

THE
TERMS OF COMMUNION
IN THE
LORD'S SUPPER
SCRIPTURALLY DELINEATED.

BY H. HARVEY,
PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY IN
HAMILTON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

NEW YORK:
SHELDON & COMPANY.

1859.



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NEW YORK, *June 20th*, 1859.

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GENTLEMEN:—The Committee, appointed to examine the manuscripts that have been presented by competitors for the several prizes which were offered for the best Essays on subjects announced by you in the autumn of last year, beg leave to communicate to you the conclusions at which they have arrived.

The prize for the Essay adapted to awaken the attention of the careless, they have awarded to Prof. H. H. Tucker, of Mercer University, Georgia, whose production is entitled "A Picture by an Ancient Artist."

The prize for the Essay designed to guide inquirers after the way of salvation, has been awarded to Rev. H. C. Fish, D.D., of Newark, N. J. The Essay is entitled, "The Great Inquiry Answered." "Safe in Believing."

The prize for the Essay designed to furnish an Exposition of the Terms of Communion, has been awarded to Prof. H. Harvey. This Essay is entitled, "The Terms of Communion in the Lord's Supper Scripturally Delineated."

Several of the Essays that have been examined are so nearly of equal merit, that a considerable degree of care has been requisite, in order to reach a conclusion entirely satisfactory. In deciding the question before them, the Committee have been influenced not merely by a regard to style, scholarship, or literary execution, but also to the adaptation of the Essay to meet the wants of the greatest number of inquiring minds amongst the mass of readers throughout the country.

Commending this and similar efforts in behalf of the cause of Truth, to the divine blessing, we are, as ever, gentlemen,

Yours truly,

WM. HAGUE,
EDWARD LATHROP, } Committee.
E. E. L. TAYLOR.

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TERMS OF COMMUNION.

THE institution of the Lord's Supper was one of the most impressive scenes in the life of Christ. Assembled at the Paschal feast with His chosen apostles, "As they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many." It was the meeting which preceded His agony in Gethsemane and His death on the Cross. The bread broken, and the wine poured forth, were the expressive symbols selected to represent the broken body and shed blood of God's atoning Lamb: and as they ate of that bread and drank of that cup, the act was emblematic of the faith on Christ, in exercise within the bosom of the true disciple, by which alone we derive spiritual, eternal life from Him. Far as the kingdom of God should spread on earth, this simple ordinance was to commemorate the sacrificial offering on Calvary. Perpetual as the Christian dispensation, it was to be observed through all ages, until the second coming of Christ;

when the visible church shall have accomplished its mission, and its members shall all be gathered into the church universal, in its triumphant state on high.

Much unhappy dissension exists, respecting the terms of Communion, or the qualifications for admission to the Lord's Supper. The position of the Baptist Denomination has been especially assailed. "Close Communion" is often urged as evidence of their schismatic character, and made a standing warning against union with their churches. Christian brethren, honored and beloved by them, have not hesitated to charge them with "exclusiveness," "sectarianism," "intolerance," and "bigotry."

It is believed that a candid examination of the scriptural terms of communion at the Lord's table will show, not only that these aspersions upon a christian denomination, now numbering on this continent almost a million of communicants, are unjust, but also that their position, in reference to the Lord's Supper, is strictly scriptural, and cannot be relinquished without abandoning important christian principles. To such an examination the reader is now invited.

I.—SCRIPTURAL LAW OF QUALIFICATION.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT A CREDIBLE PROFESSION OF FAITH IN BAPTISM, AND A CONSISTENT MEMBERSHIP IN SOME CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ARE INVARIABLY REQUIRED BEFORE PARTICIPATION IN THE LORD'S SUPPER.

All the allusions made to this ordinance obviously imply these prerequisites in the communicants. Consider the evidence of this.

1. The apostles who were present with our Lord at the institution of this ordinance were not only united as a community with Christ and one another by special covenant,¹ but were all baptized persons. This is plain: for some of them had certainly been baptized by John,² and all were administrators of baptism, a thing incredible if they were themselves unbaptized.³ The validity of John's baptism, as a christian ordinance, has, indeed, been denied; but the following facts plainly refute this objection:

(1) The profession made by the disciples of John was substantially that of the disciples after the Pentecost, viz. an avowal of deep and thorough repentance, of which the fruits were manifest,⁴ of faith in the Messiah, of whom John was the appointed precursor,⁵ and of the hope of "remission of sins."⁶ This repentance, faith, and hope, we

¹ Luke vi. 12, 13; Matt. xix. 27.

² John i. 35-40.

³ John iv. 1, 2.

⁴ Matt. iii. 1-12.

