.” Again: “Do they [the Baptists] affirm that the kingdom of Christ is confined to them? that they only have the true religion among them? and that unless men are of their party they will not be saved? Do they wish success to none that are employed in the vineyard but themselves? or say of others, engaged in the same common cause, Master, forbid them, because they follow not with us? On the contrary, do they not profess a warm esteem and affection for all those, of whatsoever communion, who love the Lord Jesus Christ and aim to promote his cause in the world? and do they not give proof of this by holding a friendly correspondence with them as opportunities offer, and by cordially joining with them in occasional exercises of public worship? It is *not* the distinguishing tenet of baptism—how much soever they wish it to prevail—that is *the main bond* that knits them in affection to one another: it is the infinitely-nobler consideration of *the relation they stand in to Christ as his disciples*. They hope, therefore, to be believed when they declare *that they most cordially embrace in the arms of Christian love the friends of Jesus who differ from them in this point.*”† What! “the kingdom of Christ not confined” to the Baptists,—“the true religion” existing in other churches,—“profess a warm esteem and affection for all, of whatsoever communion, who love the Lord Jesus and aim to promote his cause in the world,”—

* Booth’s Vindication of the Baptists, &c.: Baptist Library, vol. i. p. 46.

† Dr. Stennett’s Answer to Mr. Addington, part ii. pp. 234, 235, as quoted by Booth in his Vindication of the Baptists, Baptist Library, vol. i. p. 46.

“hold a friendly correspondence” with all such, and “engage with them in exercises of public worship,”—admit that “baptism is *not* the main bond that knits them in affection to one another,” but that this bond is “*the relation*” other Christians “*stand in to Christ and his disciples,*”—and “declare that they MOST CORDIALLY EMBRACE IN THE ARMS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE THE FRIENDS OF JESUS WHO DIFFER FROM THEM IN THIS POINT,” and yet deny their right to the table of the Lord,—refuse to go further, and “cordially” welcome them to sacramental communion,—reverse the whole admission by failing to recognise *the main bond*, the true spiritual relation of all Christians to each other,—and thus acknowledge and repudiate a sacred right in the same breath! Can the gospel of truth, justice, and consistency reconcile such a contradiction as this, or harmonize the cordial admissions and affectionate professions of the Baptists with their uncompromising exclusiveness?

But Christ is one in the churches. How, then, can the churches be two, or many, except in outward form? or how can outward form destroy the unity of those that are one in Christ? Where outward forms vary, there is difference in outward form only, if the unity be not disturbed. But the Baptists admit that pious Pedobaptist churches are “true Christian churches;” and hence their difference in outward form does not disturb their unity with the church of Christ, for Christ is one in his churches. The church is “the bride of Christ.” Christ has not *two* brides. Christ is “the vine.” Individuals and individual churches are “the branches,” and they *all* partake of the same sap. Fruitless branches are cut off, and foreign branches are not admitted. The Baptists concede that pious Pedobaptist churches are fruitful and native branches: how then can one branch disown another branch when both proceed from the same

vine and are nourished by the same sap? Christ is "the head," and individuals and individual churches are the "members," and "members one of another." But the Baptists concede that pious Pedobaptist churches are true members of Christ, the head. How then can they cut off from communion with themselves so many members, as they do, who have communion with Christ as well as themselves? Christ is the "door," and all true believers have entered that door. But the Baptists admit that all pious Pedobaptist churches have entered that door. How then can they refuse communion with those who have passed the same threshold with themselves? Christ is "the way," and all true believers have found that way. But the Baptists concede that all pious Pedobaptists have found that way. How then can they decline communion with those who are travelling in the same blessed way with themselves? Christ is the "true light," and all true believers have found that light. But the Baptists admit that all pious Pedobaptists have found that light. How then can they deny communion to those who are travelling to heaven in the same blessed light with themselves? Christ is the "true bread," and all true believers partake of that bread. The Baptists concede that all pious Pedobaptists have partaken, and still partake, of that bread. How then can they repel from the table where the gift of that bread is commemorated those who have partaken of and are sustained by the same bread with themselves? Christ is the "water of life," and all true believers drink of that water. But the Baptists admit that all pious Pedobaptists have found and drink of that water. How then can they refuse to drink of that water at the Lord's table with those who have quaffed, and still quaff, at the same fountain with themselves? Christ is "the Captain" of the Christian army, and all true believers are his soldiers. The Baptists con-

cede that all pious Pedobaptists are his soldiers. How then can they decline to take the oath of allegiance at the Lord's table with those who are led to battle and conquest by the same Captain with themselves? Christ is "the King," and all true believers are the subjects of his spiritual kingdom. The Baptists admit that all pious Pedobaptists are subjects of his spiritual kingdom. How then can they refuse to sit down at the table of the King with those who are the subjects of the same spiritual kingdom with themselves? All members of the same great spiritual family, on earth and in heaven, "*we are brethren,*"—and admitted to be brethren, and called and loved as brethren,—and yet not permitted to sit down together at the sacred table of our common Father, Redeemer, and Comforter! Let the Baptists withdraw all these concessions, or abandon their practice. The concessions are wrong, or their practice is wrong, or Christ is divided: which? Not the first and last; and, therefore, the practice of the Baptists is inconsistent both with the Bible and their own concessions.

It is a remarkable fact that whenever the Baptists frame a rule in vindication of close communion they either exclude the Pedobaptists from salvation altogether, or make concessions that set aside the rule altogether. The evidence which the Pedobaptists give of faith, and consequently of their right to the communion, is a difficulty to strict communion with which the Baptists have never been able successfully to grapple. Even the acute, profound, and logical Wayland has been driven to the necessity of making a discrimination to protect the practice of the strict Baptists. "That which qualifies a man," says he, "*essentially* for admission to the Christian church is real discipleship to Christ, *or a temper of heart* to obey him in every thing that he has revealed. This makes him a member of the holy catholic church. But, besides this, there are various

points of practical obedience in respect to which real disciples may differ; and this difference, though it do not designate a different temper of heart, yet may nevertheless render it suitable and proper that those who think alike should associate more especially with each other. One man believes that Christ commands him to administer baptism to infants; another believes this to be the command and doctrine of men. Both may be equally willing to obey Christ in whatever they suppose Christ to have commanded; both may be equally his disciples; yet it is evident that both could not unite together in the same church, for they could not practically obey the same commands: Hence arises the division of the church into different sects. It is the natural and healthy result of that freedom of opinion which springs from Protestantism.”* It never yet has been questioned by a candid Baptist that pious Pedobaptists exhibit “a temper of heart to obey Christ in every thing that he has revealed;” and Dr. Wayland admits that such are real disciples of Christ, are “members of the holy catholic church,” and are “qualified for admission to the Christian church.” The distinction which he makes in opinions which result in “the division of the church into different sects” cannot justify the exclusion of any from the Lord’s Supper who “are equally his disciples.” Difference in human opinions that do not affect “the *essential* qualification for admission to the Christian church” may be the ground of different ecclesiastical organizations, but cannot render it suitable and proper for one sect to exclude other sects from a participation in that which is the common property of all the sects.

Dr. Wayland makes this fatal concession more specifically in another passage of the same work:—“It may, however,

* Wayland’s Human Responsibility, pp. 130, 131.

be asked, What then is the bond which unites these different voluntary associations together? I answer, charity, which is the perfect bond. They are united to each other by the common bond of union to the same head, of love to the same Savior; they believe the same doctrines; they are cheered by the same hopes; they share in the same sympathies; they feel the same obligations; they encounter the same enemies, and are enlisted under the banner of the same Captain of their salvation; they are members of the same body,—are animated by the same spirit; they all breathe the same breath of spiritual life; and hence, all being in the same manner affected by the same moral agencies, all their actions are, from the nature of the case, in harmony.”* Where so many elements of spiritual “*harmony*” combine, what rule or law can be conceived, by the strictest Baptist, which can justify exclusion from sacramental communion? What contrariety can neutralize the force of such a compound? What besides these can the Baptists claim that is not of imaginary importance or that may not be justly regarded merely as the discriminating characteristic of a sect? Dr. Howell, who professes to have “copied the sentiments of Dr. Wayland,”† by a strange infatuation turns the whole force of his eminent author’s sentiments against the intolerance of the Baptist Church. “If,” says he, “by sordid selfishness I show myself destitute of love to God and the souls of men, the church ought to withdraw from me her fellowship. But to do so because I choose to exercise my discretion as to the *mode* of manifesting my Christian spirit, *while I evince that I do possess the required temper of heart*, is to dispense with the laws of Christ and to assume the right to institute *other terms*

* Wayland’s Human Responsibility, p. 142.

† Howell on Communion, p. 130.

of communion than those which he has appointed,—a usurpation of authority and a violation of the divine injunctions against which it is the duty of every sincere Christian to enter his immediate and most solemn protest.”* Most true; and every word recoils with the force of self-evidence upon the practice of the strict Baptists. The doctor must either deny that pious Pedobaptists fail “to manifest a Christian spirit,” and so, in his judgment, exclude them from salvation altogether, or admit that, in withdrawing from sacramental fellowship with them, the strict Baptists “dispense with the laws of Christ,” institute new terms of communion, usurp authority, and violate the injunctions of Christ, against which it is his duty, as a sincere Christian, “to enter his immediate and most solemn protest.”

In a circular of the Hudson River Association, New York, written by Dr. Cone, it is asserted, “If the primitive churches received only such as professed to be born of God and gave evidence that they were begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we should imitate their example; and, if there come unto us any and bring not this doctrine, we are commanded not to receive them into our houses, neither to bid them God-speed; for he that biddeth them God-speed is partaker of their evil deeds: *and how can we more fully do this than to receive them to our communion?* All candidates, therefore, for communion or membership must give evidence that they are born again. This is the first scriptural term of communion;” and Dr. Howell adds, “And the second is, that they shall have entered the church by baptism.”† Do not pious Pedobaptists give the most satisfactory “evidence that they are born again”? The Baptists admit that they do. They have, then, “the first scriptural term of com-

* Howell on Communion, p. 33.

† Ibid. p. 36.

munion." But they have not, it is supposed, "the second," which is "baptism;" and therefore they are not to be received into the houses of the Baptists nor have the encouragement of a God-speed from the Baptists, but are to be regarded as evil-doers, who would involve the Baptists in their evil deeds by communing with them. They must be not only turned out of the doors of Baptist houses, but from the covenant of God, and consigned to the doom of evil-doers. This is justified under the pretence of "imitating the example of the primitive churches." These are that reprobate class who "give evidence that they are begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," who, in the judgment of Dr. Wayland, "are members of the same body, are animated by the same spirit, breathe the same breath of spiritual life, believe the same doctrines, are cheered by the same hopes, share in the same sympathies, feel the same obligations, encounter the same enemies, are enlisted under the banner of the same Captain, are united by the same bond of union to the same Head, are affected in the same manner by the same moral agencies, and all whose actions, from the nature of the case, are in harmony" with those who repel and denounce them as evil-doers; and for whom, "as the people of God," Dr. Howell "cherishes the sincerest regard;" and with whom, he says, the Baptists "preach, pray, labor, consult, and co-operate for the spread of the gospel, and take pleasure in being associated 'in every good word and work.'" These are the evil-doers who are to be scrupulously excluded from the sanctities of social and sacramental intercourse! I leave the reader to judge which has a better right to the communion,—he who exalts a peculiar opinion into a command of God that excludes His people from salvation, or he who, with these concessions in his favor made by the excluding

party, is chargeable with an involuntary mistake,—if it be a mistake!

But we proceed a step further. The concessions of the Baptists essentially involve the conclusion that exclusive immersion—the distinguishing characteristic and foundation of the Baptist Church—is not in harmony with the precepts and spirit of the gospel, and consequently untenable. This is a serious position; and, bold as it may appear, the concessions of the Baptists establish it. The precepts of the gospel are always in harmony with the Spirit; that is, what the Holy Spirit enjoins is always in harmony with his operations. Consequently, nothing is enjoined in the gospel as a matter of duty on Christians which clashes with the operations of the Spirit in believers. The precepts of Christ as contained in the gospel, and the Spirit of Christ as contained in the operations of the Spirit in believers, never propel the believer in opposite directions. If we are doubtful as to the import of the precepts of Christ, but are clear and satisfied as respects the Spirit of Christ, and our interpretation of the precepts palpably comes in conflict with the Spirit of Christ, we have certain evidence that our interpretation of the precepts is wrong and should be abandoned or modified to harmonize with the Spirit. The same may be said with regard to what the Baptists call “apostolic precedents.” If the import we give to these precedents comes in conflict with the clear and indubitable spirit of the New Testament, we have the most satisfactory evidence that the import we have given to the precedents is wrong and should be abandoned or modified, as just now affirmed. Now, pious Pedobaptists display in heart and life the Spirit of Christ to the extent the Baptists do, to say no more; and this the Baptists admit. But the exclusiveness of the Baptists directly clashes with this genuine evangelical spirit of the Pedobaptists. Hence, the Baptists must either

abandon their exclusiveness or deny the genuineness and purity of the spirit of the Pedobaptists. The most violent Baptist does not pretend to do the latter; and hence the Baptists should abandon or modify the import which they give to the precepts of Christ and the "precedents" of the apostles respecting baptism, and the dependence of the eucharist upon it. They must either assume that Pedobaptists have not received, and do not display, the Spirit of Christ to the extent they have received and display it, or admit that the very foundation of the Baptist Church, exclusive immersion, with its concomitant, close communion, is unsupported by the precepts of Christ and the "precedents" of the apostles, and so is a mere human invention, or fiction of the imagination. This much is undeniable,—that Pedobaptists evince the spirit of the precepts of Christ and precedents of the apostles in a most eminent degree; and the evidence is yet wanting that they have misconstrued, in any essential particular, the external import of those precepts and precedents, and time enough has elapsed to justify the assertion that they run no hazard of ever being convinced of the contrary; and surely the Baptists have evidence sufficient to convince them that they have incorrectly construed and improperly applied the precepts and precedents on the subject of baptism.

If the Baptists reply that, under their construction and application of these precepts and precedents, they have flourished as a church of Christ, we observe, this avails nothing; for the Pedobaptists can employ the same argument in proof of the correctness of their construction and application of the same precepts and precedents; and then the conclusion is, that outward forms are unessential so they do not clash with the spirit and efficiency of the gospel; and therefore the Baptists should not raise a barrier to

sacramental communion where none really is justified or required by the spirit of the gospel.

Again: participation in the communion is a recognition of believers as actual partakers by faith of the spiritual blessings of the sacrificial death of Christ. In the language of Robert Hall, "In its secondary import, it is intended as a solemn recognition of each other as members of Christ, and consequently, in the language of St. Paul, 'as one body and one bread.' Now, we either acknowledge Pedobaptists to be Christians, or we do not. If not, let us speak out without reserve, and justify their exclusion at once, upon a broad and consistent basis."* But the Baptists acknowledge that the Pedobaptists, in spirit and life, are Christians in the highest sense. Therefore the "exclusion" is inconsistent both with the import of the eucharist and concessions of the Baptists; and so the basis of the Baptists' exclusiveness and restriction is imaginary.

Mr. Booth makes an attempt to explain away these palpable inconsistencies. "But is there no difference between occasionally admitting Pedobaptist ministers into our pulpits, and receiving them, or others of the same persuasion, into *our* communion,"—that is, to the *Lord's* table? "Were we," he answers, "to receive Pedobaptists into our fellowship, we should practically allow what we consider a human invention to supersede a divine institution. Not so when we admit ministers of that persuasion into our pulpits. In this case there is no divine institution superseded, no human invention in the worship of God encouraged. Again: when we admit Pedobaptist ministers into our pulpits, it is in expectation that they will preach the gospel,—that very gospel which we believe and love, and about which there is no difference between them and us. But to

* Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 324.

receive Pedobaptists into communion would be openly to connive at an error,—an error both in judgment and practice; an error of that kind which the Scripture calls ‘will-worship and the traditions of men.’”* Here is a plain recognition of the authority of Pedobaptist ministers *to preach*: and have men a divine authority to preach, and yet no right to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper? a right to occupy the pulpits of Christ, and no right to the table of Christ? a right to break the bread of life to the Baptists, and no right to break the sacramental bread with the Baptists at the table of Christ? a right to call sinners to repentance, faith, and salvation, and crowd the communion-table in the Baptist churches with young converts, seals to their ministry, and yet no right to partake with them in the sacramental feast? The ministry is a divine institution; and Pedobaptists are invested with it; and their baptism, a “human invention,” is not regarded as a bar to their *preaching*: why should it be considered an insurmountable barrier to the Lord’s table? If their *baptism* in one case is “superseded” by their *authority* to preach, why should their baptism, or want of baptism, stand in their way to the Lord’s table. If “the worship of God is encouraged” by admitting Pedobaptist ministers into the pulpit, why may it not be encouraged by admitting them to the Lord’s table? Would it be “openly to connive at error to receive Pedobaptists into *communion*,” and is it not openly to connive at the same error to receive them into the *pulpit*? “An error of that kind which the Scripture calls ‘will-worship and traditions of men,’”—why, for these very things persons were not admitted into the apostolic *churches*, much less into the *pulpit*; and yet the Baptists openly connive at this kind of error in Pedobaptist ministers, by receiving

* Vindication of the Baptists, Baptist Library, vol. i. p. 66.

them into their pulpits, and yet not openly connive at the same thing by receiving them at the Lord's table! And what aggravates the inconsistency is, these Pedobaptist ministers preach "that very gospel which the Baptists believe and love, and about which there is no difference between them and the Pedobaptists." What right has any man to preach who has not been baptized?—who has neglected the positive institution of baptism?—or who encumbers himself with "a human invention" in its place? The Baptists will not admit to the Lord's Supper—which is an *ordinance* of the gospel—any who have not been *immersed*: why do they allow or recognise the right of any who have not been immersed to preach *the gospel itself*? There is no escape from the dilemma, either to deny the *divine authority* of Pedobaptists to preach the gospel, or admit their *right* to sacramental communion.

This inconsistency of the Baptists is aggravated still more by another consideration, founded on "Baptist principles," as they are pleased to call them, and which for the present we will admit to be sound. The order with them when arguing from the Scriptures is, first, faith and conversion, then baptism, then the Lord's Supper. This with them must be the invariable order. Granted: but a man must be converted before he can have a divine authority to preach; and the ministry is the noblest, most solemn, and most exalted institution of Christianity. But Pedobaptist ministers have divine authority to preach,—that is, are invested with the highest office committed by Christ to men. Then they have believed and are converted. But they have never been baptized,—the Baptists being judges. What! converted, and straightway, *without baptism*, enter upon the work of the highest office in the church? What becomes of "Baptist principles" here? The very first duty after faith and conversion has been neglected. The Baptists

“connive” at the violation of their own principles,—the want of an essential link in an invariable order,—become a party to the offence, receive into the pulpit the usurpers, “set aside a divinely-appointed prerequisite” (baptism) to admission into the church,—much more, into the holy office of the ministry,—and yet consider the offence *sufficient* for exclusion from the sacramental table! Unbaptized men are authorized to preach, but they have no right to the Lord’s table, though the Lord himself converted, called, and authorized them to preach,—the Baptists themselves being judges!

It is not surprising that Mr. Booth should feel annoyed by this inconsistency, and so he attempts to defend the practice of the Baptists upon scriptural grounds; but the very attempt yields the *whole* ground to the Pedobaptists. “We find in that inspired volume [the Bible] a sufficient warrant for uniting with those that believe, in affection and walk, *so far as agreed*, notwithstanding their ignorance of some part of the counsel of God, to which a conscientious obedience is indispensably required from all those by whom it is known. Yes; the New Testament not only *permits* as lawful, but *enjoins* as an indispensable duty, that we should love them that love the Lord, and that we should manifest this holy affection in every way that is not inconsistent with a revelation of the divine will in some other respect.”* And he refers us to Phil. iii. 15, 16. Here is the passage:—“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” This is Mr. Booth’s vindication of the Baptists for receiving Pedobaptist ministers into their pulpits.

Philippi was the first city in Europe in which Paul

* Vindication of the Baptists, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 66.

preached the gospel; and the Epistle to the Philippians was written by him. The church in Philippi was remarkable for its purity and piety, and was the apostle's favorite church. From the whole tone and letter of the epistle, no apostolic church enjoyed greater freedom from false doctrine, or was more firmly settled in the fundamental principles of the gospel, than this church; and so we may conclude, if any church conformed fully to the gospel-standard, this church did. They were all then baptized, and all enjoyed the privilege of sacramental fellowship. If the passage quoted by Mr. Booth in defence of receiving Pedobaptist ministers into Baptist pulpits, therefore, has any force in it, the Baptists should also extend sacramental communion to Pedobaptist ministers and other Christians; for those among the Philippians who were not "perfect," or were "otherwise minded," were admitted to this privilege. "As far as they were agreed," or though they had not all attained to the same perfection in spiritual knowledge and moral perfection, they were all admitted to the Lord's table. This is undeniable. If those who had not attained to this perfection *were* admitted to the Lord's table, then the analogy of Mr. Booth fails. If such were *not* admitted to the Lord's table, then many already in the church were excluded because they had not been baptized; and the apostle himself also had no right to the Lord's table, for he acknowledges that he had not "already attained, either were already perfect." (v. 12.) And so, if Paul, with this confession, were now to appear on earth, the Baptists would not admit him to their pulpits, and would repel him from the Lord's table, though they publish him to the world as divine authority for their "principles and practice"! The "inspired volume is a sufficient warrant for uniting with those that believe, in affection and walk, *as far as agreed*;" but defect or disagreement in the Philippian church in fact

did not exclude any from the Lord's table. Therefore, the Philippians being the standard, the Baptists and Pedobaptists are sufficiently agreed to unite in sacramental fellowship.

But Mr. Booth develops a "lawful" practice and "an indispensable duty" from the Philippian analogy. "Yes; the New Testament not only *permits* as lawful, but *enjoins* as an indispensable duty, that we should love them that love the Lord, and that we should manifest this holy affection in every way that is not inconsistent with a revelation of the divine will in some other respect." But imperfect Christians in the Philippian church were not excluded from the Lord's table. Therefore, the practice of the Philippian church being the standard, it would not only be "*lawful*" in the Baptists to admit Pedobaptist ministers and other Christians to the Lord's table, but it is their "*indispensable duty*" to do it. The whole argument here proceeds upon the supposition that Pedobaptist ministers and other Christians are imperfect Christians, and that the Baptists are "perfect" Christians. No matter: the result in the argument is the same as if all were perfect alike, as all have an equal right to the Lord's table. But we are not willing to concede the superior excellence of the Baptists as a church; nor do we underrate them among the churches of Christ. We claim right to the Lord's table upon *equal* ground with them,—no more. Only we are surprised that they should yield us in some things *more* than sacramental communion, and yet deny us *that*.

But J. G. Fuller, a learned and liberal Baptist of England, in his strictures upon Robert Hall's unanswerable arguments in favor of open communion, carries the matter of concession through, in admitting that it is right for Pedobaptists to receive the communion in their own churches. The concession of Mr. Fuller is the more

important as he admits that Mr. Hall is "the most powerful advocate" of open communion, and the Baptists regard Mr. Fuller's reply as the best that has been made or can be made. Mr. Fuller's reply is presented in the form of "Conversations between two Laymen on Strict and Mixed Communion."

The "layman" for open communion observes, "Mr. Hall contends that sincere and conscientious Pedobaptists, whose mistake is involuntary, are entitled to a participation of the privileges of church-fellowship." Mr. Fuller concedes, "They who honestly believe, after an impartial investigation of the best evidence, that they have received Christian baptism, that they have entered the visible church in the way of divine appointment, *are undoubtedly entitled to its peculiar privileges*. They act on their own belief and on their own responsibility: consequently, on their own principles, *they do right in partaking of the Lord's Supper*, though in our opinion unbaptized,—their conviction and not ours being the *proper* directory."* We will let Mr. F. conscientiously entertain the "opinion" that pedobaptism is no baptism, and yet accept his concession that conscientious Pedobaptists "do right in partaking of the Lord's Supper." If we do right, we have the sanction and blessing of God; and what more could the Baptists require to justify a cordial reciprocation in sacramental communion?

Again: "We assert not only that the possession of the thing signified entitles its possessor to the sign, but also that, being so qualified, he is under an obligation to receive it."† That is, in the judgment of Mr. Fuller, Pedobaptists, being Christians, as he admits them to be, are entitled to

* Conversations on Strict and Mixed Communion, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 224.

† Fuller on Communion, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 250.

immersion, and they are "under obligation to receive it." But they have not been immersed: therefore they have violated their obligation to receive "the sign." But they have "the thing signified," though they have violated the obligation to receive "the sign." At best, then, it is obvious that the Baptists' idea of the sign is of no material importance; and hence the absence of *their* "sign," immersion, should not be made a bar to sacramental communion. It should rather remind the Baptists that after all they are greatly in error about "the sign," and that the Pedobaptists have violated no obligation in the matter.

Again: "He who is sanctified and redeemed is not only entitled to the symbols,—sanctification and redemption,—but is under a sacred obligation to be baptized and celebrate the Lord's Supper."* But Pedobaptist Christians are both "sanctified and redeemed," though they have never been immersed. The Baptists, then, attach too much importance to immersion; and they consequently prevent the Pedobaptists from discharging "a sacred obligation" when they prohibit them to "celebrate the Lord's Supper" in Baptist churches.

* Fuller on Communion, *Bap. Lib.*, vol. i. p. 250.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCESSIONS OF THE BAPTISTS, (CONTINUED.)

WE continue the concessions of the Baptists.

“The spiritual ‘body of Christ’ is indeed a ‘glorious church.’ This is the catholic or universal church. To this belong none but the truly regenerate: they are the members of this society, *knit together* by a union not imaginary, but *most sweet and dear and imperishable*. Against this church the gates of hell shall never prevail. *We rejoice in the hope that in all the visible churches of different denominations there are those who are united with us in this spiritual church. We delight to feel ourselves one with them,—one in spirit, one in aim, one in ‘a good hope through grace;’ in short, one in Christ.* The communion of this body, however, is not in material emblems, as bread and wine: it is spiritual; it is the fellowship of *soul with soul; nor can walls, nor mountains, nor oceans, nor ages, separate those who are thus cemented.*”* How then can the wall of close communion separate them? It should do it, if “spiritual union” is “imaginary.” Again: “I know, I rejoice to know, that in Pedobaptist churches there are some of the noblest lights and ornaments of Christianity. With these we esteem it a privilege to enjoy the closest spiritual communion, and we only lament that they continue unbaptized.”† “We gladly admit that, so far as the *spiritual* qualifications are concerned, there are evangelical

* R. Fuller on Baptism and Communion, pp. 220, 221.

† Ibid. p. 238.

churches whose care in receiving none but the converted is at the present time generally as great as our own, on the whole." (Curtis's Progress of Baptist Principles, p. 407.) Again: "So far as our Presbyterian, Congregational, and Methodist brethren are concerned, as a whole, we believe that membership of any of their churches now would be in general as credible an evidence of personal piety as we could desire." (p. 407.) Immersion, then, would not enhance the evidence, and hence give no better title to communion than they now possess.

"In this country [America] it seems to be generally admitted as a truth that, without loving each other less, all Christians can act more efficiently by resolving themselves into churches constituted on their own views in regard to those divine ordinances which it is part of the duty of those organizations as such to uphold."* Again: "To each of these it belongs to celebrate it as one family. The members of that particular church are to be tarried for, and it is to be a symbol of their relations as members to each other. Other things are no doubt signified, but this none the less. In all ordinary cases it should be partaken of by each Christian in the particular church of which he is a member."† Again: "Each church is a *living* body, to which the Savior has given in charge both the oracles and ordinances. All agree that it is a duty of visible churches as such to uphold baptism to the best of their knowledge and power, although not uniting as to the nature and subjects of baptism."‡ Again: "Another mistake often made is, that we are supposed at least to 'unchurch' all other denominations, or say in effect that we do not consider them true visible churches of Christ."§ We are glad to see this

* Curtis's Progress of Baptist Principles, p. 291.

† Ibid. p. 307.

‡ Ibid. p. 309.

§ Ibid. p. 404.

mistake corrected. If Professor Curtis can prove that a true visible church of Christ is not entitled to sacramental communion with the Baptist Church, he can prove any thing.

Mr. Remington, in his "Farewell Letter to his late [Methodist] Charge," observes, "I am soon to take up my lot and inheritance with *another tribe of our common Israel*; and the recollection that we belong to the *same common family* will always afford me no small degree of pleasure." But all the tribes of ancient Israel, without distinction, had an equal right to the Passover, which has been substituted by the Lord's Supper. What "pleasure" can the "recollection that we belong to the same common family" afford him who shuts other members of the family out of doors? Why should Mr. Remington leave one tribe for another, or refuse the Lord's Supper to those who he acknowledges "belong" with him "to the same common family"? This concession of Mr. Remington virtually cancels his renunciation of the Methodists. But he goes further, much further, and avows the warmest attachment of a spiritual child for the Methodist Church. Says he, "I love the Methodist Church. I love her for her simplicity, for her zeal, for her unity of evangelical faith, for her experimental and practical piety, for her revival-spirit, for her zeal in the missionary cause, for her activity in every religious and benevolent enterprise, for her institutions by which to fan up the flame of vital godliness in the church and to keep her membership alive to God. Why should I not love her? She has been a mother to me. She took me in youth and inexperience, and bore with my ignorance and mistakes. She has carried me in her arms, and always treated me with the utmost kindness and tenderness. Under God, *I owe much* to her instruction, forbearance, and fostering care. I leave her communion with deep emotion. I leave her ministry with feelings

unutterable; for there are *hundreds* in her *self-sacrificing ministry* to whom my heart has been weided by many a 'tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.' I leave a *flourishing* church to go to another equally so: and remember, this is my last prayer while within the walls of the Methodist Episcopal Church:—'Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces!'"* One would think, from reading these "farewell" sentences, that Mr. Remington had wellnigh finished his earthly pilgrimage, and was prepared to go home to heaven, had he not told us that he was going to join the Baptist Church. At least he was, it seems, in a fair way to be saved, and in a church itself doing great good; and it is not likely that he would have run greater jeopardy of being finally lost by continuing in the Methodist Church till death than he now does in the Baptist Church. How any man, with so many excellent reasons to continue in, could retire from, the Methodist Church, has never yet been made sufficiently plain in argument; or why he should decline sacramental communion with his own spiritual mother and brethren and sisters, and perhaps spiritual children, can never be reasonably vindicated.

