

GUIDE

TO THE

LORD'S SUPPER,

OR

Christian Communion Vindicated.

BY G. H. BALL,

PASTOR OF THE FREE BAPTIST CHURCH, BUFFALO, N. Y.

LIBRARY
Free Will Baptist Bible College

BUFFALO:
PUBLISHED BY PHINNEY & CO.
1852.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1852, by
GEO. H. BALL,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Northern District
of New York.

Stereotyped by
BEADLE & BROTHER,
BUFFALO.

PREFACE.

THE object of this little book, is to promote union among the children of God. The Lord's Supper is a family remembrance, a token of love, left us by our Elder Brother, a bond of union, to promote acquaintance, confidence, love, union of doctrine and feeling.

Diversity of knowledge, and of circumstances have ever caused divisions among Christians in many respects; but the truly pious have uniformly understood the nature and design of the Supper, and have been greatly blessed in celebrating it. The union of Christians in Christ, is an *actuality*. Outward divisions cannot annul the union of all pious souls in Him. We shall urge, in the following pages, the duty of visibly expressing this *actual union*, in the ordinance that commemorates the Sacrifice which is its basis, efficient and exclusive cause.

There is a growing desire among the pious, to know each other better, and associate with each other more, and the Supper of the Lord is at once seen to be the proper center of this commingling of Christian hearts. If this volume shall forward this tendency, remove objections that may exist in the minds of some, and prompt others to act out their convictions of duty, the desired reward will be realized.

Christian discussions should always be conducted in a spirit of love and candor. We have prayed for this spirit in the composition of the following pages, and hope that the prayer has not been in vain. The Author's only desire is for the triumph of truth and duty. May the reader be led into all truth, and have strength to obey.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION 7

CHAPTER I.

THE POINT AT ISSUE STATED—We do not disagree with C. Communionists in regard to the duty of baptism, or that neglect of baptism in the days of the apostles was criminal; or that willful neglect of it now, is criminal; but that innocent neglect is just cause for excluding from the Supper..... 17

CHAPTER II.

THE RIGHT AND DUTY OF ALL CHRISTIANS TO CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER, argued from their Discipleship. 25

CHAPTER III.

FREE COMMUNION, argued from the love and forbearance which Christ commands us to exercise toward all saints 40

CHAPTER IV.

FREE COMMUNION, argued from the fact that pious pedobaptist assemblies are truly scriptural churches. 56

CHAPTER V.

FREE COMMUNION, argued from the ability of all pious persons to fulfill the design of the Lord's Supper... 75

CHAPTER VI.

FREE COMMUNION, argued from the independence of positive ordinances, one of another..... 96

CHAPTER VII.

FREE COMMUNION, argued from the unscriptural fruit of close communion.....	109
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARGUMENT SUMMED UP AND APPLIED.....	135
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

SOME THOUGHTS IN FAVOR OF WEEKLY COMMUNION....	139
--	-----

INTRODUCTION.

BUT little has been said in the American church in favor of "Free Communion" for several years, though frequent arguments have been published by the advocates of the opposite practice. Free Communionists have not been silent, however, because they have lost confidence in their principles, or arguments, or relish for the practice of meeting *all saints* at the table of their common Lord, but because the very spirit which yearns for a closer union with believers, which is "kindly affectioned one toward another," begets a reluctance to spend much time or energy in controversy. It is much more pleasant to forget our differences, remember our agreements, and by love and union show the world that we are disciples. This was a subject of devout supplication with Jesus, and his numerous commands, exhortations, entreaties to this end, show how near it lay to his heart. In the councils of the Apostles, no subject more frequently recurred.

Every saint was and is dear to Christ. A believer is set forth as a member of his body, a branch of the vine, a stone in the temple of praise, a brother, a child of God, an heir with Christ. And believers are to love one another as Christ loves them; receive one another as Christ receives them. That Christians should differ in sentiment is not strange. The Scriptures give life to the intellect, open wide fields of investigation, present truth in a form that requires study to gather up all its wealth; and if men under these circumstances do not clash sometimes — if, in their energy, zeal, they do not have some warm contests, it would be strange indeed. Paul and Peter, the two giant apostles, came into collision; the apostolic churches were convulsed by such action; and ever since, when there has been life or religion in the church, there has been diversity of doctrine on many points. But this is no reason for raising heaven-high walls between Christians; and of a succession of wholesale abuse poured out upon the parties — no reason why the essential unity of believers should be destroyed. The apostles always denounced the idea of dividing the body of Christ; of rending the seamless garment; of cutting out the living members of the Lord. If they cannot agree in all things, why should they not

walk together so far as they are agreed? It is their duty to show to the world that the spirit of Christianity is one; that it binds believers together in love; that it constrains them to seek for union, and live in union, just as far as they can, without violating their views of truth. Why should the church destroy its power over sinners by so much coldness, sectarian bigotry, exclusiveness, as seems to say one sect is pre-eminently the people of God; others are heretics, disorderly walkers, because they go not with us? The Table of the Lord is an impressive place for believers to express their unity in Christ, and while they may vary in opinions respecting other things, they are generally agreed as to the design, import and use of this ordinance, and can hence enjoy it.

Organic union with brethren is not always possible, because assent to doctrines and conformity to practice are required, which are against our conscience. But the rules of organization are not the church; they are only the form of expressing the polity, the objective action of the church. They are no more the church, than the figures and diagrams of mathematics are mathematics itself, or the letters, words, sentences of language, are thought itself. So we have no right to assume that the

Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, or Baptist churches, constitute "*the church*," unless they include all known Christians. Then if our views of truth oblige us to associate in a somewhat different form, we are justified in maintaining a separate organization, but are not at liberty to assert our exclusive right to privileges which belong in common to all the church. Our *organization* does not rend the body of Christ, but to deny to any and all other members of this body the enjoyment of rights which are the property of all, rends it without mercy.

All duties enjoined on Christians in the Scriptures are to be carefully observed by all. No one is excused from performance, unless it is an impossibility to obey, or he can show a specific release from obedience. Such is the duty of prayer, of love, of charity, of forgiveness of enemies.

A positive command cannot be set aside by an inference. An inference is always regarded as of less force and authority than a positive command, because there is more liability to err in drawing an inference, than in understanding a direct command.

We are bound to aid and encourage each other in the discharge of every duty, "to bear one another's burdens," provoke each other "to good

works." Whosoever prevents a brother from doing his duty, is responsible for that neglect. Now the Supper is to be observed by all disciples, the duty and privilege of attending to it is general; "drink ye all of it,"—the command to observe it is direct and positive, and all are bound to obey, unless an equally direct and positive injunction is found to permit neglect. When the Passover was instituted, God was careful to say, that "no uncircumcised person should eat of my Passover." Had it not been for this, every Jew, whether circumcised or not, would have been in duty bound to eat of the Passover. The ordinance of release was just as positive as the law establishing the institution. Nothing short of this would have justified the High Priest in commanding any Jew not to eat it. On the same principle, all Christians are bound to eat of the Supper, unless there is a positive law to prevent them; unless it is said that no unbaptized person shall eat thereof, no Christian is excusable for not eating when the opportunity offers. And it is our duty to extend to every saint all possible facilities for the performance of this duty; and whosoever forbids a child of God the enjoyment of this right, is responsible for the neglect.

Close Communion originated in the high doc-

trines of church infallibility of the 16th century. Every sect fancied they had realized, in their own church polity, a perfect model of the Christian church, and all who were not connected with their organization were not in the church—were foreigners, disorderly walkers; hence every church refused communion to every other assemblage of Christians. Most denominations have now yielded this high ground, and rejoice to join as brethren *all* who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the time was when Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and most of the Baptists, rejected all from their communion feast, except their own members. At an early day, however, a more liberal spirit began to pervade the Baptist churches of England. Bunyan, the dreamer, the mightiest man of his age, earnestly advocated a free welcome to the Lord's table of all who believed in Christ; and his influence was not without its effect upon the subsequent history of that church. Ever after this, we find a large share of the Baptist church earnestly advocating untrammelled intercourse among Christians, as a means of strengthening their faith and zeal, increasing their influence over the world, and correcting their errors, and promoting growth in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ;

and the Lord's Supper was regarded as the chief means of promoting this useful intercourse. By and by, Robert Hall came forward, with his great heart of benevolence and brotherly feeling, and with astonishing eloquence and power, spoke and wrote in favor of this truly Christian practice of "free communion." From that time, the days of sectarian communion were numbered, in the Baptist church of England. The Presbyterian and Independent churches also repealed their rigid rules, and freely mingled with other Christians at the sacred supper. Now, the strongest, most influential and efficient Baptist ministers and churches in England are decided advocates of free communion; and to their number has recently been added Baptist Noel, whose influence is like that of another Hall, and must tell to the good of Zion. The state of things in this country is somewhat different. The main influence in the Baptist church is against free communion. It seems strange that the descendants of Roger Williams should so far forget his spirit of liberality, that Baptists in a land of liberty, should so earnestly adhere to the exclusiveness of darker ages, as to reject all from their sacramental supper except "of the same faith and order." But so it is. They are even less liberal than the *strict* commun-

ionists of England, who commune with all immersed believers, though members of other churches; while our American friends reject all who are not members of their own sect. They will admit no believer unless "he is of the same faith and order," though he has been immersed.

A large share, perhaps a majority of the Baptist church, would prefer to be rid of close communion entirely; wish it was buried in oblivion; but the leaders hold fast to it, and, as yet, there is not courage to a great extent among the more liberal to break loose from the trammels of sect, and act for God and religion in this matter.

There are reasons which generally prevent arguments never so logical from taking effect on persons who have embraced an error; and it is especially true in regard to the communion question. Men dislike to change their position lest they be called fickle-minded. They are afraid of the odium of change. It is mortifying to believe that one has been wrong all his life; it seems to reflect on his mental ability. Old associations bind a man very closely to old doctrines. By habit, we very easily come to love one sect with all the ardor of Christian devotion; and to give up any doctrine peculiar to that sect, is to sacrifice all the interest and pleas-

ure we have felt in its advancement. But most of all, men are bound by a fear of the frowns, the anathemas of their former brethren. They love their brethren, prize their friendship very highly, and find it very difficult to conclude to expose themselves to a loss of it. There is an intolerance among Christians *yet*, which comes down upon a man with awful cruelty, if he is led to depart from the adopted creed of the sect; and to him whose friends are numerous, whose affections are strong, death is quite as desirable as the certain severance of all those ties of tenderness, which will surely follow a change of his sentiments on any point of importance to the sect. Adverse as all this is to the progress of truth, it prevails very extensively in the church. Now, it is a task so to press the truth upon the conscience, and hold it there with such skill, as to give men to see clearly a disagreeable duty, and give them strength and courage to perform. It sometimes seems almost cruel to urge the truth upon persons thus situated; and it is only for the truth that we would ask a man to face a living martyrdom, more cruel, sometimes, than the stake; or banishment, after the example of Roger Williams. There is a more liberal spirit in some places, and we hope that it may not be long ere

men can sit down to the investigation of truth without feeling that a mountain of popular indignation is trembling over their heads, ready to crush them, if they come to a conclusion at variance with the mass of their brethren. So far as these *feelings* exist, we are not only obliged to sustain our position by sound arguments, but must allay these passions ere we can triumph.

But the whole current of the religious life is setting toward the triumph of our doctrine; point after point is given up, man after man lifts his voice for the truth; and the whole body of the church is pressing toward a more happy, general, Scriptural fellowship, the recognition of the unity of the great family of believers. With the sincere desire to contribute something to the consummation of this work, we propose to submit a few articles on the *right and duty of all true Christians to come to the Supper of our Lord*. Not that we relish controversy, or would willingly grieve the heart of the least of the brethren; but that we may be established in the truth.

CHAPTER I.

THE POINT AT ISSUE.

The object of discussion should be to *settle* disputes, and not to multiply them; hence, the point at issue should be fully, clearly stated, and whatever may be said on either side, made to cluster around that point. In order to rid the communion question of all extrinsic and irrelevant matter, we may remark, that we do not differ from our C. Baptist brethren:

I. *In respect to the duty of baptism.* We hold in common, that believers should be baptized; that they should not tarry, but promptly obey the positive command of their Lord, and be baptized in his name; that it is as really sinful to neglect this duty, as any other, and that Christians should use every lawful and judicious means to lead them to obey this form of doctrine. We agree with them that *immersion* is the only form of baptism; we would encourage no other form — would not for the world give any one to understand or give occasion to infer,

that any thing short of immersion meets the command of the Savior. Pedobaptism and sprinkling we discard, and because we would give our voice and influence against it, and do all we can consistently to correct the error, we have organized a separate branch, or society, of believers who have been immersed, and by uniformly refusing to receive sprinkled Christians into our organization, we give our organic testimony against infant sprinkling, or sprinkling at all, and assert as strongly as we can do it, that immersion of believers is the only baptism. We would not knowingly violate the least of Christ's commands, or encourage others to do so, and we think that our organic voice is quite as definite and potent against pedobaptism, and that our position is quite as well understood to be opposed to this practice, as that of our C. Baptist brethren, or as it would be if we excluded pedobaptist Christians from sacramental or Christian fellowship.

II. *We are agreed also that neglect of baptism in apostolic days would have excluded a person from the communion at the Supper.* The Apostles spoke with authority, and no honest man could mistake their instructions and example on this subject; they spoke in a familiar language, and were

at hand to correct any mistake into which their hearers might have fallen. Hence, if any believers neglected, or refused to be baptized, it was because they were rebellious, and *would* not obey the truth, and consequently were unfit to come to the Supper; and if there has been no change of circumstances to justify it, they should not be allowed to partake of the Supper now. Let it be understood, then, that we hold, as well as close communionists, that if our relations to unbaptized believers are the same as in the apostolic church, we are wrong in admitting pedobaptists to the Lord's table. But no person in apostolic days was regarded as a Christian if he refused to be baptized. He could not be a Christian; it was evident on the very face of it, that his professions of regard for Christ were hypocritical, for he refused to obey his law that was fully and plainly set before him by authority. Hence he was not only excluded from the Supper, but from *all Christian fellowship*; he was treated as yet in "the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." So that if apostolic example in regard to the Supper is applicable in this case to us, so also it is applicable in regard to *Christian fellowship*; for while neglect of baptism then excluded from the first, it likewise did from the last; hence, if their example

in this case binds us to exclude unbaptized persons from the Supper, it obliges us also to treat them as rebels, refuse them any recognition of Christian character, exclude them from Christian fellowship. But, says the close communionist, circumstances have so changed that a person may be in darkness in regard to baptism, neglect its observance, or mistake something else for it, and still be a Christian. They should therefore be cherished, loved, fellowshiped, as Christians, though they are in error. Amen to that, say we; and for the same reason, we hold that sacramental fellowship should not be denied them. This is a very important consideration. So long as close communionists fellowship as Christians those who are not baptized, join with them in social prayer, salute them as brethren beloved, invite them to preach the gospel to them and lead their devotions, they recognize just what we have always claimed as just and right; what we consider as imposed upon us by the plain teachings of God's word, that we should treat unbaptized persons, as the apostles were not at liberty to treat them, because of the change of circumstances; that while they were bound to reject them as rebels, because they were such, we are bound to fellowship them as Christians, because they are such. In

principle, in fact, this is deciding this controversy in our favor.