⁵ Acts xix. 4.

⁶ Mark i. 4, 5.

cannot doubt were real: and if so, there were all the characteristics of christian baptism. The knowledge was imperfect, we grant: the full import of baptism in its relation to Christ's death and resurrection could not then be understood. But this was equally true of the Supper, when instituted; in both cases some of the facts symbolized had not occurred.

(2.) The apostles received no other than this earlier baptism: if this, therefore, was invalid, they never received the christian ordinance! "The seventy" were not baptized after the Pentecost, and must, on this hypothesis, have gone through the world administering the ordinance while unbaptized. An objection which thus invalidates the baptism of Christ and the apostles, and the earliest ministry—the very source from which christian baptism is derived, is surely unfounded. Even Apollos, "though knowing only the baptism of John," was not re-baptized.¹ No evidence exists that any of those baptized by John or the apostles, while Christ was on earth, were rebaptized after the effusion of the Spirit at the Pentecost. The case of the twelve disciples at Ephesus cannot here be adduced.² Calvin and the Reformers generally, with many respectable scholars now, deny that this was a repetition of water baptism. But not to insist upon this, let the fact of rebaptism be admitted: the re-administration does not prove the defectiveness of John's baptism as such. The circumstances show that they had not received the regular baptism of John. For when it is considered that this event

¹ Acts xviii. 24–28.

² Acts xix. 1–7.

occurred twenty years after the death of John, and many hundred miles from Judea—that these men were ignorant of the great truths taught by John himself, and that this fundamental defect in their knowledge is the reason stated in the sacred text for their rebaptism,—it is evident that the repetition of the act here proves, not the invalidity of John's baptism, but the invalidity of any baptism, without the prior knowledge of certain fundamental truths by the baptized person.

At the institution of the Supper, therefore, all who partook were baptized and united in sacred covenant with one another and the Lord.

2. The commission given by Christ to His disciples, also, distinctly requires baptism on profession of faith, prior to the reception of the Lord's Supper. Mark the words: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Here, first, they are to teach, or make disciples; next, to baptize these disciples in the name of the Trinity; and then, to teach them to observe the other commands of Christ, among which is that relating to the Supper. This is the original commission given by our Lord—the very foundation of authority for church and ministerial action: and the *order* it prescribes is of solemn obligation. It requires personal faith as an indispensable prerequisite to baptism: and with like plainness it enjoins baptism as an indispensable prerequisite to the Supper.

3. The apostles, in exemplifying the commission, invariably administered the Lord's Supper only to the baptized. The first requirement after conversion is always baptism. When Cornelius and those assembled with him believed, and received the Holy Spirit, Peter at once "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."¹ As soon as the jailor of Philippi "believed in God, with all his house," at the direction of Paul and Silas, "he was baptized, he and all his straitway."² So also, when Saul of Tarsus became a believer in Christ, Ananias said to him, "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."³ A multitude of citations, however, is needless. Throughout the New Testament Baptism stands as the great act of public initiation into the christian dispensation, the first duty of a believer. It must, therefore, precede the Lord's Supper.

On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended and many repented under the preaching of Peter, it is said, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."⁴ Here observe, the first step is a glad reception of the gospel: next they are baptized and added to the church: and then, continuing steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship

¹ Acts x. 44-48.

² Acts xxii. 16.

³ Acts xvi. 33.

⁴ Acts ii. 41, 42.

they join "in the breaking of bread," or the communion. Such was the exact obedience the apostles rendered to the plain order of Christ's commission. Another celebration of the Lord's Supper is recorded as occurring at Troas: and it is said, "Upon the first day of the week the *disciples* came together to break bread."¹ It was not the mixed multitude, but "the disciples;" and of course, those disciples who had there been constituted as a christian church. Paul, in addressing the church at Corinth, strongly rebukes their manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper; but in reprehending these disorders, no allusion is made to any but members of the church. The implication is that no others partook.²

Such was the uniform example of the apostles, whose special commission it was to organize churches, under the direct plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If, now, we connect the order of the commission with this uniformity of apostolic example, the latter must be regarded as an exposition of the former; and in the absence of any permission to admit the unbaptized to the Lord's table, these connected facts must indicate the Divine law upon the subject.

4. The relation of the two ordinances, in their import and position, requires the priority of baptism. Baptism is the symbol of regeneration, the entrance upon a new, spiritual life in Christ. The Lord's Supper is the symbol of that faith in the atoning sacrifice by which this new life is sustained.

Acts xx. 7.

² 1 Cor. xi. 20-34.