Mr. Kinghorn, and all other close communion Baptists, affirm that "the church of Christ, acting upon the rule he has laid down, cannot recognise *any person* as his disciple who is not baptized in his name."† And yet Mr. Kinghorn often expresses his confidence in the piety of the Pedobaptists, and acknowledges that he does not exclude them from communion because of "suspicions attaching to their Christian character."‡ And so Baptist writers generally con-

* Remington's Reasons for Becoming a Baptist, pp. 62, 63.

† Kinghorn's Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 140.

‡ Ibid. p. 67.

cede. On this palpable inconsistency Mr. Hall remarks, "While the advocates of strict communion are shocked at the idea of suspecting the piety of their Pedobaptist brethren, they contend it would be criminal to recognise it in the church. What mysterious place is this, in which we are forbidden to acknowledge a truth proclaimed without scruple everywhere else?—which possesses the property of darkening every object enclosed within its limits, and of rendering Christians invisible and impalpable to each other? In the broad daylight of the world, notwithstanding their minor differences, they are recognised with facility; but the moment we enter the sombrous gloom of a Baptist church we are lost from each others' view, and, like those who visited the cave of Trophonius, return pale, dejected, and bewildered. Of such societies we might be almost tempted to exclaim, 'My soul, come not thou into their secret, and to their assembly be not thou united!' Shocked as we are at such illiberality, we suppress the emotions which naturally arise on the occasion, remembering (strange as it may seem) how often it is associated with talents the most respectable and piety the most fervent."*

The entertainment of an opinion admitted not to be in opposition to salvation nor pernicious in practice cannot justify exclusion from sacramental communion. It is admitted that pious Pedobaptists are in a state of salvation, and that they will be finally saved. That their opinions are not pernicious in practice therefore follows; for what is pernicious in practice is in opposition to salvation. Pious Pedobaptists, therefore, should not be excluded from sacramental fellowship; that is, until it can be shown that the opinions and practice of pious Pedobaptists are in opposition to salvation, they cannot be justly excluded from the

* Hall's Works, vol. i. pp. 422.

Lord's table. In other words, a general rule made and enforced in indication of the purity and efficiency of the gospel, but which excludes from sacramental fellowship those who are acknowledged to be among the purest and most efficient witnesses of the gospel, cannot be obligatory, and should be annulled, since it deprives of a privilege to which such witnesses are entitled by the gospel itself. Such a rule is not susceptible of any proof, either by the principles of Scripture or by any reasoning whatever. "Instead of losing ourselves in a labyrinth of metaphysical subtleties, our only safe guide is an appeal to facts; and here we find from experience that the sentiments of the Pedobaptist may consist with the highest attainments of piety exhibited in modern times, with the most varied and elevated forms of moral grandeur, without impairing the zeal of missionaries, without impeding the march of confessors to their prisons or of martyrs to the flames."*

CHAPTER VII.

CONCESSIONS OF THE BAPTISTS, (CONTINUED.)

THE reply of the Baptists to the argument drawn from spiritual communion enjoyed by the Pedobaptists at the Lord's table is amusing; and we give Dr. Howell's reasoning as an example:—"But a moment's thought," says he, "is necessary to show that all this, and much more of the same character, is the merest verbal nonsense. Do they mean to say that Jesus Christ comes literally to their table, and actually eats bread and drinks wine with them, when they

* Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 349.

celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? How then does he commune with them on earth? By sympathy with them, by bestowing his favor on them, and by the blessings of his holy Spirit."* We reply, Do the Baptists mean to say that Christ comes literally to *their* table, and actually eats bread and drinks wine with them, when *they* celebrate his sacramental supper? Not at all. How then does he commune with them? By sympathy with them, by bestowing his favor on them, and by the blessings of his Spirit in the proper observance of the eucharist. Pious Pedobaptists claim no more for themselves; and hence they have as good an evidence of the spiritual presence of Christ in their hearts and of his sanction in celebrating the sacrament of his Supper as the Baptists have. In what other sense does Christ commune with the Baptists in the sacramental observance? Do they mean that Christ is literally present in the bread and wine, or that he is spiritually present in those symbols? If the former, then they are Roman Catholics; if the latter, then they have adopted the ~~error~~ of Luther on the subject of the eucharist. If they mean neither, then the doctor's reply is "the merest verbal nonsense," since pious Pedobaptists mean just what the Baptists mean when they say that Christ communes with them in the celebration of his supper. I leave the reader to determine which have the better right to the eucharist, as Christ "bestows his favor and the blessings of his Spirit" on both equally and without distinction.

The reply of the Baptists to the argument drawn from the heavenly communion is not even a plausible sophism, but a palpable absurdity. It is, "We do not know on what laws the communion of saints will proceed." The fact of the heavenly communion is all that is material to

* Terms of Communion, p. 113.

the argument; and this is conceded. The manner of the heavenly communion is immaterial; but, whatever the manner may be, we know, from the Scriptures, that it will be spiritual, and this we know from experience is the nature of the communion of saints on earth. This is one point of identity. The heavenly communion will be universal; spiritual communion on earth is universal; and this is another feature of identity. The heavenly communion will be founded upon a holy nature; spiritual communion on earth is founded upon a holy nature; and this is another feature of identity. The heavenly communion will proceed upon the immutable principles of the divine nature; spiritual communion on earth proceeds upon the same principles; and this is another feature of identity. The heavenly communion will be an advance upon the spiritual communion of the saints on earth, taking up in it all the preceding stages of spiritual progress on earth, as the matured fruit is but the perfection and consummation of the entire antecedent process of development, and holds the part that a part does to a whole or the incipiency does to the end. What is open and free in a retributive state should not be embarrassed or restricted in a probationary state, since the latter state is preparatory to the former; and, therefore, restricted communion, being opposed to spiritual communion, places the two states of the church in opposition. What is not right on earth cannot be ratified in heaven; and what is right in heaven cannot be wrong on earth. But all Christians do commune with each other in heaven: therefore all Christians should commune with each other on earth. No church has authority to impose on its members what will not be ratified in heaven; and only what is imposed consistently with the gospel will be ratified in heaven. But open communion is practised by all the saints in heaven; and, therefore, what the Baptist Church in this

particular “binds on earth will be loosed in heaven;” and so what will be “loosed” in heaven surely never should be “bound” or practised on earth, for the Supreme Legislator never will ratify the abuse of his laws, nor sanction a practice of his church on earth which clashes with the practice of his church in heaven; and the church, if possible, should correct on earth what will be corrected in heaven. Saints will commune with angels in heaven: certainly saints are worthy of communion with each other on earth. The supposition that the manner of spiritual communion in heaven will be different from sacramental communion on earth is admissible; but the difference supposed does not prevent the external communion of all the saints in heaven,—for the internal spiritual communion entitles to the external communion, whatever it is. That is, whatever are the outward forms and privileges of the heavenly communion, all the saints are admitted to them, and they have no better title to these than they have to the outward forms and privileges of church-worship on earth: indeed, because they have a title to the former they have a title to the latter; or, rather, because they have a title to the latter they have a title to the former; for no one has a right to the privileges and blessings of the church in heaven who has not a right to the blessings and privileges of the church on earth. Set aside the right of any one to the privileges of the church in heaven, and you have set aside his right to the privileges of the church on earth,—and not before. Admit the right of any one to the privileges of the church in heaven, and you have admitted his right to the privileges of the church on earth; and no argument can set aside this right. Heaven is a place inconceivably happy, holy, and glorious; and why a title to this place, with all its privileges, does not necessarily involve a title to a seat at the Lord’s table on earth, can never be made out. Communion with God is the

highest communion of which holy men and angels are capable; and why a right to this communion in the highest heaven is not enough to entitle saints to sacramental communion on earth can never be shown. I see not how God can any more condemn his church for admitting his children to his table on earth than he can condemn himself for admitting his children to his presence in heaven; that is, how God can any more condemn his church for admitting to his table on earth those of his children whom she believes to be in error than he can condemn himself for admitting to his presence in heaven those of his children whom he knows to be involuntarily in error,—admitting that they are in error. What higher or safer standard can the church have for its conduct than the conduct of God himself? or what better plea can the church offer for its course in so plain a case than the course of God himself? Surely that zeal for God must be extravagant which transcends the bounds God has fixed for himself. In such a case I say to God he must modify his course and harmonize it with mine to protect his government and laws; and so I exalt myself above God, and subject my conscience, and aim to subject the consciences of others, to the authority of a law unknown in the entire system of obligations. From the very nature and tendency of such a lofty position ought I not to suspect that I have committed a serious error of some sort? In settling the principles of my conduct, I cannot do right when I deviate from the conduct of God. Whatever may be my convictions and impressions, derived from habit, education, and religious associations, or however the success and permanence of my peculiar tenets and practices may be involved in the continuance of my present course, I must alter or abandon it, in whole or in part, as the case may be, and at once, if it clash, and as far as it clashes, with the conduct of God: as though God commanded me out of heaven in an audible

voice to obey, I must obey, though my sect, as a separate sect, in the instant of obedience vanish from the world. Whether such would be the fate of the Baptist Church upon the abandonment of strict communion is not the question; but the conclusive vindication of pious Pedobaptists to sacramental communion, and the utter refutation of the claims of the Baptists to restricted communion, are contained in the concessions of the Baptists in regard to the heavenly communion; for the principles, rights, and privileges involved in it, and the conduct of God deducible from it, form a sure and solid basis on which open communion is established and strict communion overturned.

Dr. Howell's reply to the argument from the anticipated communion in heaven is equally amusing with the preceding. "We shall commune, say they, [Pedobaptists,] in heaven. Why not, therefore, commune together on earth? Is it true that we shall actually sit down at the communion-table in heaven and literally eat bread and drink wine in a sacramental sense? No one, I imagine, supposes that such will be the case. If not,—if we happily reach 'the better land,'—our communion will be wholly spiritual. We shall, therefore, assuredly, never commune with Pedobaptists in any manner in heaven in which we do not now commune with them on earth."* That is, as the communion of saints in heaven will not be in eating literal bread and wine, but wholly spiritual, therefore we shall never commune with Baptists in heaven otherwise than as we now commune with them on earth. This is a conclusion false in fact, for the Baptists do not on earth commune with Pedobaptists at all in a sacramental sense,—which is undeniably a manner of communion not observed in heaven. Besides, if the absence of literal sacramental communion will open the way for

* Terms of Communion, pp. 113, 114.

spiritual communion in heaven, why should the presence of the former prevent the latter on earth? If in heaven—where there is no sacramental communion—all saints enjoy spiritual communion, why should not all saints enjoy sacramental communion on earth? If all saints shall enjoy spiritual communion with each other in heaven,—where, so far as we know, there is no sort of *sacramental* communion,—why should they not all enjoy spiritual communion with each other in the sacramental observance on earth? Why raise a barrier to spiritual communion on earth which can have no place in heaven? Further: we shall not pray together in heaven: why do Baptists pray with Pedobaptists on earth? Nor shall we preach in heaven, and consequently cannot exchange pulpits there: why do Baptists exchange pulpits with Pedobaptists on earth? Finally: if the eucharist is the symbol of Christ's sacrificial death and the pledge of the bestowment of spiritual communion in heaven,—and consequently, when the pledge is redeemed and the design of the symbol consummated, the eucharist will no longer be of any service,—why then repel the saints from the eucharist while as a symbol and a pledge it is of service?

The concession that pious Pedobaptist churches do right in observing the Lord's Supper involves more than the Baptists seem to imagine. The Baptists consider the irresistible evidences which pious Pedobaptists give of Christian character, and they are compelled to acknowledge that they have an incontestable right to the Lord's Supper in their own churches; but the question of open communion is another matter, involving, as they indeed needlessly suppose, the abandonment of exclusive immersion and the suspension of opposition to infant baptism. These are the real difficulties; and so they cut the gordian knots by setting up a *separate* communion. But it does not follow that,

while Pedobaptists do right in observing the eucharist in their churches, that the Baptists do right in declining to commune with them. One thing is most obvious: the Baptists encounter the piety of those whom they regard as unbaptized; and a real apprehension exists lest, if communion with pious Pedobaptists be allowed, the Baptist Church will ultimately be absorbed in the Pedobaptist churches. This is the opinion of Baptist writers generally, and Professor Curtis may answer for the rest.

In referring to the history of mixed communion in the Baptist Church in England, he says, "By degrees the practice Robert Hall recommended became exceedingly current in the Baptist churches in that country. To such lengths were matters carried that many openly declared themselves not Baptist churches in any sense of the word, or attached to any particular denomination, but simply Christian. Sprinkling and immersion were performed in the same house of worship, as they are in some of these places to this day. Pedobaptist ministers were called and settled as pastors when the numbers of persons of that persuasion became the majority,—as they must frequently become in a country where the proportion of Baptists is so exceedingly small. They were sometimes preferred as able and willing to accommodate all parties, which Baptists could not. The result of this was found to be that *Baptist* churches lost their distinctive character and influence: the *Pedobaptist* churches lost none of theirs. And thus the question naturally evolved itself, whether it was the duty—whether it was *right*, in fact—in those who conscientiously believed in Baptist sentiments to *give up* so powerful a source of influence *in their favor* as that of *church-organization*."* Self-preservation, then, is at the foundation of strict

* Progress of Baptist Principles, pp. 288, 289.

communion. It is demonstrative of the weakness of a cause when it cannot survive the test of piety and Christian fellowship. The Baptists reiterate from the pulpit and the press that the Pedobaptists want light, or will not submit to the guidance of the light, in so plain a case as that of immersion; and yet, when they consent to sit together with them at the Lord's table, they "lose their distinctive character and influence as Baptists," while the Pedobaptists are changed in no respect. But why should the Baptists be so apprehensive of the Pedobaptists? In order to open communion there is no necessity of the abandonment of distinctive features and principles, or of blending outward institutions, or of breaking down the institutions of each other, or of perfect unanimity of opinion in all things, especially in things not essential to salvation and touching outward institutes. There is no necessity of one church being absorbed in another, or of engaging with each other in church-government, but simply to commune with each other, as the open-communion Baptists and Pedobaptists now do in England. The unity of the visible church does not consist in subjection to one temporal head, as is claimed by the Papist; nor does it consist in subjection to one universal form of church-government and ecclesiastical laws as administered by men, for these may vary in different churches without touching the unity of the church; nor does it consist in a universal subordination to one invariable form of the ministry. It consists in subjection to Christ as the only Head of the visible church, in the one faith which unites every believer to that Head, in the one baptism of the Spirit which unites the whole body of believers in one invisible church, and in *professing* at least to observe the sacraments of the gospel. He that has these qualifications, to say nothing of him who conscientiously omits the sacra-

ments, has a right to sacramental communion with the visible church.

The ground taken by the Baptists is wrong, or their concessions are wrong. They must either abandon their ground or withdraw their concessions. There is no help: one or the other must be done. Let us see.

We have already considered their concessions at length, and we argue. They admit that Pedobaptists are "Christians and Christian churches," though not "regularly-formed Christian churches." They admit that they already belong to "the invisible church, the household of faith;" they exchange pulpits, &c.; they concede that they have the sanction and blessing of God on themselves and their works; in a word, that all they lack to constitute them out-and-out Christian churches is *immersion*,—that is, *baptism* in the *Baptist* sense. Now, we reply that the Bible furnishes no ground whatever for the kind of church which they suppose the Pedobaptist churches are. The Bible furnishes no ground on which they may *recognise* Pedobaptist churches *to the extent they do* and yet *exclude* them from *church-fellowship* or *sacramental* communion. Not one word, precept, or example can be found in the Bible for this sort of recognition or half-ground. The Bible knows no middle ground. The Pedobaptist churches are true churches, or no churches. They cannot be churches and not churches at the same time. They may not be perfect churches, for no churches on earth are perfect, and never will be till the millennium. If perfection be indispensable to sacramental communion, then the Baptist Church has no right to it; for it is not a perfect church, admitting—which we do not—that it approaches nearer perfection than any other church. The Bible makes allowances for *imperfections*,—not for *deliberate* or *habitual* or *inveterate* sins. If a body of Christians may be recognised as a Christian church not-

withstanding its imperfections, it cannot be excluded from church-fellowship or sacramental communion, for there is no ground on which this can be done. A church maintaining heresy in doctrine, practising profligacy in life, and observing corruptions in worship cannot be recognised as a Christian church in any sense; for such a body is "a stranger to the household of faith and an alien from the commonwealth of Israel," and so must be excluded from sacramental communion. But a church that does not deviate so far in rites, ceremonies, and forms of worship from the gospel as to divest it of the nature, efficiency, and evidence of a Christian church cannot be excluded from church-fellowship or sacramental communion. The moment such a church is admitted to be a Christian church its imperfections cannot justify its exclusion from church-fellowship or sacramental communion: otherwise, the exclusion sets aside the admission; and there is no ground in reason or the Bible on which this can be done. Thus, the ground assumed by the Baptists is wrong, or their concessions are wrong; and consequently they must withdraw their concessions, or admit pious Pedobaptist churches to sacramental communion. Until they withdraw their concessions, we shall consider them as sufficient reasons why they should commune sacramentally with pious Pedobaptist churches, and as a complete refutation of the ground on which they exclude the latter from the Lord's table. Unchurch us utterly, or admit us to the Lord's table.

A system inconsistent with itself cannot be true; because truth is necessarily consistent. No air of sincerity, no protestations of affection, no concessions and compromises of policy, no ornaments of eloquence, no vigilance of art, can invest error with the harmony absolutely essential to truth, or prevent it from being detected and exposed when compared with truth. A system connected with so many

and such concessions and consequences cannot be true. The concessions of the Baptists contain inevitable self-contradictions which are fatal to them. If the concessions be true,—and they are true,—the pretensions of the Baptist Church in regard to exclusive immersion and close communion are groundless and nugatory. Which should the reader believe?—those who speak absurdly and contradict themselves, or those who speak rationally and act consistently? In turning the concessions of the Baptists against their distinctive peculiarities, we have endeavored to do as Benaiah did, who “plucked the spear out of a goodly Egyptian’s hand and slew him with it;” and in the close communion of the Baptists we are reminded of Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite, who blew a trumpet, and said, “We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tents, O Israel! So every man of Israel went up from David and followed Sheba, the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.” (2 Sam. xx. 1–2.)

CHAPTER VIII.

UNFAIRNESS OF THE BAPTISTS.

IN this chapter we call attention to one of the most favorite and successful sophisms employed by the Baptists in support of close communion. It is that baptism has been held in all ages and by all denominations as indispensably prerequisite to the Lord’s Supper. This is analogous to the sophism they employ in proof of *exclusive* immersion,—namely, that all denominations believe immersion is valid

baptism. In both instances they endeavor to overawe their readers by the weight of Pedobaptist authorities. Almost every Baptist writer on communion, from Abraham Booth down to Mr. Remington, parades before his reader a column of venerable and eminent Pedobaptist authorities in favor of baptism as indispensably prerequisite to sacramental communion. We shall not stop here to burden our pages with this august array, but proceed at once to expose the sophism, after having stated it in the language of its authors.*

“Nor is this a new opinion or a novel practice; for such has been the sentiment and such the conduct of the Christian church in every age. *Before the grand Romish apostasy, in the very depth of that apostasy, and since the Reformation, both at home and abroad, the general practice has been to receive none but baptized persons to communion at the Lord’s table:”*† and here follows a list of learned

* I have lying before me three Baptist works in support of restricted communion. The first is that of Mr. Booth, of England, in “Vindication of the Baptists,” republished in this country in the Baptist Library, vol. i. The second is “Terms of Communion,” by Dr. Howell. And the third is a small pamphlet, entitled “A Defence of Restricted Communion,” by Rev. S. Remington. It is a remarkable fact that these three writers refer to identically the same authorities. It is obvious that Dr. Howell has borrowed from Mr. Booth, and Mr. Remington from Dr. Howell. Mr. Booth, then, is the source of material for the other two. Mr. B. in some instances has given us the *Latin*, and in all cases cited his authorities. Dr. H. *abridges* the Latin, and gives the very same citations, though he abridges these too. Mr. R. gives us the very same quotations without the Latin and without authority. Besides, in other particulars, Dr. H. borrows from Mr. B., and Mr. R. from Dr. H.; and Mr. B. gets no credit from Dr. H., and Dr. H. gets none from Mr. R. Whether Mr. B. deserved any from Dr. H. is uncertain; that Dr. H. deserved none from Mr. R. is certain. This is the game these writers play on their readers.

† Booth’s Vindication of the Baptists, Bap. Lib., vol. i. p. 43.

Pedobaptist authorities. Dr. Howell takes the same ground:—"Baptism has been held in all ages and by all denominations to be a divinely-prescribed preliminary to the Lord's Supper:"* and here follows *the very same* learned list, and in *the same order*, adduced by Mr. Booth. Mr. Remington comes next. After quoting several passages of Scripture in proof "that it was the invariable practice of the apostles to baptize all believers before they were admitted to the Lord's table," he observes, "These passages set forth baptism as a divinely-appointed preliminary to the Lord's Supper, which has been so held in all ages since the days of Christ and his apostles by all orthodox denominations." In the next sentence he quotes Mr. Booth:—"Mr. Booth says, 'Before the grand Romish apostasy, in the very depth of that apostasy, and since the Reformation, both at home and abroad, the general practice has been to receive none but baptized persons to communion at the Lord's table,'" and then observes, "This declaration of Mr. B. can be proved by an abundance of historical *data*, which sets the question under consideration beyond the power of successful contradiction."† And then straightway Mr. Remington proves Mr. Booth's "declaration" with Mr. Booth's "data," for he adduces Mr. Booth's list of Pedobaptist authorities,—*the very same list* and in *the very same* order which Dr. Howell had borrowed from Mr. Booth before him.‡ Mr. Booth is the *substance*, and Dr. Howell and Mr. Remington are his *shadows*: if, then, we remove the substance, the shadows must vanish.

The authorities—I give them in the very order in which each of these writers quotes them—are "Justin Martyr,

* Howell on Communion, p. 51.

† Remington on Restricted Communion, p. 8.

‡ R. Fuller has the same list; but he honestly gives Mr. Booth credit for it: Fuller on Baptism and Communion, 2d ed., pp. 234-236.

Jerome, Augustine, Bede, Theophylact, Bonaventure, F. Spanheim, Lord-Chancellor King, Wall, Dr. Manton, Dr. Doddridge, and Dr. Dwight.* But all these authorities, without exception, were *Pedobaptists*, believed in infant baptism, and probably were all baptized in infancy. Consequently they believed that there is no necessity for *adult* baptism in order to sacramental communion,—which is precisely the opinion of all evangelical *Pedobaptists*, and point-blank against the Baptists. Take an example quoted by Mr. Booth & Co. “Augustine, speaking of administering the Lord’s Supper to infants, remarks, ‘Of which certainly they cannot partake unless they are baptized.’” Of course, then, Augustine was a *Pedobaptist*. So of the rest. And so of Mr. Wesley, quoted also by Mr. Booth. Let then the Baptists follow their *Pedobaptist* authorities through, and admit that *Pedobaptist* believers have already the indispensable prerequisite to the Lord’s table, and receive them accordingly, or have done with this perversion and abuse of authorities. Besides, these authorities did not believe that *immersion* was essential to baptism,—which removes them entirely out of the circle of Baptistical exclusiveness; for baptism by sprinkling or pouring is no baptism at all with the Baptists; and the Baptists would repel the authorities themselves, if they were alive, from the sacramental table.

It is admitted that many early and modern authorities maintain that baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to sacramental communion. But then, in the first place, these authorities believed in the exploded dogma of *baptismal regeneration*; and hence no wonder they fell into the error

* Booth’s *Vindication of the Baptists*, *Bap. Lib.*, vol. i. p. 44; Dr. Howell’s *Terms of Communion*, pp. 52–55; Remington on *Communion*, pp. 9–10.

that baptism is indispensably prerequisite to sacramental communion, since no one has a right to the communion who has not been regenerated. If persons are regenerated in baptism, then these authorities were right. But the Baptists do not maintain this doctrine; and therefore they and their authorities do not agree in the main point at issue. Secondly, these authorities believed in *infant* baptism; and therefore, in their view, at the proper age and after a certain course of instruction, infants had a right to the communion. In this the Baptists and their authorities do not agree. Thirdly, these authorities did not believe in exclusive immersion, but in other modes also; and therefore in this the Baptists and their authorities do not agree. Fourthly, many of these authorities—the more modern—positively, powerfully, and unanswerably opposed the pretensions of the Baptists. It is singular, then, that the Baptists should refer to them as authorities. Thus, in every material point the Baptists are not supported, but opposed, by their authorities. Had these authorities believed that baptism is not required in order to regeneration, they would not have considered it as indispensably prerequisite to communion. Modern authorities entertain sound views on the subject, and to them only can we refer in the argument. Now, do these modern authorities believe in *exclusive* immersion as baptism? Not at all. If they do, why do they give the sacrament to persons baptized by sprinkling or pouring? They also believe infant baptism valid, and so, upon repentance and faith in subsequent life, give the sacrament to persons baptized in infancy. Let the proposition be stated as follows,—The Baptists believe immersion indispensable to admission to the Lord's Supper, and eminent Pedobaptists believe the same,—and you will see the glaring sophistry of the proposition in its evident untruth. Make the proper distinction between baptism and immer-

sion, and the Pedobaptist authorities are all against the Baptists.

We may reply to this favorite position of the Baptists in the form of syllogism :—

The Baptists make baptism prerequisite to sacramental communion; but the Pedobaptists believe that they are already baptized: therefore the Pedobaptists have a right to sacramental communion. But the Baptists regard immersion as essential to baptism; but the Pedobaptists do not regard immersion as essential to baptism: therefore the Baptists must first prove to the Pedobaptists that immersion is essential to baptism, before the Pedobaptists can acknowledge that they have no right to sacramental communion. This has never been done,—but quite the contrary has been done; and therefore the Pedobaptists cannot waive their right to the Lord's table.

The Baptists adduce certain authorities for baptism as prerequisite to sacramental communion; but those authorities clash with the Baptists as to the *nature* and *mode* of baptism: besides, they believed in *infant baptism*, which, in the view of the Baptists, is no baptism at all; and therefore they can be no authority for the exclusiveness of the Baptists.

Many of the authorities adduced by the Baptists believed that persons, though baptized in infancy, had no right to the Lord's table before *confirmation*; but this dogma both the Baptists and we reject; and therefore these authorities must be rejected by the Baptists themselves. Besides, these authorities, who were Pedobaptists, did not regard the want of confirmation as a bar to sacramental communion with other churches, though they required confirmation in their own churches, and so admitted to the Lord's table baptized members of other churches, though not confirmed; and therefore these authorities are against the Baptists.

Lastly, the Baptists assume that the Scriptures require *baptism* as prerequisite to sacramental communion, and they regard immersion as essential to baptism; but we think it has been proved again and again that the Scriptures make no such requisition; and therefore baptism should not be made a prerequisite to sacramental communion.

Indeed, if it be admitted that before the origin of the Baptist Church the Christian church unanimously concurred in considering baptism as a necessary preliminary to communion, a material fact is to be taken into consideration. The precise question now in controversy had not at this time agitated the Christian church, since at this time the Baptist Church did not exist; and consequently conclusions from the opinions of the Christian church to favor the *peculiar* views of the Baptist Church subsequently formed must be gratuitous assumptions or deductions founded in perversion. Not one authority in ancient times, nor one authority outside the Baptist Church in modern times, can be adduced for the dogma of the *Baptist* Church on the subject of communion. Had such a dogma arisen in early times, some historical account of it would have been preserved; and, as neither party in this controversy appeals to any thing of the kind, it is incontestable that the dogma is of modern date. As in corrupt early ages the church taught that baptism was absolutely essential to salvation, it is not surprising, we repeat, that it taught also that baptism was indispensable to communion, which is an inference deduced from erroneous premises,—the Baptists themselves being judges. How, then, can the Baptists deduce a legitimate conclusion from premises which they would be the first to disclaim, or support their views by premises which lie at the foundation of the Papal Church? Truth cannot be the product of error. If the Baptists—as we do—reprobate the heresy of baptismal regeneration, let

them refrain in future from all attempts to overawe us, as sometimes they vainly attempt to do, by the weight of authority by which that heresy is supported. We cannot be condemned for rejecting conclusions from premises which the Baptists themselves would not admit as legitimate; and they are barely excusable for their temerity in adopting such an unfair expedient to maintain their peculiar opinions.

But, if we are to appeal to authority, it is wholly against the Baptists. The invincible Robert Hall observes, "They [close-communication Baptists] are the only persons in the world of whom we have either heard or read who contend for the exclusion of genuine Christians from the Lord's table,—who ever attempted to distinguish them into two classes, such as are entitled to commemorate their Savior's death and such as are excluded from that privilege. In what page of the voluminous records of the church is such a distinction to be traced? or what intimation shall we find in Scripture of an intention to create such an invidious disparity among the members of the same body? Did it ever enter the conception of any but *Baptists* that a right to the sign could be separated from the thing signified, or that there could be a description of persons interested in all the blessings of the Christian covenant and yet not entitled to partake of its sacraments and seals? The right of rejecting those whom Christ has received, of refusing the communion of eminently holy men on account of unessential differences of opinion, is not the avowed tenet of any sect or community in Christendom with the exception of the majority of the Baptists, who, while they are at variance with the whole world on a point of such magnitude, are loud in accusing their brethren of singularity,—while *their* singularity is replete with most alarming consequences,

destroys at once the unity and pronounces a sentence of excommunication on the whole Christian world.”*

What advantage the Baptists can hope to obtain from the opinions of Pedobaptists which they are pleased to call concessions it is impossible to conceive. If certain Pedobaptists believe that immersion was an apostolic mode of baptism, they at the same time maintain that other modes were practised; and do not the Baptists see that these Pedobaptists deem themselves as baptized and consider the Baptists as intolerant and exclusive? Again, if Pedobaptists in general believe that none ought to come to the Lord's table who are not baptized, are they not justly offended with the Baptists for deeming them unbaptized? Pedobaptists never have conceded that they are unbaptized: on what fundamental law of reasoning, therefore, can the Baptists derive any advantage from a general principle admitted by both parties? or how can the Baptists exclude the Pedobaptists from communion on the very ground on which they consider themselves entitled to it? Do not the Baptists perceive that their opinions have no influence on the practice of the Pedobaptists? The fact that the internal regulation and practice of Pedobaptist churches are different from those of the Baptist Church is conclusive proof that the appeal to the opinions of Pedobaptists on the subject under consideration is utterly groundless. So far as the Pedobaptists are concerned, they have no interest in the inquiry concerning the supposed connection between the two sacraments, for they deem themselves already baptized.