III. *We are agreed that a person who willfully neglects baptism, who knows the true meaning of the law and does not obey, is not a fit subject for the Supper.* The man who purposely disobeys any one of God's laws is a rebel; he sets God's authority at naught, disputes his right to rule and govern him, in all things, and is hence unfit to celebrate his union with Christ. He is a self-willed sinner, and the first duty for him to perform is not to celebrate the Savior's death for him and his union with him, but to repent, and do works meet for repentance. Did we know that a person occupied this position in regard to baptism, we would tell him not to eat; that it would peril his soul to eat; that he must first reform and be buried with Christ by baptism, or at least surrender this rebellion of his heart. We are charged with inviting persons to the Supper who are living in open rebellion against the law of God. We never invite such. Our invitation is not to "all of the same faith and order," whether they be slaveholders, rumsellers, covetous, or worldly men, but to all who live up to the light they have, and are sincerely the disciples of Christ. Obedience to *every law*, which has been presented

to their understanding, and earnest desire by the grace of God to do all that he requires of them, not excepting baptism, we always urge as a necessary qualification for the Supper. On these points we have no dispute. Here we stand on common ground; but,

IV. *We do disagree in regard to the lawfulness of admitting pious, honest, and faithful Christians, who have misapprehended the duty of baptism, and have not been strictly correct in its observance, to commemorate the sufferings of their Lord.* Free communionists believe that all such have a right to come to the Lord's table; while close communionists assert that they have no such right. The question is not, have they a right to come to a Baptist table, a Presbyterian, or Methodist table? but, have they a right to come to the *Lord's* table? Neither is the question, Have they a right to come to the Lord's table in a Baptist, Presbyterian or Methodist house, or when administered by a minister of any one of the Christian denominations? but, have they a right to come wherever and whenever the *Lord's* table is spread? For if it is right to eat and drink at all of these emblems, it is proper to do so whenever the opportunity is offered. If it is right in a Presbyterian house, when administered

by a Presbyterian minister, it is also right in a Baptist house, when administered by a Baptist minister. So we are not to discuss the question, whether these pious persons have a right to come to this feast with the Baptist brethren, but have they a right to come at all? Is it lawful for Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, whom we all delight to honor as Christians, to celebrate the Supper *in their own congregations*? For if it is sinful for them to commune in a Baptist church, it is sin to commune anywhere. The Lord's table is the same everywhere; the same conditions of coming to it are requisite everywhere; a class of persons who can eat and drink acceptably in one place, can do the same anywhere and everywhere. These statements are self-evident. Then this question is a broad one; its decision approves or criminales the thousands who joyfully eat of the Supper from time to time who have never been immersed. It affirms that they eat and drink damnation to their souls, or that they may approach the table of the Lord acceptably wherever it is spread. But if truth rejects pious pedobaptists from the Supper, then let them be rejected. If the law of Christ condemns them for coming to this feast before their minds are enlightened and their practice reformed

on the subject of baptism, then let them be condemned. If *it* charges them with sin in attending upon this ordinance, then let the charge come home upon them with all its force. God forbid that we should endeavor to excuse an act which he condemns; or shield a people whom he would hold guilty. But it is well to examine the law in regard to this matter; to look into the genius of the gospel, and if possible to learn the mind of Christ, our Judge, in regard to it. Let us examine carefully, candidly, prayerfully, and be prepared to conform our practices to our conclusions. Let us try to *be right* and *do right*, and Christ will lift upon us his approving face, and we shall be free men in the Lord. As we now understand the point at issue, we are prepared at least to *attempt* its settlement.

CHAPTER II.

ALL TRUE DISCIPLES HAVE A RIGHT TO CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE proposition we are about to attempt to sustain is:

All Christians have a right, and are in duty bound, to celebrate the sufferings of Christ in the ordinance of the Supper.

I. *We assert that they have this right by virtue of their discipleship.*

Rights and duties spring from character and relations. The character and relations of a disciple give rise to peculiar rights and duties; and wherever the character of disciples exists, these rights also exist. A disciple is a believer, a Christian, a scholar, a son of God, a follower of Christ. His character is set forth in the following passages of Scripture: John viii. 31, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" xv. 8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." 1 John iii. 23, "And this is

his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." Gal. iv. 6, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." John i. 12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name," or gives them the privileges of sons of God. Rom. viii. 17, "And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

Then a true disciple is a believer in Christ, loves his law, bears much fruit, is son of God, heir of God, joint heir with Christ, entitled to all the privileges of a son. Any person of whom you can say,—he is a believer, he loves the truth, is a Christian,—you can say that he is a disciple; and if he is a true disciple, you can affirm that he is a believer, bears much fruit, is a son of God and heir with Christ; but if he does not possess these characteristics, then he is not a disciple, not a Christian. All Christians have the spirit of adoption. Then every pious soul possesses with his spirit of adoption all the rights, immunities, privileges, blessings which accrue to the sons of God. They are *heirs*, and consequently are entitled to the inheritance provided

for such. Paul reasons powerfully on this point "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." That argument is invincible. Paul has placed one step upon the other so firmly, so logically, that there is no escape from the conclusion, if we admit the premises. If we admit a man to be a child of God, we are forced to the conclusion of Paul in regard to him. The only way to escape is to deny that he is a child. Among privileges of sons, is that of celebrating the death of our Elder Brother. It is by virtue of his sufferings that we are sons and heirs, and one of the first privileges which an heir covets, and which he wishes to inherit, is to celebrate the sufferings which bought his pardon. If we are sons, true disciples, we have a right to the blessings bestowed upon that relation, and no one has a right to forbid us. Many pedobaptists, all pious ones, are disciples of Christ, are sons of God. They have erred, it is true, in regard to one of the duties of Christ's church, but they do not err willfully; they are honest, pious, and purpose to keep the whole law of God, and hence He sends forth into their hearts the spirit of sons. They are children beloved, notwithstanding their error; hence, they have a right to the privilege of heirs, and may lawfully come to the Lord's table. The

Supper was instituted for all the disciples. "Drink ye all of it," is still in force, and should be respected as much as any other words of Christ. How can we break this chain of Paul's reasoning? How can we show that a man may be a son of God, and not entitled to the privileges of sons? It will be said he is in error, and must come to the truth before this privilege can be allowed him. Have we a "thus saith the Lord" for that? If the error is fatal to the privileges of sons, it is fatal to sonship itself. What is sonship good for, without its privileges? When you take away its rights and immunities, it is worth no more than liberty without the privileges of freemen. But the error of pious pedobaptists does not prevent their enjoying the full effusion of the spirit of adoption, and hence they should enjoy the full advantages of all the privileges of their relation and character; and among them come the emblems of that sacrifice which quickened them while dead in trespasses and sins.

Would a jury decide against the claims of an heir who could make out as plain a case of sonship as pious pedobaptists can? Would they shut him out from privileges which rightfully pertain to heirs, when his enjoyment of them was of great advantage to him, and did not detract a particle from the

privileges of any other person, as is the case in the communion of saints? In law and equity, an heir has a right to all the immunities of heirship, on the ground of his *relation*; and if he can make proof that the *relation actually does exist*, he can carry his claim even against statute law. Not long since, in England, the law required that an heir should be baptized, and registered in the national church, to be known in law. Those not registered were "invisible" heirs, not known as heirs; yet, when plain and positive proof was given that the claimant was a veritable heir, this law was overruled, and equity decided the judgment; showing how men regard the character and relation as necessitating the right of enjoying the privileges of the same. The law in many states does not recognize any marriage as legal unless the parties have license from the county court, and the administrator has authority from the same source to solemnize marriages. But in all instances where the intention has been good, informality or error in regard to these legal regulations is overruled, and the rights and privileges of married life are secured to the parties. To these things all the people say amen. It would be regarded an unjustifiable act of oppression to take advantage of the ignorance of the parties, or

an error in recording the facts, to disinherit an heir, or rob a widow of a third of her husband's estate. The reason of this is plain. Facts are more important than forms; the wheat of more value than chaff; the essence, the spirit, the very thing itself, is more essential than the manner in which it is made known. On this very principle, we urge that pious pedobaptists have a right to the sacrament of the Supper. The thing itself, the very substance is proved to exist; the marriage is recorded in their hearts and in heaven; their sonship is sealed by the *Lord of the house, and who are we, that we should deny them the enjoyment of all the advantages growing out of these facts? Who has made us judges of another man's servant? How dare we step forward and assert that they should be disinherited, in part or in whole, because that, through ignorance, yet with honesty of heart, they were not perfectly accurate in the formal declaration of their relations? The root of the matter is in them, their claim is based upon the Rock; every thing that can give value to it, they possess; love, faith, piety, zeal, are rooted and grounded within them, and the spirit of adoption assures them that they are sons, and consequently heirs. They have every thing that can give any value to a profession. It is because

they are *children*, humble, truth-loving, pious children, that they are *heirs*, not because they have formally and accurately professed that they are children. The most punctilious observance of the form of profession will not add an iota to the strength of their claim, for it springs wholly from their relation to Christ. "*If children, then heirs.*"

But many of our Baptist brethren will not allow them the privileges of sons. Their united voice is against any pedobaptist brother, though he be never so pious and devoted to the cause of Jesus, coming to the Lord's Supper at all. On every communion day they assert that it is wrong for them to commemorate the sufferings of the Savior in whom they are so much interested. To the extent of their influence, they disinherit these sons of God—deny them the right to this sacramental privilege. They allow that they are brethren, but cannot sit down at the table with their fellow kins, at the table of their Elder Brother. "As brethren, they are Christ's disciples, and therefore commanded by him to eat and drink in memory of him; 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 instruct the churches, as enlightened and holy ministers of Christ; yet in this ordinance, which is specially appointed to be a sign of the communion of saints, and of 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 followers of the Redeemer cannot even commemorate his death together."—(*Noel.*) Now, is it right for us to deny our brethren the privilege of an ordinance in which they can participate understandingly, profitably, because they have made a mistake in regard to another ordinance, distinct and independent of this? In the kingdom of grace, the substance, the new birth, the spirit of adoption, is that which enables us to eat and drink profitably. But close communionists make baptism, which renews no heart, makes no sons of God, no heirs, no saints, the necessary prerequisite, the basis, the source of right and ability to eat of the Supper. Does not this subject the actual, the spiritual, the essential, the gracious in religion, to the formal? And is it not wrong to arrest the legitimate rights of the life and power of religion for the sake of

form? to sacrifice the foundation of hope, in respect to which an error will ruin the soul, to its dress, its mere mode of expression, in respect to which an error may be perfectly innocent, and never exclude the Savior's love from the heart a moment, but leave the errorist a bright and shining light in the church, and an heir of glory? We dare do no such thing. The only disqualification to celebrate the Lord's Supper acceptably, mentioned in the Bible, is inability to discern the Lord's body, (1 Cor. xi. 29.) Not the least intimation is found, that any error that does not shut Jesus from the soul, and blind our spiritual eyes to his perfections, is a reason for preventing a disciple from sitting down with his fellow disciples around the table of their common Lord; and we dare not go beyond the Bible, and pluck out some of the saints from among their associates on our own responsibility. A positive affirmation denies its opposite; and a positive negation affirms its opposite. As when we affirm that God is self-existent, we deny that he was created; and when we deny man's self-existence, we affirm that he was created. When we assert that unbelievers are not saved, we assert they are lost; or that holy men only have life, that unholy men inherit death. So when God says that those who

cannot discern the Lord's body, eat and drink damnation to their souls, he asserts that those who can discern that body as their sacrifice, the offering for their sins, may eat acceptably. Now all pious souls can discern the Lord's body, and can eat and drink worthily. God invites them to come,—it is their right and duty to come.

But it is claimed that profession of faith is so important that no one ought to be admitted to the Lord's table who has not made one, and that baptism is the only acceptable mode of profession. "The Scriptures," says Fuller, "lay great stress on confessing Christ's name before men, (Matt. x. 32,) and baptism is one of the most distinguished ways of doing this. * * * If, therefore, we profess Christianity only in words, the thing professed may be genuine, but the profession is essentially defective." "Now," says Noel, "as confession is so necessary, and pedobaptists cannot (conscientiously, honestly) confess him by baptism, because they believe it to be wrong, but earnestly desire to confess him in the Lord's Supper, is it not inconsistent in those who insist so properly on the value of a profession, to say to a Christian, 'because you cannot confess him in one way, we will hinder you from confessing in another'?" The essential imperfection of

confession without baptism is always urged as a reason why pedobaptists should not be admitted to the Supper. But allow that no scriptural profession or confession is made by pedobaptists, and what is the result? To what conclusion will such a position drive us? We allow that one conclusion is, they should be excluded from this Sacrament. But this is not all. We are obliged to go farther than this, and assert that the whole army of pedobaptists who have rejoiced in the flames of persecution, gone up through great tribulations, who have laid their all at the foot of the cross and died for the truth; or spent all their energies to lead dying heathen to Christ, and been such examples of piety, that close communion ministers delight to hold them up as models for their people to imitate, have made no scriptural profession; and fall under the curse of those who do not confess Christ before men; (Luke xii. 8, 9; Matt. x. 32,) even be denied a favorable recognition before the Father and His holy angels. An unscriptural profession is not acceptable; is no confession at all; and if pedobaptists have made no profession, the conclusion is inevitable that they must perish. Christ will not greet and save them when the world shall be on fire; they will not be allowed to eat and drink the cup anew with him in

his kingdom; and of course we should do what we can to prevent them from celebrating the Supper on earth. But it is not true that they have made no good profession. Confession is made in four ways, according to the Scriptures:

1. By word of mouth. Rom. x. 9, 10, "If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." See also 1 Peter iii. 15; 1 John iv. 3, 15; 2 John vii.

2. By a holy life. Matt. v. 16, "Let your light so shine that others, seeing your good works, shall be led to glorify your Father who is in heaven." 2 Cor. iii. 2, "Ye are our epistles written in our hearts, read and known of all men." "By their fruits ye shall know them." Phil. iv. 17, "I desire fruit that may abound to your account." Rom. vi. 22, "But now being made free from sin, ye have your fruit unto holiness."

3. Baptism. Gal. iii. 27, "For as many as have been baptized unto Christ have put on Christ."

4. The Lord's Supper. Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, 26, "This do in remembrance of me." "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this

cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come."

? If baptism is essential to confession, it is also essential to salvation, for there is no salvation without confession; but there is no proof that a good profession may not be made without a precise knowledge in regard to the form of baptism. In apostolic days it could not be so, but now, close communionists practically allow that it may be so. The confession is good and sufficient to them in the conference room, the pulpit, around the family altar, on the dying bed, in the morning of the resurrection, every where but just at the Communion table. Now we claim, that it is just as good there as any where else; and hence we gladly welcome all saints to the feast, and rely upon the preaching of the word, our uniform practice of immersion, and our organic testimony against infant sprinkling, to correct the error of our brethren in regard to baptism. And thus, while we secure to them all the rights and privileges which their union with Christ, their holy lives, their sonship demands, we do not encourage their error, but invite them to learn more perfectly the law of the Lord, and "walk in the good old way." To pursue the opposite course, we should make no allowance for their repeated and satisfactory

professions of union with Christ, and, what is worse we should throw suspicion on their honesty.

"But the order," says the close communionist, "is first, believe, be baptized, and then observe all things whatsoever is commanded, (Matt. xxviii. 20,) and if you will show **us** any permit from Christ to depart from this order, we will do it, but not till then." But you have already departed from it, and the whole spirit of the gospel, and the spirit of religion in the soul, oblige you to do so. You welcome pedobaptists to all the privileges of sons except one, because they have the spirit of sons. Every point among the "all things whatsoever I commanded you," you seem promptly to invite them to enjoy, except one, and by so doing you abandon the order in ninety-nine cases, and then wage a ceaseless contest over the hundredth. Are not preaching, praying, giving of alms, singing, reading the Bible, and all the multifarious duties of religion contained in this "all things," as well as Communion? And if you insist that a disciple must be baptized before he comes to the Supper, because that is the *order*, you must also forbid his praying, singing, exhorting, confessing with his mouth, until he has performed the same duty. No, dear brethren, this reasoning will not stand; you cannot rend the body of Christ

on such a basis. Your premises prove too much; your conclusions are against the gospel, the rights of disciples, your own religious practices, and the Christian sense of the world. We like the spirit of those ministers who were returning from the Evangelical Alliance. There were Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopal ministers in the ship, and the mad billows threatened their destruction. They expected every hour would be their last. The Lord's Supper was proposed and administered, and all partook, expecting soon to meet their Lord. Close communion doctrines were laid aside, and all ate and drank as brethren. Nearness to eternity melted away all objections, and they rejoiced in the communion of saints. So may it soon be on the land, as on the stormy deep. May sectarian bonds give way, and the saints meet each other as heirs to all the rights and privileges of children.

CHAPTER III.