The one symbolizes the new birth ; the other, "the bread of life," by which the new born are nourished, and "grow up to the stature of perfect manhood in Christ." To administer the Lord's Supper to the unbaptized is to invert the natural order and destroy that harmony which appears in all the ordinances of God.

Baptism is the rite of admission to the church—the visible point of separation from the world and union with God's people. It is the door of the house of God. The Supper, on the other hand, is an ordinance within the church, and is the highest expression of church fellowship. The apostolic custom, therefore, of restricting its observance to those within the house of God, is manifestly just ; the opposite practice must lead only to confusion.

It is evident, then, from these scriptural proofs, that baptism, upon a credible profession of faith, and consistent membership in a christian church, are prerequisites to communion at the Lord's Table. The character of the communicants at the first celebration of the Supper ; the order of the commission ; the exemplification of that commission in the uniform conduct of the apostles ; and the relative import and position of the ordinances themselves,—all reveal the will of God on this subject, and render obvious the obligation resting on us.

II.—THIS LAW OBLIGATORY UPON THE CHURCH.

THE CHURCH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THIS DIVINE LAW OF THE SUPPER, AND IS THE SOLE AUTHORITY TO DECIDE UPON THE SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATION OF THOSE SEEKING ADMISSION TO THE TABLE.

1. The administration of the ordinances is committed to the church and its ministry. They are solemnly charged to maintain their purity, and held accountable for their due observance. All the language of scripture respecting the administration of them, whether of commendation or rebuke, is addressed to the church or its ministry.¹ This principle is universally admitted in regard to baptism. The authority of the church to decide upon the qualifications of a candidate for baptism, is unquestioned. The mere opinion of the individual that he is fitted for that ordinance, is in no case deemed a sufficient warrant for its administration: the church is made the judge of his scriptural fitness for it. Is there not equal reason for this rule in regard to the Lord's Supper? Why should the decision be left to the candidate in this more than in the other?

2. The Lord's Supper is the symbol not merely of christian, but of church fellowship: admission to it, therefore, must be under the control of the church. The ordinance, so far as it indicates relationship

¹ 1 Cor. xi.

among the partakers, signifies their church relation, as members of a visible body of Christ.¹ In the New Testament we find it nowhere celebrated, except by a church, and that in its collective capacity. Hence Paul commanded: "When ye come together to eat, tarry one for another;"² and charged, also, that the excommunicated should not be admitted to the sacred Feast³—clearly indicating it as a solemn act of the assembled church. All the reasons, therefore, which require the church to decide in regard to admission to its church fellowship, may be urged as requiring it to decide also, in regard to admission to the Supper, the symbol of church fellowship.

3. Moreover, if the candidate were the sole judge of his qualification, then all must be admitted who deem themselves qualified, whether Universalists, Spiritualists, Mormons, or even the most immoral. But this would destroy utterly the significance of the Lord's Supper. The use of the symbols by those among whom the things signified do not exist, must thus render one of the great ordinances of Christ's church a solemn mockery of truth. Indeed, a church might as reasonably invite all to come, without examination, to its baptism, as extend such an invitation to its communion. However popular a practice, so unscriptural, might become from its apparent catholicity, its obvious tendency would be to obliterate all distinction between the church and the world, subvert all discipline, and undermine the very foundations of the gospel.

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

² 1 Cor. xi. 33.

³ 1 Cor. v. 11.

4. Let it be supposed, however, that the candidate furnishes satisfactory evidence of piety; but, though deeming himself baptized, the church does not regard his baptism valid. What is the duty of the church? We answer: The law of Christ must be honored rather than the error of the man. If they believe the candidate in error respecting the fact of his baptism, the tendency of inviting him to the Lord's Table would be to confirm rather than to correct that error. It would be an act of unfaithfulness to the individual, and an admission that the scriptural observance of Divine ordinances is non-essential—a principle fraught with peril to the purity of the church of God. Moreover, the church has no power to dispense with a Divine law. To set aside the revealed will of God is to arrogate divine prerogatives, and exalt man above God. If, in deference to the opinions or prejudices of the candidate, the Divine will may be disregarded in this case—whither would such a principle lead? It involves the subversion of Protestantism. It denies the supremacy of God's word, and places the church above it, with power to dispense with Divine laws—the very basis of Romanism and the source of its corruption.

The church, therefore, is solemnly bound, in faithfulness to God, and the candidate approaching His Table, to maintain the divinely instituted terms of communion.