Baptist writers possess a singular aptitude for using such imposing and comprehensive expressions as these:—“In the general truth of this proposition all denominations agree;” “the pious and learned of all ages and denomina-

* Hall's Works, vol. i. pp. 320-321.

tions fully concur with us;" "in which we have substantially the concurrence of most of the Pedobaptist world;" "we have the concurrence of all Christians in every age and country;" "we have the unanimous suffrage of all the prevailing denominations;" leaving the reader to solve the wonderful mystery why the pious and learned of all ages and denominations are not Baptists. Not a single reference to Pedobaptist authorities, when legitimately applied, supports the *peculiar pretensions of the Baptists*, and in a majority of instances they furnish the most conclusive refutation of those pretensions,—a species of ordnance which the Baptists are unskilful in using, and whose fatal effect they seem not to have apprehended. For example: in proof of the nature of positive law Dr. Howell quotes Dr. Owen as saying, "That principle that the church hath power to institute and appoint any thing, or *ceremony*, belonging to the worship of God, either as to matter or to *manner*, beyond the orderly observance of such observances as necessarily attend such ordinances as Christ himself has instituted, lies at the bottom of all the horrible superstition and wars that have for so long a season spread themselves over the face of the Christian world."* Dr. Owen as a Pedobaptist was opposed to the exclusive use which the Baptists make of both the positive institutes of Christianity; and consequently this terrible sentence is made to turn directly against the Baptist Church. Bishop Hoadley is next adduced as saying, "There being no other foundation for them [the sacraments] with regard to us but the will of the Institutor, this will must of necessity be our sole direction, both as to our understanding of their true intent, and practising them accordingly; because we can have no other sort of direction in this sort of duties, unless we will

* Howell on Communion, p. 25.

have recourse to *mere invention*, which makes them *our own* institutions, and not the institutions of those who first appointed them."* Bishop Hoadley was a Pedobaptist; and consequently that he believed that the Baptists, in the use of the sacraments, had "recourse to *mere invention*, which made them *their own*," there can be no doubt.

In proof that many of these very authorities believed in baptismal regeneration, and so maintained the connection of the two sacraments, Dr. Howell himself shall be adduced. Says he, "A superficial knowledge of ecclesiastical history is sufficient to convince any one that but a few centuries transpired after the apostles, before a melancholy change was effected in the opinions of the Christian world with regard to the design and efficacy of the sacraments of the gospel. Their importance was magnified immeasurably, and they were soon believed to be so intimately connected with the vitality of religion that they could not in any case be omitted without preventing the salvation of the soul. In the third century and onwards, the Christian fathers believed and taught that sins were only forgiven *in baptism, that infants, by this ordinance, were purged from original pollution, and that all persons dying without it were lost.*"† Dr. Howell had this "superficial acquaintance with ecclesiastical history;" and hence he should have honestly stated why his Pedobaptist authorities maintained the necessary connection between the two sacraments. It is easy to see that this is no support of the Baptist view, which holds the connection on entirely different ground.

This pious fraud, and others like it, which Baptist writers and preachers sometime practise upon their readers and hearers, and to which doubtless may be mainly ascribed their success, deserve particular notice; while such a method of

* Howell on Communion, p. 26. † Terms of Communion, p. 181.

maintaining their peculiar tenets and practices not only indicates the weakness of their claims, but is humiliating to every man of sober reason and candor. We shall mention a few examples of this captivating fraud, though a useful volume might be written on this topic; and any one of moderate reading, and having the leisure, who should write a treatise entitled the "Unfairness of the Baptists," would perform a useful service to the misrepresented and deeply-injured Pedobaptist churches of Christ, as well as open the eyes of the Baptist Church itself

Professor Curtis, in the very first sentence of his book entitled "The Progress of Baptist Principles in the Last Hundred Years," recently published, makes this bold assumption:—"This volume might almost be called 'Concessions of Pedobaptists as to the Errors of Infant Baptism and the Importance of Baptist Principles.'" We reply, from the candid examination we have given his "volume," it may be called, whole and entire, *The Perversions of Pedobaptist Authorities in Support of Baptist Principles*. The statement of the pious fraud is most ingeniously made in the following language:—"His aim has been to draw a wide distinction between parties and opinions. Hence the object of this volume is not to exhibit or defend the Baptists, but their *principles*." Let this distinction be fairly made,—which we propose to do,—and if it does not appear that the "principles" referred to are not peculiarly Baptist principles, but sound Pedobaptist principles *perverted* to support Baptist opinions and practices, then, in our judgment, there is no case of perversion in the annals of time. Professor Curtis, whose book is now before me, states five of the fundamental principles of the Baptist Church,—namely, "freedom of conscience, and the entire separation of Church and State; a converted church-membership; sacraments inoperative without choice and faith; believers the only scriptural sub-

jects of baptism; and immersion always the baptism of the New Testament."* Any man of ordinary knowledge of the evangelical Pedobaptist churches knows that they maintain the first three of these principles; and it must have required an extraordinary degree of presumption upon the ignorance of Americans to claim these principles as the peculiar doctrines of the Baptists. The last two they, and they only, claim; and in the spirit of charity we say they are welcome to them. But, when they attempt to support these two peculiar tenets by Pedobaptist concessions and principles, we are compelled to resist the attempt and expose the fraud. Indeed, this author himself admits, "Some of these [the last two] they have held alone, and others [the first three] frequently *in common* with Christians of different denominations."† *In common!* in what then is there difference but in the last two? and to "defend the Baptists" the last two must be defended, and no more; for the moment the first three are claimed the Baptists enter upon *Pedobaptist* ground, which of course must support the Pedobaptists as well as the Baptists: only it is singular that Professor Curtis should say, "it is impossible that *opposite* principles should long survive among enlightened evangelical Christians."‡ That is, that the first three should long survive in the progress of the last two; that is, that the progress of the Baptist Church involves the destruction of "freedom of conscience, entire separation of Church and State, a converted church-membership," &c.

To be more particular. This author asserts, "Many of the points which were in dispute a hundred years ago, and which were regarded as *Baptist peculiarities*, have become established principles of the great unwritten creed, the general religious sentiment, of the whole country,—the

* Progress of Baptist Principles, p. 15.

† Ibid. p. 13.

‡ Ibid. p. 15.

common law, so to speak, of American Christianity.”* A sufficient rebuke to this pompous swelling is that American Christianity has not recognised this “common law” as identical with “*Baptist peculiarities*,” nor has the “whole country” ascribed “the general religious sentiment” to the influence of the Baptist Church: only a *small* part comparatively has been accessible to the influence of the Baptist Church, and that influence (so far as it is sound and salutary) arising indeed from *Pedobaptist* principles adopted and transferred by degrees into the Baptist Church. But Professor Curtis specifies an instance as illustrative of the influence of the Baptist Church,—“freedom of conscience.”† He mentions “Roger Williams as the first Christian legislator who introduced perfect religious liberty into the Constitution of any State.”‡ But, in the first place, Roger Williams brought with him from England the principles of religious freedom, and was a member of the Church of England when he came to this country. Secondly, he remained in the Baptist Church but six months after he was immersed. Thirdly, he advocated and practised open communion while he remained in the Baptist Church and after he left it. Thus, the great founder of the Baptist Church in America neither derived his principles of religious freedom from the Baptist Church nor supported the Baptist Church after he founded it! Certain is it, therefore, that religious freedom did not appear to Roger Williams as “a necessary consequence of the *distinctive peculiarities* of the Baptist Church,” as is pretended by this author.§ Besides, Lord Baltimore, the Proprietor of Maryland, and “who recognised a general religious toleration,” was a Roman Catholic; and William Penn, who

* Progress of Baptist Principles, p. 18.

† Ibid. p. 18.

‡ Ibid. p. 19.

§ Ibid. p. 19.

prepared his "frame of government" for Pennsylvania, was a Quaker; and Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson, who were members of no church, overturned religious intolerance in Virginia,—indeed, the latter was a Deist; while the *Presbyterians* on all hands are allowed to have taken "the lead" in this great work; and Washington was an Episcopalian. That the Baptists were borne along by the mighty forces on all sides in favor of freedom of conscience in those times is not surprising; but to ascribe freedom of conscience to the influence of the peculiar tenets of the Baptist Church (immersion and close communion) is effrontery surpassed only by papal usurpation of authority over the conscience itself; and when this author affirms that "the whole world has been coming round to these great truths [the rights of conscience] first embodied, vindicated, and maintained by the Baptists,"* one is reminded of the ease with which sectarian zeal can originate pious frauds, and to what a height infatuation can soar. The zeal in this case is rebuked, the pious fraud exposed, and aspiration checked, by the single consideration that the American mind was emancipated from the bondage of civil and religious tyranny by the combined influence of Protestantism, admitted on all hands to have operated on all sides, and not through the instrumentality of any particular church,—indeed, in opposition to the embarrassments and impediments necessarily involved in "the distinctive peculiarities of the Baptist Church." As far as the Baptist Church has been truly *Protestant* it has contributed to American republicanism, but no farther; and now to claim as *peculiar* ground what is *common* is as ridiculous as it is arrogant. Other evangelical churches, especially those that date farther back than the Baptist Church, and on far better ground than she occu-

* Progress of Baptist Principles, p. 60.

ped, might say the same thing of their principles, and then argue that freedom of conscience was a necessary consequence of their distinctive peculiarities; and so all might contend for the distinguished honor which the Baptist Church claims, for they all contributed to the establishment of American republicanism and American Christianity. It is not too much to say that by as much as the other churches have excelled the Baptist Church in modesty they have surpassed her in merit in competition for the honor in question.

The Baptists, in the history of their church from its origin, overlook the easy and gradual transition of a church from a state of corruption and error to a state of comparative purity and excellence,—a transition and improvement not ascribable legitimately to the practical influence of the principles and practices which she originally adopted, but to the principles and practices of pure and spiritual churches in contact with her and accompanying her in her progress to fortune and fame. It is a fundamental fact in the history of the Christian era that the progress of a pure gospel improves man in every department of civilization. Social and civil governments and laws are improved in proportion to the practical development of the truths of the gospel; and, as a concomitant result, corrupt and defective sects of religion are purified in character and improved in doctrine and practice. Civil governments are either improved or overturned, the old governments either modified or new governments set up in their place upon better principles; and the same is true of corrupt and defective churches. These remarks are applicable in a striking manner to the history of the Baptist Church. It will be found that little by little she has arisen from an obscure and corrupt origin, and reached her present respectable and noble position through influences extraneous to her primi-

tive constitution, though in several respects her regeneration is not yet complete. It is a matter of surprise that her historians and writers, declining to award the merit of her improvement where it justly and properly belongs, have confined the sources of her improvement and enlargement within her own limits; while it is matter of greater surprise that *she* should ever have presumed to ascribe the purity, excellence, and efficiency of other evangelical churches, and the existence and prosperity of our republican civil government, to the influence of her peculiar tenets and practices. And it is more surprising still, that, while from her contact with churches pure and sound in doctrine she has borrowed from them many fundamental truths of the gospel and incorporated them in her own creed, she should take their admissions of the soundness of those doctrines as concessions to the truth of her "peculiarities;" holding to those churches the relation of the borrower to the lender, and yet, in opposition to all the dictates of truth and justice, holding the lender under obligation to the borrower! The Baptist Church has not one fundamental truth or principle of the gospel in her creed or practice that did not exist in the creed and practice of other churches antecedently to her origin. It is a reflection upon the intelligence and a presumption upon the ignorance of men to assert or claim the contrary. Why then appeal to admissions of this nature in support of Baptist claims? The admissions support the Baptists only so far as they support the churches that make those admissions, and thus by a sort of necessity carry the Baptist Church along with them in common with other churches. In fact, this appeal to the concessions of the Pedobaptist churches is a recognition of the purity and orthodoxy of the Pedobaptist churches,—is a defence of the Baptist Church behind the ramparts of the Pedobaptist churches,—is a retreat into the walls of the Pedobaptist

churches for security and protection. Abrogate, renounce what of Pedobaptist orthodoxy is contained in the faith and practice of the Baptist Church, and what remains to that church but an *exclusive mode* of one of the sacraments of Christianity and the concomitant restricted observance of the other sacrament? How long could the Baptist Church exist in this state of mutilation? Let the Baptists give back to the Pedobaptist churches what she has borrowed from them, and that moment she is bereft utterly of the means of supporting her *peculiar* tenets, exclusive immersion and close communion. Dissolve the bonds of Pedobaptist orthodoxy that hold the Baptist Church together, and her peculiarities fall at once of themselves: in that instant she will be rejected by an enlightened community and renounced by all the evangelical churches in the world. It is *Pedobaptist* doctrine, elemental in the Baptist Church, that is the only sure basis of her existence and the only sure guarantee of her perpetuity. Remove this, and she falls to ruin in a day.

Another example of the sophistical reasoning of the Baptists is the confounding the inherent tendency of the doctrines and institutions of evangelical pedobaptism with the adventitious circumstances with which they were formerly implicated, and from which they have been extricated. This popular and successful sophism is effectually exposed by the consideration that the adventitious circumstances are ascribable to the fault of human nature, to man's entire depravity, and not to any inherent defect in the doctrines and institutions themselves; and consequently a renovation of the human heart is accompanied with the abrogation of the adventitious circumstances and the restoration of evangelical doctrines and institutions to their original simplicity and purity. Corruptions and innovations originate in motives inseparable from inordinate self-love, and are fostered by worldly and political influences, as in the develop-

ment of the Papacy, and in the constitution of the great church-establishments of Europe,—offices, originally simple and humble, gradually elevated from one grade and title to another still higher, till the apostolic office of elder or bishop is filled by a monarch, who claims the homage of the world, and institutions, originally simple signs and seals of the covenant of salvation, become inscrutable mysteries communicating *ex opere operatum* all the blessings of the covenant to the recipient. The rise and prevalence of doctrinal errors and corruptions in ceremony are in proportion to the decay of intelligent and scriptural piety, and resistance to the former is in proportion to the revival and extension of the latter. The wonder is that the combination of the political and superstitious influences and amazing power of wealth and learning employed in erecting the splendid structure of Papacy did not sweep a pure Christianity from the face of the earth; and this it would have done if the Bible and religious feeling in man had not been indestructible. And now that that religious feeling has been roused and guided by the light of the Bible and the Spirit, and the gorgeous and meretricious drapery thrown around the offices and institutions of the gospel has been removed by the deft skill and courage of holy men, to ascribe the baleful influences of unregenerate and aspiring human nature to the inherent tendency of those offices and institutions is a chimera surpassed only by the claim to papal infallibility and supremacy. No; the tendency to corruption and the augmentation of political and ecclesiastical power is not inherent in evangelical pedobaptism. Evangelical pedobaptism is linked with the development and maturity of human destiny. The Pedobaptist Reformation of Luther has stamped upon human nature impressions which centuries of Pedobaptist triumphs have deepened, and which it seems, we run no hazard in saying, will

be perpetuated from age to age in moulding the world's character and achieving the world's redemption.

But what is there in evangelical pedobaptism against which the Baptist Vatican "lightens" so fiercely and "thunders" so loudly? In it is no penance for the neglecter of baptism, nor missal for the worshipper of the sacramental elements, nor use of the confessional, nor recognition of human merits, nor prayer for the dead, nor mass for patients in purgatory, nor supplication to the Virgin, nor invocation of the saints, nor a vaticum for the Christian "*in extremis*," nor a pæan to celibacy, nor an anthem to virginity, nor a shrine for holy relics, nor a receptacle for an image, nor a trace of idolatry, nor a ceremony of worldly pomp, nor a service for inspiring superstitious awe, nor a rite of priestly policy, nor a precept or regulation of papal import or authority; but, simple and impressive in order, sound and scriptural in doctrine, pure and spiritual in experience, consistent and noble in character, energetic and efficient in action, it has gone forth "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners;" while human society, under its influence, on every hand, has ever been tending to a higher and purer state of civilization, refinement, and religion.

What church—to say nothing of other evangelical churches—has given better evidence that He who instituted the sacramental supper is with her than the Methodist Church? Like a mighty army her sons have joyfully rushed forward, stormed, and carried by assault the citadels of the enemy on every hand. It may almost be said of them, "the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth unto it." What battles have they not fought, what dangers have they not encountered, what difficulties have they not surmounted, what enemies have they not overcome, what sufferings have they not endured, what labors have

they not performed, what activity have they not displayed, what energy have they not exerted, what proof of fealty to God and love to man have they not given in a thousand forms? As a living, impetuous, irresistible torrent, Methodism has swept away the opposition of Scribe and Pharisee, and her bold, vigorous, and undaunted leaders have led her forward to spiritual victory. God has sanctioned the holy invasion; and surely he gives the invaders a title to the kingdom won, and seals with his approbation every repetition of their sacramental oath at his table. No church since the days of the apostles has ever exercised more charity toward other Christian communities than the Methodist Church does toward those who differ from her in opinion and church-government. No church has been more independent of aid from other churches in its labors and success. No church has been gathered so entirely from the world without robbing other churches. No church has contributed more to the prosperity of other churches. No church since apostolic times has flourished so rapidly and done so much good in so short a time as the Methodist Church has done. We might enlarge, and heaven and earth would respond. We only add, it would be no desecration of the Lord's table, nor dishonor to the Baptists, for them to engage with the Methodists or any other Christians in sacramental communion.

Professor Curtis observes, "This controversy has of late years been conducted in a far more Christian spirit, and the points of difference have been greatly narrowed down."* What points of difference? The points of difference referred to are the abuses and absurdities which the Baptists formerly connected with baptism, and which, having been refuted by Pedobaptist facts and arguments, they have abandoned, so

* Progress of Baptist Principles, p. 16.

that now the points of difference are exclusive immersion and close communion, which are as tenaciously maintained and as firmly opposed by the parties as ever. But, the points of difference being less now than formerly, there is good reason why the parties should be more friendly now than formerly. The prejudices of the Baptists have "evaporated" with their errors.

"Other churches, of late," says another Baptist writer, "have become more friendly toward the Baptists." This is true; and the reason asserted for this is that other churches are yielding gradually to the influence and approximating to the tenets and practices of the Baptist Church. But the reverse is the reason of the friendly bearing of evangelical churches toward the Baptist Church. The gradual approximation of the Baptist Church to the doctrines and practices of the evangelical churches is the true explanation of this gratifying change. The Baptist Church from its origin has gradually and by almost insensible degrees taken up into its creed so much of the doctrine and adopted so much of the practice of other churches, and thus has so narrowed down the causes of difference and repulsion between her and other churches, that it is but a natural and necessary consequence that they should be more friendly toward her now than formerly. In this case they could not hold her at a distance, or treat her with indifference, without condemning what she had borrowed from themselves and retained and practised themselves; and with every advance of the Baptist Church to the sound and evangelical views of other churches will be their recognition of her claims to their friendship, confidence, and regards. For example:—In England, in 1535, (to go no further back, and not to mention the heresies maintained by many if not all the sects from which the Baptists claim descent,) they denied that "Christ was both God and

man:"* how then could evangelical churches be friendly toward them as sound in the faith until they renounced this heresy and adopted the orthodox view of Christ,—which they have since done? Again: no further back than the period in which Wall wrote (1705) many of the Baptists “believed none to be Christians but themselves, because they believed none to be baptized but themselves; and many of them were so peremptory in this, that if they were in the chamber of a sick man, and any Pedobaptist, minister or other, came to pray with him, they went out of the room; and, if they were invited to the funeral of any Pedobaptist, they went to the house and accompanied the corpse with the rest of the people to the church-door; but there they retreated: they called it the *steeple-house*.”† But a very great change has come to pass since then, and the Baptists now engage with other churches in every particular of Christian fellowship but sacramental communion; so that it is not surprising that other churches should be more friendly toward them than formerly.

The Baptists—for example, Dr. Howell and Mr. Remington—often attempt to prove close communion upon other churches. What then? In this either the Pedobaptists are right or they are wrong. If they are wrong, then a similar practice among the Baptists is not right. If they are right, then the Baptists have no right to complain. But the Pedobaptists do not practise restricted communion, as all the world knows. Therefore the Baptists cannot appeal to the Pedobaptists for the propriety of their practice. This were a sufficient answer to much that the Baptists have written in vindication of close communion. But Mr. Whitney, a Baptist, in his work on Open Communion, shall answer this side-issue. “The question is not whether

* Wall, vol. ii. p. 310.

† Ibid. p. 326.

we are as free or not in our communion as others are. Some, indeed, like Mr. Remington, seem to think that this is the whole question. Even if it were true that Baptists were more free and liberal in their administrations of the Lord's Supper than other denominations,—which, however, is about as capable of being proved as that *a barred and bolted house* is easier of access than *one with open doors whose inmates stand to welcome you in*,—what would this have to do with justifying the practice of close communion? The question is, Are we as free as God's word and the genius of the ennobling religion of Christ require us to be? It is a weak cause indeed that is sustained by such a course, and a bad one alone that needs it. And yet this is the mode in which hundreds are made confirmed restricted-communicants. When all other arguments fail, this, in nine cases out of ten, is sure to be plied, if not to effect the end desired."* We agree with Mr. Whitney, that, where a man's reasoning is bad, ordinarily his motive is not good.

We know no work, except Dr. Howell's treatise on "Terms of Sacramental Communion" and certain Romish publications, that contains crowded in it more pious frauds of the character under consideration than Mr. Remington's little pamphlet on Communion. It is a singular little pamphlet,—singular in its authorship: Mr. Remington was for "twenty-five years a member," and for "nearly twenty years" a minister, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and during that time a member of three annual Conferences, and at last settled in the Baptist Church. Singular in its popularity: it has already (1852) reached the *twenty-second* thousand. And singular in its puerile sophisms: and this may explain its popularity. Almost every page is replete

* Whitney on Open Communion, pp. 38, 39.

with sophisms. For example:—To refute the charge that the “Baptists rob the children of God of their privilege,” he inquires, “How often do the different denominations of Pedobaptists commune with each other?” and replies that “for more than twenty-five years he was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and never for once during all that time enjoyed the privilege of communing with any other denomination;” and that “a few weeks ago, in conversation with a preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church,” the preacher acknowledged to him that for “twelve years he had not communed once with other denominations.”* And why not? Because they were *denied* the privilege of communing with other churches? No; but because they *voluntarily declined* the privilege. The fault, then, was not with “other denominations,” but with *themselves*. But the Baptists *deny* others this privilege; and therefore the fault is with the *Baptists*. Again: he repeats a dialogue he had while a Methodist preacher with a “young convert” who applied to him for baptism by “immersion,” and whom he refused to immerse because she believed immersion was the only valid mode, saying to her, “Well, madam, if this is your opinion I cannot baptize you, because you are not a Methodist, but a Baptist;” and so she “goes to the Baptists.”† We reply that he acted unjustly both to the “young convert” and the Methodist Church, for the Methodist Church makes no such requisition of candidates for *private* membership in her fold.‡

* Remington on Communion, pp. 13, 14.

† Ibid. pp. 19, 21.

‡ The Methodists do not believe immersion either essential to baptism or a bar to communion. It is a sufficient refutation to this sophism to say that the Methodists would not repel pious *Baptists* themselves from the Lord's table, though they believe, as Mr. Remington's “young convert” did, in exclusive immersion. Yea, the *Baptist* Remington himself would not be excluded; and I hesitate not to express the belief

About the time of this dialogue it is presumable Mr. Remington was not far from the "liquid grave" himself.

Again: he cites instances of persecution and intolerance by the Pedobaptists "in New England in 1636, 1639, 1643, 1644, 1651, 1680, and 1770,"* from which he argues the existence of the spirit of persecution and intolerance in Pedobaptist churches in America in the present day. But look at these dates. They are all before the Declaration of Independence, civil and religious, which occurred in 1776, when America threw off the yoke of English control. His charge, then, lies against *English* persecution and intolerance, and not the Pedobaptist churches of the *United States*. But his humiliating inference from *English* persecution and intolerance, above cited, is most appropriate to the Baptist Church from its origin to the present time:—"Any system of religion, therefore, which in its practical influence would lead us to persecute those who are of a different opinion with ourselves, or would *preclude* Christian fellowship with those who are *right* in the fundamentals of religion, and have passed from death unto life and become the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, just because they differ from us in some things *not absolutely necessary* to salvation, must be wrong, radically wrong."† Then the Baptist "system" of religion is "wrong, radically wrong," for it does "preclude Christian fellowship" with pious Pedobaptists who differ from the Baptists in nothing "*absolutely necessary* to salvation,"—the Baptists themselves being judges, and Mr. Remington in particular. "We rejoice to believe," says he, "that there are genuine Christians in all the evan-

that many of his old Methodist brethren in the ministry and membership would gladly meet with him in the old familiar and sacred service at the Lord's table, in the Methodist Church, so long as he maintains a Christian integrity in the Baptist ministry.

* Remington on Communion, pp. 23, 24.

† Ibid. p. 25.

gical churches, for whom we not only entertain the highest respect but sincere Christian affection and fellowship.”* How just is the claim to the meed of praise in the following sentence the reader can judge:—“One thing which is worthy of praise must be allowed us, [Baptists,] and that is CONSISTENCY.”†

Again:—“Let the Pedobaptist churches enforce their respective disciplines, and require their members to invariably sanction infant baptism, and there would be such a fire kindled among them that nothing but immersion would quench it. They would drive their members off to Baptist churches by hundreds, if not by thousands.”‡ Here is another mistake of the *Methodist* Remington. The Methodist Discipline makes no such requisition under the sanction of exclusion. It is obvious Mr. Remington was imperfectly acquainted with the letter and spirit of the Methodist Discipline, at least in this particular. Besides, *water* is a novel means to “quench” the fires of religious contention, and by this time the Baptists must have become expert in its use.

Again:—“Again, I know of many ministers of the gospel who, notwithstanding the avowed principles of the Pedobaptist churches that baptism is an essential prerequisite to the communion, will immerse such as have been sprinkled in infancy, and even adult years, rather than let them go to the Baptists. Is this consistent?”§ This inconsistency is chargeable upon the *individual* ministers that do it; but the church unqualifiedly disapprobates the abuse, as Mr. Remington himself acknowledges:—“I acknowledge that this is not in accordance with established usage in Pedobaptist churches;”|| and again:—“To determine what are the doctrines or discipline of any church, we must not

* Remington on Communion, p. 5.

† Ibid. p. 27.

‡ Ibid. p. 28.

§ Ibid. p. 28.

|| Ibid. p. 29.

rely upon the mere statements or practice of *isolated individuals*.”*

Again : he charges close communion upon other churches, for example :—“ With close-communion laws, I ask, how can the Protestant Episcopal Church be open-communion ?” † But private members in the Methodist Church do commune with the Episcopalians ; and this Mr. Remington himself acknowledges :—“ The Methodist Episcopal Church do not deem it wrong to go and eat and drink with them, [Episcopalians,] though they will never return the courtesy.” ‡ How then can the Episcopalians be “ close-communion ” ? Besides, the Episcopalians, as is well known, *do often* “ return the courtesy ” in the Southern country, however they may decline to do it in Mr. Remington’s neighborhood.

Again : he introduces an applicant for communion in the Methodist Church, and represents him as rejected because he does not “ *believe, preach, and dress just like the Methodists*.” § Mr. Remington is fanciful.

Again : he forms a sophism from the Methodistic rule respecting “ class-meetings,” || which is refuted by the fact that the Methodists do admit to communion members of other churches who have not the institution of class-meetings.

We shall close our notice of Mr. Remington with a concession that refutes his whole treatise :—“ Pedobaptists who are united in a congregation may be regarded as a church, and a *Christian* church, though they have never been baptized according to Christ’s example and command ; but they cannot be fellowshiped as a *regular gospel church*. We may extend to them the hand of *Christian* fellowship, but

* Remington on Communion, p. 30.

† Ibid. p. 46.

‡ Ibid. p. 47.

§ Ibid. p. 49.

|| Ibid. pp. 50-53.

not the hand of *church-fellowship*.”* Then “a congregation” may be “a *Christian church*” and not “a *Christian church*” at the same time,—which is absurd. The moment it is admitted that we are *Christian churches*, it follows that we are founded upon the *gospel*. Moreover, a “*Christian church*” is entitled to “*church-fellowship*,” or it is not a *Christian church*. The Baptists, then, must deny that we are *Christian churches*, or extend to us “the hand of *church-fellowship*.” But Mr. Remington admits that we are *Christian churches*: therefore he and his brethren should extend to us “the hand of *church-fellowship*.”

Mr. Remington’s little work has nothing new in it except his sophisms against the Methodists; and from twenty-five years’ association with them he learned enough of them to misrepresent them; and we would have given his popular pamphlet but little notice did we not believe that its popularity depended upon its sophisms and misrepresentations.