Free communion argued from the love and forbearance which Christ commands us to exercise toward all his saints.

The religion of Christ, as well as other systems, has its *essential* elements; principles and duties which lie at its foundation, which grow out of the relation of things, which are necessary to the very existence of true religion; and he that fails to lay hold of these principles, and perform these duties, is a heretic, to a fatal extent. No change of circumstances, remoteness of time, obtuseness of intellect or moral sense, can so excuse a failure here, as to save from the fearful doom of the reprobate. Such is the principle and exercise of love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Without love, knowledge, faith, zeal, leaves a man, "a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." Without love, there can be no religion, no life, no fellowship with Christ. In many things we may be in error and still be saved, but an error here is fatal. The Quaker, who rejects

all ceremonies and does not allow the obligation of the Sabbath, if he obeys this "royal law," will *live*, but he that conforms to every *form* of godliness and fails in this, will perish. It is important to obey every commandment of Christ; but ignorance may excuse neglect of some laws, but never can excuse neglect of this. While we admit that every commandment of Christ is of importance, that no one of them is non-essential, it is folly to assert that all of them are of *equal* importance; are *equally* essential to the Christian life. If love is greater than hope and faith, (1 Cor. xiii. 13,) it is greater than any religious ceremony; and hence, if, in the course of events, we are tempted to sacrifice love to the forms of religion, we may know that we are wrong; that love should always, under all circumstances, have the pre-eminence. There should be no conflict here, and there will be none, if we will allow the glorious harmony of truth to prevail; if we assume no false positions in our zeal for some favorite dogma. Much is said about keeping *all* the commands of Christ, and this very plea is often got up to apologize for the violation of this *greatest* commandment. Many a loving brother has been excluded from the church as a heretic, for a departure from the forms of godliness, in superlative

zeal for *all* the commandments, while scores of covetous, sensual men, have been first in the embrace of the brotherhood, though living in constant violation of this "royal law."

We would urge believers to continue obedient to every commandment of Christ, and especially to this. There is no precept so often repeated, so emphatically urged upon the disciples, made the object of such earnest supplication, as this. And there is one place, especially, where we are called upon to exhibit our love to the brethren, that is sacred above all others; where Jesus is brought home to our consciousness; where we should feel the authority of his words in the most emphatic sense; where every prejudice, selfish notion, bigoted conception, is annihilated by the force of the spirit of love and union which is imposed by the Savior's words, and imparted by the Savior's presence, and that is the Supper of our Lord. These emblems are the symbols of love—fornbearing, long suffering, self-sacrificing love; love that believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth; and if we have any disposition to exhibit our love to the brethren, we should do it here; if we are inclined to obey this oft repeated injunction of Christ at all, this especially, is the place to do it.

Let us study the oracles of truth and see if it is not so. Let us examine the words and import of the true testimony. We will quote a few passages. John xv. 12, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you;" xvii. 11, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are;" 21. "That they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou has sent me;" xiii. 34, 35, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye love one another." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Rom. xii. 10. 1 John iv. 20. Paul says, Eph. v. 2, "And walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." This is but a specimen of the words of inspiration in regard to this duty. Here it is asserted that the bodying forth of our love in proper acts, is the chief sign of discipleship. We are to know, and the world is to know, that we are disciples, from the practical fruits of our love, from the acts of love toward the brethren. Christ has instituted the ordinance of the Supper to give us an opportunity to express our love in an intelligible, effective

form, and the whole force of responsibility to manifest our love at all, presses us to unite with *all* who love Jesus in celebrating his Supper. This is the symbol of our brotherhood. Here we commemorate the sacrifice that makes us brothers; the grace that has won us from the broad way to the *one* path of life; that bought for us the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; and if we refuse to join our brethren in commemorating these facts, if we thrust them from our midst in the very presence of the symbols of that bleeding sacrifice which bought our pardon, our emancipation from the fearful curse of hell, how can we assume, and how can the world believe, that we are disciples of that Christ whose death for us we cannot agree to celebrate? Of what avail are all our other professions of love, while we refuse to join in partaking of this chief symbol of oneness in Christ? If this law of love binds us to any duty, it is, heartily, joyfully, to welcome *every* true child of God to our side, while we partake of the Supper of our Lord. If it is wrong to withhold any mark, any profession of our brotherly love, it is pre-eminently so in the case of the Supper, which constitutes the highest legal form of expression within our reach; the form which received the especial appointment of

Christ, which constitutes the distinguishing badge of Christian union.

But it will be said that pedobaptists are in error in regard to one of the ordinances of God's house, and we are commanded to have no fellowship with heretics, nor to bid them God speed. But C. Communionists allow them to be Christians; fellowship them in the prayer and conference room, and invite them to preach the gospel to their people, and salute them as children of God, and hope to meet them in heaven, and why not admit them to the Supper? If we had any command to that effect, we would, our opponents usually reply. But we have no law permitting us to receive unbaptized Christians to the Supper. In regard to this, it is not required that a special law should be given to provide for such a case. The law is, "Eat ye all of it," and it is more proper that a specific law should be required authorizing us to *exclude* a brother from the Table, before we presume to violate the general statute that *all* should eat. And there is no law that prohibits any pious soul from coming to this Feast, that allows us to make any exceptions in the application of the law of brotherly love.

And lest the weak and erring brother should be

thrust out, and denied an equal participation in the blessings of fellowship, of communion and brotherly love, Christ has given us lucid, definite, positive instruction to guide our conduct in these cases. He tells us, that to withhold a cup of cold water from the least of his disciples, or doing of kindness to these little ones, is tantamount to doing the same to him. The idea is, that the erring, weak, feeble Christian is so far identified with Christ, and is so fully a representative of him, that an act done to one of these little ones is received as done to him. Hence, when the Lord's table is spread, the pious pedobaptist of right may claim a seat, in the name of his Master, and we are bound to receive him for the sake of his Savior and our Savior, bound to embrace him within this social act of love in Jesus' name, as one of his little ones. The New Testament is full of instructions to this effect, so that it is strange that any one should hesitate for one moment in regard to his duty. Rom. xiv. 1, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye;" 4. "Who art thou who judgest another man's servant: to his own master he standeth or falleth;" xv. 7, "Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Mark ix. 39, 40, "Jesus said, forbid him not—for he that is not

against us is on our part." These words are just as binding upon us now, as if they came from his throne this day; they are clothed with the highest authority of the universe, and relate to the dearest interests of social being. The only question on which any doubt will be indulged by any Christian, is, are they applicable to the case in hand? Do they bear upon our duty to weak brethren in regard to the Supper? Of their applicability to this case, I have no doubt. They are a mere comment on the law of love: a law which is to have a living, controlling, modifying influence over us and in us, wherever we are, and in whatever we do; a law that is essential to the Christian system, and must and will enjoy the widest possible application in the case of every true believer. They are given to make us understand, without the necessity of mistake, that we are not to disfellowship a brother so long as the marks of a Christian are found in him. Though he may hold to some doctrines that we regard as erroneous, no matter; so long as he is a *brother*, these precepts demand the lawful recognition of his union with Christ. C. Communionists allow that they are bound to fellowship a brother who is in error in regard to baptism, in all other things except at the sacrament. But all other

modes of fellowship will not answer for this. The Supper is appointed as a public, social profession of mutual love and interest in Jesus Christ, and to divide here, is to neutralize all other professions of unity. But why cavil? Why wait for plainer direction? Here it is in the most positive terms. "*Receive ye one another as Christ also received us;*" and Eph. v. 2, "*Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.*" Then Christ is to be our example in this case as in others, and we are to do just as he would do, just as he does, for he is still with his people under the circumstances. Where he manifests his love, we are bound to do the same; where he receives a brother, and approves of his course, there we are to receive him, and give our sanction to his conduct. This is all plain. There is no mysticism in this argument. If it be found that Christ does love pedobaptists, and receive and bless them; if he is present with them at the Supper, these scriptures make our duty plain. Their application to the case in hand is just as direct as any law can be made. The law against theft is no more direct. The law requiring kindness to the poor is no plainer, or easier of application. It does not specify who the poor man shall be, what shall be the cause of his poverty, how poor he must be, or

what shall be the particular want that presses upon him; it is enough that he is poor; we are bound to aid him. So this law just fixes the principle, and gives us a guide for its application. We are to show love to our brethren; and when, and where, and how, the Savior exhibits his love and fellowship, we are obliged to exhibit ours. And does not Christ love pious pedobaptists? Does he not receive them as children beloved? Does he not meet with them at the sacramental board, "sup with them and they with him," send his blessed Spirit into their hearts, give them the assurance that the oblation is accepted, that their expressed interest in his sacrifice for them is well-pleasing in his sight? Is there any one so ignorant, so bigoted, so blind to facts, as to affirm that, when the devoted, the humble, the thankful of this class come to the Supper, that there is no Lord, no approving Spirit, no comforting grace, no quickening of hope, no communion of love in their midst? Does Christ stand aloof from them, leaving them to cold, lifeless, Christless, comfortless formality, as they take the emblems of the sacrifice in which they hope? We know that He is with them. Volumes would not contain the record of blessings which he has breathed upon them — the comfort of love, and assurance of hope

which he has given them on these occasions. Oh how rich, how blessed have these seasons been to their souls! We have evidence enough that Christ does join with them, approve and bless them, notwithstanding their mistake in regard to baptism. Then let us do the same thing so far as we can. Christ has led the way, and *commanded* us to follow. We should not presume to be more particular than He is; we should not dare to refuse to follow his example, or reject a brother whom he receives. These brethren he receives; dare we reject them? "God hath received them," and that should settle all queries?

But it is asked, How can we walk together unless we are agreed? We cannot join a brother in doing what we believe to be wrong, however much we may love him. But because he cannot agree in some things, it is no reason why we should thrust him from us, and forbid his enjoying with us, privileges in cases where we are agreed. On this point, we have a plain direction from God. In view of the division of sentiment which then existed, and would exist, Paul was directed to write, Phil. iii. 16, "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." This is a common sense law

How proper, reasonable it is for Christians to unite in all the services of religion in which they are agreed. Mark the instruction—so far as we have attained, so far as our knowledge of duties agree, let us walk by the same rule, be united, continue in mutual fellowship, making just as little of our imperfect knowledge and difference of opinion as possible. Now, all Christians are agreed as to the design of the Supper, and are agreed, too, in their practical and saving acquaintance with the sacrifice commemorated, and hence, all are bound to mind the same thing, commune at the same table, have no schism at the sacramental feast. We know how the apostles treated erring Christians. There was the error of circumcision, quite as hurtful to the growth of Christian knowledge and the peace of the church as pedobaptism. It was the cause of much bitter strife and bloody persecution, but never was made the occasion of thrusting a pious man from fellowship at the Lord's table. Now, unless it can be shown that the error on baptism is more hurtful to the truth, more repugnant to the peace and purity of the church, than circumcision, the example of the apostles is authoritative in this case, and we are under the most solemn obligation to deprecate division in the body of Christ at the

communion table, as did the apostles, and to cultivate the same toleration toward our brethren whom we believe to be in error. But if this error is declared to be more criminal than that, we request our opponents to reconcile this assertion with the high encomiums they are forward to bestow upon pedobaptists, many of whom they do not hesitate to rank among the most eminent saints on earth. Says Booth, "It is not every one that is received of Jesus Christ, who is entitled to come to his table, but such and such only as revere his authority, submit to his ordinances, and obey the laws of his house." If we are not to receive pious men to the table of our Lord, then it is in vain that God has commanded us to receive them as Christ receives them; in vain that Christ has given unmistakable evidence that he approves of their communing and meets them at his Supper; in vain that a perfect example has been set before us; and a rebuke for rejecting a brother whom God had received, recorded for our instruction. If Booth's assumption is true, then Christ receives those who do not reverence his authority, which is absurd. He would also make out that a mistake in regard to one ordinance of his house, on the part of any brother, imposed the duty on us, of compelling him to wholly neglect another,

making us responsible for his disobedience in one case because through ignorance he made a mistake, fell into a formal irregularity in another.

"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 the Scriptures and listening to the 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 communion? It was reserved for worse days to see such a spectacle." (Noel.)

The fear sometimes expressed, that if we commune with pedobaptists, we shall be partakers of their error, is a mere shadow. Why should we be

implicated any more than Christ is, who delights to meet with them, and smile upon their devotion? Why should we be more select, exclusive, particular than Christ? Why should we require a man to know more, be more perfect in his Christian services, in order to attain to our fellowship, than Christ does? A man that is good enough to secure the favor of Jesus, will not defile us by his presence at the Supper.

We have now seen that the essential element of religion, that without which no man can be a Christian, requires us to cherish and express our love to the brethren under all circumstances, and especially in that ordinance which symbolizes the dying love of Christ: that no rite or ceremony concerning which a mistake may leave a person in the full enjoyment of the favor of God, and an heir of glory, should interrupt the full development of this essential principle—love—concerning which a similar mistake deprives the soul of God's favor, and all hope of salvation; that a position or assumption that does this, must necessarily be fallacious, and opposed to the harmony of truth, and should be surrendered, and made subordinate to the "Royal law." We find Close Communionists have exalted baptism to this unlawful position, making it sunder the

household of faith, rend the body of Christ, even where dying love calls loudest for union; and we have shown that the whole authority of the law of brotherly love imposes the duty of making baptism subordinate to love, and all Christians cordially uniting to celebrate the sacrifice of their common Lord in his own appointed way. We have also seen that the most positive instructions are given us respecting our duty to weak and erring brethren, making it our duty to receive them just as long as we have evidence that Christ receives them; and while we may not be able to walk together in all points, yet we must walk together in all things wherein we are agreed; and as we are agreed in regard to the import and design of the Supper, we are bound to walk together there. Let these testimonies of our Lord prevail, until bigotry, sectarianism, division among the people of God, shall be melted away, and our different churches shall embrace each other in the arms of brotherly love, even as Christ embraces every pious soul in his pure, just, rational, impartial affections.

CHAPTER IV.

Pedobaptists members of the Christian church, and therefore entitled to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

If Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Methodist churches are not a fiction; if they are truly scripturally, Christian churches, it follows inevitably that they are entitled to all the ordinances, privileges, honors that the Savior has bequeathed to his body. They are entitled to a scriptural ministry, and have the right, the authority to ordain such a ministry; they are entitled to the preached word, and the celebration of the ordinances, according to the ability that God hath given them. It is their due, that other Christian sects should recognize them as churches of Christ, their ministry as scriptural, and the legality of the ordinances so far as performed in harmony with the word of God.

Strict communionists assert, that pedobaptist churches are not scriptural churches; refuse to recognize them as such by correspondence, or giving

of letters of commendation to their members who wish to join them. They regard the pedobaptist ministry as not ordained, and invariably reordain them when they join a Baptist church, before they are allowed to officiate, and, of course, it follows that they are not entitled to the ordinances of the church; and hence, if a Baptist member sits down to the Lord's Supper in a pedobaptist church, he must repent or be excluded. Says Fuller, "You greatly mistake if you suppose we consider the absence of baptism as a disqualification for the Lord's Supper only. Baptism being the divinely appointed mode of entrance into the visible church, we consider the absence of it, (as far as our concurrence is concerned,) as a disqualification for all the offices and exercises peculiar to churches. We decline a union with pedobaptists in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, because it is a church ordinance, and to unite with those as church members, who, in our opinion, have not entered the church by the door of Christ's appointing, would be, we conceive, a most unworthy reflection on his wisdom, and disregard of his just authority." If this position is scriptural, we should gladly submit to it, and however unpleasant its consequences, meet them all, with "Thy will be done." To obey God is our first and highest

duty, and should be our greatest pleasure. And if it is scriptural, we allow that C. Communion is a consequence, with its attendant practices. Episcopalians, who, like strict Baptists, assume that they are *the church* alone, very consistently draw the following conclusions. 1. That no others are true and scriptural churches. 2. That theirs is the only legally ordained ministry. 3. That the Supper is celebrated lawfully, only in their church. 4. The same in regard to baptism. 5. No minister not ordained in their sect, is allowed to officiate in their churches, or preach in their pulpits. 6. They reordain all ministers who join them from other sects. 7. They rebaptize all persons who join them from other churches. 8. They allow no correspondence with other churches that directly or indirectly acknowledges them to be true churches of Christ. This, to say the least, is consistent. The premises justify the conclusion, and they are bold in acting out their doctrine, that their neighbors' errors, "*disqualify* for all the *offices* and *exercises* peculiar to churches." In every important particular, the mass of strict Baptists are driven by their principles to the same conclusions. The difficulty is, the premises are unsound. It is an unscriptural assumption that a failure to apprehend one form of profession,

invalidates all other forms, which are clearly apprehended, and faithfully observed. The church is not so frail, unsubstantial a thing, that a mistake in regard to the form of baptism should annihilate it. Its foundation and superstructure are not dependent upon an external rite, for their existence, or means of making their existence known to the world. The essentials of a church are not obtained through baptism, neither destroyed by its innocent neglect.