It has no right to devolve the decision of qualification upon the individual. God holds it responsible for the due administration of the ordinance. The

words of Rev. John N. McLeod, D.D., defining the views of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, corroborate this position. "On the subject of *sacramental communion*, the principles of the church are, that such communion is the most solemn, intimate, and perfect fellowship that christians can enjoy with God and one another; that when Christians are associated together in a church state, under a definite creed, communion in the sacraments involves an approbation of the principles of that creed; and that as the church is invested with authority, which she is bound to exercise, to keep the ordinances pure and entire, sacramental communion is not to be extended to those who do not approve the principles of the particular church, or submit themselves to her authority. In maintaining these principles, the Reformed Presbyterian Church does not design to unchurch any other religious denomination, or deny the christianity of its members. She recognises the validity of the ordinances of all Christian communities who hold the Divine Head, and the plenary inspiration of his Word. She rejoices to know that these contain many of the saints of God, who have fellowship with Him and with one another at the Table of the Lord, and she is willing to co-operate with them to the extent of her ability, in promoting the common Christianity. But she does not feel at liberty to allow every man to be the judge of his own qualifications for sealing ordinances, to dispense these ordinances to such as do not assent to her religious principles, or whom she could not submit to her discipline, were they found violating their christian obligations."

III.—RESTRICTED COMMUNION ALMOST
UNIVERSAL.

THIS RESTRICTION OF COMMUNION AT THE LORD'S TABLE IS NOT PECULIAR TO THE BAPTISTS: IT IS THE POSITION OF NEARLY ALL CHRISTENDOM.

The Christian world has, in all ages, been nearly unanimous in the above statement of the Divine law of the communion. History here furnishes unequivocal testimony. Dr. Wall, the eminent historian of Pedobaptism, says, "No church ever gave the communion to persons before they are baptized. Among all the absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained *that*, that any person should partake of the communion before he was baptized." Doddridge, author of the "Rise and Progress," remarks: "It is certain that, as far as our knowledge of primitive antiquity reaches, no unbaptized person received the Lord's Supper." This was the doctrine of Luther and Calvin, of Wesley and Whitfield. Pres. Dwight remarked: "It is an indispensable qualification for this ordinance, that the candidate for communion be a member of the visible church of Christ, in good standing. By this I intend, that he should be a person of piety; that he should have made a public profession of religion, and that he should have been baptized."

However clear the evidence given by a person of his conversion, however exalted the Christian quali-

ties that adorn his character, if he be not baptized, almost all Christendom refuse him admission to the Lord's Table. The eloquent Dr. Griffin, in his "Letter on Communion," said, "We ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, and of course are not church members, even if we regard them as christians. Should a pious Quaker so far depart from his principles as to wish to commune with me at the Lord's Table, I could not receive him; because there is such a relationship established between the two ordinances that I have no right to separate them: in other words, I have no right to send the sacred elements out of the church." "Hibbard on Baptism," a recognised theological text-book among the Methodists, has the following paragraph: "It is but just to remark, that in one principle the Baptist and Pedobaptist churches agree. They both agree in rejecting from communion at the Table of the Lord, and in denying the right of church fellowship to all who have not been baptized. Valid baptism they consider essential to constitute visible church membership. *This also we hold.* The only question then that here divides us, is, what is essential to valid baptism?"

No Pedobaptist denomination holds open communion. All their creeds and established usages require baptism and church membership prior to the Supper. Individual churches and ministers have, indeed, occasionally departed from this rule; but such departure is in plain violation both of the principles and the ordinary practice of the denomination to which they belong. The only open communion body

among evangelical christians is that section of the Baptist denomination who deny that the one ordinance is in any sense a prerequisite to the other, and invite all to the Lord's Table *solely on that ground*. But the ordinary doctrine and usage of Pedobaptist churches are justly expressed in the recent words of a leading Methodist journal in the South, when it declares, "No christian church would willingly receive to its communion even the humblest and truest believer in Christ, who has not been baptized."

Now it is evident, from the considerations thus far advanced, that a church, believing scriptural baptism and consistent church-membership to be divinely instituted terms of communion, and also believing the responsibility of deciding upon the scriptural qualification of the candidate to be devolved upon itself—could not conscientiously invite those it deems unbaptized to the communion. In doing so, it would presumptuously sin against God, by violating the Divine order of the institution. If it be a Pedobaptist church, it may consistently invite those who, whether as infants or adults, have been immersed or poured upon, or sprinkled; for it believes any of these modes to be valid baptism. But if it be a Baptist church, the invitation can only be given to those who have been immersed upon an intelligent profession of faith; for in the Baptist view, immersion of an actual believer is the only real baptism, and sprinkling and pouring are not baptism. The Baptists and the Pedobaptists, therefore, agree perfectly in regard to the terms of

communion: neither could invite the unbaptized to partake without a violation of conscience; but they differ as to what constitutes baptism. The Pedobaptist has three modes; the Baptist has but one; and the door to the Communion Table is in each case no wider than their baptism.