And now what is the amount of the concessions contained in preceding chapters and of the pious frauds exposed in this chapter? Cold and inanimate are the concessions,—though they are sufficient to establish all the verities essential to pious and evangelical pedobaptism. They are made in a frigid apathy. The imagination of Baptist writers seems dead to the moral dignity and efficiency of the Pedobaptists, and admiration is expressed with reluctance, reservations, and exceptions. Their blameless purity and moral triumphs are enveloped in a mass of ecclesiastical fictions and corruptions, and their majesty and beauty disparaged or neutralized by expressions prophetic of dark and degenerate periods. Fair room is allowed for the exhibition of Baptist martyrs to the truth; but other witnesses, as genuine and nobler in character, are left to repose in the

* Remington on Communion, p. 71.

silence and obscurity of the past. This want of candor evinces the want of charity and the presence of an undue love of party; or it may be that the want of charity explains the absence of candor. The estimate of an argument depends in a very great degree upon the habits and feelings of the reader; and hence, when prejudices are already existing in favor of one party and a friendly disposition indulged toward the other party in controversy, it is almost impossible to draw the line between unfairness and intentional misrepresentation; and the path of the reader is indeed perilous when he is unable to detect in his author unfairness on the one hand and a secret and deliberate violation of truth and justice on the other. A deliberate suppression of facts material to a just and rational conclusion evinces not only the spirit of bigotry in its most artful attire, but of the most insidious hostility to the misrepresented sects of Christianity. Whether disguised or not, the real issue is involved in shadow, and doubt and suspicion are cast back upon the primitive history and present existence of other evangelical denominations. It is a wily manœuvre to tarnish their native purity and destroy their claims to confidence and support. It is a dexterous attempt to confound the limits of sophism with sober reasoning, and to palm upon the public a pious fraud in the place of unquestionable merit and plain truth. It is a method of debate which may be crowned with a limited success, but which must be ultimately abandoned with shame and defeat. It is an assumption prodigally ornamented with imposing quotations from Pedobaptist authors, transmuted into concessions, which, when interpreted in their proper connection, turn out to be invincible arguments against the assumption, leaving it destitute of all reason and moral dignity, and convicting its supporters of the affectation of severe impartiality. Men of this class seem to be governed by the

influence of inextricable bias; and their only reward can be a transitory triumph,—such only as a narrow sectarianism and unholy ambition can achieve. The want of candor on any subject is humiliating; but in a matter of such serious concern as that before us it deserves the severest reprehension; and this will be timely administered, since ordinarily dissembled piety is corrective of its insinuating sophisms and too superficial to prevent the exposure of its deep-laid fraud. The mildest judgment we can express of this mode of upholding a cause is that it is the sport of sectarian caprice, the fruitless conjecture of prejudice, and the pure invention of the advocates of favorite opinions. That testimonies so explicitly and harmoniously in opposition to the peculiarities of the Baptist Church should ever have been employed in support of those peculiarities is one of the boldest and most desperate adventures of controversialists upon record: I had almost said that the adventure itself is one of the peculiarities of the Baptist Church. Never had the philosophical remark respecting a certain class of writers, who “know a little, presume a great deal, and so jump to a conclusion,” a more perfect illustration than in this case. All that can be truly said of the unfairness of the Baptists is, that in their positions the true and the false are adroitly intermingled; and, in extricating the former from the latter, the positions are found to contain inevitable self-contradictions that are utterly fatal to them.

But it is time to dismiss from the attention of the reader the unpleasant topic of this chapter; and this we shall do with a single general remark. Let the reader, who has neither the leisure nor the means to consult the Pedobaptist authorities adduced by Baptists in proof of exclusive immersion and close communion, take it for granted, once for all, that a pious fraud lurks in every attempt. No plainer case is conceivable, than that if conscientious Pedobaptists (and

Baptists admit that the authorities they quote are conscientious) maintained Baptist principles they would have been *Baptists*. In every case of quotation from Pedobaptist authorities I have referred to the original authority, whenever accessible to me, and found, without an exception, that the Baptists are guilty of the most manifest injustice, distortion, and perversion in the citation or quotation. There is nothing like this unfairness on record except the pious frauds and sophisms in Romanism and Puseyism: indeed, though not so learned or so skilful as the latter, the Baptists have been bolder and more successful in the use of this dishonorable method,—both exhibiting irretrievably the inherent weakness of their *peculiar* tenets and practices.

CHAPTER IX.

RESTRICTED COMMUNION A MODERN INVENTION.

THE ground taken by the Baptists, which they regard as the invulnerable and inaccessible rampart of their peculiar claims, is that “their church is distinguished by two prominent traits: that she immerses exclusively in baptism, and admits to the ordinance none but believers.”* This position is taken in all their writings, and is the beginning, continuation, and end of all their argumentation. Adhering with inflexible tenacity to this fundamental ground on which all their hopes are based and built, they institute the inquiry “whether the church at present known as Baptist has existed in all ages since the days of Christ,”† and endeavor to trace back a line of successive sects to the days of the apostles as em-

* Howell on Terms of Communion, p. 251.

† Ibid. p. 251.

bracing Baptist principles and adopting Baptist practices, affirming that “in more modern times the Baptists were known in Italy as the followers of Gundulphus,—in France under the name of Berengarians,—of Paterines in the Duchy of Milan,—of the Petrobrussians and Henricians in Languedoc and Provence,—and of the followers in Brescia of Arnold.”* *Exclusive immersion to none but believers* is their rock; and whatever sect they find in their researches occupying this rock they claim as a Baptist sect, *whatever other opinions were embraced by that sect*. And so they conclude that “the Baptists are not Protestants, nor Dissenters, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, nor Reformers, but what we have been in all ages,—the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.”†

We shall take up the principal of these sects in order, and examine briefly but sufficiently into their opinions and practices respectively, and then compare them with the doctrines and practices of the present Baptist Church, to see wherein they differ and wherein they are identical, showing that the differences are so great that what of identity remains is insufficient to justify the belief that they were what are now called Baptists. And in our investigation we shall find that restricted communion, as it is practised by the Baptists, is of more recent origin than their opposition to infant baptism.

1. Let us run our eye along the chain of opposition to infant baptism from its origin, and see if we can find the doctrine of close communion anywhere in its whole course. Opposition to infant baptism originated with *Peter de Bruis*, in the *twelfth century*, who publicly preached that *infants ought not to be baptized, because they cannot believe, and therefore cannot be saved*. Next arose the Anabaptists, in the

* Howell on Terms of Communion, p. 257.

† Ibid. p. 251.

early part of the *sixteenth* century, and of these, Benedict, the famous Baptist historian, says, "Under this head—the German Anabaptists or Mennonites—I shall include the whole family of this people as described by Mösheim, who will be my principal guide in their history from the remote depths of antiquity."* And thus he quotes Mosheim:—
"The true origin of that sect which acquired the name of Anabaptists by administering the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion, and derived that of Mennonites from the famous man to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, is hid in the remote depth of antiquity, and is of consequence extremely difficult to be ascertained. This uncertainty will not appear surprising when it is considered that this sect started up *all of a sudden* in several countries at the same time, &c. Their progress was rapid; for in a short space of time their *discourses, visions, and predictions* excited commotions in a great part of Europe, and drew into their communion a prodigious multitude, *whose ignorance rendered them easy victims* to the illusions of enthusiasm. Some of them maintained, among others, the following points of doctrine: that baptism of infants was an invention of the devil; that every Christian was invested with the power to preach the gospel, and consequently that the church stood in no need of ministers and pastors; that in the kingdom of Christ civil magistrates were absolutely useless; and that God still continued to reveal his will to chosen persons by dreams and visions."† Such were the early opposers of infant baptism, and fathers of the Baptist Church! Respecting Menno, the founder of the Mennonites, Mosheim, Benedict's guide, says, "he expressed his *abhorrence* of the *licentious tenets* which several Anabaptists held in relation

* Benedict's History of the Baptists, p. 44.

† Ibid. pp. 45, 46.

to the *baptism of infants*, the millennium, &c. : he explained and modified them in such a manner as made them resemble the religious tenets which were universally received in the Protestant churches."*

Some Baptist writers claim descent for the Baptist Church from the Waldenses, a body of Christians inhabiting the valleys of the Alps and brought to light in the *twelfth* century. They were generally a pious and exemplary people,—advocated many of the doctrines of the Reformation, and opposed the false pretensions and superstitious additions of the Church of Rome. *But they did not oppose infant baptism.*† When certain Romish priests accused them of refusing baptism to their children, they denied the charge, but acknowledged that in certain instances they had delayed baptism because their own pastors or barbs were abroad in other parts of the work of the church, and that hereby the baptism of their children was often delayed longer than they desired.‡ Wall gives the following account:—“The present Waldenses, or Vaudois, in Piedmont, who are the posterity of those of old, *do practise infant baptism*; and they were also found in the practice of it when the *Protestants of Luther’s* reformation sent to know their *state and doctrine* and to confer with them; and they themselves do say that their *fathers never practised otherwise*. And they give proof of it from an old book of theirs, called the *Spiritual Almanack*, where infant baptism is owned.”§ In the 17th article of the rule of faith and practice adopted by all the Waldenses assembled at Angrogne, September 12, 1535, they state their doctrine of the sacraments as follows:—“Art. XVIII. As to the sacraments, it has been determined by the Holy Scriptures that we have but two sacramental

* Mosheim, vol. ii. cent. 16, part ii. c. 3.

† Perrin’s History of the Waldenses.

‡ Wall, vol. ii. p. 301.

§ Wall, vol. ii. p. 240.

signs or symbols, which Jesus Christ has left to us: the one is baptism, the other the eucharist or Lord's Supper, which we receive to demonstrate our perseverance in the faith, *according to the promise we made in our baptism in our infancy.*" Professor Curtis admits that the Waldenses practised infant baptism. "To what extent they [the Waldenses] rejected infant baptism has long been a matter of dispute. That many of them did so is beyond question. And, on the other hand, that some of the sects who went under this general name continued to practise it, *we do not doubt.*" (Progress of Baptist Principles, p. 26.) There is other testimony, which we omit, to notice but one fact more. "Soon after the opening of the Reformation by Luther, they sought intercourse with the Reformed churches of Geneva and France, *held communion with them*, and appeared eager to testify their respect and affection for them as brethren in the Lord,—the churches of Geneva and France at this time being in the habitual use of infant baptism. *This single fact is sufficient to prove that the Waldenses were Pedobaptists.*"*

The descent of the Baptist Church is sometimes traced from the Cathari of Germany, the Paterines in Italy, and the Paulicians in Greece. But the following are well-authenticated facts in church-history:—"All these sects were *semi-manicheans*. The Paulicians denied that this inferior and visible world is the production of the Supreme Being, and distinguish between the Creator of the world and of the human body from the Most High who dwells in heaven; and some have been led to conceive that they were a branch of the Gnostics rather than of the Manichees: *they refused to celebrate the institution of the Lord's Supper*; they rejected the books of the Old Testament and the two epis-

* Dr. Samuel Miller on Baptism.

bles of St. Peter; instead of confessing the human nature and substantial sufferings of Christ, they amused their fancy with a celestial body and with a fantastic crucifixion that eluded the impotent malice of the Jews; they believe in the eternity of matter,"* &c. However heretical they were, no evidence of a satisfactory nature has ever been adduced that they *opposed* infant baptism.

The Baptists pretend to trace their descent from the *Donatists*, a schismatic sect which arose in the year 311 and derives its name from Donatus, its founder. They made no alteration in ecclesiastical government, none in doctrine, *and continued the practice of infant baptism as they had done before their separation.* "The doctrine of the Donatists was conformable to that of the church, as even their adversaries confess."† "Among all the reasons that the Donatists gave why the baptism of the Catholics was null, there is none that lays any blame on their giving it in infancy. But, on the contrary, St. Austin does often make use of the instance of infant baptism, as *granted by them*, to overthrow some of their errors that they had about baptism."‡ Optatus, Bishop of Milvium, in persuading the Donatists to union with the church, reminds them that "the ecclesiastical organization is one and the same with us and you. Though men's *minds* are at variance, *the sacraments are at none.* And we may say we believe alike, *and are sealed with one and the same seal,—not otherwise baptized than you, nor otherwise ordained than you.*"§ And Cresconius, a Donatist, settles the dispute:—"There is between us and you one religion, *the same sacraments, NOTHING IN CHRISTIAN CEREMONIES DIFFERENT.* It is a *schism* that

* Waddington; Wall; Buck, p. 329; Mosheim, vol. ii. 233; Milner, vol. i. 572; Ruter, p. 154.

† Mosheim, vol. i. 123.

‡ Wall, vol. ii. 130.

§ Ibid. vol. i. 161.

is between us, not a *heresy*.”* Donatists, therefore, were *Pedobaptists*. Professor Curtis, evidently a man of some reading and a degree of candor, concedes this much,—that “at first there *is little distinction recorded between the Catholics and Donatists* in regard to *this point*, [infant baptism :] it is *even probable* that individual cases of infant baptism may have existed among the earlier Donatists.”†

The Baptists attempt to trace descent also from the *Novatians*, a sect of *dissenters* that arose in the year 250 and takes its name from Novatian, who separated from the church, not on account of *doctrine*, but mere points of *discipline*. “They were distinguished merely by their *discipline*, for their religious and doctrinal tenets do not appear to be at all different from those of the church.”‡ The origin of this sect is given by Neander :—“This dissension arose from a contest *about the election of a bishop*, and from a contention of *opinions on the subject of church-penance* ;”§ and Novatian himself, “being in danger of death, on his *sick-bed* received the rite of baptism by *SPRINKLING*, as his condition required.”|| Mr. Benedict concedes the whole issue here. Says he, “As this [the Novatian] is *the first party* of importance who were acknowledged to be sound in doctrine which withdrew from the established church, it is proper to give a full account of the reasons which led to the separation :”¶ *and infant baptism is not mentioned as one of those reasons.*

We might have given a more extended examination of this topic, and adduced many other authorities ; but Mr. Benedict saves us any further trouble in the following con-

* Wall, vol. i. 161.

† Progress of Baptist Principles, p. 23.

‡ Watson's Theological Dictionary, p. 708.

§ Neander's Church History, p. 142.

|| Milner, vol. i. 180.

¶ Benedict's History of the Baptists, p. 4.

cession: "I shall not attempt," says he, "to trace a continuous line of churches, as we can for *a few centuries past* in Europe and America. *This is a kind of succession to which we never laid claim; and, of course, we make no effort to prove it. We place no reliance on this sort of testimony to establish the soundness of our faith or the validity of our administrations.*"* Well said, Benedict! thou art properly named Benedict; and never let the Baptists question again "the *soundness* of the faith or the *validity* of the administrations" of their Pedobaptist brethren by an appeal to the history of the Christian church.

We are at the end of the chain. We have seen that the testimony of a *thousand* years from the birth of Christ is undisturbed by a single instance of opposition to the apostolic practice of infant baptism.† Further: there was no opposition to infant baptism for *twelve hundred* years, except from Tertullian and Peter de Bruis, both of whom founded their opposition to it upon *grounds* that would *overturn* the Baptist Church. Further: for more than *fifteen hundred* years of the Christian era there was not a single church on earth that opposed infant baptism upon ground occupied by the modern Baptist Church. Thus, the Baptist Church must date its origin with the Anabaptists in Germany, in the *sixteenth century*. The beginning of opposition to infant baptism, upon the principles maintained by the Baptist Church, is coeval with the beginning of the Baptist Church; and no opposition of this kind is recorded in any authentic church-history further back than the *sixteenth century*. From the sixteenth century to the times of the apostles, so far from discovering any evidence of the *restricted com-*

* History of the Baptists, p. 51.

† The opposition of Tertullian is of no importance, for he admitted the *universal prevalence* of infant baptism in his day.

munion of the modern Baptist Church, we find no foundation on which that church itself could properly be located.

2. But the origin of close communion in the Baptist Church is more recent than the origin of the Baptist Church itself.

Admit—which we do not—that the Baptist Church commenced with Tertullian, who, on certain grounds, opposed infant baptism but yet admitted its universal prevalence: did he separate from the church? Not at all, but yet communed with the church. Without doubt Tertullian was an open-communionist. This the Baptists cannot deny. Consequently it is reasonable to suppose that, from the time of Tertullian, all who embraced *his* opinions on the subject of infant baptism practised mixed communion also for many centuries afterward; or, if any practised close communion, they did not do it from opposition to infant baptism. We have seen that the particular sects through which the Baptists claim descent till the time of Peter de Bruis, if they practised close communion at all, did not do it from opposition to infant baptism, for several of them practised infant baptism. Not one of these was a Baptist sect; no historian calls them Baptist sects: they were known and called by other and appropriate names. If Baptists existed at all till the time when the *Anabaptists* arose, they existed in Pedobaptist churches, and so practised mixed communion. In a word: we find no evidence that the Baptists *ever organized themselves anywhere as a distinct and separate sect, under the authority and necessity of baptism as a term of communion, till the seventeenth century.*

Of this the following is the proof:—The “*first Baptist Church*” in England was formed in 1602,* and “the first

* Backus's Church History, p. 19. Benedict gives the date 1607 or 1608.

in America" in 1639.* "Crosby, in his History of the English Baptists, says that they began to form themselves into separate societies in 1633, five years after the birth of John Bunyan, and hardly three years before the banishment of Roger Williams in this country. Up to that time they had been intermixed in churches with other non-conformists, though during nearly the whole of the preceding reign they had contended more or less strenuously for their principles as Baptists. Eleven years after this the whole number of Baptist churches in England was fifty-four, seven of which were in London; and, when John Bunyan became pastor of the church at Bedford, the number was still greater. Most of these churches, *in consequence of the opposition* which they received from others, refused to commune with them altogether. To some, however, among whom were John Humphrey and John Bunyan, this course appeared uncalled-for and unchristian, and they contended for *the continuance* of that free intercourse at the Lord's table *which had been steadily maintained between Baptists and Christians of other persuasions from the first.* Restricted communion, therefore, appears evidently as a modern invention. It was a thing only of recent date when Humphrey wrote his 'Free Admission to the Sacrament,' and Bunyan, some ten years after, his 'Differences about Water Baptism no Bar to Communion.' And now it has scarcely the sanction of two hundred years, and that from *only a portion* of the denomination at any time."†

Dr. Howell adduces Wall in proof that the "Parliament assembled upon the restoration of Charles II. expressed the

* Benedict's History of the Baptists, pp. 441-459; Prof. Knowles's Memoir of Roger Williams; Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge, p. 190.

† Whitney on Open Communion, pp. 149-151.

dislike the nation had conceived against these men,"—that is, "the *Baptists*,"—and that an act was passed in favor of all except those who "had committed the unpardonable crime of embracing *Baptist* principles." Dr. Howell also quotes from Wall "the language of Judge Hale" commendatory of *the Baptists* "who pretended so highly to liberty of conscience."* And Dr. Howell, in a note, says, "The Anabaptists of that day, on all hands, are confessed to be *the Baptists of our times*."† Very well: let us then refer to Wall, whose work referred to is before me. I refer to the very places, and in connection with the places, cited by Dr. Howell; and let us see how the matter will turn out.

Says Wall, "In the year 1533, 25th of Henry the VIII., John Frith (who was martyred that year) wrote a short tract, which he calls a Declaration of Baptism: in it he takes notice of the *antipedobaptist* opinion, as then *lately risen in the world*, (it was about *eleven years'* standing in Germany, and was but *lately got into Holland*, for this was a year before the outrage and dispersion at Munster.) What he says of it is this:—'Now is there an opinion risen among certain, which affirm that children may not be baptized until they come unto a perfect age; and that because they have no faith.' But after a short discourse, he breaks off from that point thus:—'But this matter will I pass over; for I trust the English (unto whom I write this) *have no such opinions*.'"‡ And Wall adds, "At what time it [Anabaptism, that is, according to Dr. Howell, "modern Baptist principles"] began to be embraced by any English I do not find it easy to discover. But it is plain that no very considerable number in England were of this persuasion till about *sixty years ago*,"§—from the time Wall wrote.

* Howell on Terms of Communion, p. 123.

† Wall, vol. ii. pp. 306-307.

‡ Ibid. p. 122.

§ Ibid. p. 315.

And Wall continues: "It is to be noted"—and Dr. Howell carefully omits this whole paragraph—"that when this opinion began first to increase they did not all of them proceed to separation from the established church: they held it sufficient to declare their sentiment against infant baptism, to reserve their own children to adult baptism, and to be baptized with it themselves, without renouncing communion in prayers, *and in the other sacrament*, with the Pedobaptists. In the year 1645, when Marshall had in a sermon objected to the Antipedobaptists the sin of separation, Toombes—a Baptist—answers that this was practised only by some; that it was the *fault of the persons*, not of the *principle of antipedobaptism*; that he himself *abhorred* it: and he quotes, as *concurring* with him, 'the *Confession of Faith* in the name of seven churches of Antipedobaptists in London.' But these that continued in communion were not for Oliver's turn. There was great care taken to instil into them principles of total separation; which proved too effectual: and within a while they did all, or almost all, *renounce the settled congregations*, and became great enemies to them. In which *separation they do still almost all continue*."* Thus, the true origin of close communion in the Baptist Church, according to Wall, Dr. Howell's Pedobaptist witness, is to be dated in the times of Oliver Cromwell, and ascribed to his political policy.

Wall, in another part of his great work, observes, "To speak of the case of England in particular. They [the Baptists of his times] know themselves that it is a separation *begun* less than eighty years ago. Any very aged man may remember when there were no Englishmen, or at least no society or church of them, of that persuasion. *They at first held the opinion without separating for it*. Their

* Wall, vol. ii. p. 322.

eldest *separate* churches are not yet of the age of a man,—viz.: *seventy years*. I mean the aged men of *reading* among them know this: the young and vulgar, who will talk 'right or wrong for a side, do not own it; but the others own it, and they justify it by pleading that their opinion is the truest."* Wall then gives the facts. "There are several good books," says he, "written purposely on this subject, and directed to the Antipedobaptists, to show that, supposing their opinion to be true, yet their schism [separation] is a sin; and that by men of both the opinions. Mr. Toombes, who continued an Antipedobaptist to his dying day, as I am told, wrote *against separation for it; and for communion with the parish churches*. I have not seen that book; but this I have seen, where he defends his opinion against Marshal, and where Marshal had said, 'The teachers of this opinion, wherever they prevail, take their proselytes wholly off from the ministry of the word, *and sacraments*, and all other acts of Christian communion both public and private, from any but those that are of their own opinion.' To this Toombes answers, 'This is indeed a wicked practice, justly to be abhorred: *the making of sects upon difference of opinion, reviling, separating from their teachers and brethren otherwise faithful, because there is not the same opinion in disputable points or in clear truths not fundamental*, is a thing too frequent in all sorts of dogmatists, &c. I look upon it as one of the great plagues of Christianity. You shall have me join with you in showing my detestation of it. Nevertheless, first it is to be considered that this is *not* the evil of *antipedobaptism*, and therefore must be charged on *the persons*, not on the assertion itself.' And accordingly Mr. Toombes himself continued in communion with the church till he died."† "Mr. Stenuett," (a Bap-

* Wall, vol. ii. p. 557.

† Ibid. vol. ii. pp. 558-560.

tist,) Wall continues, "in a book come out the other day, says, 'If he [Mr. Russen] mean they [the Antipedobaptists] cannot look upon those that differ from them as Christians, the contrary is well known.'"* Wall then quotes from their confessions. "But it is best to quote from their confessions. In the first year of King William, one party of the Antipedobaptists published a confession of their faith: they say it is the same for substance with that published 1643, in the name of seven churches, which I suppose were the first in England. Now they say they are concerned for 'above a hundred.' They declare in the preface the design both of that and this confession to be 'to manifest their *consent* with both [the Presbyterians and Independents] in all the *fundamental* articles of the Christian religion;' and, as they add afterwards, with other Protestants. It is plain, then, that they count not the age or manner of receiving baptism to be fundamental."† Baptist principles, then, in their origin, did not involve separate or strict communion; and this opinion was *not* one of the "principles" embraced by the Baptists in more recent times.

But Dr. Howell endeavors to make the impression that Baptists have suffered martyrdom for the principles which the present Baptist Church embraces. "Wall, whose language," says he, "in substance I adopt, affirms that it was but a short time ere '*four* Baptists—three men and one woman—were condemned to bear fagots at Paul's Cross, and that three days after a man and woman were burnt at Smithfield.' *Ten* other Baptists were, in a few weeks more, put to death; and some months subsequently *fourteen* more suffered the same fate."‡ But, in the first place, Dr. Howell omits an important testimony of his historian, namely,

* Wall, vol. ii. p. 551.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 552.

‡ Terms of Communion, p. 125.

“*This year* the name of this sect [Anabaptist] *first appears* in our English Chronicles.”* And, secondly, he omits the true reasons for which they suffered death, which Wall gives. “The Bishop of Salisbury (History of the Reformation, part 1, book 3, p. 195) mentions these men, but not under the name of Anabaptists. He says that in May this year (1535) nineteen Hollanders were accused of some *heretical* opinions,—‘denying Christ to be both God and Man; or that he took flesh and blood of the virgin Mary; or that the sacraments had any effect on those that received them: in which opinions *fourteen* of them remained obstinate, and were burnt by pairs in several places.’ Here is nothing peculiarly about *infant baptism*. But the circumstance of time, May, 1535, leads one to think that they were some of them, that were to have made a part in the insurrection at Amsterdam. For the author of an English pamphlet, written 1647, called A Short History of the Anabaptists, (who has made a good collection out of Sleiden, Hortentius, &c.,) says that many Dutchmen from several parts, who had been appointed to assist John Geles in the surprise of Amsterdam before mentioned, hearing the ill success, fled to England in two ships. Now, this insurrection was in this very month. And that author reckons those two ship-loads to be *the first seminary of Dutch Antipedobaptists in England.*”†

From this investigation we are led to the following conclusions. First, that antipedobaptism in England is of modern date. Secondly, that strict communion is more modern still. Thirdly, that Dr. Howell has no just ground on which to boast of his English Baptist ancestry, and it would seem that he should be the last to admit that “the Anabaptists of that day are on all hands confessed to be the Baptists of our times.”

* Wall, vol. ii. p. 310.

† Ibid. vol. ii. pp. 310-311.

Dr. Howell vehemently exults,—“We glory in our whole spiritual ancestry, among whom we number the apostles of Christ and the saints and martyrs of all ages.”* Would the doctor’s apostolic ancestry have excluded from communion those whom they acknowledged to be Christians? and were not thousands of the saints and martyrs of all ages Pedobaptists? Have not nearly the entire multitude of saints since the days of Christ, embracing thousands of those whom the Baptists associate with their spiritual ancestry, been Pedobaptists? Is not nearly the whole body of them in the present day Pedobaptists? Of the “whole spiritual ancestry” which the doctor claims, I challenge him to name a single case, except an occasional one in very recent times, who suffered martyrdom for opposition to infant baptism; and he is welcome to the glory of descent from this sort of ancestry. While we are unwilling to admit the ancestral fame to which he aspires, we certainly feel no hesitation in allowing that in the art of boasting he is entitled to the laurel. Robert Hall places the Baptists in the following alternative:—“What became of that portion of the ancient church [on the supposition that the ancient church was Baptist] which refused to adopt the baptism of infants? Did they separate from their brethren in order to form distinct and exclusive societies? Of this not the faintest trace or vestige is to be found in ecclesiastical history; and the supposition is completely refuted by the concurrent testimony of ancient writers to the universal incorporation of orthodox Christians into one grand community. We challenge our opponents to produce the shadow of evidence in favor of the existence during that long tract of time of a single society of which adult baptism was the distinguishing characteristic. We well know that in the latter part of his

* Sacramental Communion, p. 18.

life Tertullian did *secede* from the orthodox Catholic church, but we are equally certain that he was moved to this measure, not by his disapprobation of infant baptism, but solely by his attachment to the *Montanists*. We therefore offer our opponents the alternative either of affirming that the transition from the primitive to the modern usage was sudden and instantaneous, in opposition to all that observation suggests respecting the operations of mind, or of acknowledging that *for two centuries* the predecessors of the present Baptists *unanimously approved and practised a mixed communion,—a communion in which Baptists and Pedobaptists united in the same societies.*”*

The extreme presumption of the Baptists must involve them in inextricable difficulties on every hand. They assume that the apostolic churches, and the churches for a century after the days of the apostles, were Baptist churches, and that subsequently infant baptism was introduced, and became “the main pillar of Popery” and principal source of the evils and corruptions of Popery. Very well: with all the important and comprehensive concessions of Baptist writers to the piety and efficiency of the evangelical Pedobaptists of modern times before us, and supposing that the first Pedobaptists were as eminent for piety and usefulness as those of our times, we ask, in the first place, for the least proof that any Baptists at all existed in those times; or, secondly, if they existed, that they expressed the same friendly regard for their pious Pedobaptist brethren in those times as the Baptists do now, and separated from them only on account of infant baptism. Tertullian, we have seen, though he entertained singular views of baptism, remained in the communion of the church, and was not expelled the communion till he became a Montanist. On these two

* Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 482.

points history is silent; and the conclusion, founded upon the concessions, is as plain as open day that infant baptism was not the cause of the early divisions in the church which the Baptists ascribe to "Baptist principles," nor made the occasion of a separate communion, as in the case of the modern Baptist Church.

We close this chapter with the following reflections:—

1. Opposition to infant baptism is of comparatively recent date.

2. The origin of the present Baptist Church is more recent still.

3. Close communion in the Baptist Church is still more recent than the origin of the Baptist Church.

4. Several of the sects through which the Baptists claim descent did not separate from the church on account of infant baptism, for they practised infant baptism after their separation.

5. One of these sects particularly—the Waldenses, who practised infant baptism—did commune with the "Reformed churches in France and Geneva," which is opposed to the modern requisition of *membership* in the Baptist Church, or in churches of "like faith and order."

6. The modern Baptist Church itself, which was scattered among the Pedobaptist churches, practised mixed communion with them, and, at its commencement as a separate and organized sect, practised open communion.

CHAPTER X.

COMMUNION CONFINED TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

THE heading of this chapter may startle the reader; but such is the fact; and in the fact we have a convincing and melancholy proof of the spirit and inconsistency of strict Baptists. If baptism be an indispensable prerequisite to sacramental communion, and immersion only is baptism, then *immersed* members in Pedobaptist churches have a right to communion in the Baptist Church. They have as good a right to communion in the Baptist Church as the Baptists themselves have, for in every other particular the Baptists concede that the Pedobaptists are qualified for the communion, and only want immersion to give them a title to it.