But this high ground is successfully combated by some of the noblest spirits of the Baptist church. And though the lesser lights may and do stand unmoved by the force of their reasoning, they find it impossible to overthrow their arguments, and the whole denomination, we trust, will yet yield to their invincible conclusions. Robert Hall reasons thus: "If we examine the New Testament, we shall find that the term church, as a religious appellation, occurs in two senses only; it either denotes the whole body of the faithful, or some one assembly of Christians associated for the worship of God. In the former sense, it is styled, in the apostolic creed, Catholic or Universal, a belief in the existence of which, forms one of its principle articles. In this sense Jesus Christ is said to be 'head over all

things to the church, which is his body.' It is in this collected view of it, that we affirm its perpetuity. When the term is employed to denote a particular assembly of Christians, it is invariably accompanied by a specification of the place where it was accustomed to convene; as, for example, the church at Corinth, at Ephesus, and at Rome. Now, it is manifest from Scripture, that these two significations of the word differ from each other only as a part differs from a whole; so that when the whole body of believers is intended, it is used in its absolute form; when a particular society is meant, it is joined by a particular specification."

President. Wayland, *University Sermons*, page 222, says: "The church is always represented to be a portion of the human race possessing the very attributes which our Savior, in the passage which I have quoted, (John xvii. 20, 21,) enumerates. Thus the apostle Paul addresses his various epistles either to the churches, or to the saints, or to the church of God, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. The church in any place, and the saints in that place, mean, with him, precisely the same persons.

"The church is repeatedly denominated by the apostle Paul, *the body of Christ*," and every

individual believer is a member of the body, of which Christ is the head. Thus, Eph. i. 22, 'He hath given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body.' Eph. iv. 15, "That ye may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, maketh increase of the body. Col. i. 18, 'And he is the head of the body, the church.' The illustration here used is precisely analogous to that derived from the relation of the vine and its branches. The idea in both cases is the same. That portion of matter which obeys my will, and is pervaded by my spirit, and partakes of my animal life, is a part of my body. So, the members of the body of Christ are those who obey his will, are influenced by his Spirit, and partake of his moral life. These, taken together, form the church, which is his body. All the rest are the world. It is this Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, that distinguishes them from other men. 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but faith that works by love;' 'If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature;' 'Christ has purchased the church of God with his own blood.' From these, and a multitude of passages such as these, it is evident that the church of God is always

spoken of in the New Testament, as the company of redeemed souls, pervaded by the Spirit of Christ; and that they are the persons of our race who possess exactly the same moral attributes as those for whom he prays that they may be one."

Page 225: "Such, then, is the simple notion of the church, as it is presented in the New Testament. It is a term used to designate a class of persons of peculiar moral character, right affections toward God and their fellow men. Whoever possesses these moral affections, belongs to this class, or is a member of this church, no matter by what other peculiarity he may be distinguished. Whoever is destitute of these moral attributes, is not a member of this church, or does not belong to this class, no matter by what name he may be called, or what profession soever he may have assumed. But it may be said, This truly is the conception of the church as it exists in the mind of Him who searches the heart. The Lord knoweth them that are his; but there is not in us that knowledge. We can form no such church. What, then, is the scriptural idea of the church as it actually exists here upon earth? Let us proceed to answer this question."

"In the first place, then, I think it must be obvious, that if this be the pure, original idea of a

church, it must lie at the foundation of every practical, and visible manifestation of it which we are authorized to constitute among men. We are not authorized, and therefore cannot organize a church which shall inevitably include every true disciple, and exclude every one who is not a disciple. We are, however, bound to use for this purpose, all the means of discernment which the Holy Spirit has given us, honestly endeavoring, to the utmost of our power, to render the church visible co-extensive with the church invisible. The model is placed before us, and though we are unable to attain to a perfect conformity with it, we should labor to attain to as perfect conformity as our limited knowledge will permit."

Then every assembly of believers, that we know to be pious, to possess the Spirit of Christ, to be members of Him by faith, we are to fellowship as members of the true church of Christ.

Dr. Wayland goes on to say, that all the saints in one place, without any specific organization, yet uniting in worship, come the nearest to the scriptural idea of a church; and that no decree, creed, organization, or act of man can make or unmake a church member.

"Nor, again, can any one of the sects into which

the disciples of Christ are divided, claim for itself the exclusive title of the Christian church. What sect can claim that all its members are the unfeigned disciples of Christ? and that all without its pale are reprobates? what sect of the Christian church is so distinguished by a holy life, by abounding self-denial, by victory over the world, and by universal charity, that, in the sight of God or man, it can dare to claim such a pre-eminence? The sect which approaches most nearly to the Spirit of the Master, would be the last to indulge in so arrogant an assumption."

Many errors have crept into the church, but it is self-evident that a defect which does not separate believers from Christ, must leave them members of his body, the church; and if members of it, entitled to all the rights, privileges, enjoyments, which Christ has bequeathed to his disciples. Because a member is not in all respects perfect, we are not allowed to cut it off, or treat it with neglect, or shut it out from the blessings which belong to the whole body. But rather give it more attention, care, indulgence, afford to it better privileges if possible than the other members, or, as Paul has it, "bestow upon it more abundant honor." What makes a member of the church if not the infusion of the

life of the true vine, the life of Christ into the soul? And what sect has a right to say to its brother members, "you are not of the body?" The reasoning of President Wayland is scriptural, logical, overwhelming in conclusiveness, and coming, as it does, from a Baptist divine and philosopher of world-wide reputation, it has given the narrow-minded of this church much trouble. Reviewers have tried their hand at him, critics and sectarians have complained, but the argument still stands a noble monument of reasoning, as compact as a marble column, able to withstand the attack of every foe.

A sect is not "*the church*," and has no right to assume the prerogative of shutting other brethren from the privileges of the church. No sect has a right to assume a falsehood; as it does when it assumes that it is "*the church*." Christians have no right to recognize sects or principles that infringe upon the privileges of their brethren, much less, that directly or indirectly assert that they are not members of the church of Christ. These are common facts, principles and privileges pertaining to all the assemblies of the faithful, which no sect has a right to violate; and any practice that does violate any of them, is wrong, opposed to the unity of the

body, to the express laws of Christ. The right of celebrating the death of Jesus for our redemption, is one of these universal privileges. Every Christian is interested in the Sacrifice, (for sin,) and of course interested in celebrating it. It is a gift to the *whole church*, just as much as the flesh and blood, just as much as Christ crucified, is a gift to all. One is, and must be co-extensive with the other, for one is a fact ever to be remembered, and the other is the appointed means of remembering it. This is the gift of the Head not to a few members of the body, not to the hand or arm alone, but to *all* the members, and, as pious pedobaptists are united to this Head, as they are partakers of the Spirit and life of Christ, as they possess the requisite moral traits, they are in the body, which is the church, and have a right, are in duty bound, to celebrate the Supper.

We have an argument from another distinguished Baptist minister touching this point. Says Dr. Dowling, in a sermon on "Christ the foundation," "The church which Christ purchased with his blood consists of the true believers of every land, of every age, and of every name. * * God forbid, therefore, that we should imitate those who proudly arrogate to themselves, as a visible hierarchy, or

organized community, the claim of being exclusively *the church* of Christ. The New Testament knows nothing of any such organization as exclusively the church. It cannot be doubted that from the time of the apostles till now, there have ever existed *true churches of Christ*; yet neither any one of these visible churches, however pure its doctrine — nor any collection of these churches, much less of false ones — had any right to arrogate to themselves as an essential organization, the character of the alone church of Christ." This is true, and goes to show, what every unprejudiced Christian will not be sorry to have believed, that every pious assembly is a branch of the true church, that pious pedobaptists are just as really, scripturally members of this church as Baptists of like character.

Many attempt to evade this conclusion, by saying that they truly are members of the invisible church, but not of the visible. But this evasion is not valid. For immersion is by no means the only form, or manner of professing faith in Christ; is not the only means of making known, of acting out, making visible our life in Him. It is legal to profess with our lips; to show our faith by works of love and mercy, and by celebrating the Lord's Supper. Pedobaptists have confessed Christ with the mouth,

in their actions, have revered the *ordinance* of baptism, though they have mistaken its form, and the Lord's Supper. They are known to be Christians by their works; they give evidence of this, by acts and sayings which are just as legal, and more positive, more certain, less ambiguous than baptism itself. They are visible churches, they are known to God and man as living members, and it is improper to disregard the unmistakable evidences, to reject the accumulated and convincing proofs of membership merely for a defect, or informality in one item of evidence. Which is most consistent with reason and Scripture, to yield to the force of the ninety and nine items of proof, that they are true churches, and be charitable toward the one informality, until they are further enlightened; or reject the ninety and nine, for the sake of the one defect? They stand before the C. Baptist tribunal and demand a decision. They know that they love Christ, love his gospel, obey every law of his house as far as they understand, have let their light so shine, that others have been led to glorify God; Christ is evidently among them, blesses them in their coming in, and going out, souls are converted, sinners are reformed and made to give praise to God. These things are *known*, and *visible*, you

admit them as facts, will you allow that we are members of the church of Christ? Strict Baptists reply, baptism is the door, you have not entered it, and are not in the church. But what is meant by baptism being the door? It is no where in Scripture said to be a door into the church. It is no where said that it initiates into the church. It is said, "*God* added to the church daily," but no where, "believers were baptized into the church." Believers are "baptized into Christ," "into his death," "for the remission of sins," as a symbol of the resurrection, but never to initiate them into the church. Baptism is an important mode of publishing our faith in Christ, the fact of our forgiveness in him, and our hope in the resurrection, but it is not the *only* mode of such publication. This unscriptural figure, that baptism is the *door*, has deceived many, and made them believe that the most perfect possession of Christian graces, the most indubitable proofs of union with Christ, the most active use of every function of the Christian church may exist, and for years be exercised outside of the church; just as if the church was a stately mansion, some material, visible shell, or frame, or enclosure on some island, only approachable through the water. I do not hesitate to pronounce such a

view of the church, sensual, and untrue. The essentials of a church are, character, Christ-likeness; just as the essentials of a tavern, are accommodations for travelers. The sign may not be perfect in its execution, it may be marred by a blunder of the painter, but if travelers *know* that there they may find a home, it still answers all its legitimate purposes; and it would be folly to assure such, that it was not a tavern. So it is folly to assert that because a company of true Christians have blundered in regard to a part of the sign of their membership, they are therefore not members of the church. Baptism is one sign of church membership, because it is a sign of discipleship, but not the only, nor most definite and satisfactory sign. There are many others, some of which are certain proof of actual union with Christ, which baptism is not. Should the churches greatly increase in holiness, benevolence, zeal, and yet all embrace pedobaptist views, would the church be annihilated? Would it be no more known as properly a Christian church? Would all their shining virtues give no warrant to church ordinances and privileges, and responsibilities, without a complete and punctilious observance of immersion?

But pedobaptists have not rejected the ordinance

of baptism; they have not refused to confess Christ by its observance; they reverence the institution as much as we; but its form they have mistaken. We reject this mistake, but cannot disfranchise them; cannot forget the cloud of witnesses to the actuality of their title to an equal standing among the churches of Christ.

The proof that pedobaptist churches are scripturally such, appears to us to be conclusive; and the duty of Baptists toward them is very obvious. We should recognize the facts in the case, should admit that they are true churches, give letters of commendation to our members who wish to join them, as true churches; admit their ministry to be scripturally ordained, and empowered to administer the ordinances of God's house, admit that it is lawful for them to celebrate the Lord's Supper in their midst, and not exclude our members, if they sit down to the Supper among them, when thus lawfully administered; allow their members to sit down with us when we partake of the Supper, for if they can lawfully eat in one place, they can in another; and permit their ministers to take part in administering the sacrament in our churches, as lawful ministers of Christ; and when they join us, admit them to the office of ministers without reordination.

Some inconsistently admit, that pedobaptists may celebrate the Supper among themselves, but not come to the Table in a Baptist church. Says Fuller: "We admit that sincere and conscientious pedobaptists, as such, are, in an inferior sense, justly entitled to the Lord's Supper." But we have proved that they are "justly entitled to the Lord's Supper," in just as superior a sense as Baptists are. But the object of this "inferior sense," is to avoid the hopeless task of overthrowing the arguments which demonstrate the *perfect* lawfulness of their communing, and sliding to the conclusion, that, what it is proper for them to do "in an inferior sense," among themselves, it is improper for them to do at all in a Baptist church. For if it be once admitted that they have a perfect right to eat of the Supper at home, it must be admitted that they have the same right to eat of the same Supper wherever furnished. Fuller allows that they may eat among themselves, because they are honest in their belief that they have been baptized. But is that honesty of less worth in a Baptist church, than it is in a pedobaptist? Is the Lord's table more select there, than in a pedobaptist church? Does it require higher qualifications to approach it there, than elsewhere? But he says, "When they sit

down with us, we are responsible for the act." Why? There can be no other reason, than that you are able to prevent it. Then if you had the power, you would feel yourself obliged to prevent communion in every church but your own. You have power to condemn its celebration, and if you do not do it, you are so far responsible. But you approve the act in part; you should wholly approve it, and allow what is true, that the same act is as justifiable in one church as another. It is no small thing to deny a Christian church this privilege, to rob them of the memento of their Lord's love—to forbid them to obey the positive command, to "eat ye all of it, in remembrance of me"—to steadfastly deny to them the enjoyment of a part of the legacy of their common Savior. God forbid that I should ever assume such a fearful responsibility.

But it is said, "You refuse to receive pedobaptists into your churches; you deny them church fellowship, while you admit them to your communion. We consistently deny sacramental fellowship to all whom we reject from church fellowship." We do not reject them from church fellowship, for we allow that they are in the church of Christ. We do not hold that membership in our sect, is necessary to church membership. We organize a sect, not as

exclusively the church, but a branch, a society in the church. Among other things, we wish to give our influence against infant baptism, (sprinkling,) and we organize for that purpose; but in doing so, we do not propose to separate from the body of the faithful, any more than a temperance society separates from the State. We have "specific work to do, demands of conscience to fulfill, and take this path to the end, all the time seeking to preserve the essential unity of the body. When we celebrate the Supper, we show forth that unity, and are greatly blessed in the act. It is a luxury to join a pious pedobaptist minister in administering this sacrament to all who love the Lord Jesus Chrst. And while we do it, we do not compromise our views of truth, weaken our influence in favor of believers, baptism; but rather draw our brethren nearer to us, so that their prejudice may be allayed and their errors corrected.

CHAPTER V.

Pious pedobaptists are able to realize the design of the Lord's Supper, and therefore have a right to partake of it.

It is easily shown that the ordinances of God's house stand, each upon its own basis, deriving their authority, each from the specific command that instituted it; taking its nature, design, and usefulness from the same source. Baptism is to be administered to certain characters, for purposes peculiar to itself. The Supper, also standing upon its own merits, enforced by the law which instituted it, is to be administered to persons of a certain character, for purposes peculiar to itself. Two things are necessary in order to receive any ordinance lawfully, and profitably. 1. The requisite character, the character of a disciple, a Christian. 2. A knowledge of its nature and design.