A few quotations on this point will suffice:—"Let them [the Pedobaptists] return to the baptism of the Bible, and all separation will cease."* "A believer as the candidate, and immersion as baptism, all confess to be legitimate. To this intelligent Pedobaptists can with a good conscience confine themselves. Beyond this we cannot, dare not, go. Thus far all perfectly harmonize."† "If we understand the case aright, they [Pedobaptists] could all be immersed without any violation of conscience. By so doing they remove the only barrier to our church-communion."‡ "It

* R. Fuller on Baptism and Communion, p. 248.

† Howell on Communion, p. 264.

‡ Remington on Restricted Communion, p. 236.

is the Lord's table; and this is the very reason why we do not admit those who have not the prerequisite [immersion] which the Lord requires."*

This is the language of authorities in the Baptist Church in England and America.

But we shall show that the want of immersion is not the true reason why Pedobaptists are excluded from the Lord's table in the Baptist Church. We shall show, in the language of Mr. Whitney, himself a Baptist, that the Lord's Supper with the Baptists is "a *denominational affair* altogether;" that it is a rule of the Baptist Church to exclude all from the communion who are not "members of some church of like faith and order,"—that is, the *Baptist Church*. This is the real ground of the close communion of the Baptist Church, notwithstanding the specious endeavors to lay the whole burden of blame upon Pedobaptist churches. It is well known that *immersed* members of pious Pedobaptist churches, all over the land, are excluded from communion in the Baptist Church, except in cases acknowledged to be violations of her restrictive rules. Mr. Whitney says of himself, "It was simply because I questioned the propriety of this course that the Council which met in the autumn of 1851 to recognise me as pastor of the church at Westport refused to do it. They had examined me on all the various points on which it is customary to examine on such occasions,—experimental religion, call to the ministry, doctrinal views, church-polity, and baptism. Apparently only one question more remained to be asked. It was this:—'In administering the Lord's Supper, would you invite to it any credible Christians who are baptized, or would you restrict your invitations to such as are mem-

* R. Fuller on Baptism and Communion, p. 243; Howell on Communion, p. 107; Cone on Terms of Communion, Bap. Lib., vol. iii. p. 412.

bers of *Baptist* churches?" My reply was, 'I would invite any who are baptized and leading consistent Christian lives.' But for this reply, and because I was unable after all that was said to see the impropriety of it, the Council refused to install me."* Mr. Whitney quotes a dialogue from Mr. Remington's "Defence of Restricted Communion" to the same purpose; and, as this "Defence" is before me, I give it in the language of Mr. Remington. Mr. C., a Baptist minister, is about to administer the communion. Mr. R., a Methodist minister and member of the New England Conference, is present, and says, "My name is R. I am a member of the Christian church and a minister of the gospel. Will you permit me to sit down with you and your church at the Lord's table?" C. "Are you a Baptist?" R. "No, sir; I am a Methodist and a member of the New England Conference of ministers; and I should like, if agreeable, to commemorate the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ with you." C. "But, my brother, you must be baptized before you come with us to the Lord's table: and you know our principles,—that we consider no baptism valid but immersion." R. "True; but I have been immersed." C. "Let me inquire, then, my brother, do you, both by precept and example, sanction immersion as the only gospel baptism?" R. "Oh, no, sir. I believe that a valid gospel baptism may be performed by either sprinkling or pouring." C. "I thought so; and you certainly know that with such views and practice we should make ourselves very inconsistent to admit you to the communion with us."† Mr. Remington's "Defence" is endorsed by the "American Baptist Publication Society," and hence it contains the "views" on which the Baptist Church acts

* Whitney on Communion, pp. 95, 96.

† Remington on Restricted Communion, pp. 15, 16.

in the United States. "Even the members of Free-Will Baptist churches are never invited, and never would be communed with if it could be avoided. But it is not for the want of repentance, faith, and baptism; for the moment a Free-Will Baptist joins a close-communication church he is no longer unqualified. Nor are members of Calvinistic open Baptist churches—persons like Alexander Carson, Baptist W. Noel, and a large share of the Baptists in England and Canada—regarded by 'regular' Baptists as proper fellow-communicants."* That the Lord's Supper is perverted to a denominational ordinance is conceded by Professor Curtis, quoted by Mr. Whitney:—"All that our course in declining to celebrate with members of other *denominations* exhibits, is that such persons do not belong to *churches of our order. We do not own them as Baptists.*"†

Thus, after all this ado about "repentance, faith, and baptism, as indispensable prerequisites"‡ to sacramental communion, they are not sufficient in an immersed Pedobaptist, nor in a Free-Will Baptist, nor in an open-communication Baptist, to entitle to the Lord's Supper in the close-communication Baptist Church! "Return to the baptism of the Bible," that is, be immersed, "and all separation will cease." It is done; and the separation continues! "Thus far all perfectly harmonize;" and yet there is no harmony! "By being immersed, the only barrier to our church-communication is removed." It is done; and Christians are as far removed from communion with the Baptists as if they had not been immersed! "It is the Lord's table; yes, it *is* the Lord's table; and that is the very reason why we do not admit those who have not the prerequisite [immersion] which the Lord requires." And those who *have* this pre-

* Whitney on Open Communion, pp. 97, 98.

† Ibid. p. 101.

‡ Howell on Communion.

requisite are repelled from the Lord's table! They do not belong to "churches of *our order!* They are not *Baptists!*" This, then, is the upshot of the whole matter,—a doubling back of the ingenuity of the Baptist Church into a denial of its own terms of communion, a settling down around the Lord's table as belonging to the *Baptists* alone, a prescription of membership in the *Baptist* Church as the only condition of admission to the Lord's table, a perversion of the Lord's Supper to a mere *denominational* observance! I must be a Baptist; that is not enough: I must be a "*regular*" *close-communion Baptist*, or I cannot be admitted to the Lord's table in the Baptist Church! Gospel of Heaven! is this thy law? Son of God, is this thy gospel? No, no! But if a divine requisition is indeed laid upon all Christians to join the *Baptist* Church, then let us hear no more about "repentance, faith, and immersion as being the divinely-ordained and *unchangeable* terms of sacramental communion." Have done forever with the pretence that "we cannot commune with the Pedobaptists, because they are not immersed," whilst the true reason declared is because "*they are not of churches of our order.*" Proclaim *this* through the land, and be honest. Retract the concession that "Pedobaptists have a right to the Lord's Supper and do right in partaking of it." Say that we usurp the sacred privilege of the *Baptist* Church. Efface the seal of endorsation from the sentences of Dr. Howell:—"Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, are incontrovertibly THE terms of communion, appointed by the King of Zion, and from which we are forbidden, by the most sacred obligations, at any time, for any purpose, or under any circumstances, to depart."* "We are prohibited

* Howell on Communion, p. 102.

from adopting any terms of communion other than those ordained by our Lord Jesus Christ, and that to these we are at all times, and in all circumstances, under obligations to adhere, individually and collectively, *without addition, diminution, or change.*"* "Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are indispensable terms of approach to the Lord's table, *and to which those who have observed these preliminaries cannot afterward be debarred of access but in consequence of a forfeiture of Christian character by immorality or heresy.*"† Let the "American Baptist Publication Society" expunge these sentences, or receive pious Pedobaptists who have been *immersed*, or prove that immersed Pedobaptists have "forfeited Christian character by immorality or heresy." And let the Society *add*, or cause to be added, to the terms as stated by Dr. Howell, "the great American champion of their system," that "*membership in the Baptist Church is indispensable to communion in the Baptist Church.*" If Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Owen, Baxter, Doddridge, Edwards, Wesley, Whitefield, Brainard, Payson, were now to appear, though they might submit to *immersion*, they could not be admitted to communion with the Baptists unless they *joined* the Baptist Church; and Bunyan, Hall, Carson, Noel, and Roger Williams, the founder of the Baptist Church in America,—all Baptists,—if now alive, must likewise be excluded, because not members of "like faith and order;" that is, not "REGULAR" Baptists!

The advice of Mr. Whitney is capital:—"Why not deny at once the sacramental table to be *the Lord's*, and honestly and avowedly contend for its being a denominational table? If it be true, as the practice of restricted communion from

* Howell on Communion, p. 265.

† Ibid, p. 266.

one end of the land to the other says, that the qualification for communion is not repentance, faith, and baptism merely, but simply a place in the Baptist denomination, then let us hear no more about not communing with others on the ground of their not being baptized. For the truth's sake let us have consistency and honesty. Let it be frankly and fearlessly asserted that the communion-table is not the Lord's, nor for his people, but a denominational table for those only who are of our denomination. If the system is justifiable, there is nothing to gain by urging false pleas in its behalf and cloaking its deformities under falsehoods, nor any thing to be feared by placing it on its true basis and attempting to defend it as it is. Should it fall when placed there and left to stand without the fictitious props which now support it, let it fall. It is unworthy to stand; and the sooner it falls the better, as well for those who practise it as for the church at large, and for the general advancement among men of the pure and ennobling principles of the gospel of the Son of God."*

The restriction of communion to *membership* in the "Baptist Church *order*" is an act of ecclesiastical proscription surpassed only by papal usurpation. This single requisition of the Baptist Church is repellent of the other churches of Christendom to the extent that circumstances and power will allow. It is intolerant to the utmost bounds of civil freedom; it is a wholesale abuse of religious liberty. It is a law which civil authority and religion at present restrain, but which, should occasion offer, would jeopardize the existence of both civil authority and religion. The apostolic church contained no such law; and yet it degenerated into papal tyranny. It retrenches the word of God. It is the defence of a favorite cause at all hazards,

* Whitney on Open Communion, pp. 110, 111.

which in the end must fetter its supporters in the chains of their own forging. It is the full scope of arbitrary assumptions. It has not an element, not even the appearance, of truth in it. It has no intrinsic worth, no salutary tendency. It is not capable of any sort of vindication. It is unworthy of a church claiming to be fairer and purer than the rest of God's people and boasting of being the only organization constructed conformably to the apostolic model. It is a bold abuse of Pedobaptist authorities adduced in proof that "baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to sacramental communion;" for these authorities never confined sacramental communion to churches of "the same faith and order," but sanctioned and encouraged it in churches of different organizations—Romish and other heresies excepted—from the apostolic times till the present. It is a deadly polemical thrust at evangelical Pedobaptism in all its sects, and in their ultimate overthrow would reap the spoils of their splendid fortunes. In tendency it overturns the foundations of the common faith and renders all mutual forbearance and approximation impossible. It divides the Baptists and Pedobaptists into two great parties as mutually inaccessible and mutually hostile as were the Jews and Samaritans. It is a deep-laid systematic scheme, that parsimoniously monopolizes the most precious treasures of divine wisdom and love. This the testimony of the weightiest witness for God! the expenditure of the talents of the most trustworthy disciples and friends of Jesus! This the weapon which the only "regularly" organized gospel corps wields in strenuous opposition to the primitive church supposed to be degenerated into pious pedobaptism! This the distinguishing characteristic of those who are "elected" to guide the heirs of the covenant by the living word, and bear the warnings and threatenings of the law to the wicked and impenitent! This the method by which

the age is to be animated with a higher degree of spiritual life, and be made a season of celestial efflorescence for all future time! This the guardianship of the truth, whole and entire! This *the wall* "against which the gates of hell shall not prevail"! But enough. In reason it is wholly defective; of Biblical authority it is wholly destitute; and the New Testament is directly opposed to it.

But this is not all. The Baptists will not admit to the communion Pedobaptists who in immersion obtained the manifest "sanction" of God himself. Read the following: "It happened," says Mr. Remington, in his "Farewell Letter to his Late [Methodist] Charge," "a little more than two months ago, that several persons belonging to my congregation desired to be immersed. I could not refuse them, though I resolved not to immerse them myself. Accordingly, I engaged a brother in the ministry to officiate for me. To confess the whole truth, I felt rather vexed than pleased. The weather was cold, and I thought it presumptuous to go into the water under such circumstances. There were eight candidates, all females, one of whom was rather feeble in health; and I was requested to reserve her for the last,—which request I readily complied with. Suffice it to say, they went down into the water one by one, and came straightway up out of the water, while I stood upon the shore a silent spectator. Soon, however, the scene began to *melt* my heart, and something seemed to kindly whisper, *This is the way to follow Jesus*. I felt that *Jesus* was present to *own* and *sanction* his ordinance. That Spirit that descended upon him at his baptism in the river Jordan appeared to be hovering over us and to change the whole aspect of the occasion in my mind to one of the most intense interest and delight. At length the last subject came; that feeble young woman went down into the water, and, to *my surprise*, she came up out of the water praising God, &c.

My heart was humbled, and I felt to mingle my tears of gratitude with hers. The *impression* made upon my heart that morning I trust will continue while memory endures.”* And yet neither Mr. Remington nor any other Baptist minister would admit “that feeble young woman,” nor any of the rest immersed with her, to the Lord’s Supper, unless they joined the *Baptist Church*. God’s “sanction” of Pedobaptist immersions is not enough to entitle to a place at his table! “Jesus is present to own and sanction his ordinance” at the hands of a Pedobaptist administrator, and “the Spirit appears hovering over” the scene as at the baptism of Christ, and Mr. Remington feels “the most intense interest and delight” on the occasion, and is “surprised” at the effect that followed,—yea, his “heart is melted,” and he hears “something kindly whispering, *This is the way to follow Jesus,*”—and yet these very Christians are not worthy of participation at the Lord’s table with the Baptists! If baptism at the hands of a Pedobaptist was not vitiated, how can the Lord’s Supper at the same hands be? If God in these cases owned and sanctioned the ordinance that the Baptists make indispensably prerequisite to the Lord’s Supper, by what authority can the Baptists deny the right of these persons to the Lord’s Supper? That *membership* in the Baptist Church is an indispensable condition to sacramental communion is therefore refuted by the testimony of Mr. Remington himself.

“Churches of like faith and order”! Worse and worse. Is not prayer in the name of Jesus, with every other act of proper worship, *alike acceptable* devotion and the peculiar prerogative of every Christian church? “Like faith;” very well: and yet they exclude those who they acknowledge “have obtained like precious faith with”* them-

* Remington’s Reasons for Becoming a Baptist, pp. 58, 59

selves,—a shot point-blank from the apostolic battery against this peculiarity of the Baptist Church. Peter at first refused even to eat with the Gentiles; but, when the Holy Ghost fell upon them assembled in the house of Cornelius, he hesitated not a moment to admit them to all the privileges of the Christian church, “forasmuch,” says he, “as God gave them the *like* gift as he did unto us who believed;”† and adds, “who was I that I should withstand God?”—that I should be stricter or *more orderly* than God himself? Peter had as good evidence that these Gentiles had a right to the privileges of the church as the converted Jews had; and the Baptists concede, what is obvious on every hand, that pious Pedobaptists have “the *like* gift” with themselves. Peter, an apostle, was not intolerant enough to “withstand God;” and his practice may be recommended to the serious consideration of the Baptists. Mr. Hall observes, “The practice which we are reprobating is nearly equivalent to the inscription over the door, Let none but Baptists enter within these walls,—an admirable expedient, truly, for diffusing the Baptist sentiments; about as rational as to send a man from London to Constantinople to study the evidences of Christianity.”‡

The Baptists assume a fearful responsibility when they dispute the Christian character and standing of other evangelical churches, and a greater responsibility when they venture to repulse them from the *Lord's* table because of a want of conformity to *their* “faith and order.” Such a repulse is equivalent to a positive and unequivocal denial of the right of every other Christian denomination but their own to the blessings of the everlasting covenant, equivalent

* 2 Peter i. 1.

† Acts xi. 17.

‡ Works, vol. ii. p. 228.

to a formal shutting out of all other Christians from the kingdom of grace and glory, equivalent to an association of all other true believers but themselves with unbelievers and the heirs of perdition, and is, in fact, so far as they can do it, rendering absolutely impossible obedience to the command of Christ, "*Do this in remembrance of me.*" If it were proved that *immersion* and association with the Baptist Church are essential prerequisites to communion, then the Baptists were not responsible for their restriction and exclusiveness, and the responsibility would lie upon other churches to submit to immersion and join the Baptist Church. But, in the first place, it has never been proved that immersion is the only valid mode of baptism,—but the contrary; in the second place, if it had been proved, it has never been proved that *baptism* is essentially prerequisite to communion; and, in the third place, if it had been proved that immersion is prerequisite to communion, it never has been, and never can be, proved that association with the Baptist Church is prerequisite to communion in the Baptist Church.

All that is required as essentially prerequisite to communion is the evidence of Christian character. That is, both baptism and the Lord's Supper stand upon the same ground in this respect; for as the evidence of Christian character in adults is required as prerequisite to baptism, so it is required as prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. As, therefore, the Baptists grant baptism to all who give this evidence, they are bound to admit to the communion all who give the same evidence. They acknowledge thousands who have never been immersed to be Christians; and to these they should no more deny admission to the Lord's table, should they seek to be admitted, than they should have denied them immersion had they sought to be baptized in that form. Upon the ground of Christian character alone

they baptize all who desire it; and this is right; and so, upon the same ground, they should admit to the Lord's Supper all who seek it. It is extravagant to demand immersion also as preliminary to communion; but when, in addition to Christian character and immersion, *membership* in the Baptist Church is required also as indispensable, extravagance exceeds all bounds.

CHAPTER XI.

RESTRICTED COMMUNION UNREASONABLE.

NOT to confine the attention of the reader to the forms of logical precision, a few solemn and vital questions are proposed.

What a spectacle have we in a restricted communion! Shall the Father, in tender mercy, devise the plan of salvation, and, through a long series of centuries and sublime transactions, in prophecy and providence, amid the ruins of civil governments and false systems of religion of every form, and opposition of earth and hell, preserve his word and church in a glorious manner, and yet one branch of that church, under authority of that word, stand out, disowning, alienated, sundered, opposed, without communion, without confidence, without religious "dealings," and playing the Samaritan toward the rest of the church, as if its title to heaven were founded upon uncompromising and incessant hostility to those who profess "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one hope of their calling"? It is unreasonable.

Shall the Son lay aside his glory, assume the nature of man, lead a suffering life, endure the wrath of God, shed

his blood, and die a shameful agonizing death, that he may lay down the foundation of a kingdom that shall embrace all nations, the foundation of a church that shall include every people, tribe, tongue, and kindred of this earth, the one kingdom, the one church, of the living God,—oh, shall the Son of God astonish heaven and earth with the grandeur of his scheme, the wonders of his life, the prodigy of his death, and the excellence of his teaching,—shall he devote his whole life to unite the entire human race to God forever, and just before his death institute, in the most solemn and impressive manner, an ordinance,—his own supper,—a bond of union of all his people, a common oath of fealty to him, a means of reciprocal benefit, encouragement, and love between all the members of his body,—and yet *one sect* assert sole right to that sacramental communion and oath, repel those who differ in nothing essential to salvation, in nothing wanting in moral probity, clash harshly and unkindly with the rest of the churches of Christ, turn the table of the Lord into “a stone of stumbling and rock of offence,” and excite the bitter, biting taunt, “These Christians have just religion enough to form a faction and hate their brethren heartily”? Is this reasonable? It is not reasonable.

Shall the Holy Spirit call and send out men of every order of mind to preach the word, and seal their commission in awakening and converting men of every rank in humanity, and baptize the churches with power, and on them stamp the seal of divine approval, and adorn them with heavenly virtues and graces, and excite in their individual members a reciprocal brotherly love, and shield them all against the world's invasions, and harmonize them in the great enterprise of the world's redemption, and yet *one communion* throw up around itself a strong rampart of sectarianism which other denominations sound in the faith of Jesus

are not permitted to pass, exerting to the utmost the baleful and blasting influence of *sect* on the rest of the "kingdom of God," exercising caution, management, and address to break down other altars of Christ or draw away worshippers from them, and allowing no sacramental fellowship whatever to other children of God, unless they dissolve their connection with their particular churches and transfer their precious spiritual interests to her superintendence? Is this reasonable? It is unreasonable.

Shall this *separate sect* engage with other churches in public worship in their respective churches, in singing the praises of Zion, in public prayer with their members, in exchanging pulpits with their ministers, in social spiritual conversation at the fireside, in the sick-room, at the death-bed, everywhere but at the communion-table, and yet at the communion-table have no fellowship at all with them, and spurn them away as disobedient children, unworthy of their sanctity and profession, because destitute of their sectarian mark and different from them in *their* peculiarities? Is this reasonable? It is unreasonable.

Shall this sect engage with other churches in gracious and powerful revivals, in which the rumbling among the dry bones waxes louder and louder, in which multitudes press into the kingdom of God and souls by families and flocks enter into the fold of Christ, in which the vain, the fashionable, the gay, the dissipated, the formal, the moral, the rich, the poor, and those who ridiculed vital and experimental godliness, "escape for their lives" and "flee from the wrath to come," and the most solemn spiritual concern is universal among persons of all degrees, tastes, pursuits, and ages? and yet,—but look at one of these revivals. The town, village, or country-place seems to be full of the presence, love, and peace of God. The very breezes and sunlight seem to come from a pure and happy world,—the

clouds by day to float with blessings of heaven, and the moon and stars by night to shine with the softened reflection of the Sun of righteousness. The stillness of the air is sacred, and the singing of birds is sweet. The quiet homes of men seem to be enjoying a visit from the Son of man, as the cottage of Bethany did; and peace smiles around the happy mansions, parents and children and husbands and wives and friends rejoicing in the converting power of God. God is seen in his sanctuary: his days are delightful and his tabernacle amiable. The congregation is alive and eager to catch every word of instruction from the pulpit, some weeping in penitential sorrow, others in earliest spiritual love and joy, and others in sympathy for those who are impenitent and in danger of dropping into hell. The public praise is simple, lively, harmonious, and exalted almost to seraphic melody,—as nearly so as happy mortals can employ in the service of God; at least, there is no service in which the hearts of good men—old and young Christians—harmonize so sweetly as praise in a revival, all singing with unusual animation and elevation of heart and voice, the very melody giving an intense charm to the truth, rendering duty pleasant, and invigorating for other services of the sanctuary. The prayers are simple, earnest, spiritual, special, powerful, uttered as if at the feet of Jesus, and sent up to heaven to be answered,—and answered sometimes in a signal and overwhelming manner. The lukewarm are greatly enlivened and renewed. Many who for years had been depressed with doubts and fears receive a more plentiful baptism of the Spirit and rejoice in clearer discoveries of God's mercy and love. Some who occasionally had been seeking salvation for years, and who had often obtained glimpses of pardon, now give themselves wholly up to the work of seeking, and, in a powerful conversion, obtain the fullest assurances of pardon. Backsliders are reclaimed,

and rejoice with exceeding joy. Strangers are solemnly impressed as soon as they enter the house of God, and many of them are soon weeping in the congregation or at the altar, and partake of the gracious feast, and go away rejoicing. More seems to be done for religion in one week than had been done for many years before. The "Spirit of grace" sheds abroad his holiest influences; the Son of God spreads his mildest radiance around; the "love of the brethren" flows from heart to heart till the swelling tide overflows all bounds in streams of hallowed transport, and the scene compels the reverential testimony, "How venerable is this place! Surely this is none other than the house of God! and this is the gate of heaven!" But soon the whole scene is changed. The sacramental bread is to be broken. All these evidences of the divine favor and approval are at once swept aside; and though the members of this one *separate* sect, and perhaps their *pastor* with them, took this "sweet counsel" with this sister-church, and some of their children, parents, husbands, wives, and friends were converted at her altar, and many of the converts became the rich spoils of the common labors, lo! a huge stumbling-block, an inexpiable transgression, lies in the way to the Lord's table: the charm is dissolved; the *sectarian* suddenly prevails over the *Christian*; "they only follow *Christ*;" they do not follow *us*: they are not of "*our* faith and order;" they are a "disorderly" church: communion with them would be "*unlawful*;" they have never been "*immersed*." Is this reasonable? It is unreasonable. It is a reproach,—a shame,—a crime,—the true award of which, sooner or later, must come, in this world, or when God arises to judgment.

Once more: Shall all the true churches derive their spiritual life and being from the same source, be encouraged by the same gracious word, be delivered in

temptation, in trial, in danger, by the same gracious hand, be comforted in suffering, in losses, in bereavement, by the same blessed Spirit, be relieved in want, in poverty, in necessities, by the same special providence, be strengthened in misfortune, in calamity, in persecution, by the same heavenly Friend, be supported in sickness and in death, and led along the valley of death, by the same heavenly Physician and Guide?—be intrusted with the same great work on earth and called to the same great reward in heaven, be one with God in time and eternity,—and yet *one* of these churches bind itself around as with a chain of iron, to hold within it all its members, and surround itself as within a wall of adamant, with no egress nor ingress but to those of *its* communion, and shut up, lock up, the sacramental banquet to *its sole use*,—to *its sole use* hold a solemn feast to which all God's people have an equal right, and in which all these great mercies and blessings and hopes are gratefully acknowledged, and the death that secures them all is reverently commemorated? Is this reasonable? It is unreasonable.

Does God make no distinctions between his churches but as they obey him? No! and shall *one* of these churches presume to make such a distinction? Has God in any way evinced that the *exclusiveness* of this one sect is right, and the opposite practice of the other churches is wrong? No! but quite the contrary, if their "fruits," and the concessions of this sect *itself*, are to be received as proofs. If we glory in this, it is in the Lord, that in our hearts and in our lives we have the evidence that God owns us as his people, and we never will exclude from his table any who we believe are his people.

CHAPTER XII.

CONSEQUENCES OF RESTRICTED COMMUNION.

WHAT is right in itself may be abused, and the abuse becomes an evil. Sacramental communion is right in itself; but when it is made restrictive to a single sect of the true churches it becomes a subject of abuse, and the evil consequences are many.

1. It is a *self-excommunication*. It is an open renunciation, as far as it goes, of visible fellowship with the rest of the churches of Christ. It is arrogantly assuming to be the only true church of Christ on earth. It is a deliberate, bold, and formal protest against fellowship with the rest of the universal church of the living God in her ordinances, — a dissolution of the “unity of the Spirit” under the profession of “doing God service.” It is a solemn proclamation to the world that the claims of other churches are unfounded and imaginary, and that the manifestations of divine power, grace, love, and faithfulness in them are spurious and delusory. It impeaches the professions of other churches, accuses their intelligence of inconsistency, and charges their piety with insincerity. It excludes every description of Christians who are not of *our sect*. It is a public announcement that none are the people of God but the members of *our church*. It is a total disregard of the terrible word of the Lord, “Whoso shall offend one of these little ones that shall believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” Dr. Howell un-

qualifiedly proclaims, "We are not Protestants, nor Dissenters, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, nor Reformers, but what we have been in all ages,—*the church* of our Lord Jesus Christ."* This assumption is endorsed by the imprint of the "American Baptist Publication Society."

The setting up of a *separate communion* on reasons found in mere forms and ceremonies, or in difference of opinion and practice in immaterial matters, in the days of the apostles, would have been considered a violation of the commandment of Christ, a conspiracy against the unity of his kingdom, an attempt to lacerate and destroy his church, a desecration and slander of the spirit of the gospel, an occasion to the enemies of Christ to blaspheme, and a scandal to the Christian cause. Though these serious offences may not be involved in the *intentions* of the Baptist Church in the present day, yet they are in fact the unavoidable consequences of baptistical restrictions and exclusiveness. Argue and explain as we may,—give to Christian charity and forbearance their utmost exercise,—the Baptist Church is a *schism*,—not entire, but *partial*, and to a serious extent,—*a schism to the whole extent of the nature and importance of sacramental communion*. Her exclusiveness on the subject of baptism might be regarded as a harmless, at least tolerable, error; but when it is made the basis of a separate communion, the indispensable prerequisite to sacramental fellowship with the church of Christ, we are forced to the conclusion that she has severed one of the tenderest and most sacred ties that bind the church of God together. Names, influence, learning, usefulness, numbers, strength, in other respects, are nothing on this one point. On this one fundamental point the Baptist Church is a *separate sect*. This cuts deep. And

* Terms of Communion, p. 251.

if on other fundamental points the Baptist Church were schismatical as in this, she might be justly excluded from the Christian church. Notwithstanding the divisions, rents, wranglings, and bitterness of feeling that this one evil has produced, it is gratifying to know that matters are no worse, and that enough remains essential and fundamental in the Baptist Church as a ground on which she may be regarded as a part of the Christian church and an efficient agency in the world's redemption. She might be better and do more; and so might every other Christian church. Though she excludes *us* from the table of the Lord, we are ready cheerfully to receive and welcome *her* there. England and Canada encourage us to hope for the best in the United States.

The self-excommunicating spirit and practice of the Baptist Church as regards sacramental communion are the more remarkable since, as we have seen, she practically recognises Christian fellowship in every other respect.

Dr. Howell, "the American champion" of the cause, proudly flaunts the sectarian banner to the breeze, under a proclamation that calls Christendom to submission, and with an inscription of profound meaning and dazzling glory:— "*Our* whole mighty army, bearing the banner of undeviating obedience to the word of God, the *whole* word of God, and *nothing but* the word of God, upon the ample folds of which is inscribed 'ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM,' presents an unbroken front,"*—a banner under which none are permitted to enlist but *strict Baptists*, in the "whole army" of whom we look in vain for such men as Bunyan, Hall, Carson, Foster, Noel, and Roger Williams,—the last acknowledged to have been the first to call the Baptists to arms in the little gallant company of "eleven" in America

* Terms of Communion, p. 16.

in 1639! The inscription on the banner is indeed unexceptionable; but the design is sectarian, for the "unbroken front" is sectarian, and every soldier marshalled under it is a *separatist*, and what just reason there is for excluding the rest of the Christian army it is impossible to conceive. It had been well for Christianity if this unbroken front and solid square had long ago opened into columns wide enough to admit into rank millions of other loyal and valiant soldiers, who are recognised as fighting under the banner of the "Captain of our salvation," but are excluded from the shadow of "the ample folds" of the Baptist flag! A close inspection of this baptistical inscription will convince the beholder that the army beneath it is parading the world to win mankind to the imaginary importance of the mere *mode* of a sacramental rite,—as if this were "the word of God, the whole word of God, and *nothing but* the word of God," or any part of the word of God!