Qualifications for one of these ordinances, does not imply qualification for the other. A Christian may understand the nature and design of baptism,

and hence, be able profitably and lawfully to observe it; and yet have no knowledge, or a perverted knowledge of the Lord's Supper, and hence, unable profitably or lawfully to observe it. No act is virtuous, or acceptable to God, unless intelligently performed. The act of celebrating the Supper, has no merit, unless it is celebrated as the Lord's Supper, and made to signify what was intended by its Author. So also a Christian may be ignorant in regard to baptism, but fully instructed in regard to the Supper. His character is correct, his love to God and his law, which is the basis of all obedience, is fervent, but he is ignorant in regard to the nature and design of baptism; and perfectly and correctly instructed in regard to the nature and design of the Supper; and of course, as a child may see, cannot possibly observe the ordinance of baptism, while he can, to the full demands of the law, observe the ordinance of the Supper. No reasonable objection can be raised to his engaging in an act for which he is thus qualified; and it is the height of absurdity to object to his performance of that act, because he has not attended to another act or duty for which he is not qualified at all. If the two acts were so related, that one could not be lawfully observed without the pre-observance of

the other, the knowledge of them both would be necessarily co-extensive; or the character and knowledge qualifying for the second, could not be obtained without the observance of the first. It is so in regard to faith and baptism. We know that faith *must* precede baptism, because faith is necessary to the character of the person to be baptized. But baptism is not necessary to the character of those commanded to partake of the Supper. A person may be a disciple, a son of God, an heir of Christ, without baptism, and such are commanded to celebrate the Supper; but no person can be a disciple without faith, and hence, can not be properly baptized without it, for disciples alone are commanded to be baptized. When C. Communionists show us that qualification, that the character and knowledge, necessary to partake of the Supper, is as dependent on baptism, as the qualification for baptism is dependent on faith, we will allow their argument of "the order of truth" to be of some force. But the fact is, baptism does not qualify for the Supper, does not add a single element of piety or knowledge to the candidate.

Now, if it can be shown that pious pedobaptists are qualified to partake of the Lord's Supper, it will be settled that they have a right to do so.

For this purpose, we will trace out the design of the Supper, and study the character of our brethren.

1. *One design of the Lord's Supper, is to bring to our minds the sacrifice, the crucifixion of Christ for our sins.*

The literal flesh and blood of Christ, possess no especial merit in themselves, but they were symbols of the consecration of the life, honor, ease, glory, riches, of Christ, and the assumption of poverty, temptation, sorrow, agonizing burden of man's guilt, deathly grapple with Satan in his wrath, and finally the horrors of the garden and the cross, for the redemption of rebels from hell; and the bread and wine of the Supper, are emblems of this event, and designed to keep it in perpetual remembrance.

/ See Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, take, eat, this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it: For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Also, Mark xiv. 22, 23, and Luke xxii. 19, 20, "And he took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying, this is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me." And 1 Cor.

xi. 24, 25, * * "this do in remembrance of me; For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

This design, then, of the Supper, is plain. This great central idea, "Jesus Christ and him crucified," is commemorated in this simple ordinance, and whoever eats and drinks of these emblems lawfully must see this truth overshadowing all others in grandeur and importance, and be personally interested in it. No one is condemned in the Scripture for partaking of these emblems, if they can discern this glorious fact in a practical and saving manner; but those, and those only, who cannot discern the Lord's body in its saving significance, eat and drink "damnation to their souls." Ability to perform other duties lawfully, to be baptized, to sing, preach, pray, work miracles, the most rigid morality, or ceremonial exactness is no qualification for this ordinance. An abiding confidence, a humble trust in the sacrifice of the life of the Son of God for sinners, a resting on him for pardon, life, salvation; the bringing Him home to the soul, as its "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," and realizing what Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ Jesus living in me, and the life which I live

here in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God," is the indispensable preparation for its observance. He that is destitute of such a practical realization of those doctrines, whatever of other merit he have, is wholly unfit to enjoy this privilege; and he that the most fully, practically, savingly, partakes of this qualification, whatever else he may lack, is the most worthy communicant at this sacrament. Who can object to such an one's communing? what possible reason can there be for refusing him this privilege? What can he do to add to his ability to honor the doctrines which are here set forth, and more acceptably partake of the emblems? Is there any thing in all the workings, emotions, conceptions, purposes of a soul that thus adores, trusts, and loves the Crucified one, that should prevent him? When a company of such souls sit down to the Lord's Supper, with Jesus and him crucified so fully before and among them, that all he has done, all that he is, in wealth or wisdom, grace, compassion, saving power, justice and truth, so absorb the attention, fill the whole mental vision with their glory, control, quicken, and render blissful every affection, so that they forget the world, its cares and pleasures, and even the brethren who sit around them; and feel and know that Jesus is to them,

"all and in all," the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely; it is certain that they are acceptable to Christ, that they do fully meet the demands of obligation in regard to this Supper. They possess the *character* of those to whom the Supper is to be administered. They also fully appreciate the leading design of the Supper. There is no duty left undone the observance of which would have added to their character, or knowledge of this duty. There is no law to prevent any such from communing. All such are commanded to do so. Just so far as any person is competent to commune as above stated, he is acceptable to Christ, and just so far as he fails in those particulars, he is not acceptable.

No one will deny, but that pedobaptists, just as much as Baptists, possess these blessed traits of character, and have as clear, impressive, saving, blissful views of this design of the Supper as the Baptist brethren, and are just as much blessed in the act of partaking of those emblems, feel their souls just as much drawn out to the Savior, and may even surpass them in the ardency of their adoration of that sacrifice that plucked them from the burning. They "discerned the Lord's body," and it cannot be improper for them to perform an act for which they are so fully qualified. Would baptism by immersion

add any thing to their qualifications? With their present views, immersion would render them wholly unfit for the Supper. They believe that they have been baptized, and should not be rebaptized, and to do it without faith is sin, and sin would deprive them of the favor of Christ. But even if they should change their views of baptism, and be immersed, it would not necessarily render them any more pious; if they trusted in baptism more, and Christ less, surely they would not improve in piety; and it could in no way correct, render more truthful their views of the design of the Supper, or add to their ability to enjoy it. They are now honest, pious, devout; they are personally interested in the sacrifice commemorated, have felt quite as much of the power of "Christ crucified" on the soul, as others; are very desirous of calling this sacrifice to remembrance in the way of Christ's appointing; are prepared to do so in an intelligent, and satisfactory manner, and should not be forbidden. Those who do forbid them, should show that baptism adds something to the character or knowledge of the subject, adds to his ability to "discern the Lord's body;" or that the Supper is designed to show that the subject has been baptized, instead of showing that he is interested in "Christ crucified;" or that

God has said, that no unbaptized person shall eat of the Supper; or that some evil to the person and church results from his observing it. But none of these things can be made to appear, and no argument can prove it improper for a person so fully *qualified* to celebrate the Supper, to do so.

(2. *The Supper is also designed as a protest on the part of the communicants against sin.*

For what was Christ slain? "For our sins." He was a sin-offering, he came to save the people from their sins; "without the shedding of blood there is no remission," but "his blood cleanseth from all sin." It is as an offering for sin then, that we celebrate the death of Christ; so that whenever we partake of those emblems, we protest against sin in all its forms. We assert that it is evil, cruel, unjustifiable, deadly, hateful. That we repent of it, loathe it, forsake it, and are resolved to give our whole influence against it. These emblems bring to our minds its nature and fruits, our guilt and danger, from which we expect deliverance only through the blood of Christ. Then we renew our penitence, our grief for sin, our pledge to forsake it, our hope of its forgiveness, our confession of our ill-desert, our entire destitution of merit, and entire dependence on Christ for salvation from sin and woe.

All of this a pious pedobaptist does as sincerely, as thoroughly, as a Baptist. The mere fact of being immersed makes no difference in regard to his ability or disposition thus to protest against sin. Every one who does hate sin, should be allowed to declare it, by celebrating the grace that made known his danger, turned his heart against its cause, and offers a full and glorious refuge from sin and sorrow.

3. *The Supper is designed to afford an opportunity of giving a social expression of confidence in the atonement.*

Religion is eminently social. It allows no man to live to himself, or die to himself. He must live to instruct, encourage, comfort, strengthen the brethren; to "do good unto all men, especially to the household of faith." Christians are to "exhort each other in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs," for the edification of the brotherhood. Indeed, all the services of God's house are designed for this end. "Comfort ye one another with these words," is the spirit of religious worship. The Lord's Supper is of great value in this regard. It is a solemn declaration of each communicant to the others, that they are united in confidence in the atonement, in the belief that it is full, free, available, adapted to

their wants, saving in its application, precious in its results; that they have not followed a fable, trusted in a delusion, built their hopes on the sand, but on the Rock of ages. Each to the other says, I have found these things true in my own experience; "Christ Crucified," has melted my stony heart, won my affections, subdued my will, removed my darkness, forgiven my sins, quelled my fears, healed my wounded spirit, and filled me with peace, joy, and hope. And as they eat and drink, a magnetic influence steals over the congregation that quickens their faith, strengthens hope, increases joy, and girds to more than mortal energy, to do battle with enemies within and without. For this cause, disciples were to come "*together on the first day of the week to break bread,*" and no one can tell the amount of strength and encouragement Christians have derived from this ordinance, and how many weak disciples have been saved from falling by the influence of this social affirmation of confidence in the cross. It would be greatly to their advantage now to assemble every Lord's day to break bread as they did in apostolic days. This ordinance prompts to sympathy, as it shows that each communicant enjoys a near relation to the loved Being, whose death is celebrated; it is a bond of union more

sacred than earthly ties, and is a warrant that each disciple prays for the other, and holds himself ready to do for him what no other mortal will. It shows that there is a precious oneness of faith, hope, love, warfare, desire, purpose, prospect in Christ, that underlies, and prompts to this act of social commemoration, and they feel drawn together in affection as if by the charm of a magnet. How precious to step aside from the cold, selfish world, with all its pomp, pride, strife, and drop into a circle of such blessed harmony, and union! It is worth more than rubies, than gold or refined gold, to the pilgrim traveling through this tumultuous, unfaithful world. Here they retire from the field of strife, contention, ignorance, crimination, to join in an act that is a sign of union more precious than all other unions, harmony overshadowing all other, and so sweet and saving, that it is with joy they forget and forgive all the differences of opinion, errors in judgment, defects of knowledge which exist among the communicants, in the blissful reflection that they are mutually united to the best of beings, instructed and united in the most important of all truths, and hope through the same grace for a glorious triumph over sin, ignorance and error, and to reign together in glory. The effect of this on pious

minds is exceedingly happy. The ordinance is also designed to give a social testimony to the world in favor of the atonement, "As oft as ye drink this cup ye *do show forth* my death." The all important question to a thoughtful man is, "How shall I prepare to meet God?" "Is this the Christ, the Savior of the world?" "If I receive him, shall I live?" All men are affected by influence. The opinions of the virtuous and intelligent are of great weight. None can give an opinion in regard to the power and safety of the atonement, as properly as those who have tested its virtues. If they are united and persevering in their testimony, that it is all in power, preciousness, that any claim for it, it will have its effect. We see the effect of social testimony in the movements of men of the world. Mass meetings, political conventions, immense gatherings are mighty to operate on the public mind. Those who can get up the most earnest, and formidable demonstration, gain the most adherents. But here is a demonstration that assures the world that those who are practically acquainted with the atonement, find it just what the world needs. Every communion season is a proclamation, a vindication, of the fact that there is life in Christ. It is an invitation to the world, to come to Him and live.

As it is repeated, it is a testimony that mature consideration confirms them in their opinion; and that increased acquaintance with Christ, increases their attachment to him, and love for him, and hope of eternal life. Important testimony! A guide to the world's only hope! Bless God that there are any who joyfully "*show forth his death*" to this condemned world, which is now so nearly ripe for destruction!

But who are competent to fulfill this design of the Supper? Who can join in saying to all around, Christ is precious, the atonement is not a failure, but a life-giving fact; the cross is the power of God to salvation? Of course, all who have proved it in their own experience. And we all know that pious pedobaptists can just as truthfully, properly, usefully, join in this ordinance, in encouraging their brethren, and testifying to the world, as pious Baptists. They know as much of Christ, have felt as much of his power, have as good reason to confide in him, love him, rejoice in him, and have as much desire to inspire others with confidence in him, as their brethren, and can therefore sincerely, honestly, and usefully "*show forth his death*," in its value, power, life-giving energy. Moreover, what right have C. Communionists, to forbid them this privilege

of stating the truths that burn within them, in this manner? what right to deprive the brethren, themselves, and the world of the advantage of this testimony? what right to smother an honest, truthful, and saving utterance, by this ordinance, of more value than tongue can tell, of what can be expressed in no other way to the same advantage? Fearful is the responsibility of those who rob the church and the world of such a blessing, and these brethren of such a privilege. Is the social influence of faith in Christ too strong? does it press "Christ and him crucified," too vividly before the attention? Is too much confidence inspired in him, that it should be sought to prevent three-fourths of the pious from joining in this act, of socially showing forth his death? O, that Christians would open every avenue of influence, nurse every vein of testimony, call out every conviction of the preciousness of Christ, that the church may be strengthened, and the world saved! Christians are all agreed in their ability to fulfill this design of the Supper. They are divided in regard to church government, baptism, and some other points; but all are agreed here, and why not all join in testifying to the value of the atonement, as men of different sentiments, but agreed in some one point, such as temperance, and liberty, join to express their adhesion to that point?

4. *The Supper is also a mutual pledge of fidelity on the part of Christ, and the believer, to fulfill the conditions of the covenant in which they have joined.*

"This is the blood of the covenant." This ordinance, whenever observed, brings fresh to the mind all the terms of life as proclaimed by Christ, and his pledge never to withhold a blessing promised, never to leave his flock to perish, allow his care for them to flag, his death to lose its life-giving energy, his mediation its efficiency, his grace its abundance, until they reign with him in glory.

On the part of the communicant, it is a pledge that he will always trust in his grace, obey his word, love his disciples, honor him in word and action, declare his power to save, to a lost world, cherish his spirit, and be always ready to suffer, and even die for the truth, for the honor of Christ, and the welfare of his cause.

The frequent repetition of such vows is of great advantage to the believer; it engraves a sense of his obligation deeply on the tablet of the heart, it brings him to feel its importance, sacredness, solemnity, and guards against its violation. When he drinks the blood of the covenant, and reflects how faithful Christ has been to him, how his mercy is

"the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," his goodness is rich and long suffering; how he must regret his instability, waywardness, and how firmly he must then resolve in the strength of that grace that never has failed a trustful soul, never to dishonor Christ again, never to yield to temptation, turn from the path of duty, fear the frowns of the world, shun sacrifice, hardship, suffering for his sake, so long as his pilgrimage shall continue. He will reproach himself with his instability and faithlessness. "What! shall Christ suffer so much for me, and I do nothing for him? shall he be so faithful to bless, and I so faithless to serve? I will resist unto blood striving against sin." Now it is self-evident that *Christ* would have all pious souls frequently renew this contract of fidelity with him. It is for the interest of all to do it; it is just as desirable and profitable in the case of a pious pedobaptist, as in that of a Baptist. Error in regard to baptism does not lessen its importance, its usefulness, nor the ability of a Christian to do it, honestly and effectually, so as to influence all his future life. Christ has appointed this ordinance for this purpose, and all have a right to renew their vows here, so long as they are properly included among his disciples.

5. *The Supper is designed to familiarize the disciple with Christ, and thus mould him into His image.*

Communion with the great and good, is one of the richest privileges of life. The Supper opens to our view Christ in all his perfections, and especially in his stupendous sacrifice for the good of others, and calls up the attention to it, in a manner that the most stupid, dim-sighted, heavy-eared, are forced to be somewhat impressed by the view, and they go away better, more benevolent, honorable, self-denying than when they come. At least this is the tendency. Now who needs this influence? Who can profit by it? Have we a right to shut any of the disciples from it? Christ surely desires that *all* should partake of his likeness, be moulded into his image; and every one who can discern Him in this ordinance, can realize this design, and gratify the Savior by eating and drinking of his Supper. There is probably no place where Jesus so fully reveals himself, where such high, truthful, renewing views of him are gained, as at the Supper. It is the favored point of his manifestations, and no pious soul should be robbed of the acquaintance with him that he may gain at this sacred place. He gives them his spirit in other places and would gladly meet them here.

6. *The Supper also reminds us that the Lord will come again and gather his disciples to himself.*

1 Cor. xi. 26, "For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." Matt. xxvi. 29, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." And Mark xiv. 25, Luke xxii. 18. Yes, Christ is to come again, not for a sin-offering, but to perfect salvation. 2 Thess. i. 7-10, "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, * * when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all those that believe." That will be a glorious event, "to those who love his appearing," and deserves to be kept in remembrance. We are to see that same Jesus again, face to face, and sit with him at the "great Supper of the Lamb." That will be the end of conflict, of sorrow, imperfection and death; the triumph, glory, crowning of the saints in the kingdom of God. It was the hope of the speedy coming of this event, as historians tell us, which so mightily sustained the martyrs of early days. Time rolls on to the ushering in of "that day," when the sleeping saints will spring from the tomb, be

caught up with the Lord in the air, and be ever with him, and we are exhorted to "comfort one another with these words." This Supper, then, is a figure of a glorious feast of victory yet to come — a pledge that Christ will come again, "drink the cup anew with his disciples in the kingdom of God."

Now, the question occurs again, are pious pedobaptists qualified to fulfill this design? We all know they are. His spirit dwells in them, and will "quicken their mortal bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," and this is a warrant that they shall join him in the "marriage Supper," and reign with him in his kingdom. They are as deeply interested in the return of Christ, will be profited as much by it, will be as heartily welcomed by the Savior and immortal saints, as Baptists; and unless we would make the typical Supper more select than the triumphal one; be more particular than Christ; reject here persons with whom we expect, and hope to meet "at that day," persons who will then wear brighter crowns than thousands of the Baptists; unless we would deny them access to a duty, a privilege in which they are greatly interested, and in every sense gratified to perform or enjoy; we must adopt the doctrine of the communion of saints, and receive them to the Supper.

We have now traced through the design of the Lord's Supper, in its separate items, and find that in every particular, pious pedobaptists are qualified to fulfill it, both as it regards character, intelligence, and interest. And now what are we, that we should forbid their coming to the table of our Lord, whenever it may be spread? Who are we, that we should oppose all this assemblage of evidence that they may just as lawfully partake as ourselves? Who are we, that we should make baptism so much more important than every thing else, that an error in regard to it should invalidate every consideration in favor of their celebrating the Supper of the Lord? We have no sectarian table; no sectarian dogma to set forth at the Lord's table. But in the legitimate design and significancy of the Supper, all Christians are agreed, and their union in them is conclusive evidence of their right to celebrate it. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, "The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."

CHAPTER VI.

The Supper and baptism are independent ordinances, and hence, the observance of the former cannot be conditioned on the latter.

The presumption is in favor of the independence of positive ordinances. If it is assumed that one positive ordinance so depends upon another as to make its observance improper so long as the other is neglected, the burden of proof rests upon the assumer; because it is in the nature of a positive ordinance to rest alone on the law that enacts it. Moral law grows out of the relation of things, but positive laws can never be inferred from the relation of things, nor traced to it, as the source of their authority or significancy. Positive laws are of authority only because God has made them so; and their significancy also rests wholly upon His expressed will. They are full of meaning because He has ordained that they shall have such a meaning: as, by special appointment, a stone may be a symbol of victories, a lock of hair of parental love, or a

ring a symbol of connubial fidelity. Then it follows that unless the words of the law instituting an ordinance, assert that it must or must not precede some other ordinance, it cannot reasonably be affirmed to be so. The whole authority and design of an ordinance must certainly grow out of and rest upon the law that institutes it. Man has no right to add any thing to it, or take any thing away from it.

If the law says that it is designed for a certain end, or ends, so it must be. If the law has assigned it a certain position or relation, there it must stand, but no position or relation is to be assumed that the law does not authorize. Moreover, if there is a clause in the law that establishes a special relation, it can be easily found, and easily understood. In regard to baptism and the Supper, if one is invariably to precede the other, a plain and direct statement to that effect will be found in the law. In respect to circumcision and the Passover, circumcision was invariably to come first, and a plain, specific direction to that effect was entered upon the statute book. The nature of the case required it. The service is of a positive character, and their nature, position and relation must be positively fixed. If they are essential to the design and advantage

of the ordinances, they become a part and parcel of the institution, and require precisely the same definite authority to establish them that is required to establish the institution itself. Moral duties are quite different. Faith must precede hope, because hope is the fruit of faith. There is a *natural* succession in regard to repentance, faith, peace, but there can be no natural succession in positive duties. There is a natural order in regard to the foundation and superstructure of an edifice, but not in the succession of railroad coaches. One coach must needs go before another, but it is of no consequence which comes first. And if the men are bound to run a particular coach ahead, it must be by a specific order of the conductor. So, also, if baptism *must* come first, it can only be because Christ *has commanded it*. The order and relation must rest on the same basis with the ordinances, and constitute an elemental part of them, and require just as positive an injunction to authorize them, as any other part of the ordinances. But he has commanded no such thing. There is no law, or part of a law, for such an order. There is not the least intimation that the Supper must not come first in order, that it would be violating the will of Christ to observe it first.

It will be asserted that baptism in apostolic days came before the Supper. Well, if it did, it does not prove that its precedence was in any degree necessary. There is a great difference between an accidental and an instituted precedence. If baptism came before the Supper, it was accidental, as it is accidental that Peter spake first on the day of pentecost. Some act must come first, but that does not prove that any *one act must always come first*.

We hold that a person should be baptized just as soon as he can be, after faith; so also should he celebrate the Lord's Supper as soon as he has opportunity. That would bring the act of baptism before the Supper in most cases, as baptism is to be administered but once, and the Supper repeated often. But that is far from showing that an innocent neglect of baptism disqualifies for the Supper. Why does it come first? Because it adds a necessary moral qualification to the candidate to commune? No. Because Christ has said that it must invariably come first? No such saying is on record. Because of a relation of the ordinances one to another? Positive ordinances can have no such relation without divine appointment. Then it must be accidental, not necessary — a matter to be regulated by the circumstances of the persons concerned.

As positive ordinances themselves are naturally independent, and there is no law to require baptism to come first, we must conclude that the assumed order of C. communionists is a fiction. And does the order of the events which these *ordinances* commemorate favor the necessary precedence of baptism? We have seen that a leading design of the Supper is to commemorate the crucifixion of Christ. Baptism sets forth our death to sin, renewal to a holy life, and the resurrection of the body. But how do we die to sin, and live again? It is the cross that slays the old man and creates the new. The first step in religion is to embrace "Christ crucified." The first object that a penitent is exhorted to behold, is the "Lamb of God" as a sacrifice. "Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification." His death comes first. It was a great event that he rose from the dead, the first fruits of them that slept, but it was not the first great event. It is a great thing to die to sin and rise to life, and be raised up at the last day; but Christ crucified must first be brought home as a living reality to the soul, before that event will occur. Then the Supper celebrates the *first* event in the scheme of atonement, an event which occupies the *first* step in our religious experience; which is not merely the Omega,

but the *Alpha* in the Christian system; hence, there can be no propriety in asserting that baptism must precede the Supper, because of the relation of their design. On the contrary, as Christ crucified is the first step in the atonement, and the first in our experience, we should conclude that no time should be lost in celebrating that death, and our experience of its power. And as Christ crucified is also our support through life, his death should always be commemorated as often as convenient. It is of interest and profit to the Christian and convert at all times. But the reader will see that if there is any foundation-stone to the scheme of atonement, it is the death of Christ; and hence the facts commemorated by the Supper, cannot be dependent upon, or derive their virtue from those set forth by baptism. Baptism shows forth more the effect, the fruit of the atonement, not the atonement itself; and hence the Supper cannot be second to, or dependent upon baptism; it is of prior importance, and prior origin to baptism, and should not be made such a slave to it, so overshadowed by it, as to place it quite beyond the reach of a disciple, unless previously immersed. The order of the events commemorated is, first, the death of Christ, which the Supper sets forth, then the burial and resurrection for our justification which baptism commemorates.

Then in our experience of the power of the truth, the order is the same. Christ on the cross is the *first* object of attention and makes the first impressions on the soul; our sins are first crucified by the cross, then the old man is buried, and the new man revives, and the hope of a final resurrection fills the soul. Then this assumed order is not only not sustained by the order of the events they celebrate, but altogether *disapproved*. For it is vain, worse than vain, to claim that the events that come last in history and last in experience should necessarily be celebrated first.

Historically, communion is first. When was the law given to baptize all believers? Just forty-three days after the institution of the Supper, and the command, "Eat ye all of it." This, every Bible student knows full well. John baptized before, and so did Christ's disciples, but neither of them preached the full gospel, and they could not have administered its ordinances in their full sense. The import of baptism could not be fully or properly understood until after the resurrection, and we have abundant evidence that even the disciples had no just views in regard to these things till after the resurrection. See the difference between John's and Christian baptism. 1. John baptized unto

repentance; Christian baptism was an evidence of repentance, faith and life in Christ. 2. The former was on a pledge to receive a future Savior, and confide in a future sacrifice, (Acts xix. 4;) the latter in a sacrifice already made. 3. The former was not in the name of the Trinity; the latter was. 4. John's disciples were baptized when they believed, as in Ephesus, (Acts xix. 5,) and probably on the day of Pentecost. 5. The latter bodies forth the resurrection of Christ and his followers, (Rom. vi. 5; 1 Peter iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 29,) the former did no such thing. This is the great, distinguishing element of Christian baptism; this the great fact it presses upon the attention, and could only be apprehended after the resurrection of Christ.

If there is a religious act that stands firmly and exclusively on its own merits, that is independent in its sublimity, authority, value, interest, sacredness, it is this. It does not derive a whit of its authority, importance, interest, usefulness, from its sister ordinance, but towers above it, and is independent of it in every respect. The supposed order of Close Communionists is a fiction. Baptism was not instituted first; does not represent facts of prior occurrence either in the history of the atonement, or its application to the heart of the penitent; it does not

add a single qualification for communing; the Supper in no respect derives its authority from baptism, nor does it rest upon it for any of its virtues or significancy. The Supper is superior to it in the majesty and importance of its doctrines; the depth of suffering, immensity of sacrifice, infinitude of anguish and mercy which it represents. The Cross has clustering around it, inclosed within its magic history, facts of grief, of love, mercy stooping to the depths of human guilt and wretchedness, all assumed for the sinful and unthankful, which thrills the universe of intelligences when they behold; and the Supper is the appointed medium through which saints may gaze upon these glorious facts, a medium fit in itself, appointed by Christ for all who are partakers of his body and blood, and no man should thrust away his brother without cause; no man should wall this ordinance around with sectarian fancies, in his zeal for an *order* which Heaven never appointed. Is it not a fact, that moral qualification to perform a duty imposes the obligation and confers the right to perform it? If God calls me to preach, and I have grace and ability, I may preach, though wholly unable to obey the command, "Sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord." It would be foolish to urge, because I don't

know how to sing, that I ought not to do what I am qualified for. So in regard to the Supper. Christ commands all his disciples to eat and drink; every true disciple is practically acquainted with the truths commemorated with "Christ crucified;" he is competent to commune; and why should ignorance in regard to baptism prevent him? It is unjust to assume it, unless we can show, 1. That baptism adds some essential qualification to the subject; gives him some new light; some clearer views of the sacrifice; removes some error that blinds the mind and diseases of the heart. But this cannot be done. All ought to know that a pious pedobaptist is just as well qualified to commune in every moral and religious respect as a Baptist of the same piety; and that if the pedobaptist should be immersed without a great change in his views of baptism, that, instead of *fitting* him to commune, it would wholly disqualify him. A pure, honest heart is indispensable and of great price. Or, 2. That God has positively forbidden some of his children to come, as he has commanded *all* to come to the table. The exception must be as positive as the law. We may quote a tradition from Rome that baptism is the door into the church, or let our own imaginations rule us; but this will not answer the

contract. When God wished to except some from the Passover, he gave a positive law, that no uncircumcised person should eat of it. Without that law, no Israelite could have been excluded. The courts say, that all laws must be interpreted so as to favor *liberty*; that a positive statute is requisite to deprive a man of his rights or real privileges, apparent or real. But where is your law for wresting from the disciple his right to his Lord's table? Where the law that says "no unimmersed person shall eat of my Supper?" None can be found.

Some say, "We have no law for allowing them to come." Yes we have. Every law that makes it the duty and privilege of any Christian to eat, does the same for all, unless an equally direct and positive law make exception to some. Point us to one and we will submit. If God says, "No unimmersed person shall eat of the Supper," the argument shall close here. But the word of God is silent in regard to this assumed *relation*. It was never heard of until Popery ordained it. Christ never instituted such a connection.

Some point us to the commission as evidence, and assert that the order there observed is authoritative. Well, let us follow the order and see where we shall end. First, we will teach all men; then

baptize them; then direct them to do *all the other duties of religion*. There must be no communion, no prayer, no praise, no charity until after baptism. Who believes this order required? No one! Reference is also made to the day of Pentecost, as furnishing evidence in favor of this relation of the ordinances. But are any willing to believe that the order of that narrative is to be the order of Christian duty? Let us see. First, they received the word, then were baptized, then fellowship, then breaking bread, then prayer. Prayer is the last duty. No one is willing to be bound by such an absurd assumption as this. Every close communionist deviates from this order. Then, when we allow pedobaptist brethren to commune, we only do in regard to the Supper, what they do in regard to prayer. We hold the order of the narrative of no authority; they hold it authoritative just so far as it favors their assumption and no farther. They assert that baptism must come first, because it is mentioned first; but to be consistent they should also affirm that prayer comes last because mentioned last. They lay down a principle good and strong to support their strict notions, and then repent it the very next moment because it don't suit them. Let us not trifle thus with the word of God.

We care not how soon a converted person is baptized; but we do seriously object to tying other Christian duties to this ordinance merely to suit our prejudices.

Converts are not called upon to pray, or sing, or exhort, or preach, because they have been baptized. Neither should they commune for this cause.

We have shown that there is no relation between these ordinances that should require the observance of baptism first; that as Christian acts, they are separate and independent; that baptism adds no qualification to the subject for communing; that ignorance regarding some things is no reason for not allowing the exercise of what knowledge of duty we have in regard to others; that the paramount importance of the sacrifice of Christ demands its frequent celebration; that the Bible affords no authority for shutting away from the Supper any Christian; and we will close this argument with the prayer, that we may all be disposed to surround the Lord's table here, as we hope to when we come into his kingdom.

CHAPTER VII.

The relative influence of free and sectarian communion.

Men are usually no better than their principles. Doctrines, institutions, practices, exert a powerful influence on all who embrace them. The polity of the papacy moulds those who grow up in its midst, into its own image. So the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Quaker polities give a cast of mind peculiar to themselves; and this again decides the color and effect of their influence on the world. There are laws of influence, as well as laws of mechanics, and they are almost as certain in their operation. Wrong positions will lead to wrong results, as truly as a bad tree will bring forth bad fruit. And it is quite safe to try a system of belief or practice by its fruit; and if the fruit be bad, that at least is probable evidence against the system. "Godliness is profitable unto all things," and that which is not profitable is of suspicious character. The practice of close or open communion, each has its

influence. Their influence, of course, must be diverse one from the other. And how do they stand? What is their fruit? What effect follows their observance, as it regards the communicants and others?