Is this the guardian and transmitter of the divine revelations to man? Then why so vacillating in its utterances of the truth as it has come down to us from former ages, and why propose to bless mankind with a "new translation" of the Holy Scriptures,—a translation that would require an alteration in the inscription on the Baptist banner, by substituting "one *immersion*" for "one baptism"? The spirit of self-excommunication displayed in strict communion is not even the imitation of the majesty of the true church—not the pure gold of truth, but the baser metal of error, which the crucible detects. Holy names and holy words are blasted by refusal to commune with those whom we acknowledge to be Christians; for such a refusal is equivalent to a denial of their Christian character, whatever may be the protestations to the contrary. It is in deadly hostility to the social principle of religion. It excludes utterly the advantages of co-operation, renders impossible the dis-

charge of those obligations by which religious society is held most firmly together, and impracticable the fulfilment of those proper and respective duties on which union is most securely founded and perpetuated. It renders the churches unable to lighten each others' burdens by mutual assistance. Practically carried out in every other relation of the churches to each other, it dissolves the bonds of the family of God, and the church is destroyed; for renounce the connections which religion has formed, and you must be renounced also, and stand an isolated individual, or an isolated sect, in the very centre of Christendom,—and, every other church pursuing your course, union is at an end, and the church is no more. It is independence at the expense of all the blessings of union,—Arabian freedom: your “hand against every man, and every man’s hand against” you. Union is overlooked, and attention is fixed only on bonds that draw a single denomination into *closest* sectarian communion. We feel instinctively that disaster lurks within it; we are disquieted by an indefinable apprehension that danger is either at hand or not far remote; and we look about us for the surest means of self-defence,—conscious that it is humiliating for any portion of the church to be beguiled into the necessity of surrounding itself with walls impassable to the rest of the Christian world, and that the rest of the Christian world should thereby be reduced to the necessity of providing the best means of self-defence. If concord be life, how can discord be other than death?

“Let party names no more
 The Christian world o’erspread:
 Gentile and Jew, and bond and free,
 Are one in Christ their head.”

The piety and zeal of the Baptist Church alone counterbalance the evils of its restrictions.

2. Restricted communion originates in, and fosters, the *spirit of bigotry*. Books are read, studies are pursued, sermons are preached, volumes published, conversations cherished, faculties employed, and time expended, for this one end,—sectairan collision. The soul is narrowed down and contracted within the interests of *the sect*. The virtues and graces of other Christians are disparaged, and their failures and faults aggravated into misdemeanors and crimes. As the spirit of the *sect* predominates, the spirit of the *gospel* languishes. As regard for the sect increases, concern for the common faith, the general good, and the Redeemer's truth, grace, kingdom, and glory, diminishes. Zeal for the peculiarities and prosperity of the *sect* is substituted for personal religion and the worship of God "in spirit and in truth." Sacrifices are consecrated to the idol-god of the *sect*, and not to the God of our salvation. Hard-faced formality is substituted for living godliness. Greater stress is laid upon the union of the *sect* than union with the *church of God*. A favorite system grows with the *sect*, till, to support its integrity, it is necessary to supply certain doctrines by inference, and illusory deductions from the Scriptures are confounded with the original Scriptures themselves.

It is not difficult to prove that to be true which we wish to believe, and which coincides with our desires and habits. Possibility strikes us then with the force of demonstration, doubtful evidences are conclusive, and plausible arguments are irresistible. But the reverse is the case when the truth demands the recantation of our faith and the adoption of that which we do not wish to be true. Then the claims of truth are admitted with reluctance, powerful arguments are received as plausible, conclusive evidences are entertained as doubtful, demonstration is reduced to possibility, and the mind is dissatisfied with every species of proof that can be

produced. In either case the exercise of candor and impartiality is next to impossible. What allowance infinite mercy may make to this infirmity of human nature cannot be defined; but that it is a fit occasion on which to appeal for mercy there can be no doubt. But bigotry goes beyond this. It is blind to the truth. It is deaf to the appeals of reason. It is insensible to the force of argument. It is reckless in its defence of party. It sentences and roots out. It invades the authority and province of the Deity. It assumes the office of an executioner. It deprives innocent Christians of the means of salvation, and expels them from the sanctuaries of religion. Oh, what a narrow church does "the general assembly" here become, and in what a narrow place is it here confined! The gospel invitation is, Approach, for "yet there is room;" but the master here commands, "Retire, for there is no place for you."

As an example of the infatuation and bigotry which strict communion engenders, take Dr. Howell himself, one of the most popular writers in its defence:—"What more need we say firmly to settle the principles of our faith? In relation to so plain a truth *it is difficult involuntarily to err.*" Again:—"Are they [Pedobaptists] conscientious? We are willing to admit that they *may be.*" Again:—"The former assumes that, as the Pedobaptist *sincerely, if such a thing be possible, believes himself to be baptized,*" &c.* By-the-way, did it never occur to the doctor that it is more difficult for the Pedobaptists to be saved at all than for them "involuntarily to err," or be "sincere in believing themselves to be baptized"? If "the righteous" Baptists "are *scarcely saved,*" what must become of the Pedobaptists who can scarcely be *sincere* in their errors? If the Baptists, who are as certain as open day that they are baptized, just

* Terms of Communion, pp. 56, 86, 106.

reach heaven, what must become of the Pedobaptists, with whom *sincerity* in believing that they are baptized is *scarcely* possible? But the doctor says, as we have seen in another part of his treatise, that he “cherishes for the Pedobaptists, as the people of God, the *sincerest* affection, and preaches, and prays, and labors, and consults, and co-operates, and *takes pleasure* in being associated with them ‘in every good word and work.’” What! with persons of even *doubtful sincerity*, to say nothing of their positive errors? I leave the reader to judge in which of these opinions of the Pedobaptists the *doctor himself* is sincere. If in the latter, then he is justly chargeable with bigotry in the former; if in the former, then he is justly chargeable with insincerity in the latter; and insincerity, in this case, can be ascribable to no other conceivable source but the spirit of proselytism. It is not a matter of surprise that he should have expressed the following opinion of Robert Hall:—“It is a matter of no surprise that a man so great as Mr. Hall, with principles so loose and contradictory, should have been at once the glory and the shame, the boast and the blight, of the Baptist Church.”* The “blight” arises from another quarter, and Mr. Hall refers to it:—“What is the consequence which must be expected from teaching an illiterate assembly that the principal design of their union is to extend the practice of a particular ceremony, but to invest it with an undue importance in their eyes, and, by tempting them to look upon themselves as Christians of a higher order, to foster an overweening self-conceit, to generate selfish passions and encourage ambitious projects? Accustomed to give themselves a decided preference above others, to treat with practical contempt the religious pretensions of the best and wisest of men, and to live in an

* Terms of Communion, p. 112.

element of separation and exclusion, it would be astonishing indeed if their humility were not impaired, and the more delicate sympathies of Christian affection almost extinguished.”*

A proselyting and uncharitable spirit—which is but another name for the intolerance of bigotry—is the natural fruit of the exclusive principles of the Baptist Church. But Mr. Remington, who was once a Methodist and became a Baptist, says, “The practice of close communion does not lead to bigotry: if it did, the Baptists would have been persecutors.”† And to this Mr. Smith, who was once a Baptist and became a Methodist, replies, “But he [Mr. Remington] should remember that the spirit of persecution is often seen in other forms than in imprisonments, racks, and tortures, and that it will be quite in time for Baptists to boast in this matter when they have once had the whip in their hands and refused to use it. He would do well also to remember the saying of their great apostle, Robert Hall,—viz.: That their views of the communion *were equally intolerant* with the bigoted principles of Romanism: that the one was ‘the intolerance of power, the other of weakness.’ That they do lead to bigotry, he [Mr. Remington] has himself shown, as any one may see by reading his two pamphlets,—the first, ‘Reasons for Becoming a Baptist,’ written when he had just embraced these *sentiments*, the other, ‘Defence of Restricted Communion,’ when he had not only embraced the theory but the *spirit* also,—the fruits of which are seen in the gross perversions and misrepresentations of the discipline of a church to which he owed, under God, the salvation of his soul.”‡ The Baptists claim descent from the apostles, and affirm that the apos-

* Works, vol. i. p. 496.

† Restricted Communion.

‡ Reasons for Becoming a Methodist, pp. 159, 160.

tolie churches were Baptist; and, as they degenerated ultimately into papal intolerance and bigotry, who can say that their modern restrictions are not in the right line to a repetition of papal heresy and practice?

3. Restricted communion casts off *co-operation* with the churches of Christ. It is a stranger to the benign laws of mutual benevolence. It is the parent of excitement, alienation, enmity, animosity. It is ever receding further and further from other churches, inventing new points of discrepancy, creating new subjects of contention, opening new sources of crimination, gathering new combustibles for party-passions, presenting new obstacles to concord, and raising new barriers to "brotherly love." "*My church*" absorbs so much anxiety that little concern is felt for other churches,—the *common* interest,—the church of *God*. The divine rule—"Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it"—is applicable only to *my church*. I can rejoice that the "word of the Lord has free course and is glorified" in *my church*, and labor most zealously for it; but I am pained to hear of its success elsewhere, and rejoiced to hear that it languishes elsewhere. It is pleasant enough to draw members away from sister-churches, and it evinces the piety, independence, and good sense of those members to come; but no sympathy is felt for the church that suffers the loss. It is agreeable to receive accessions from revivals in sister-churches and then to represent the increase as a proof that religion is flourishing in *my church*: the church of *Christ* is not once thought of but to "bite and devour." Other churches are left to stand or fall by themselves, provided no attack be made by the enemy upon some common interest or civil privilege. Other matters are "none of their business."

CHAPTER XIII.

ADVANTAGES OF OPEN COMMUNION.

THE advantages of open communion are many and incalculable, two of which only we shall mention.

1. It would contribute to the interchange of *friendly counsel and proper admonition* among the churches. One who treats me with coldness and indifference, shuns my company, disparages my reputation, excites broils in my house and among my neighbors, publishes my faults to the world, and endeavors to banish me from society, is not the man to expostulate with me about my frailties and imperfections or admonish me about my errors. But the man who is kind and sociable in his intercourse with me—who is found in my house, at my fireside, at my table, and is on terms of intimacy and friendship with me—is the man who can profit me by his admonitions and reproofs, because he has proved that he *loves* me and has a sincere concern for my improvement, especially when I know that our enterprises and interests are essentially interwoven and our affairs a matter of common concern. In this way how might the churches be instrumental in helping one another to correct deficiencies, faults, and errors, and in pointing out wherein each “walks not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel”! We might then converse familiarly and calmly about differences in doctrine and church-government, and, “seeing eye to eye,” make such modifications as would remove the barriers to the most intimate Christian union and fellowship. Individual Christians and ministers in different churches would profit by friendly counsel, admo-

dition, and encouragement. The noise of the brawler would be hushed. Ecclesiastical tale-bearers would be silenced. Busybodies would lose their importance and be reduced to insignificance. The petty hostilities of irritable sectarians would be terminated. Pharisaical panegyrics, now so often lavished upon "*our church*," would be discountenanced. The detestable spirit of proselytism would be crushed. The antipathies, collisions, and wranglings of evangelical churches would soon be no more. And in the deep and holy calm that would ensue might be heard the celestial and tender strains of that "wisdom which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of compassion and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy," by which all the true churches in the world might be made a mutual improvement and support.

2. It would strengthen the force of the testimony for Christ among men. Let it never be assumed again, as it has been by some, that God's own people can maintain a stronger testimony for him by disunion than by union. What is a testimony for our sects and peculiarities worth to God and his truth when our shibboleths, symbols, and flags challenge believers to battle with one another, and our forms are the wedges that split the church of Christ to pieces? What could more enforce the church's testimony for the truth among men, or more effectually rout the whole field of infidelity and unbelief, than religion reduced to a practical system upon the broadest Christian fellowship, on which the inferior particulars in which the churches vary were lost in the glory of the higher particulars in which they agree? Let the churches confine their testimony to the substantial truths of revelation which cement the foundations of the common salvation, and no longer let their creeds clash with their communion, and a ground is formed for Christian confidence, energy, and co-operation which the

powers of earth and hell cannot resist. Let the spirit of Christian fellowship pervade and predominate in the subordinate and supreme councils of the churches, and, as a central fire, it will soon animate the whole church and bow mankind in submission and fealty at the feet of Christ. Though we cannot rationally believe that the union of all the churches under identically the same doctrinal and ecclesiastical government is expedient and practicable the present hour, because there are opinions, habits, feelings, and forms which must be reduced to some common standard before it can be wisely and safely done, yet let us in the mean time cultivate the most friendly Christian intercourse in every possible way, as opportunity serves, and so ripen into mutual alliances for mutual benefit, and hasten the time when "the Lord shall build up Zion and appear to men in his glory." Thus shall we live

"Citizens of ages yet to come."

CHAPTER XIV.

OBJECTIONS TO OPEN COMMUNION CONSIDERED.

IN this chapter we shall give attention to the principal objections to open communion.

1. "God may, and does, hold communion with those with whom we may not." Very well: this settles the question. *God is with us.* Why should the Baptists lay more stress upon the mere *mode* of baptism than God himself does? God "hold communion with those with whom" his people may not! What better evidence can there be of one's right to the table of the Lord than that the Lord is with him? John Jones, "a bold reprovener of sin" and an inflexible non-

conformist, told some of his friends who were for separating from their brethren because they were not altogether of their own principles and entertained different sentiments about non-essential matters that, "*for his part, he would be one with everybody that was one with Christ,*"*—a sentence worthy of inscription in letters of gold over the portals of every church of God on earth. Henry Jessey, another non-conformist, after his ejection turned Baptist; "and it proved no small honor and advantage to the Baptists to have such a man among them. But, notwithstanding his differing from his brethren in this or any other point, he maintained the same Christian love and charity to all saints as before, not only as to friendly conversation, but also in regard to *church-communion*, and took great pains to promote the same catholic spirit among others."† God holds no communion with an unregenerate man, but with regenerate men; and all regenerate men, by virtue of union with God, have already spiritual union and communion with all his people on earth, and so have a right to a place at the Lord's table with them. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John i. 3.) That is, as our communion with God is a sufficient reason for others to commune with us, so their communion with God is a sufficient reason for us to commune with them. Then it is not true that "we may not hold communion with those with whom God communes." As soon as a man becomes a Christian he has a right to fellowship or communion with all the people of God.

Matters which destroy not communion with Christ cannot prevent the communion of Christians. "Receive ye one

* Non-Conformist Memoirs, i. 340.

† Ibid. p. 130.

another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God." (Rom. xv. 7.) Here Christ is the example, and the glory of God is the aim. "Receive:" this is the command. The church, then, that sees in other churches or in individuals the evidence of Christ's approbation and presence, and yet excludes them from communion with her, disregards the example of Christ, violates his command, and impedes the glory of God. It is no atonement for these offences for a church to boast *that she will glorify God in her own way*. God can be glorified no otherwise than in *his own way*; and the Scriptures just quoted utterly exclude all *separate and exclusive communions* of his people as methods of glorifying God.

Besides, if this objection is valid, it is subversive of all Christian fellowship. The outward walk is the only incontestable evidence of right to Christian fellowship: "By their fruits ye shall know them." If such an evidence as this—the external effect of communion with God—is not a sufficient warrant for reciprocal communion among the churches in those ordinances appointed expressly for their spiritual benefit, then we must admit persons to the communion on some other ground than that prescribed in the gospel; and then we cannot know whether we are indeed communing with the people of God or not; and so Christian communion would be impossible,—for communion upon principles of *man's making* is not *Christian communion*, but profanity and pollution. Let us follow the divine rule.

Finally: the terms of the objection should be reversed. We should hold communion with those with whom God holds communion, and that to the whole extent of the evidence which they give of such communion. If we walk with those who "walk with God," we are certainly in the way to heaven. We never should be ashamed to be found in worship or sacramental communion with those whom the

God of our salvation deigns to own and bless as his children. No power on earth is authorized to hinder me from going with those of whom God is the Father, and to whom I can say, "I will go with you, for God is with you." And rather than commit the grievous offence of shutting out God from an exclusive communion-table by shutting out his people, I would abandon the table at which this is done. I never could be held a willing captive within the iron wall, hemmed round by ceremonial forms and points of disagreement which prevent one from being one with the family of Christ.

Dr. Howell states this objection in another form. Says he, "Christ *may* bless with his presence and favor those who disregard his injunctions, but he has not covenanted to do so."* This is a new interpretation of the spirit of the gospel, which admits of blessing those who disregard its plain letter, while it is inconceivable on what ground the spirit and letter of the gospel can come in conflict. It would require the most stupendous miracle and a revolution of all the laws of reasoning to establish the validity and propriety of this novel law of interpretation. When the spirit of the gospel is once satisfactorily made out, it may be taken for granted that no divine injunction exists, or can exist, which is in conflict with it; and, therefore, if Christ blesses Pedobaptists, their involuntary omission of baptism—if they have omitted it—cannot be construed into a disregard of the injunction respecting that ordinance; and so the Baptists do violence to the *spirit* of the gospel, at least, when they affirm and require baptism as an indispensable condition of communion. No argument can ever amount to the smallest degree of plausibility that Christ blesses those who voluntarily disregard his injunctions; and, if an

* Howell on Communion, p. 42.

exception to this intuitive truth were possible, the Baptists have never ventured so far as conscientiously to believe that pious Pedobaptists are guilty of this offence. They cordially concede that pious Pedobaptists are blessed with the "presence and favor" of Christ; and hence it is a matter of surprise that they should inflexibly maintain that the former are excluded from sacramental communion by "the injunctions" of Christ. If it were possible to conceive of Christ blessing those who voluntarily disregard his injunctions, it is impossible to conceive why those should not be received to sacramental communion who voluntarily disregard the injunction of baptism; or if it be a fact that Christ blesses those who involuntarily neglect that ordinance, it is impossible to conceive why they should not be received to sacramental communion. Man receives no blessing not contained in the covenant, expressed or implied; and any theory in opposition to this is one of the flimsiest fictions of the imagination. Extreme indeed must be the urgency of a cause when it is forced to adopt an expedient of this sort to support it,—an expedient which, while it makes God "the author of confusion," is extorted by the piety of those who make him "the God of peace."

But this is not all. Who shall say—and what is it to say—that man ever receives the presence and favor of Christ *outside* the covenant? The Papal Church says it, and Dr. Howell repeats it. It is to elevate exterior authority *above* the inspired sense of the Bible, which is the only infallible standard and rule of faith. When the Papal Church, in corruption and arrogance, transcended the plain and inspired sense of the Scriptures, the necessity arose to invent a new and adequate standard to support the authority of her doctrines and rites; and we need not be surprised that the evangelical piety of unbaptized Christians has forced upon the Baptists a similar necessity.

We retort the prohibition of the doctor upon him. God's "wisdom forbids us to assume his prerogative and place our own inventions superior to his laws in the government of his kingdom."* And his supposition, "If God has some secret code by which he saves those who habitually violate his revealed will, it is for his own government, not ours,"† we consign to the fate of Romish dogmas of a similar nature. A position that is guarded against all means of proof detects itself; and such is this. It bears no mark of truth, but carries with it the irresistible features of internal error, which no sophism can conceal and no dogmatism support.

But the doctrine of the doctor admits of another application. What blessing *inside* the limits of the covenant do the Baptists receive which the Pedobaptists do not receive *outside* the covenant? or in what single particular do the Baptists display any superiority in piety and efficiency over evangelical Pedobaptists? or in what single doctrine or practice are they entitled to peerless honor in purity except in the vindication of a rite supposed by them to be neglected by the rest of the Christian world? And if in all these respects the Pedobaptists are equal to the Baptists, let them show what other blessings Christ has covenanted to bestow. Till this be done, facts evince either that the Baptists are outside the covenant as well as the Pedobaptists, or that the Pedobaptists are inside the covenant as well as the Baptists; and so in the former case neither have a right to communion, and in the latter case both have an equal right to it.

2. "Open communion compels us to admit all that pass themselves for Christians, and thus abolishes the distinction between the precious and the vile."

First. Are any of the "vile" among the "precious" in

* Terms of Communion, p. 88.

† Ibid. p. 109.

restricted communions? If so, then the objection is an argument against *restricted* communion.

Secondly. Restricted communions exclude those who are *acknowledged* by the objectors themselves to be Christians and as having given evidence that they *have* "received Christ Jesus the Lord." Open communion proposes to welcome and encourage all who evince "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," and to repel and exclude all that are aliens and enemies; and thus the distinction between "the precious and the vile" is preserved. But restricted communions go further, and exclude the "precious" with the "vile." The "vile" cannot invalidate the right of the "precious." Sinners cannot set aside the rights of Christians. No power on earth can do it. Scriptural discipline is not prostrated, nor is the house of God opened to utter profanation, by admitting the "precious" to the table of the Lord in any of his churches. No man or church is able to "search the heart and try the reins of the children of men:" the "outward appearance" only can guide, and by this every church must be guided. Secret states must be left with God.

Thirdly. There never has been a church, from the days of the apostles to the present hour, in which the "vile" have not existed; and hence, if the objection be valid, there should not have been, and ought not now to be, any sacramental fellowship between Christians of different names; and the doctrine of the unity of the church is a fancy, a deception. The objection subverts the foundation of the church and overturns the sacramental table at a single stroke. It cuts up the communion of saints by the roots. It brings the purest churches under the ban of a terrible and desolating proscription. If by communing with a particular church I must approbate the "vile" within her fold, then I can commune with no church on earth, not even

with my own, for in all the "vile" may be found; and so there can be no lawful sacramental fellowship on earth. Do not the Baptists find the "vile" at home as well as abroad? Then let the sacramental table be removed from the Baptist Church, or the objection be surrendered.

True, we are to "keep ourselves pure;" to "have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness;" to "come out and be separate;" to "withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly;" to separate from "idolatry,"—from the "world which lieth in wickedness,"—and specially from the "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth:" all this is plain and peremptory. But for one believer to refuse communion with another, or for one church of Christ to refuse communion with another, because there the "vile" are associated with the "precious," not a commandment or an example can be found in the Bible. Andrew Fuller, one of the most eminent writers and preachers in the Baptist Church in England, observes, in a "Letter to a Friend," "It was no reproach to Christ and his apostles to have had a Judas among them, though he was a thief, so long as his theft was not manifest; but, had there been a rule laid down that covetousness and even theft should be *no bar to communion*, the reproach had been indelible." If the Pedobaptists countenanced in their communion persons heretical in opinions, profligate in character, and scandalous in life, the objection would be of resistless force; but this is not so, and the objection fails.

Besides, these persons did not appear profane when they were received into the church; and, since they have been found out to be inconsistent and irregular, they are retained in order to their repentance and amendment,—which God will allow a church to do for a period; while he threatens to cut off the church that fails to cut off incorrigible offenders, as he did in the case of the ten tribes, and then the two

tribes of Israel, and afterward all the apostolic churches without exception.

3. "Unbaptized persons were not admitted in the apostles' days. Pedobaptists, therefore, ought not to be admitted now."* In the first place, this is assuming that pedobaptism is not apostolic baptism,—which is begging the whole question of baptism. Secondly. Granting that the unbaptized were not admitted in the apostles' days, were the excluded such as the Baptists now exclude? Infidel Jews, idolatrous heathen, and the disobedient and rebellious, were excluded by the apostles; but it never can be proved that the apostles would have excluded believing, pious, obedient, and faithful Christians, such as the Baptists concede the Pedobaptists to be. It is unreasonable to assume that they would have done it. Would the apostles have exchanged pulpits with unbaptized Christian ministers, united with them in prayer and other services of church-worship, recognised them as members of the household of faith, admitted that they had "a right to the Lord's Supper, and did right in partaking of it in their own churches," and engaged with them in the discharge of every other Christian duty, and yet excluded them from the sacramental table? Would the apostles have beheld unbaptized Christian ministers preaching the same doctrines that they received from Christ and the Holy Spirit and taught themselves, and their preaching accompanied with the unction, power, and demonstration of the Spirit superior to their own, and their labors crowned beyond all comparison with greater success than their own, and thousands upon thousands of happy converts from all classes of society crowding into unbaptized churches, while but hundreds were obtained as seals to the apostolic ministry?—would

* R. Fuller on Baptism and Communion, p. 241.

the apostles have beheld unbaptized churches far outnumbering their own, and powerful and overwhelming revivals breaking out in them on every hand and wherever their ministers came, and thousands upon thousands of their converts pressing into and increasing the strength of the apostolic churches?—would the apostles have beheld unbaptized churches engaged in the noblest enterprises to advance the kingdom of Christ at home and abroad, far and near, and everywhere accessible, organizing powerful religious societies, such as Bible, Missionary, Sunday-school, and Tract societies, to disseminate evangelical truth, and outstripping in the aggregate the apostles themselves in these matters?—would the apostles have beheld the salutary influence of these unbaptized churches extending into every department of society, modifying human laws, tastes, manners, habits, and customs on every hand, and insinuating a sanctifying leaven into the most powerful empires of earth, and depositing the elements of freedom, stability, and prosperity in the very fundamental laws and institutions of the nations that received and tolerated them?—would the apostles have beheld these unbaptized ministers and their churches enduring as great hardships, leading as holy, consistent lives, and dying as triumphant deaths, as the apostles themselves and their churches displayed?—would the apostles, in a word, have beheld themselves comparatively a small sect in the very centre of a thousand evangelical churches owned and blessed of God in a wonderful manner on every hand and helping mightily even the apostolic churches in the world's redemption,—and yet, after all this, refuse to receive them to the Lord's table because they were not *immersed*, or, if immersed, because they were not of their "faith and order"? The very idea is preposterous. Why, the apostles would have come to a dead stand: if they were Baptists, they would have been confounded. They

would have inquired, "What does all this mean? Have we not received from the Master that we are to admit none to his church or his supper, on any terms, by any means, and under any circumstances, but those who have been immersed and are of our faith and order? Surely we must have misunderstood the Lord. See, here before our eyes, all around us, are unbaptized ministers and churches excelling us in laboring for God. God, of a truth, is with them mightily. The Holy Ghost has at least baptized them with 'fire.' They yield us the accession of thousands of unquestionable conversions; and yet they are themselves spreading on every hand. It is wonderful. There is a mistake somewhere. We must be wrong, for they give no evidence that *they* are wrong. The *facts* are against us. They give better evidence that *they* are the true apostles and *their* churches the true churches than we do that we are such. *We must either deny the truth of the gospel or change our ground.* We must acknowledge that we have either misunderstood the 'commission' and instructions of the Lord, or that his commission and instructions to us were of no essential importance. It cannot be the latter: it must be the former. We must convene a council and change our ground on two essential points. We must abrogate the essential importance of immersion and annul the condition of membership in churches of our 'faith and order' as prerequisite to sacramental communion, and so break down the wall of close communion that separates our brethren from us; for they give better evidence than we do that they understand the true and proper meaning of the 'commission' and instructions of our common Lord." Thus, in the appeal to what the practice of the apostles would have been in a similar case, we turn the tables upon the Baptists. Make the cases parallel, and the Baptists must abandon their ground. Make the cases parallel, or withdraw

the objection. Either class pious Pedobaptists with infidel Jews, idolatrous heathen, faithless, disobedient professors, and the non-professing world,—in a word, exclude them from the Christian church altogether,—or withdraw the appeal to the practice of the apostles for the course you pursue. There is no alternative. You must do one or the other. The objection forces you to the one; the reply drives you to the other. Abandon the objection, or maintain it.

Alas, your leaders are resolved to maintain this objection at all hazards. I quote from Mr. Whitney, and give his comments. “Just look for a moment,” says he, “at the language of those whom you point to as the defenders of your practice. ‘All Pedobaptists are, however ignorantly, *openly disobedient* to a command of Christ.’* ‘They *refuse subjection* to Christ and violate the laws of his house.’† ‘The *essential preliminaries being disregarded*, they cannot approach the table of the Lord.’‡ ‘Their reception by us would on our part amount to *a conspiracy* with them in their DESIGN to *overthrow the law of God*, and render us not Christian communicants, but *partners in their rebellion against the authority of the Supreme Legislator*.’§ Evangelical and pious Pedobaptists disobedient and rebellious! Holy men like Owen and Baxter, Doddridge and Scott, Chalmers and McCheyne, Edwards and Davies, Whitefield and Tennent, Brainard and Payson, openly disobedient, rebels against the authority of God, refusing subjection to Christ, and designing to overthrow his laws! Would to God we had more such, or that all who make these modest charges and consider themselves obedient above others would

* Curtis on Communion, p. 243.

† Kinghorn's Terms of Communion.

‡ Howell on Communion, p. 178.

§ Ibid. p. 87.

only supply their place! But where does such language place all Pedobaptists? Out of 'the church which is *subject* unto Christ,' among the godless, whose sentence, as written out by the pen of inspiration, is, 'Unto them that are contentious and *obey not* the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish.' It not only throws them out of the visible church, but out of the invisible. Can you be surprised to hear close-communicants denounced as illiberal and bigoted when they make use of such language and practise a course which, if consistently interpreted, necessarily leads to the unchurching and condemnation of everybody but themselves? And to refuse to commune with such men because they will not sin against their souls is to act more in accordance with the genius of Hildebrand than the spirit of Christ."*

Mr. Whitney might have gone further, and retorted upon Curtis, Kinghorn, and Howell, and reminded them that they and their brethren exchange pulpits with these "openly disobedient" men, "conspirators," and "rebels" against the government of God, and engage with them in the solemn mockeries of church-worship, "when occasion offers," and concede that they have "a right" to take the oath of conspiracy at the Lord's table, and bid them God-speed in their horrid "design to overthrow the law of God"! If the objection supports close communion, it presupposes a coalition of close-communicants with open-communicants against the authority of God. If such a coalition does not exist,—and it does not,—then the objection falls to the ground, and the appeal to what would have been the practice of the apostles in the case fails.