1. *What are their respective influences on the union, sympathy, fellow-feeling that should exist between Baptists and other Christians?*

Close communion is a perpetual drawback to this state of mind. It is not to be concealed that there is a general conviction among the rejected, that the rule that shuts so many pious, faithful persons from the Lord's Supper is unfriendly, selfish, unscriptural, unreasonable and sectarian. The many merits of strict communionists are shaded, dishonored by this act, and it is in every one's mouth that they are bigoted, and almost cruel in this exclusiveness. Incidents are continually recurring which keep alive this unpleasant state of feeling. Ministers who by invitation have labored in close Baptist congregations, and have led souls to Christ, are separated from the converts for whom they have travailed in birth, denied the privilege of joining in celebrating that very sacrifice which they have so successfully commended to their attention; most affecting scenes of this kind often occur. A close Baptist congregation, invited an own brother of their pastor to

aid in a meeting of days. Scores were converted, and were baptized. The day for celebrating the Supper came—the invited brother preached on the design of the ordinance, and the Holy Spirit melted all hearts in thankfulness for the love of Christ in dying to save them. The pastor left the pulpit, and his brother in it, who was a free Baptist minister, and presented the emblems to the converts. And as they saw this man of God shut from the table, their grief was overwhelming, and his heart was full of sadness; and tears and sobs reproached, condemned the practice of close communion. Up to this time their fellowship was sweet. But this act was like a quarrel over the lock of hair left by a dear parent as a memento of her love; it was a day of bitterness in the cup of Christian fellowship that poisoned the whole. That scene was always remembered with grief, and always shaded the entire period of intercourse. Innumerable instances of this kind are occurring yearly. Then there are converts sundered, and the first lessons of sectarianism taught them at the Lord's table, where, of all other places, Christians should forget their differences, and be one in the Lord. And families are severed, husbands forbidden to celebrate the Supper with their wives, brothers with sisters, parents with children,

the most pious excluded and the other received. Who can endure all of this without feeling? Who can be shut out from communion with his dearest friends for no cause, as appears to him, and not have his heart rise up and condemn it. How can the excluded portion of saints be blamed for feeling sensitive and sorrowful, injured and almost indignant when they are cast out as heretics? How can they be blamed for feeling that close communionists question their piety, and claim superior holiness to themselves? How can they be blamed for charging their strict brethren with bigotry, sectarianism, illiberality and selfishness? They cannot be expected to rise above this rebut, this shock of their Christian ardor; and sometimes, poor human nature is sorely excited by this course of action.

But free communion invites confidence, encourages love, feeds the desire for union and assures all saints that their piety and integrity is fully appreciated. There are differences of opinion and practice among Christians that tend to division; but I have never known an instance where different denominations have frequently joined in celebrating the Lord's Supper, but that these differences gradually melted away, and the many cords of union entwined more closely around their hearts. This course will kill

prejudice, bigotry, sectarianism, if its practice is adhered to. The most happy results have often followed a permanent arrangement for different churches to assemble and celebrate the Supper together. Now which bears the best fruit? One practice creates prejudice, the other allays it. One practice wounds the hearts of the saints, cools the ardor of Christian love and nurtures sectarianism; the other heals all wounds, fans love to a flame and melts away sectarianism. The one divides minister and convert, friend from friend, saint from saint; the other invites to union and mutual love. The one provokes jealousy, hard speeches, unkind feelings, severe censures; the other rebukes these unpleasant things, by bringing all together around the emblems of that love that suffereth all things, endureth, hopeth, believeth all things and never faileth. Which fruit is most scriptural, Christian-like? Which gives the strongest evidence that the tree, the practice that bears it, is of the Lord.

2. What are their respective influences among Baptists?

Just as surely as close communion provokes jealousy on the part of the excluded, and forces the necessity of apology, excuse, and protest from the close Baptists, so also it creates division among

Baptists. Every Baptist who presumes to commune with all with whom Christ communes, is rejected from the fellowship of his fellow Baptists; denied the privilege of church membership with them, the privilege of communing with them, of associating with them in the blessed work of missions and education, or of union in the same Association for mutual encouragement and comfort. In fact, they are called disorderly walkers, and fellowshipped no more than as if they were pedobaptists, and indeed, often not as much so. As family quarrels are always the most bitter, and civil war the most sanguinary, so the persecution of Free Baptists by their Baptist brethren has often been more unrelenting than their severest opposition to pedobaptists. We hear it often stated by them that they would prefer the prosperity of a pedobaptist church to a Free Baptist one. And why all of this severity? Why treat us so coldly? Because we will not join them in excluding all believers from the Supper who have not been immersed, and thus give our influence to this practice, and help to "conquer the prejudice," of Christians, quiet the consciences of close communionists, and strengthen their unpopular position. And there are thousands who are now members of pedobaptist churches, who would unite with the

Baptists, and give their support to the cause among them, if it were not for this exclusive practice. This they cannot assent to. The whole current of their Christian life is against it, and they are more ready to deny themselves a home among the Baptists than disobey Christ's law that requires all disciples to eat of his Supper. But free communion would open the door to all Baptists to unite, and thus give a more effective testimony in favor of believers' baptism, and greatly increase their ability to save the world. Adopt the principle that a man may come to the table of the Lord *as a Christian*, not as a Baptist, pedobaptist, or Quaker, but a true disciple of Christ, and the way is open for union among us at once.

Or if close communion was not made *the essential thing*; if open communion churches were tolerated in Associations, recognized as Baptist churches, and freedom was given to a church to adopt open communion without fear of excommunication, much good would result. Even such a recognition of the possible propriety of open communion, would tend greatly to union. But this pittance is not granted; not a breath of toleration is allowed; not an inch of freedom is admitted.

Thus, on the one hand, close communion divides

the family of Baptists, drives many to seek a home among pedobaptist churches; while open communion invites to union, to free toleration in regard to the Lord's Supper, and combined organic testimony in regard to baptism. We would not *compel* any one to commune with pedobaptists, but we would not have others compel us not to do it. Let the principle of open communion be recognized; let those who *can conscientiously*, commune with pedobaptists, and receive them to the Supper among themselves. If any cannot do this, let them have the ordinance administered to baptized believers alone, for their special convenience; then no one's conscience will be violated, and union will be secured.

But close communionists will do no such thing. They must bind, crush the conscience and pious emotions of the free-spirited brother, or exclude him from their fellowship, and brand him as a disorderly walker. Which is fruit from the true vine?

3. *How does the world view the matter?*

I venture that there is not one out of a hundred among the impenitent who approves of close communion. It is almost a universal thing among unbelievers and young converts to positively object to it, or doubt its propriety; and to very many it is a grievous stumbling-block. They look for love, union,

forbearance among professors, to correspond with the word of God; but the first deep impression, it may be, that fixes itself upon them, proceeds from the refusal of believers to join in celebrating the merits of their common Lord together, the rupture of love and union over the emblems of the body and blood from which they all profess to receive life. Take a case:—There is a little company of Baptists in the seats of the church, and a large number of professors at the door, refused admission. The sinners present, open their Bibles and read, (John xiii. 35,) "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another;" and whisper, "this looks like it! Wonderful love, that excludes from this feast of love, the better half of believers!" But what is that? The deacon is leading another from the little band. What does it mean? Why, two young converts, with hearts united in love, took seats together. Both have been immersed, but one joined the Methodists, and his associate, not believing the report of close communion, joined the Baptists, and invited his friend and brother to celebrate the Lord's Supper with him. But the deacon thrusts him out!

"That is the comment on John xiii. 34, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one

another: *as I have loved you, that ye also love one another!*" say the sinners. But there is another rejected from the feast. It is a minister. For half a century he has preached the gospel, and is beloved and revered by every one. In that very house, he has seen hundreds converted. That young elder, and those deacons who reject him, are his converts. But with trembling steps, quivering lip, tearful eye, he leaves; he is a Presbyterian. "Religion is a fable" say the sinners, and leave themselves, in disgust. Instead of union and love, they have seen, in an ordinance appointed as a visible symbol of love and union, division among brethren, the very highest claims to Christian confidence disregarded, and a few, a handful of believers, assuming a monopoly over the emblems of the Savior's body and blood. What must be the effect of such scenes? We know that it shakes the confidence of many in the reality of religion. We have heard many take just such incidents, (and they are not a few,) and urge them as evidence of the vanity of the Christian religion. They assert that they treat their neighbors better than Christians treat each other, and refer to such scenes as proof.

But here is another scene. There is a house full of believers. They are invited to celebrate the

Lord's Supper as *Christians*, and the essential oneness of the saints is dwelt upon with warmth. The Savior is precious to all, and all join to set it forth. Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, all unite. The gray-headed father who was excluded from the table in the other scene, assisted by a young Baptist brother, consecrate, and give the emblems to deacons of the several churches, and all partake. The silent moments are solemn, precious, impressive to all, and as they sing in conclusion,

"Our heavenly Father calls
Christ and his members one,
We the young children of his love,
And he the first-born Son.

We are but several parts
Of the same broken bread;
Our body hath its several limbs,
But Jesus is the head.

Let all our powers be joined,
His glorious name to raise;
Pleasure and love fill every mind,
And every voice be praise."

the world looks on and is convinced that there is a real, joyful, desirable union among Christians, and that that union is from above. Facts testify to this, and common sense would lead us to expect it. These opposite results of free, and close communion are

so frequent and common, that none can be ignorant regarding them. And which practice sets forth the truth most fully? By which may we let our light so shine, as to lead men to glorify God? Which fruit appears most natural to the tree whose root is love? Any thing that weakens the confidence of unbelievers in religion, repels them from the society of Christians, breaks the influence of Christians over them, is a matter of the greatest importance. And is it not known, that the common objection to religion, is the disunion of professors? Is it not a hindrance to the progress of the gospel, calling loudly for reform? If Christians would agree to meet at the Lord's table, they would be slow to speak injuriously of their brethren, and would give a united testimony to the union of saints in faith and hope.

4. *Which practice is most favorable to immersion?*

The greatest impediment to the progress of truth, is the prejudice, the *pre-judgment* of men. Men judge a case before they hear it, and hence, are wholly incapable of appreciating the testimony that conflicts with this pre-judgment. The influence of passion, self-love, self-confidence, and pride of opinion, join to shut out the light, and confirm the subject in his chosen position. Hence, error is not to

be corrected, more by the emission of light, array of argument, than by inspiring a willingness to see, and understand. A man may be honest, and deceived, and occupy a position that renders it quite impossible to correct his error. The thing to be done for him is to change his stand-point, his attitude of mind. Any effort not preceded by this, will surely fail. Now, Baptists claim that the evidence of believers' baptism being the only scriptural baptism, is so full and positive, that it needs only that one see it, in order to yield to its force. But that is the very thing that is so difficult to accomplish. How shall we get pedobaptists to feel the force of our arguments? We have confidence in our missiles if we can only turn aside the shield of pre-judgment, and gain a candid hearing. This is the real point to be gained. This is the *difficult* part of the undertaking. And how shall we surmount it? How shall we get pedobaptists to be willing to have their long cherished notions refuted, the fallacy of their position revealed, and a new course of action pressed upon them, with all the authority of divine law? Is it the better way to excite their prejudice against us, and repel them from our society as far as possible? To prevent their forming any attachment for us, as churches and individuals,

or becoming interested, and feeling at home in our assemblies of worship? Is it wise to make the difference between us greater than it really is; to assure them that to become a Baptist, they must make sacrifices, and tear from associations, and crucify the purest Christian emotions, in a manner, and to an extent that shocks their entire religious nature, and brings them into antagonism with the law, upon which hangs all the law and the prophets? To assure them that they must no more commune with their brethren beloved, must count them no more entitled to celebrate the Supper of their Lord; no more recognize them by letter or otherwise, as truly a Christian church; repel the ordination of their ministry as illegal, and null and void? This is substantially the import of close communion, and every one must see that instead of its advancing the doctrine of believers' baptism, it must retard it, must be a fatal hindrance to its progress. The piety, and doctrines of grace of close communionists invite to confidence, but this sectarian feature is very repulsive. It prevents free Christian intercourse between the ministers and members of the Baptist, and pe-dobaptist denominations, and those mutual attachments so necessary to the progress of truth. I do not mean to say that there is *no* such intercourse

now, but that close communion hinders and prevents it, so far as it has influence at all, and that its influence to this end is very great, I do mean to assert.

But the opposite practice produces an opposite result. It invites to intercourse, interchange of views, and interest in our doctrines and usages; and thus makes it easy for them to judge of the validity of our arguments in favor of immersion of believers alone, and if convinced, they can obey Christ in this duty, without being obliged to exclude their brethren from sacramental fellowship. I know that expediency is not law, but right is always expedient. "Godliness is profitable unto all things," and when a given practice is favorable to the realization of a great and scriptural end, we may infer that it is right, unless it clearly contravenes some law of God. Our opponents use this argument, saying that their policy is more favorable to immersion than ours, because they make it a test of so much importance, and I may be allowed to turn the argument upon them, for it surely is plain that our course is the most favorable to this doctrine. Close communionists in England, centuries since raised the same cry, that our policy would destroy the Baptist church. But what are the facts? Is history for or against us?

Let us hear the testimony of the historian. Rev. Mr. Belcher, D. D., of Philadelphia, in his history of the Baptists, says of the results of free communion in England, "Two things have certainly been the result. The one is, that in the districts where *mixed* communion, as it is called, has prevailed for a century or two, the pedobaptist cause is exceedingly feeble; and the other, that in proportion as the system extends, it introduces the sentiments and practice of the Baptists, in so many instances, among the members of pedobaptist churches, that comparatively few of their pastors can say very much against the Baptists. Nor is the fact less certain, that in the advocacy of the peculiarities of the denomination, such as baptism itself, the most able and earnest publications have issued from the brethren who have advocated mixed communion, and by them the denominational institutions have been most firmly sustained. In no one instance has a regular Baptist church invited a pedobaptist to become its pastor, while not a few Baptist ministers have been invited to the pastorate of pedobaptist churches."

Rev. Jabez Burns, D. D., of London, says: "Its (free communion,) course has been much accelerated of late, by the more intimate intercourse which all

evangelical churches have had with one another, and I do not know of a really prosperous Baptist church in our metropolis where it does not prevail." These historical facts, given by these distinguished Baptist ministers, are full of meaning, and most effectually confute the assumption, that open communion is adverse to the Baptist cause, and sustain the doctrine, that it is the sure way to extend our sentiments, and gain converts to them.

The *flourishing* churches are open communion, and of course the close communion are not flourishing to the same extent; where open communion has prevailed the Baptist influence is predominant, and continues to aggress. Open communion ministers are the champions of the Baptist cause. These are *facts*, and show a result in perfect harmony with Scripture and common sense, give the entire preference to open communion. With all its impediments, the Baptist cause has rapidly extended, and is rapidly extending; but if it could be rid of these drawbacks, and all could come out with a free, brotherly, frank, charitable spirit and practice, its advance would be wonderful.

5. *What may be their influence on the spiritual growth of the parties who practice open or close communion?*

It is obvious that there is at least a danger of magnifying the importance of ceremonies, and losing sight of the vitality, the life, the soul of religion. The position that Christian character, and knowledge of the nature and design of the ordinance, does not qualify a person to partake at the Supper; that baptism is indispensable to this act, is to make very much more of baptism than is profitable, and may hide the importance of piety, suppress the desire to attain it, and leave one contented with the outward sign.

Says Baptist Noel, "In another way this practice of close communion may still more powerfully obstruct the doctrine of believers' baptism. If I mistake not, it must injure the spirit of the churches which practice it. How can they be so separate from those with whom they are commanded to be openly one, without serious loss. How can they so value the right of baptism, as to repel from their communion those who have the faith, and devotedness which the right expresses, and not suffer by it! At least they must be much tempted to overvalue the form of religion, and undervalue the reality, to 'pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cumin, and to omit the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.' This exclusion of holy

men seems a palpable disregard of 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, it must hinder the conversion of sinners. But let all consistent believers be admitted to the communion, then irritation may subside, prejudice be diminished, the piety of the Baptist churches become attractive, the doctrines of baptism be examined candidly and many may be converted to it."