4. "To be separated from our brethren at the Lord's

* Whitney on Open Communion, pp. 131-133. It is gratifying to see a Baptist administering such just rebuke to his brethren.

table is more painful to us than to them; but our love for them, as well as our loyalty to Jesus, demands of us this self-denial."* The Baptists have a singular aptitude to connect *a cross* with the discharge of many religious duties. At one time immersion is a cross, especially in freezing weather and to delicate females, when in fact it is only repulsive to man's natural instincts and to woman's native modesty. At another time the dying Christian who cannot be immersed, and so cannot have the communion, must "submit with pious resignation" to the necessity; and "it is a very great attainment to submit patiently to suffer the will of God, at such a time, concerning us."† And now it is a cross to decline communion with those who are "knit together with us by a union most sweet and dear and imperishable," whom "neither walls, nor mountains, nor oceans, nor ages, can separate."‡ We repeat, this sort of "self-denial" is a singular demand upon piety,—especially, too, when Dr. Howell admits that "all the Lord's children have an undoubted right to his table." The pious heart indeed shrinks from communing with the ungodly at the Lord's table; and it is no self-denial to do this. But how a Christian can feel the prompting of "self-denial" in declining to commune with his brethren in the sacred supper is wholly inexplicable, except upon the ground of perverted moral sensibility. I cannot understand how it is "painful" to unite with another in the discharge of a duty equally imposed upon both. How "loyalty to Jesus" can be impeached by uniting with his subjects in taking the oath of allegiance to him is another mystery, inexplicable except upon the ground that I am controlled rather by the laws of

* R. Fuller on Baptism and Communion, p. 239.

† Remington on Restricted Communion, p. 72.

‡ R. Fuller on Baptism and Communion, p. 220.

an improper religious education than an enlightened judgment of the laws of Christ's spiritual kingdom. Christians often confound the peculiar claims of party with the inexorable claims of the divine law, and so are "loyal" to their sect and disloyal to God. An enlightened conscience would free many a sincere Christian from painful mortification and useless self-denial in a multitude of instances. Certain it is that pious Pedobaptists have no compunctions of conscience in obeying the command, "Do this in remembrance of me," nor would *they* have any, nor feel it to be a case of "self-denial," nor disloyal to sect or to Jesus, to unite with pious Baptists in sacramental communion. It is, however, to be deeply regretted that pious Baptists are governed by different views of duty; and we most sincerely return the pious lamentation of Mr. Fuller, "the more we admire their characters, so much more do we lament that they throw their influence on the side of error;" though we drop his appended phrase,—“and continue in disobedience.”* We sincerely regret that, while it almost "breaks" Mr. Fuller's "*heart*" because we charge "inconsistency" upon him, his *conscience* should dictate that it "would not only be inconsistency but a *deliberate sin* in him"† to commune with us; for a pious man, with his heart and conscience in conflict, cannot well be at ease. There certainly is to every pious heart an attraction toward those on whom the sunshine of God's countenance rests; and to such a heart it does seem that it ought to be not only "painful" but remorseful to repel or neglect them: it is paradoxical, to say the least, that both should be right. It is a singular government that yields joy and comfort to the Pedobaptists in partaking of the Lord's Supper, and at the same time imposes upon the Baptists the "painful" duty of expelling them from that hallowed service,—singular that God should

* R. Fuller on Baptism and Communion, p. 239. † Ibid. p. 244.

own that service as "loyal," and yet some of his children pronounce it "disloyal" and "continued disobedience,"—singular, above all, that a service should be conceded by one party to be "right" when performed by the other party, and yet "a deliberate sin" when united in by both parties! Our appeal, then, is to God, with the concessions of the Baptists, and not to the standard by which the Baptists determine their obligations,—assured that we shall not run the hazard of incurring the divine displeasure by any arbitrary assumptions of exclusive privileges.

"I have known," says Robert Hall, "more instances than one of good men complaining of the uneasiness—I might say the anguish—they felt on those occasions, when they witnessed some of their most intimate friends, persons of exalted piety, compelled, after joining in the other branches of worship, to withdraw from the Lord's table, as though 'they had no part or lot in the matter.'"*

5. "As no one who was not circumcised was permitted to partake of the paschal feast, so no unbaptized person is admissible to the eucharist." Our reply is brief. Circumcision is expressly enjoined as indispensably preliminary to the passover, and the neglect of circumcision incurred the sentence of *excision*, *exclusion* from the privileges and blessings of the everlasting covenant: "that soul shall be cut off from the people." But no such dependence of the eucharist upon baptism is stated in Scripture; and the Baptists themselves admit that pious Pedobaptists already enjoy all the spiritual blessings of the new and everlasting covenant. If such a dependence does exist, how did it happen that pious Pedobaptists obtained all the spiritual blessings of the covenant, and why are they not "cut off" by God himself "from his people"? That such a necessary dependence does not exist is evident from the single

* Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 323.

consideration that pious Pedobaptists give as good evidence that they are already admitted by God himself to a participation of the blessings of the everlasting covenant as the Baptists themselves can furnish. Besides, if there be any force in this analogical argument of the Baptists, it must revert to the Pedobaptists; for then baptism comes in the place of circumcision,—which is the fact; and then all pious Pedobaptists are already entitled to the communion, and the Baptists are wrong in opposing infant baptism.

6. “When we receive,” says Dr. Howell, “the Lord’s Supper with Pedobaptists, we either actually abandon, or practically falsify, all our principles in relation to the sacraments of the gospel. Is it possible they [the Pedobaptists] can wish us to admit them to communion with us, or desire us to sit down with them without acknowledging the validity of their baptism? Read all their books on this subject, and the conviction cannot be resisted that they esteem our communion with them as worth nothing except as an acknowledgment of their baptism or a renunciation of our own.”* The consequences stated in this objection are not necessarily involved in mixed communion, for the Baptists might still maintain their “principles in relation to the sacraments,” and, so far as they are concerned, might still maintain the necessary dependence of the sacraments upon each other, regarding their Pedobaptist brethren as innocently, because involuntarily, erring in the matter of baptism. Besides, it is not true that the Pedobaptists require the recognition of the validity of their baptism in order to mixed communion: believing that their baptism is valid, they do not require the concession of the Baptists to strengthen its validity. Nor is it true that the Pedobaptists would “esteem” mixed communion “as worth nothing”

* Terms of Communion, pp. 119, 120.

without a renunciation on the part of the Baptists of their baptism, for they might still maintain and practise their doctrine of exclusive immersion. Finally, it is believed that all in strict Baptist churches, in England and America, are not of the opinion of Dr. Howell.

7. "Baptists cannot commune with Pedobaptists, because they administer baptism for illegal purposes and attach to it an unreasonable and unscriptural degree of efficacy and importance."* This author, on same page, observes, "Pedobaptists of all classes regard baptism as at least synonymous with regeneration." We need scarcely stop to remind the reader that neither of these statements is true respecting *evangelical* Pedobaptists, and that this author attempts, it is feared, to practise a pious fraud upon those of his readers who may fail to detect his sophism, by which he wishes to show that the Baptists "are the only people who do not unduly exalt the sacraments of the gospel,"† and therefore they should not commune sacramentally with any other sect of Christians. Communion should be practised with none but evangelical churches; and we deny that the evangelical churches "attach an unreasonable and unscriptural degree of efficacy and importance" to baptism. After having labored to prove baptismal regeneration upon Pedobaptists, (including Papists and Protestants,) whole and entire, this author himself concedes, "The *evangelical* portion of them will, I doubt not, earnestly protest that *they* do not believe that baptism has any regenerating or saving influence whatever."‡ As to the "creeds and standards" of the evangelical Pedobaptists, it is almost needless to say that this author either misunderstands or has misrepresented them, and that "the antagonistic influence of Baptist prin-

* Howell on Terms of Communion, p. 180.

† Ibid. p. 181.

‡ Ibid. p. 201.

ciples" has rather been a barrier to the progress of the gospel than a restraint upon the "extravagance" of the evangelical churches. The truth is, evangelical Pedobaptists attach neither more nor less importance and efficacy to baptism than the Baptists do; and so this objection is irrelevant.

8. "Baptists cannot unite with Pedobaptists in sacramental communion, because they attach to the Lord's Supper an unreasonable and unscriptural importance and efficacy."* This is but the repetition of the preceding pious fraud, which is a favorite weapon with unfair religious controversialists. To use the language of this author, this proposition "is extravagant and ridiculous." For he maintains—what no one denies—that in the early ages of the church *infant baptism and infant communion* were connected; but this ridiculous absurdity is not now practised even in the Romish Church, and so does not now exist as a barrier to communion with that church. Indeed, this author says, "The Papists and all the Protestants who have been under this influence have long since abolished infant communion."† Why then refer to it as a reason for not communing with evangelical Pedobaptist churches, in which it never existed in doctrine or practice? All arguments to prove that evangelical Pedobaptists attach more or less importance to the Lord's Supper than the Scriptures justify or evangelical Baptists admit are mere assumptions; and so, this objection failing, the Baptists may commune with their Pedobaptist brethren without "insincerity, hypocrisy, or sin."‡

9. "The policy of free communion is disastrous to the church."§ The progressive prosperity of the evangelical

* Howell on Terms of Communion, p. 203.

† Ibid. p. 213.

‡ Ibid. p. 208.

§ Ibid. p. 215.

Pedobaptist churches at once refutes this objection; and it can never be proved that the prosperity of the Baptist Church is the legitimate result of strict communion. On the contrary, the probability is that the prosperity of the Baptist Church is ascribable mainly to the adoption and application of the fundamental doctrines and principles of salvation which constitute the creeds and enter into the measures and practices of the evangelical Pedobaptist churches; and so long as this is true of the Baptist Church it must continue, in the nature of things, to prosper, notwithstanding the restraints and impediments involved in exclusive immersion and strict communion. The maintenance of these two dogmas may perpetuate the *distinctness* of the Baptist Church as a sect, but can never tend to promote its prosperity. The prosperity of the Baptist Church lies in other causes,—causes common to other evangelical churches,—which are the common ground of sacramental communion between them, and on which they are entitled consequently to communion with the Baptist Church. Nor does it follow that free communion would be “disastrous” to the Baptist Church, since it need not abate at all in its piety or zeal, or abandon any of its truly evangelical principles and doctrines, nor relinquish immersion, which it regards as so essential, “solemn, and impressive.” The Baptist Church, like the Methodist Church, carries the gospel chiefly to the middling classes of social society; and certainly it can never be pretended that men are converted through the instrumentality of the *sacraments*. Thus, the Baptist Church might practise free communion, and yet preach the saving doctrines of the gospel with undiminished zeal and success. Then if the tide of prosperity turn in favor of the Baptist Church, let it be so; or if it turn more strongly in favor of other evangelical churches, let it be so: in either case more souls are saved

and the prosperity of Christianity is more rapidly promoted among men. One great barrier to evangelical union and harmony in efforts and enterprises to evangelize the world is broken down, and the strength and time formerly expended in wasting each others' energies in mutual strifes and impeding each others' progress are employed in mutual helps and in combined labors to accelerate the final triumph of the gospel in the world's redemption. Our petty differences and intense solitudes for our own arks and sects are humiliating. This author observes:—"Christian communion, in its largest sense, extends to all *the modes* by which believers recognise each other as members of a common head. Every expression of fraternal regard, every participation in the enjoyments of social worship, every instance of the unity of the Spirit exerted in prayer and supplication or in acts of Christian sympathy and friendship, truly belongs to the communion of saints."* One would imagine that this is the language of a liberal evangelical Pedobaptist, if he were not told that a strict Baptist is the author of it; while it is surprising that all this can be done, and is done, by strict Baptists, who all the time maintain their tenet of exclusive immersion, and yet cannot go further, and engage in free communion without abandoning that characteristic tenet.

10. It is assumed by Professor Curtis that open communion involves "a full and perfect membership in any numbers, with an equal right to vote, to elect officers, or become officers themselves, as well as to preach and administer ordinances only as they conscientiously believed correct."† To this objection we shall give particular attention, because it is founded on a serious misapprehension of the rights implied in sacramental communion.

* Howell on Terms of Communion, p. 229.

† Progress of Baptist Principles, p. 287.

1. No church has a right to require that as a term of church-membership which is not essential to salvation; and it is not essential to salvation that a person belong to this or that particular church; but every one has a right to the Lord's Supper who has performed that which is essential to salvation; and therefore a person may and should be received to sacramental communion with a particular church without becoming a member of that church.

2. Every one who is a member of the spiritual or universal church of Christ has a right to the visible ordinances of the church; for the visible ordinances of the church belong to the spiritual or universal church of Christ, and consequently to no particular church more than to another, unless we can prove the absurdity that what belongs to the whole does not belong to a part of the spiritual church.. Hence it is evident that sacramental communion with one particular church does not necessarily involve membership in that particular church, since the communicant is already a member of another particular church which has an equal right to sacramental communion with the former.

3. The objection is in fact a question of church-government, and as such we shall now more particularly consider it. Human nature is *substantially* the same always and everywhere; and, corresponding to this nature, the gospel is always and everywhere essentially the same. But *circumstantially* man is infinitely various, and hence differences may exist in the external governments of particular churches, provided nothing be done in conflict with the immutable and essential principles of the gospel. As man is substantially the same always and everywhere, certain ordinances and institutions of the gospel, applicable alone to man's substantial nature, are enjoined as universally and immutably binding, such as preaching, the sacraments, thanksgiving, prayer, and praise. In other words, the

spiritual church of Christ is one, as the human race is one, but composed of many societies, all branches of the same body, and governed by the same fundamental spiritual laws, and having the same right to the same immutable ordinances and institutions, though under different but harmonious external governments. There are two elements essential to the being of the spiritual universal church of Christ: the one doctrine, and always the same; the other spiritual, and always active and operative; and where these exist in a particular church, its external government, in the nature of things, is sufficiently in harmony with the principles of the gospel to entitle it to recognition as a branch of the universal church of Christ; for every essence has a development *peculiarly its own*; and so Christianity, in doctrine and life, has its own development, and is independent of every form of church-government in itself not contrary to the gospel. It is thus that churches with different ecclesiastical governments, but having the same evangelical doctrine and life, are members of the same great body,—the universal church; and so each has the same right to the same ordinances and institutions of Christianity, and are bound to observe all, because they are equally binding upon all.

Thus, while particular churches having the same doctrine and life are but members of the same body, or parts of the same great whole, and so in doctrine and life are not independent of each other, in external government and regulations they are different, are independent of each other, and cannot make laws for or interfere with each other, any more than the church can make laws for or interfere with the state, or the state make laws for or interfere with the church, but each particular church can regulate its government and discipline according to the general principles revealed and provided for every case that can occur in the

exigencies of time and place. From these fundamental principles several consequences follow.

If a member leaves one particular church for another, he remains still in the one church of Christ; but if he joins not another particular church he leaves the one church altogether; and yet no one is justified in renouncing the communion to which he belongs from motives of taste, convenience, or worldly policy, much less because it contains in it some who are corrupt, or against whom prejudices, however strong, are entertained; though he may renounce a communion if it be destitute of spiritual life and teach false doctrine, for such a communion is no part of the church of Christ. On the same ground, no Christian is justified in neglecting any of the ordinances and institutions of Christianity because some in the church to which he belongs are corrupt, or entertain for him prejudices, however strong or malignant: he is under prior and abiding obligation to Christ, and he cannot neglect his duty to him, however others may neglect it. Nor is any member of a particular church justified in declining communion with another particular church which he believes is a part of Christ's church, since Christ is the head of all the parts of his church. And so the ordinations and ministrations of one particular church are as valid as those of another particular church, because Christ is the head of all the particular churches comprehended in the visible church, and is the head of every spiritual member and minister of every particular church, and rules and supports every particular church in every place. Not that the minister of one particular church is invested with authority to vote, or sit in trial, or administer ecclesiastical government, in another particular church, or engage in framing rules and regulations for the government of another particular church; for in these matters each particular church may adopt its

own government and discipline, so it be done in accordance with the general and immutable principles provided in the gospel for the direction of those in authority in the church. Right to commune with another church does not involve right to engage with that church in ecclesiastical matters, such as legislation for the peace and order of its members, regulation of its worship, superintendence of its interests, voting in church-trials, &c. In these matters each church has its own government, rules, and regulations. And therefore none of these are invaded or sacrificed by admitting members of other Christian churches to the Lord's table, since the Lord's table is the *common* property of all Christian churches. And as a properly-accredited minister of one particular church is the minister of the whole church, as the preacher of the truth, his administration of the sacraments and his right to communion should be recognised as valid as are the administration and rights of the minister in any other particular church. And so private members of one particular church are not invested with authority to vote, or sit in trial, or engage in any manner in framing or administering the ecclesiastical government of another particular church; for, as above, each particular church may adopt and administer its own government. In this matter, under the restriction and direction stated, each church may exercise its own discretion and freedom. But in the matter of the immutable ordinances and institutions of Christianity no particular church can exclude the members of another particular church, for all have an equal right to them, and here rights are not left to the discretion and freedom of any particular church. For example,—which is the matter in hand,—the Lord's Supper is a standing ordinance of Christianity, of universal and perpetual obligation, that is, equally and perpetually binding upon all the churches of Christ, which neither originated with nor can be appropriated to

the use and benefit of any particular church to the exclusion of any other particular church; and so, while it is the common and inalienable right of every particular church, reciprocal communion between the churches does not secure to those communing "an equal right to vote, elect officers, or become officers," or engage in any manner in the ecclesiastical government of the churches respectively. In mixed communion all enjoy an inalienable right to the Lord's Supper, each particular church retaining at the same time its right under the gospel to provide and administer its own external government according to the gospel. This is the course pursued by the English Baptists, as is admitted by Professor Curtis himself:—"Most of the English [Baptist] churches now do not allow Pedobaptists to become fully members of the church in the sense of voting or having any share in the government, *but simply to commune.*"* This is as it should be in America and everywhere else in the Christian world.

11. Allied to this is another objection to open communion urged by the same author:—"The visible churches are also independent bodies, just as all the families in a community are independent in their household arrangements. Hence it does not follow that, because an individual is entitled to enjoy the privileges of a home in his own family, he is therefore at liberty to claim all the same prerogatives in any other, as he may see fit to demand them. So must it ever be, measurably, in well-regulated Christian churches."† The analogy is radically defective. The Lord's Supper is the "privilege" or "prerogative" of every particular church, without distinction; and every true believer has an inalienable right to "home" anywhere with his Father's family. Admit that the Lord's Supper is the peculiar privilege or prerogative of a particular church, and

* Progress of Baptist Principles, p. 289.

† Ibid. p. 403.

it becomes at once the foundation of a *sect*; and this is the assumption and the practice of strict Baptists, whatever may be their concessions. Arguments drawn from social life in favor of strict communion do not touch the question in controversy, though the intercourse, generally practised in well-regulated conventional life, might be turned with great force against the practice of strict communion in the Baptist Church, and put to the blush the exclusiveness of that church,—since members of different “families in a community,” though “independent in their household arrangements,” are often found in friendly intercourse in the same house and around the same social table.

CHAPTER XV.

EMINENT BAPTISTS IN FAVOR OF OPEN COMMUNION.

SOME of the “noblest spirits and brightest lights” in the Baptist Church, whose names are fadeless in the annals of Christianity, deny that baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to sacramental communion. John Bunyan, the celebrated author of “Pilgrim’s Progress,” was a Baptist; and he opposed this dogma of his church. “The ingenious author of the Pilgrim’s Progress was one of the first in this kingdom [England] who dared to assert that the want of baptism is no bar to communion, and acted accordingly.”* Roger Williams, immortal in the history of American independence, and the founder of the Baptist Church in America, and who withdrew from the church he founded, was in favor of open communion. Robert Hall, one of the most

* Booth’s Vindication of the Baptists, *Dap. Lib.*, vol. i. p. 49.

elegant and eloquent writers in the Baptist or any other church, was in favor of open communion, and has done more, probably, than any other man, to break down the opposite practice in his own church. John Foster, one of the most profound and accomplished writers of his age, a Baptist, is at the side of Robert Hall. The two Haldanes, of Scotland, are of the same class. Alexander Carson, the author of the best defence that has ever appeared in favor of immersion, and the great authority of the Baptists for the original meaning of the Greek word *baptizo*, was in favor of open communion. Baptist W. Noel, who withdrew from the Church of England and became a Baptist, has published, in his work on Christian baptism, pp. 287-301, "*reasons for free communion.*" To the writings of some of these, and of others, we shall refer in this chapter, making extracts from their works which are not in the possession of the people generally.

We begin with John Bunyan. We make several extracts from a treatise written by him, entitled "A Reason for my Practice in Worship."

"Let the cry be never so loud, Christ, Order, The Rule, The Command, or the like, carnality is at the bottom; and they are but babes that do it; their zeal is but a puff. (1 Cor. iv. 6.) And observe it, the great division at Corinth was helped forward by water-baptism. This the apostle intimates by 'Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?' Ah, brethren, carnal Christians with outward circumstances will, if they be let alone, make sad work in the churches of Christ against the spiritual growth of the same. 'But I thank God,' saith Paul, 'that I baptized none of you,' &c. Not but that it was then an ordinance of God, but they abused it in making parties thereby. 'I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanus, men of note among the brethren,

men of good judgment, and revered by the rest: they can tell you I intended not to make a party to myself thereby. Besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.' By this negligent relating of whom were baptized by him, he showeth that he made no such matter of baptism as some in these days do; nay, that he made no matter at all thereof with respect to church-communion; for if he did not heed who himself had baptized, he much less heeded who were baptized by others. But if baptism had been the initiating or entering ordinance, and so appointed of God, no doubt he had made more conscience thereof than so lightly to pass it over. 'For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.' The gospel, then, may be effectually preached, and yet baptism neither administered nor mentioned,—the gospel being good tidings to sinners upon the account of free grace through Christ; but baptism, with things of like nature, are duties enjoined such a people who received the gospel before. I speak not this because I would teach men to break the least of the commandments of God, but to persuade my brethren of the baptized way not to hold too much thereupon, not to make it an essential of the gospel of Christ, nor yet of communion of saints. 'He sent me not to baptize.' These words are spoken with a holy indignation against them that abuse this ordinance of Christ."

Again:—"But to exclude Christians from church-communion, and to debar them their heaven-born privileges for the want of that which yet God never made a wall of division between us: 1. This looks too like a spirit of persecution. 2. It respecteth more a form than the spirit and power of godliness. 3. This is to make laws where God hath made none, and to be wise above what is written,—contrary to God's word and our own principles. 4. It is a directing of the Spirit of God. 5. It bindeth all

men's faith and light to mine opinion. 6. It taketh away the children's bread. 7. It withdraweth from them the increase of faith. 8. It tendeth to harden the hearts of the wicked. 9. It tendeth to make wicked the hearts of weak Christians. 10. It setteth open a door to all temptations. 11. It tempteth the devil to fall upon those that are alone and have none to help them. 12. It is the nursery of all vain janglings, backbitings, and strangeness among the Christians. 13. It occasioneth the world to reproach us. 14. It holdeth staggering consciences in doubt of the right way of the Lord. 15. It giveth occasion to many to turn aside to most dangerous heresies. 16. It abuseth the holy Scriptures; it wresteth God's ordinances out of their place. 17. It is a prop to Antichrist. 18. Shall I add, is it not that which greatly prevailed to bring down those judgments which at present we feel and groan under? I will dare to say it was the cause thereof."*

Again:—"Strange! Take two Christians equal in all points but this; nay, let one go beyond the other far for grace and holiness; yet this circumstance of water shall drown and sweep away all his excellencies, not counting him worthy of that reception that with hand and heart shall be given a *novice* in religion, because he consents to water."†

Again:—"But if thou canst hear them as God's ministers, and sit under their ministry as God's ordinance, then show me where God hath such a gospel ministry as that the persons ministering may not, though desiring it, be admitted with you to the closest communion of saints."‡

Dr. Howell admits that "the justly-celebrated John Bunyan, author of the Pilgrim's Progress and numerous

* Complete Works: "Reasons of my Practice in Worship," pp. 220. 221.

† Ibid. p. 222.

‡ Ibid. p. 220.

other reputable works, was the father of open communion"* in the Baptist Church in England; that is, among the first to resist *strict* communion in the Baptist Church, which, as we have seen, till about his time had practised open communion.

Robert Hall, of England,—one of England's most elegant and liberal writers and divines, and one of the brightest ornaments not only of the Baptist Church but of Christianity,—has written an unanswerable treatise on "Terms of Communion, with a Particular View to the Case of the Baptists and Pedobaptists." As this work is not accessible to readers generally, we shall make several extracts from it expressive of his opinions of restricted communion:—

"The writer is persuaded that a departure from this principle in the denomination to which he belongs has been extremely injurious, not only to the credit and prosperity of that particular body, but to the general interests of truth. By keeping themselves in a state of separation and seclusion from other Christians, they have not only evinced an inattention to some of the most important injunctions of Scripture, but have raised up an invincible barrier to the propagation of their sentiments beyond the precincts of their own party."† Again:—"The success of their scheme tends not to extend the practice of baptism,—no, not in a single instance,—but merely to exclude the Lord's Supper. Leaving the former appointment unaltered and untouched, it merely proposes to abolish the latter, and, as far as it is practicable, to lay the Christian world under an interdict. They propose to punish men for the involuntary neglect of one ordinance by compelling them to abandon the other; and, because they are uneasy at perceiving them perform

* Terms of Communion, p. 220.

† Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 285.

but one-half of their duty, oblige them as far as lies in their power to omit the whole. I must confess I feel no partiality for those violent remedies which, under the pretence of reforming, destroy, or for that passion for order which would rather witness the entire desolation of the sanctuary than a defalcation of its rites; and, in spite of all the efforts of sophistry, I must be permitted to believe that our Lord's express injunction on his followers, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' is a better reason for the salvation of the communion than can be adduced for its neglect."*

Again:—"In withholding the signs from those who are in possession of the thing signified, in refusing to communicate the symbols of the great sacrifice to those who are equally with themselves sprinkled by its blood and sharers of its efficacy, in dividing the regenerate into two classes, believers and communicants, and confining the church to the narrow limits of a sect, they [the Baptists] have violated more maxims of antiquity and receded further from the example of the apostles than any class of Christians on record."†

Again:—"I am fully persuaded that few of our brethren have duly reflected on the strong resemblance which subsists between the Church of Rome and the principles implied in strict communion: both equally intolerant; the one armed with pains and penalties, the other, I trust, disdaining such aid; the one the intolerance of power, the other of weakness."‡

Again:—"The tenet to which we are opposed produces an effect so contrary to what the genius of the gospel teaches us to anticipate, and so repugnant to the noblest feelings of the heart, as to form a presumption against it which

* Hall's Works, vol. i. pp. 308, 309.

† Ibid. p. 312.

‡ Ibid. p. 358.

nothing can surmount but the utmost force and splendor of evidence.’*’

Again:—“It is this presumptuous claim of infallibility, this assumption of the prerogative of Christ, this disposition to identify ourselves with him and to place our conclusions on a footing with his mandates,—this is the secret spring of all that intolerance which has so long bewitched the world with her sorceries from the elevation of papal Rome, where she thunders and lightens from the Vatican, down to Baptist societies, where ‘she whispers feebly from the dust.’”† Mr. Hall exhibits “the striking resemblance between the system of strict communion and that which is maintained by the Churches of England and of Rome.” “The Romish,” says he, “it is well known, pretends to an absolute infallibility, requiring, under pain of excommunication, that the sense she puts on the words of Scripture should be received with the same submission with the inspired volume. In what respects, let me ask, is the conduct of the *strict* Baptists different? A controversy arises on the extent of a positive rite, whether it should be confined to adults or be communicated to infants. Both parties appeal to the Scriptures, which the Baptist interprets, in my humble opinion, correctly, in such a manner as to restrict it to believers; the Pedobaptist, with equal sincerity, supposes it to include infants. While the former in his own practice confines it to the description of persons to whom he judges it to belong, he acts with unexceptionable propriety; but when, not satisfied with this, he insists upon forcing his interpretation upon the conscience of his brother, and treats him precisely in the same manner as though he avowedly contradicted Christ and his apostles, what is this but an assumption of infallibility? If we

* Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 404.