6. *To what extremities does close communion force its advocates, in argument and assumption?*

Whoever takes a position will find himself casting about him for arguments to sustain himself, and if they be rather scarce, he will force irrelative considerations to his support; will be likely to endeavor to make up his deficiency in argument by assumption, bold assertion, violent accusation of his opponent. From some cause, there is an extensive conviction among close Baptists, that those of opposite views are not honest in their opinions, and this conviction or suspicion is often intimated when the subject of communion is under discussion. Many Baptist brethren resist this suspicion, struggle against its influence over them, while others are willingly under its power, and love to justify themselves with the

idea that pedobaptists are criminally in fault for their error, and deserve to be rebuked for their sin by dis fellowship at the Lord's table. It chills the blood almost, to hear such argue, and press their conclusions, and ask, "now, can a man be honest and hold such errors? He must surely know better; must he not be willfully in the wrong?" It is a sad necessity indeed to feel obliged to criminate the servants of God, and cast suspicion on the mass of believers who are not Baptists. But the danger of doing so is great, just as soon as we attempt to fortify close communion. For every Christian instinct, every impulse of the Christian heart calls upon us to receive whom Christ receives, and carefully cherish even the weakest members of the body of Christ.

And when close Baptists appeal to Scripture to sustain their practice, the tendency to do injustice to their brethren, and to their own Christian feelings is still more imminent. On examining the scriptures usually quoted to justify the rejection of pedobaptists from the communion, we find them classed among the most debased and erratic characters. I will here record some of the scriptures which are usually urged to sustain this practice, as I find them in an argument in its favor. I quote them in the

order that I find them in the article. Titus iii. 10, 11, "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Romans xvi. 17, 18, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Then pious Presbyterians are *subverted, and sin, being condemned of themselves; we must avoid them, keep out of their company, for they serve their own belly and are deceivers.* If this is true of them, surely they ought to be rejected.

2 John, 10, 11, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that bid-deth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds. It would be rather hard to be *shut out of the houses* of our Baptist brethren. Will they be careful never to pray for the success of pedobaptists in their efforts to save men? 2 Corinthians vi. 14, 15, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"

and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" It must be a stern necessity that forces brethren to apply such language to their fellow-christians. We need not wonder that sinners are disgusted with religion when it is thus perverted.

Eph. v. 11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." 2 Thess. iii. 6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition ye have received of us." And who are these disorderly walkers? Were they sprinkled Christians? What tradition did the apostle allude to? Baptism was not a tradition, but a command. Verse 11, will explain the matter, "For we hear that there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies." They were vagabonds, loafers, living on the charity of the brethren, and refusing to work. This was crime, laziness, a blot on their moral character, and if not repented of, would shut them out of the kingdom of heaven. Such should be rejected now; but it is very ungenerous to apply that character or its penalty to pious,

faithful Christians. 1 Cor. v. 11, "But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railor, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." This passage might exclude some of the slaveholding, anti-mission, and anti-temperance men "of the same faith and order," but I cannot see what application it has to the case of a true disciple of Christ.

Rom. xiv. 23, "He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." But this text alludes particularly to the eating of meat offered to idols, and not to this sacrament. And the principle of the passage does not apply to pedobaptists, for they do not doubt; they have faith in the duty, the justice of the act, and the truths which the emblems represent. It cannot apply to C. Baptists, for they are not to believe nor doubt for their brethren. But it favors free communion, for the doctrine is that if a man has faith that it is right to do an act, he may do it, but if he has not faith he may not do it. Now, as every man eats on his own responsibility, any pious man who believes it to be right to partake, may do so; and if any one presumes to reject him, Paul would thunder in his ear,

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Judge not him that eateth, for God hath received him."

Thus every passage of Scripture that is quoted to justify the exclusion of pious persons, assumes that they are not pious, but infidel, sensual, lazy, the children of the devil. There is not a single passage of Scripture that forbids a pious soul from holding communion with Christ in this ordinance, but every consideration that renders it proper and useful for Baptists to commune, weigh with all their force in favor of a like course on the part of every pious person.

It indicates the fallacy of the position, that it is untenable, that such extreme measures must be taken to sustain it. Why must it be assumed that pious pedobaptists have made no satisfactory profession of religion? Why insinuate that dishonesty lies at the bottom of their error? Why apply to them such passages of Scripture as the above, which were written alone for characters the most objectionable? The Christian feeling of the Baptist church is against it; but they have taken a position, and must sustain it; they "have written a book, and cannot change." Much of their practice is positively opposed to these assumptions, and they

only speak thus severely, uncharitably when defending this dogma, and this shows that it is because of the necessities of the case, the extremity of their position, that forces them "to conquer their prejudices," or their better convictions, and wage such a war of crimination. The existence of the cause and result is very unpleasant. It is a task to write about it, to draw out its hideous limbs and exhibit their deformity; but duty seems to require it. No facts in the history of the Baptist church are more mortifying, afflicting, depressing to a Christian's heart, than those connected with this doctrine of close communion. Could we gather up all the tears that have been shed over them, all the sad hours they have caused, all the wounds they have inflicted upon the convert, the husband, wife, brother, sister, companion, by thrusting them asunder at their Lord's table, and pour the tale of all into the ear of the church, it seems as if it would banish the practice forever from the earth. I would that this cancer in the body of believers might be removed, that its numerous evils might cease to distract, divide, afflict, the saints, and ruin sinners.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Argument applied.

Our argument for *Christian communion*, is now closed. We have seen that pious pedobaptists are true disciples of Christ, and as such have a right to celebrate the broken body and spilt blood of Christ. The law of love, too, binds us to receive them, as it obliges us to love them *as Christ loves them*, receive them as Christ receives them, and so far as we have attained, so far as we are agreed, we should mind the same thing, walk by the same rule. This law is binding, and must be subjected to no exceptions.

The fact that pedobaptist assemblies are scripturally Christian churches, and hence have a right to all the ordinances and privileges of the church, and access to the Lord's Supper among the rest. It has also been proved that all pious persons have the character requisite to candidates for the Supper, that they are the very persons to whom it is to be administered; and as pedobaptists likewise understand and fully realize the design of this ordinance, there

can be no reason why they may not partake. Reason and Scripture force the conclusion, *that a person possessing the required character and a knowledge of the nature and design of the duty to be done, is not only at liberty to, but is solemnly bound to perform it, and no man has a right to forbid him.* The independence of all positive ordinances, one of the other, has been seen to support the conclusion, that an error in regard to one, is no reason for forbidding the observance of the other; and that nothing short of a clause in the law, as specific as its other provisions, can justify its non-observance.

The fruit of close communion is also bad, and as we have a right to judge a doctrine as well as a person by its fruit, we conclude the tree to be bad. Sectarian communion cannot grow on the tree of love and union. It is a hindrance to the cause of Christ, and happiness of his disciples, and must be wrong. These arguments are before the reader, and it is for him to judge of their weight. We deem them more than sufficient to sustain the practice of Christian communion. Together they appear highly conclusive to my own mind. If they are so to the reader, his duty is plain. He cannot, as an honest man, practice or give support to a practice that is so directly opposed to the will of Christ. He should

remember that the act of rejecting the least of Christ's disciples, is regarded as done to Him. He might just as well reject Christ from his table as to reject his humble follower. Christ regards it the same. Who will venture such an act? Who will resist the demands of truth and love, and smother the convictions of his own conscience? Who will be a slave to fear, to sectarian bonds, to prejudice, and stifle his own convictions on this important matter? I know that some say that it is of small importance to reject disciples from the table of the Lord. But is it so? Is it of little importance to wound the hearts of the people of God? thrust the pious from the sacramental feast? disobey the positive commands of Christ to receive and love, as he receives and loves? compel others to disobey the law, "*eat ye all of it?*" divide believers at the very point where it is all important that they should set forth their union in Christ, and where they can heartily do it? put arguments into the mouths of sinners against the Christian religion? Is this of small importance? No, verily!

It is of so much importance, that all who are convinced that all Christians should unite in celebrating the death of Christ, in which they are all practically interested, should join their influence to correct this

error, and by our doctrines and practice, to bring all Christians to relinquish their sectarian communion, cease to assume a monopoly over the Lord's table, and with one heart and one soul, do honor to Christ at the communion table.

CHAPTER IX.

How frequently should the Lord's Supper be administered?

On this subject there has been a variety of practice. Some celebrate the Supper weekly, some monthly, some quarterly. Have we any Scripture evidence in favor of any particular time? No one contends that we have any direct command to eat weekly, monthly, or quarterly; but there is some evidence that the early disciples celebrated the Supper on the first day of every week. Luke refers to the practice (Acts xx. 7,) as if it was one principal object of meeting; and as they met every Lord's day, it may be fairly inferred that the breaking of bread was a part of the usual service. And 1 Cor. xi. 20 and 33, imply the same thing: "when ye come together to eat," in its connection, strongly favors the idea that it was one object of the meeting on the first day of the week, to break bread.

Then there was a propriety in calling the body

and blood of Christ to remembrance often, as it was their only hope for life, and as it is very certain they needed the blessings of grace and knowledge which are especially imparted through the Supper, repeated to them as often as every Lord's day. Christ has appointed the Supper as a medium of rich blessings which cannot be obtained as well through any other channel; and those who have often celebrated the Supper, and sought in its promised grace, have testified to its great advantage.

The historians are agreed in stating that the primitive practice of the church was to celebrate the Supper weekly.

Says Neander, Church History, vol. 1, page 332, "As we have already remarked, the celebration of the Lord's Supper was still held to constitute an essential part of divine worship on every Sunday, as appears from Justin Martyr; and the whole church partook of the communion, after they had joined in the Amen of the preceding prayer. The deacons carried the bread and wine to every one present, in order. It was held to be necessary that all the Christians in the place should, by participating in this communion, maintain their union with the Lord, and with his church; hence the deacons carried a portion of the consecrated bread and

wine to strangers, to the sick, to prisoners, and all who were prevented from being present at the assembly.

Mosheim, in describing the order of religious worship in the first century, says, page 86 of Ecclesiastical History, "In these public assemblies of Christians, the Holy Scriptures were read. * * * Afterward the prayers, which constituted no inconsiderable part of public worship, were recited after the Bishop. To these succeeded hymns; which were sung, not by the whole assembly, but by certain persons, during the celebration of the Supper and the feast of charity." Here it will be observed that the Supper constituted a part of the usual services of each Sunday.

On pages 133 and 135, he says, "Christians assembled for the worship of God in private dwelling-houses, in caves, and in the places where the dead were buried. They met on the first day of the week. * * * The hours of the day allotted to the meetings varied according to times and circumstances. When the Christians were assembled, prayers were recited; the Holy Scriptures were read; short discourses on Christian duties were addressed to the people; hymns were sung; and at last the

Lord's Supper and the love-feast were celebrated; the oblations of the people affording the material."

Justin Martyr states that the regular services of Sunday were, reading the Scriptures, exhortation, prayer, singing, and the *Lord's Supper*. See note on page 135, Mosheim.

The testimony of other historians is to the same effect, and shows that it was the custom, during the first and second centuries, to celebrate the Supper on every Lord's day.

The only objection I have ever heard to this practice is, that its frequency would detract from its interest. But why should it, any more than frequent prayer, singing, hearing the word preached? My experience is, that a weekly observance of this service increases its interest and value; and with this agree the statements of those who have thus frequently observed it. If this chapter shall lead any congregations to come nearer to the spirit, and enjoy more freely the blessings of this ordinance, its design will be fully realized.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES — THE EPISTLES OF PAUL.

AFTER we have examined all other sources, while we find corroboration and ample certitude to the fact of Christ's life on earth, yet are we dependent upon the narratives of the New Testament for the details in word and work of that life which was such a potent factor in the world's history.

The writings of Paul of Tarsus occupy an important place, not only in the canon of Scripture, but also in the history of the criticism which has been brought to bear upon the New Testament. Four of his epistles have stood forth even more conspicuously than the others, — that to the Romans, the two to the Corinthians, and the one to the Galatians. Until within a few years it might have been said that the genuineness of these four chief epistles had never been doubted. But of late, on purely arbitrary, subjective, and dogmatic grounds, a school of Dutch critics has assailed their integrity, and,

by so doing, attempted to weaken their claims to genuineness.¹ The want of success on the part of this new group of antagonists is becoming more and more apparent; indeed, the attack has nowhere occasioned alarm, and has secured attention only from those whose special business it is to investigate all assertions in regard to the Scriptures, and allow every phase of thought to be heard.

That company of critics, active fifty and sixty years ago, known as the Tübingen School, accepted Paul's four great epistles as genuine and trustworthy, though disparaging, if not altogether rejecting, all other books of the New Testament.

These epistles claim our attention not alone because of their general acceptance as historic, but also because of the time of their composition. Chronologically the epistles of Paul are the first and oldest documents within the New Testament canon, penned at a time when, as yet, our Gospels were unwritten. Introductions to the New Testament frequently begin with these epistles.

¹ See my articles, "Criticism of the Epistle to the Galatians," *Old and New Testament Student*, February, 1891, pp. 90-96; and "Some Recent Criticisms of the Pauline Epistles," in the same, July-August, 1892, pp. 39-44.

It is important, therefore, as well as interesting, to see what facts concerning the Christ, Paul mentions in his epistles. Paul is a character "whose personality stands forth with absolute clearness in the light of history."¹ No one has had the hardihood to deny his historical existence. He was a man of commanding intellect; converted from a publicly avowed hostility to Christianity and all Christians, he became a most ardent advocate and propagator of the religion, and a zealous ally and courageous leader amongst the believers, ready at any moment to sacrifice his life, if need be, for them and their cause; and this man, thus converted, gives his testimony within twenty-five years after Christ's ministry.

Paul's testimony, too, because undesigned, is all the more convincing. He set himself to no biographer's task. Not memoirs nor treatises, but epistles, called forth by the seemingly unimportant exigencies of his preaching and travels, became his literary remains. And yet these epistles teem with allusions and statements sufficient to delineate clearly the chief features in the earthly career of Jesus.

The four chief letters were penned between

¹ Dean Farrar, *Encyc. Brit.*, art. "Jesus Christ," vol. xiii., p. 659.

A.D. 55 and A.D. 59.¹ In them Paul brings out plainly the following facts:²—

1. That Jesus, according to the flesh, was of the seed of David (Rom. i. 3).
2. That Jesus was the Son of God (Rom. viii. 3, 32; ix. 5; Gal. iv. 4).
3. The crucifixion of Jesus (1 Cor. ii. 2, cf. Rom. iv. 25; v. 6–10; vi. 6; Gal. ii. 20; iii. 13; vi. 12, 14).
4. The Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20–26).
5. The resurrection (1 Cor. xv.; Rom. i. 4; iv. 24; vi. 4, 9; vii. 4; viii. 11, 34; x. 9; xiv. 9; 2 Cor. iv. 14; v. 14, 15; Gal. i. 1).

Other facts Paul plainly implies; for example, "the gentleness and meekness of Jesus" (2 Cor. x. 1); the preaching of Jesus, from frequent allusions to Christ's gospel (Gal. i. 8; Rom. xv. 8) and to the kingdom of God as the burden of Christ's preaching (2 Cor. vi. 9; Gal. v. 21); and that Jesus sent out apostles (his apostles being referred to, e.g., Gal. ii. 8).

¹ Conybeare and Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Appendix II., date 1 and 2 Cor. and Gal. in A.D. 57, and Rom. in A.D. 58; Holtzmann, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, dates Gal. in A.D. 55 or 56, and 1 and 2 Cor. and Rom. in the winter of A.D. 58 and spring of A.D. 59.

² See Dean Farrar's article, "Jesus Christ," *Encyc. Brit.*, vol. xiii., p. 659, note 6; Westcott's *Gospel of the Resurrection*, § 46 sq., p. 108 sq.

But the resurrection receives chief attention. That which is the most miraculous, most disputed, is the best attested by Paul. One entire chapter is devoted to this subject (1 Cor. xv.); and elsewhere, in a variety of forms, the fact of the resurrection is most clearly and explicitly stated.

The remaining epistles of Paul confirm many of the statements of fact made in the Gospels. The same may also be said of the epistles of Peter, James, and John. They are corroborative witnesses. It is remarkable that, though making no attempt to write a life of Christ, and penning letters called forth by seemingly trivial circumstances, Paul and the other apostles should have revealed, both by direct statement and by allusion and implication, so much of the historic character of Jesus.