† Ibid. p. 442.

presume to treat our fellow-Christians, merely because they differ from us in the construction of a positive precept, as unworthy of being *recognised* as Christ's disciples and disqualified for the communion of saints,—if we allow them 'faith,' while we deny them 'obedience' and affirm them not to 'revere Christ's authority, submit to his ordinances, or obey the laws of his house,'—we defy all the powers of discrimination to ascertain the difference of the two cases or assign a reason why we must ascribe the claim of infallibility to one and not to the other. If judging for others is supposed to involve a claim of infallibility, and on that account, and that alone, to be shunned, to attempt to vindicate the practice of our opponents from that imputation will baffle the acutest intellect. The Roman Catholic attaches such importance to the rite of baptism as to believe that, when duly administered, it is *necessarily* accompanied with the pardon of sin and regenerating grace. The strict Baptist maintains that its absence where all other religious qualifications are possessed in the highest perfection which human nature admits deprives the party of 'the privileges of faith' and renders him an alien from the Christian church. The adherents to the papal power claim to themselves the exclusive appellation of the *church*,—the arrogance of which pretension is faithfully copied by the advocates of strict communion. The former, however, by confining salvation within her own pale, avoid the absurdity into which the latter fall, who, while they affirm the great body of the faithful are not entitled to that appellation, are obliged to distinguish between the mystical body of Christ and his church, which the Scriptures expressly affirm to be one and the same."*

Again:—"With mingled surprise and indignation they

* Hall's Works, vol. i. pp. 450, 451.

behold us making pretensions which no other denomination of Protestants assumes, placing ourselves in an attitude of hostility to the whole Christian world and virtually claiming to be the only church of Christ upon earth. Fortified as it is by its claims to antiquity and universality, and combining in its exterior whatever is adapted to dazzle the imagination and captivate the senses, there is nothing in the Church of Rome that has excited more indignation and disgust than this very pretension. What, then, must be the sensation produced when, in the absence of all these advantages, a sect comparatively small and insignificant erects itself on a solitary eminence, from which it repels the approach of all other Christians !”*

Again:—“All that I have seen and heard concurs to convince me that the practice of strict communion rests almost entirely on *authority*, and that, were the influence of a few great names withdrawn, it would sink under its own weight. Among those of recent date none has been more regarded than that of the late venerable Fuller; and, as he left a manuscript on this subject to be published after his death, he is considered as having deposed his dying testimony in its favor. That he felt some predilection to a practice to which he had been so long accustomed and whose propriety was very rarely questioned in his early days is freely admitted; but that he all along felt some hesitation on the subject, and that his mind was not completely made up, I am induced to believe from several circumstances. First, from the fact of his proposing himself to commune at Cambridge with the full knowledge of there being Pedobaptists present. Secondly, from a conversation which passed many years ago between him and the writer of these lines. In reply to his observations that they act precisely on the same

* Hall's Works, vol. ii. p. 227.

principle with our Pedobaptist brethren, since they also insist on baptism as an essential prerequisite to communion, it was remarked that this was a mere *argumentum ad hominem*: it might serve to silence the clamors of those Pedobaptists who, while they adhered to that principle, charged us with bigotry, but that still it did not touch the merits of the question, since a previous inquiry occurs, whether any thing more is requisite to communion on scriptural ground than a vital union with Christ. His answer was, *When mixed communion is placed on that footing, I never yet ventured to attack it.*

“In short, there is a certain false refinement and subtlety in the argument for strict communion which would never occur to a plain man who was left solely to the guidance of Scripture. In common with almost every other error, it derived its origin from the public teachers of religion, and with a change of sentiment in them it will gradually disappear; nor will it be long ere our churches will be surprised that they suffered themselves to be betrayed by specious but hollow sophistry into a practice so repulsive and so impolitic.”*

Again:—To “the argument for strict communion from the *order* of words in the apostolic communion,” Mr. Hall replies, “It is obvious, if the reasoning of our opponents be valid, it militates irresistibly against the inculcation of every branch of Christian duty on persons who in their judgment have not partaken of the baptismal sacrament: it excludes them not merely from the Lord’s Supper, *but from every species of instruction* appropriate to Christians; nor can they exhort Pedobaptists to walk worthy of their high calling, to adorn their Christian profession, to cultivate brotherly love, or to the performance of any duty resulting

* Hall’s Works, vol. i. pp. 209, 210.

from their actual relation to Christ, without a palpable violation of their own principles. We affirm that in no part of Scripture is it inculcated as a *preparative to the Lord's Supper*, and that this view of it is a mere fiction of the imagination. How came the deteriorating effects of their error respecting baptism to affect them *but in one part*—that of their eligibility as candidates for communion—without spreading further? That it just amounts to a forfeiture of this privilege, and of no other, is a conclusion to which, as it is certain it cannot be established by reason, we ask to be conducted by revelation; and we entreat our opponents for information again and again, but entreat in vain.”*

Again:—“Let this principle be once established and fairly acted upon, and there is no question but that divisions will succeed to divisions, and separations to separations, until two persons possessed of freedom of thought will scarcely be found capable of walking together in fellowship, and an image of the infinite indivisibility of matter will be exhibited in the breaking-down of churches into smaller and smaller portions. An admirable expedient, truly, for keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!”†

Again:—“If communion with a Christian society cannot be had without a compliance with rites and usages which we deem idolatrous or superstitious, or without a surrender of that liberty in which we are commanded to stand fast, we must, as we value our allegiance, forego, however reluctantly, the advantages of such a union.”‡ Finally:—“Strict communion is the general practice of our churches, though the abettors of the opposite opinion are *rapidly* increasing both in *numbers* and in *respectability*.”§

Dr. Alexander Carson, the author of the great text-book

* Hall's Works, vol. i. pp. 305, 307.

† Ibid. p. 290.

‡ Ibid. p. 456.

§ Ibid. p. 292.

with the Baptists, who "lived during the controversy of Fuller, Hall, and Kinghorn on open communion," was in favor of open communion. The following extracts are taken from his biography by George C. Moore, who "long resided under his roof and enjoyed his unbounded confidence," and which biography Mrs. Hanna, Dr. Carson's daughter, declares has been written "faithfully, forcibly, clearly, and without exaggeration or partiality."*

"Dr. Carson lived during the controversy of Fuller, Hall, and Kinghorn on open communion. He was often requested to publish his views on this subject, but all efforts to induce him to do so failed. He, however, promised to leave his family his ideas on this contested question, for posthumous publication; 'but,' said he, 'my views on that subject must not be published while I live.' The Baptist Publication Society have prefixed an article to his book on baptism, written by the Reverend John Young, in which it is said that the church at Tubbermore 'have never regarded an obedience to baptism as an indispensable condition of admission to the Lord's Supper. Indeed, they have carried the principle of open communion to the utmost extent, by receiving members into their body upon evidence of their conversion, with but little inquiry whether they agreed with them on the subject of baptism. Certain it is that Mr. Carson believed this plan to be consistent with the will of the Lord; and this fact, while it may seem to show that his views of gospel order were not in all respects precise and clear, is at the same time a strong proof of his extreme liberality and kindness of disposition. He was ever more ready to hold fellowship even with those Pedobaptists who otherwise taught a pure gospel than with such Baptists as he might conceive to have departed from genuine ortho-

* "RECOMMENDATIONS" affixed to Life of Carson, by Moore.

doxy.' In justice to Dr. Carson's memory, I must say that he solemnly disclaims, in his preface to the book to which the above is prefixed, the principle to which this writer attributes his practice. 'Liberty of sentiment,' says the doctor, 'is not a phrase which I admit into my religious vocabulary; for, though I love and acknowledge those who love the Lord Jesus, I hold myself as much under the law of God in embracing all the children of God as in forming the articles of my creed. My recognition of all Christians I ground on the authority of Jesus. To set at naught the weakest of Christ's little ones I call not illiberal, but unchristian.'" Mr. Moore then inserts "an extract from a letter which Dr. Carson wrote in reply to an epistle from a church in New York, addressed in care of his respected friend, James Buchanan, Esq., late British consul," from which we extract the following. It bears date

"TUBBERMORE, NORTH OF IRELAND, }
"May 6th, 1819. }

"The church of Christ at Tubbermore to the church of Christ at New York. Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

"BELOVED BRETHREN:—

"It is not from inattention, nor from want of impression of the importance of the subject of your communication, that we did not at first fully reply to you, &c. Ignorance of any divine institution is an evil, and must be felt as such by a church, as far as it exists in any of its body. But the question is, What is *God's* way for getting rid of an evil? We believe that it is by forbearance, affectionate instruction, and prayer. Many, on the contrary, have thought that the most effectual way to make a disciple receive an ordinance of Jesus is to refuse him fellowship till he has com-

plied. Notwithstanding all we have heard in favor of this plan, we still deem it the wisdom of man. Accordingly, we have found that God has made foolish this wisdom. Long has it been tried without success; and of late, in some parts of Ireland, it has been carried so far that *some individuals can scarcely find a second to unite with them in constant fellowship*. By permitting Satan to work them up to this frenzy, it appears to us that God has fixed his seal of disapprobation on the sentiment in its lowest degree, and would lead sober-minded Christians, who have been led away by its plausibility, to examine more attentively the ground of their opinion. *It detracts considerably from the joy with which we should have received your letter that we find no notice taken of this subject, but, on the contrary, that you seem to make baptism a term of fellowship*. The greater part of our members not only have been baptized, but we are convinced that views on this subject extensively affect other matters in Scripture; but we all deem that a man who has been received by Jesus *ought not to be rejected by us*, and that if he feed his people with his ordinances *it would be criminal in us*, as far as in our power, to join in confederacy to starve *the weakest* of them. We think that the man who has been admitted to the fellowship of 'the general assembly and church of the first-born' is undoubtedly worthy of a seat with us. We entreat you to examine this subject,—recollecting that, *if it be sinful to receive any that Christ has forbidden, it is also sinful to refuse any that he has invited*. There is no safe side in error! That Jesus will not approve of *refusing* fellowship to *any of his brethren*, known to be such, appears to us to have the irresistible light of self-evident truth."*

In another letter, addressed to Mr. Buchanan, in 1833, in

* Moore's Life of Carson, pp. 83-89.

allusion to the same subject, Dr. Carson observes, "The church in this place has always acted on *that* principle. There is nothing of greater importance to the welfare and prosperity of the churches than to bring them to understand this point. But there is nothing in which they are so ignorant and to which they are so averse. They consider that they have attained to perfection in this matter, and, by a false view of the want of zeal, consider themselves entitled to refuse their fellowship to many of the sheep of Christ."*

The "Reasons for Free Communion" which Baptist W. Noel addresses to his Baptist brethren are so excellent that copious extracts from them may not be unacceptable to the reader:—

"There are many Pedobaptists who love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. They are his members, his servants, his soldiers, his friends. They maintain his authority, promote his cause, copy his example, obey his precepts, and live for his glory. They love him, and are therefore loved by him, (John xiv. 21,) and to each of them he will say at last, 'Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' (Matt. xxiii.)

"Why ought not Baptists to own them as brethren? All who are the servants of Christ ought to be owned as such. If he honors and loves them, it is not his will that their fellow-servants should dishonor them. God has made them his children by adoption and grace, and cannot be pleased to see that while they are owned by him they are disowned by their brethren. It must be right to own the work of the Holy Spirit, wherever it is accomplished, and to choose those for our friends whom he has chosen to be his temples: (1 Cor. vi. 19.) It is according to nature, and grace too, that the sheep of the same flock, under the same shepherd,

* Moore's Life of Carson, p. 89.

should walk together and feed together in the same pastures: (John x. 16.) Brothers ought to sit down together at their Father's table, (John i. 12; Gal. vi. 10;) and soldiers of the same army ought to be united. (Eph. vi. 10-17; 1 Thess. v. 8.)

“We are called to receive all Christ's disciples, notwithstanding their errors, as Christ has received us, notwithstanding ours. If we must not openly acknowledge them because of some defects in knowledge, why should Christ accept us notwithstanding greater defects? The great ground of this open reception, this free brotherly intercourse, is stated by St. Paul in these words:—‘Let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth, *for God hath received him.*’ (Rom. xiv. 3.) In other words, let not the Baptist, who cannot baptize infants, condemn pious Pedobaptists, who do baptize them, because their faithful profession and their holy life prove that God has received them; and those who are accepted by God as his beloved children are surely good enough to be welcomed by erring and sinful followers of Christ as beloved brethren.

“As ‘brethren,’ they are Christ's disciples, and therefore commanded by him to eat and drink in memory of him, (Matt. xxvi. 26,) but they must not eat and drink with their fellow-servants. They are welcome guests to their Lord, but are repelled by their fellow-guests. Elsewhere they are owned to be brethren, but the chief sign of brotherhood must be withheld from them. They may lead the prayers of their fellow-Christians, and they may instruct the churches as enlightened and holy ministers of Christ; yet in that ordinance which is specially appointed to be a sign of the communion of saints and the unity of the body (1 Cor. x. 17) they must be put out as though they were not members. What a spectacle is thus afforded to the world, who see with contempt that the most earnest fol-

lowers of the Redeemer cannot even commemorate his death together! When the saints of Jesus are thus put out of the communion of any of his churches, are not those who put them out treading in the steps of Diotrephes, (3 John 10,) though with a different spirit?

“But how can the godly Pedobaptist be excluded on these terms? He is no more a disobedient unbeliever than the strictest of the Baptists who would exclude him. The reason why he is a Pedobaptist is that he believes the baptism of infants to be according to the will of Christ. What person was ever excluded from the Lord’s Supper in the apostolic churches for doing all that he believed (after searching of the Scriptures and listening to apostles) to be according to the will of Christ? What upright and earnest believer was ever in those days excluded? What member of one church was refused communion with the members of another? In what apostolic church were ever such men as Baxter, Howe, and Flavel, Doddridge and Whitefield, Edwards and Payson, Fletcher, Martin, Brainerd, and Chalmers,—men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, walking with God and laboring for Christ,—refused such communion? It was reserved for worse days to see so strange a spectacle.

“What if these good soldiers had not taken the oath of allegiance to their king in the exact manner in which Baptists take it, still it was taken. What if they had not put on their king’s uniform just as Baptists put it on, yet they wore it. The Baptist has professed his allegiance to Christ at baptism; the Pedobaptist has professed it at the Lord’s Supper. Both wear the king’s uniform, but the one assumed it at the earlier rite, the other more irregularly at the later rite. If the one in baptism professed to die and rise with Christ, the other in the supper ‘showed forth the Lord’s death.’ (1 Cor. xi. 26.)

“If, indeed, to admit him to the table were to dispense with the command of Christ and to sanction the neglect of baptism, he must not be admitted; but this cannot be, because he is admitted by the churches who practise free communion, on the ground that he is a believer who keeps the commands of Christ, honors baptism, and believes that he has been baptized. I own that he is unbaptized; but his case is totally different from the case of a person refusing to be baptized in the time of the apostles. They knew that they were disregarding a divine command; he believes himself to be fulfilling it: they refused baptism because they despised the authority of Christ; he refuses it because he respects that authority. A loyal, loving, and obedient believer, who obeys the commands of Christ as far as he knows them,—why should he be excluded? He is unbaptized, it is true; but his neglect of baptism is simply an error; and if a faithful, loving, and obedient believer, who studies and follows the Scriptures, is to be excluded from communion for an error which does not touch the great doctrines of the gospel, where is the exclusion to stop? Arminians and Calvinists must not hold communion together, nor Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Independents, nor Millenarians with anti-Millenarians, nor members of establishments with members of free churches, nor free-communication Baptists with those who advocate strict communion, nor any believer with any other whom he believes to be in error. No members of any church can receive the Lord’s Supper together. Churches must be scattered, and nothing remain but a sickening and noxious individuality, the churches being reduced to a chaos of disconnected units.

“Let it further be observed that the reasoning which could prove that unbaptized persons must not, under any circumstances, be admitted to the Lord’s table, must equally

prove that they must not, under any circumstances, be owned as brethren. If you sanction their error by admitting them to the Lord's table, you must sanction it no less by all fraternization with them; and, since we must never do evil that good may come, all persons, according to this doctrine, must exclude from their fellowship all whom they imagine to be in error, and, unless they be themselves infallible, must allow all their fellow-Christians equally to excommunicate them. Since this absurd conclusion follows from the doctrine that in admitting saints as such to the communion of saints we sanction their errors, it follows that this doctrine is false. Saints may be admitted to the table of their Lord without sanction of their errors, and Pedobaptists may come to it without any dishonor done to the sacrament of baptism.

“If I mistake not, it must injure the spirit of the churches which practise it. How can they so separate from those with whom they are commanded to be openly one without serious loss? (John xvii. 20, 21.) How can they so value the rite of baptism as to repel from their communion those who have the faith and devotedness which the rite expresses, and not suffer by it? At least, they must be much tempted to overvalue the form of religion and to undervalue the reality, to ‘pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin’ and to ‘omit the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.’ (Matt. xxiii. 23.) This exclusion of holy men seems a palpable disregard to the work of the Spirit in Pedobaptists, tempts Baptists to overvalue themselves on account of baptism, and, if it impairs the spirituality of the church, must hinder the conversion of sinners.

“For consider the real character of this exclusion. Those only are ordered in the word of God to be excluded who are

heretical in doctrine, (Gal. v. 12,) who are vicious in their practice, (1 Cor. v. 11, 13,) who are schismatical in their temper, (Rom. xvi. 17,) who injure their brethren, (Matt. xviii. 17,) or who are openly disobedient to the commands of Christ. (2 Thess. iii. 14.) But you exclude in company with all these some of the most loyal, the most active, the bravest, and the most loving disciples of Christ. They may, like Enoch, walk with God; like Abraham, sacrifice all that is dearest to them to serve him; like Moses, trample under feet the world's most alluring bribes; like Paul, consecrate noble faculties with untiring ardor to the cause of their Redeemer; and yet, because they are Pedobaptists, you will exclude them from the table of their Lord. You do this because they will follow what they believe to be the will of Christ, the meaning of his command, and the practice of his apostles. You do this because they do just what you do yourselves,—since you will baptize believers alone because you think that Christ requires it, and they will baptize infants because they think that he requires it. You do this, therefore, on a principle which would justify their exclusion of you, which proscribes all communion among believers and would substitute submission to human authority for entire, unlimited submission to the authority of Christ. This cannot be right: a more brotherly course is demanded by the plain precepts of Scripture, by the clear proofs of faith and love in Pedobaptist brethren, by the duty of independent judgment inculcated on all. (Rom. xiv. 5, 23.) And to admit the saints of Christ as such to his table, to demand no other terms of communion than such as are terms of salvation, to welcome as brethren all whose doctrine and conduct prove them to be so, and to invite all evangelical churches to this manifested unity, is at once to extend the true doctrine of

baptism and to promote the progress of Christ's kingdom in the world."*

We refer next to other Baptists in favor of open communion. Dr. John Ryland, one of the most distinguished of the Baptist ministers of England, was in favor of mixed communion. He had republished Bunyan's reasons for the practice, with some of his own. Mr. Jay, in his reminiscences of him, says that he was one day dining at a friend's house, when one of the company asked him his opinion about strict communion and excluding pious men from the Lord's table. He replied thus:—"You decide the thing by calling it the *Lord's table*. Suppose, sir, when I entered this room I had taken upon me to say, Mr. such-a-one (naming him) and Mrs. such-a-one, 'You shall not sit down at this table:' what would Mr. D., the master of the house, say? 'Why, John Ryland, you have forgotten yourself! You are not the owner of this table, but the *master* is. The table is mine, and I have a right to invite them,—and I have invited them; and is it for you to forbid them? So in the church the table is the *Lord's*; and all who are called by his grace are his guests; and he has *bidden* them."†

"In America, at the head of the liberal class stood the late excellent Dr. Stillman, of Boston, who was beloved by all the churches in that city and respected by Christians throughout the United States,"‡ and only declined communing with Pedobaptist ministers because he "found the brethren of his church and other Baptists unfavorable to the intercourse."§ Rev. S. W. Whitney, A.M., late pastor of the Baptist Church, Westport, N.Y., and still a Bap-

* Noel on Christian Baptism, pp. 287-301.

† Puritan Recorder.

‡ Dr. Griffin's Letter on Communion, Bap. Lib. vol. iii. p. 213.

§ Ibid. p. 224.

tist, has issued a small treatise on "Open Communion," which has reached the second edition; and in the preface he says, "From some who differ from him he knows what to expect. But he is happy to know, on the other hand, that there are many, and *Baptists* too, who will welcome his humble effort as a *token* of the dawn of a coming brighter day." And he accompanies it with a prayer "That the volume, as it now goes forth to the public, may be accompanied with the divine blessing, and aid in doing away with one of the most uncalled-for and unscriptural bars to the full intercommunion of Christians in things emblematic of their union to Christ and to one another as members of his family."* And to this prayer we cordially breathe Amen. He denies that "baptism has been held in all ages and by all denominations to be a divinely-prescribed term of communion." "When you say that baptism has been held by all denominations to be a term of communion, either you are no Baptist, or your assertion is not true; for a professing of Christ by immersion—the thing that you are contending for, and the only thing that you are willing to admit to be baptism—has not been held by all denominations to be necessary to communion. In no age and by no denomination, except the close-communion Baptists of *modern* times, has the want of an *immersional* profession of Christianity been considered a barrier to the Lord's table."†

Again:—"One of the first things that strikes an individual in looking at the system of restricted communion is its glaring want of candor and consistency. It is not what it professes to be. It restricts the supper from others professedly on the ground of their not being baptized. It asserts its readiness to admit to the Lord's table any who

* Whitney on Communion, p. 4.

† Ibid. pp. 78, 79.

have been baptized and are leading irreproachable Christian lives. Yet it excludes many such, and betrays an utter insincerity of profession. When met with this fact, it changes its ground, takes another stand, and yet another, and says, Communion is a symbol of particular church-fellowship, and therefore it is that others are excluded. But in so doing it takes a stand equally false,—the supper being never administered as a particular church-ordinance, but as a denominational observance. There is a want of candor on the part of its advocates, in not presenting their reasons for it in their true light and on their true basis, while they endeavor to shield themselves under subterfuges which have only the appearance of truth. A system that needs such a mode of defence is not of God. He is light, and in him is no darkness at all. And if we would walk in the light, as he is in the light, we should not be close-communicants.”*

Again:—“So long as it is a stubborn fact that there are multitudes of holy and zealous Christians who differ from us in their views respecting the act and subjects of baptism, it is enough to know that those with whom we engage in the solemn ordinance of commemorating the Savior’s death are members together with us of the common household of faith. Nay, more: I consider it unworthy of any enlightened mind, and beneath the dignity of the religion of Christ, to descend at any time, much more at such a time, to the inquiry how a disciple, eminent it may be for his piety and usefulness, has made his profession of Christianity. Such a course ill becomes a follower of Christ.”†

Again:—“It is perfectly ridiculous to see any one attempting to show that a ‘Pedobaptist church is no home

* Whitney on Communion, pp. 128, 129.

† Ibid. p. 93.

for a Baptist,' when a close-communication church, *as such*, ought to be a home for no CHRISTIAN."*

Again:—"If the Baptist denomination is less numerous than it might be, if its influence both at home and abroad is not what it should be, Baptists have nothing to blame for this more than their own dwarfing, antichristian, and odious system of denominational communion,—a system that decapitates all non-conformists,—as unwarranted as the papal restrictions of the use of God's word, and as intolerant as the spirit that drove Roger Williams, as a dangerous man, from his home. It goes to work to advance the truth in the very best way calculated to blind men to it and to keep them from examining it. It runs directly counter to the voice of reason and the genius of Christianity, which teach that if we would win from error we are not to expect success by the use of harsh, coercive, and repulsive means, but by those that are mild, conciliatory, and attractive."†

Again:—"Overlooking the great principles in which the power of the gospel lies, and going contrary to them, it vainly seeks to bring men to the knowledge of the truth by setting it in a repulsive and odious light. Such a system, be it from what source it may, cannot be of God."‡

Again:—"When the communion is made a *denominational* thing, as it really is, its administration is more than unjustifiable; it calls for reprehension from every Christian, as a course that degrades the ordinance and dishonors Him who instituted it. If this is not the offspring of party spirit, it would be hard to say what is. It is a desecration of the Lord's Supper which finds no parallel in Christian churches,—a tampering with a divine institution of which the world itself is not guilty."§

* Whitney on Communion, p. 142.

† Ibid. p. 144.

‡ Ibid. p. 142.

§ Ibid. pp. 145, 146.

Again :—“It is gratifying, however, to know—as I do know—that there are multitudes belonging to our [Baptist] churches who would gladly see the practice abolished, and would readily abjure it, but for the want of ministerial co-operation and sanction, the fear of being fickle-minded, and the dread of excommunication and unkind treatment, in some cases, from those they love.”*

Again :—“But we have every reason to believe that the day is at hand when the system of restricted communion must be abolished, if not entirely, at least to a very great extent. *Present indications show that the strong tide of feeling which for years past has been increasing against it cannot much longer be successfully kept back.* Its inconsistencies and glaring antichristian character are becoming daily more and more felt. And, when the mind of the denomination is fairly enlightened to see them, it must come to the conclusion that the system is not only uncalled-for, but unscriptural and unworthy of a follower of Christ. This is all we need.”†

In England the tendency to open communion in the Baptist Church is alarming and portentous to the Baptist Church. Our authority for this statement is J. G. Fuller himself, already quoted largely in this treatise, a Baptist in England, and the celebrated author of “Conversations between two Laymen on Strict and Mixed Communion,” in reply to Robert Hall’s great treatise on Open Communion. In the “preface” to his “conversations” Mr. F. observes, “The tendency of mixed [open] communion is becoming every day more apparent, and its deteriorating and dissociating influence more visible. Every successive month brings ‘certain strange things’ to our ears; a standing ordinance of Jesus Christ displaced, condemned, and decried;

* Whitney on Communion, p. 151.

† Ibid. p. 152.

its very mention deprecated; natural allusion to it studiously avoided; the almost total suppression, in the Christian ministry, of one of 'the counsels of God;' *the reception of members without any baptism, notwithstanding a renunciation of the ceremony performed in infancy and without any public confession of faith in Christ, beyond a knowledge of character and personal appearance in the temple of mixed communion; clandestine admissions of unbaptized [unimmersed] persons to the Lord's table; attempts to enforce mixed communion; unnecessary and unwelcome collision with Pedobaptist churches; the constitution of Baptist churches altered by way of experiment; the necessary expulsion of conscientious strict Baptists; defective discipline; a general relaxation from primitive Christianity; a disposition to sacrifice another 'non-essential,' the Lord's Supper, whenever the supposed interests of peace and union shall make the demand; private baptisms, in compliance with the special desire of Pedobaptist members; the celebration of believers' baptism in the morning and of infant baptism in the afternoon of the same day, in the same place, the morning preacher being specially requested not to plead for his views of baptism, by a non-compliance with which the Pedobaptist members were greatly offended!* These are indications (and others might be enumerated) sufficiently clear and strong of the tendency of mixed communion.* This is a sad state of things in the Baptist Church in England. Mr. Fuller proceeds:—"One portentous result of the proposed innovation, conceded by our eloquent opponent himself, [Hall,] ought never to be forgotten,—the extinction of Baptist churches! 'Were that practice universally to prevail,' he says, 'the mixture of

* Conversations on Strict and Mixed Communion, Bap. Library, vol. i. p. 223.

Baptists and Pedobaptists in Christian societies would probably ere long be such *that the appellation of Baptist might be found not so applicable to churches as to individuals.*' In this, then, *all parties are agreed*:—that the tendency of mixed communion *is to annihilate as such all the Baptist churches in Christendom!*"* And Mr. Fuller sounds the alarm, in the language of Mr. Kinghorn:—"It is time for us, in this state of things, to act with circumspection and becoming firmness. It is manifestly the duty of the members of our churches, and of those who sustain the office of deacons and ministers, to put the question to themselves and to each other, *Do they wish to promote the dissolution and ruin of the Baptist denomination, as such?* If you do, Mr. Hall tells you his system will effect the purpose; but, if you do not, *take heed to your ways.*"†

Such are the opinions of eminent Baptist writers, and such the tendency to open communion in the Baptist Church. We shall close this treatise with an appeal to strict-communion Baptists.

* Conversations on Strict and Mixed Communion, Bap. Library, vol. i. p. 223.

† Ibid. p. 223.—It is generally known that Mr. Spurgeon, a Baptist preacher, who is attracting so much attention in England and whose sermons are extensively circulated in this country, is in favor of open communion. And we shall not be surprised if ere long, both in England and America, other gifted sons of the Baptist Church shall exert their talents and influence on the side of the free and open communion of the gospel.

CHAPTER XVI.

APPEAL TO STRICT-COMMUNION BAPTISTS.

AH! some of you who kneel at the communion-table never would have knelt there, perhaps, had not those whom you exclude called you to Christ. And some of you who shut yourselves up in God's temple, under the vain pretence of protecting the honor of the temple, never, perhaps, would have passed its blessed threshold, had not those on whom you close and lock the doors led you to the portals of mercy and pardon. And some of you who make baptism an indispensable prerequisite to the Lord's Supper never, perhaps, would have obtained the baptism of the Holy Ghost, had not those whom you disown and renounce as disqualified for the communion taken you by the hand and tenderly led you to the holy fountain. And some of you who make *membership* in *your* church an indispensable condition to participation in the Lord's Supper never, perhaps, would have been united with Christ's visible and invisible church, had not some of those whom you repudiate as "disobedient children of God" recovered you from rebellion and brought you back, no longer "strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." And some of you who have "gone down into the water" would have gone down to hell, perhaps, had not some who know no other baptism but sprinkling or pouring taught you, exhorted you, prayed for you, wept over your follies, and rejoiced in your forgiveness. And some of you who, in the way to heaven, rejoice around your own altars, never would have found that blessed way,

perhaps, had not some of those with whom you would think it a reproach and a dishonor to be found at the Lord's table introduced you into the way at the altar of penitence, pardon, and joy in their own churches,—from which you retired happy, never, never to return. And some of you whose children, parents, wives, husbands, and friends, as well as yourselves, have been forgiven, and are on your way to heaven, and enjoy blissful hopes of being saved forever, and often express your gratitude and joy in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, never, perhaps, would have been saved, nor found the way to heaven, nor enjoyed a blissful hope of being saved forever, nor known any gratitude or joy in the service of God, nor enjoyed a single privilege of communion, and life would have been desolation, and time a desert, and death despair, had not those whom you now regard as “disobedient and rebellious” found you miserable, lost, bruised, and dead, and tenderly and affectionately conducted you to Christ.

You concede that those whom you exclude from communion have faith; and a moment's consideration will prove that the exclusion is wrong. What is this faith? It is the condition of salvation; it is the source of devotion; it is the internal spring of external obedience and activity; it is the principle of promptitude and energy in submitting to the precepts of religion, and develops itself in exertions in every cause connected with the will of God; it is a persuasion that resolves every thing into the authority of the Bible and the glory of God. Have not, then, those whom you exclude a right to communion?

You concede that they have the substance signified by baptism, and yet for want of the sign deny them admission to the Lord's table. Had they the sign and not the substance, you would not admit them. Therefore, do you not give more importance to the sign than to the substance?—

more importance to baptism than to regeneration? The substance of the sacrament remains, though the form has never been administered; and, if administered, it wastes and passes away. It is the substance, then, that is essential; and, therefore, all that should be required by any evangelical church in order to communion is the possession of the substance signified by baptism, no matter by what mode signified, as in the case of pious Pedobaptists, or whether it be conscientiously omitted altogether, as in the case of pious Quakers. Besides, you take for granted that immersion was the only apostolic mode of baptism. But this is not so certain as the being of God, or as the obligation of faith, or as the piety of those whom you exclude from communion. Mr. Hall candidly admits, "The evidence by which our views are supported, though sufficient for every practical purpose, is decidedly inferior to that which accompanied their first promulgation: *the utmost that we can pretend to is a very high probability.*"*

Mr. Booth, a very high authority with you, observes, "It is not every one that is received of Jesus who is entitled to communion at his table, but such, and only such, as revere his authority, submit to his ordinances, and obey the laws of his house." Can any man or church fear offending Christ who receives to communion those whom he has received? Christ cannot be offended with those who make him their example. What should those expect who resist the authority of his example?

May time soon destroy all local prejudices and party conflicts about matters not essential to salvation, and religion advance her original and inalienable rights and privileges by the cordial reciprocity of all Christians in sacramental communion and harmony in holy zeal!

* Works, vol. ii. p. 215.