Baptism, then, is the grand point of difference as to the communion. This is so plain that candid men readily acknowledge it. *The Congregational Journal*, in a recent editorial, remarks, "Did we believe that only believers who have been immersed, are baptized, and that only baptized persons have a right to the Lord's Table, we should believe and practise strict communion, and we should almost consider it an insult to be required to give it up without a change of views on the subject of baptism. . . . We, as Pedobaptists, are close communionists, and we hope we shall never cease to be such. The only legitimate subjects of controversy between us and the Baptists are the subjects and mode of baptism." The truth is, this law of the communion is strictly enforced in the Episcopal and the Presbyterian church; it is the common usage among the Congregational churches of this country and the Independents of England; and the discipline, as well as the more common custom of the Methodists recognises the same principle. All these are "close communion" on precisely the ground which Baptists maintain.

For illustration. The Quakers do not hold to water baptism in any form, but only to the baptism of the Spirit. Suppose, however, an eminently-

pious Quaker should be present in a Presbyterian church at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Could he be invited to partake? Certainly not. But why not? Is he not a christian? Do they not expect to commune with him in Heaven? Why not, then, commune on earth? The ready answer of the consistent Presbyterian would be: "This Quaker has not been baptized; and though he is an undoubted christian, we could not, without transgressing the Divine law of the Supper, invite him to the Table." Here is close communion; and this is precisely Baptist ground. To them the Pedobaptist is no more a baptized person than the Quaker; and the same reason that repels the pious Quaker from the Pedobaptist communion, also compels them to decline inviting the Pedobaptist to the Table with them.

Another example. Here is a convert, whose piety is undoubted, but who has never been baptized in any form. Let him be present at the celebration of the Lord's Supper in a Presbyterian Church. Will he be welcomed to the Table? Assuredly not. But why not? He is converted to God; a child of God and an heir of Heaven; and these christians expect to dwell with him in holy communion for ever. Why then debar him from communion at the Lord's Table now? The Presbyterian would answer: "True, he is a christian; but then he has never been baptized, and the scriptures do not allow us to invite him." Here is Presbyterian close communion. Now the Pedobaptist is to the Baptists precisely in the condition of this convert. He has

never been baptized ; and the scriptures, therefore, do not allow them to invite him to the Lord's Table. They may esteem and love him as a christian ; but this cannot authorize them to despise and set aside the terms of communion which the Lord has established.

In truth the Pedobaptists are no more open in their communion than the Baptists. The church, and not the candidate, is made the judge of the fact of baptism among them ; and the right of approaching the Lord's Table *is limited to those whom the church deems baptized*. It matters not how much evidence the individual gives of piety, or how strongly he may assert his baptism ; if the church deems him unbaptized, the Supper and all acts of church fellowship are denied. This is precisely Baptist ground. Nay, their communion is even closer than that of Baptists. For the door of admission is not with them as wide as their baptism ; they baptize multitudes in infancy whom they dare not admit to the communion. For this refusal of the Supper to the unconverted, the Baptist, of course, will not censure them ; but it surely becomes them to be somewhat modest in rebuking christian brethren for "close communion," when the same offence, if it be one, stands so glaringly conspicuous in their own practice.

IV.—COMMON OBJECTIONS NOT VALID.

SEVERAL OBJECTIONS, FREQUENTLY URGED AGAINST THE BAPTIST RULE OF COMMUNION, MAY HERE BE CONSIDERED.

First, it is urged; "Many in Pedobaptist churches have been immersed on profession of faith; the validity of their baptism is acknowledged; why not then invite them to the Lord's Table?" To this objection we reply:

1. The inconsistency of their church position should debar them from the communion. They are in full fellowship with a church in which, even according to their own belief, the ordinances are perverted. Infant baptism, and the substitution of pouring and sprinkling for the Divine symbol, are the professed doctrines of the body; and their membership, so far from being a testimony against these errors, is of necessity a direct personal sanction of them. As this perversion of a divine ordinance, with the manifold evils resulting from it, is the act of the church, it is their act as voluntary members of that church. Their influence is thus consciously and deliberately exerted against the purity of the ordinances of the gospel. They wilfully sacrifice to convenience, or taste, or fashion, their serious convictions respecting the truth of God. Surely those who, in this manner, willingly destroy the order of God's house, ought, as "walk-

ing disorderly," to be excluded from the Lord's Table.

Indeed the position of a Baptist in a Pedobaptist church implies a most serious compromise of christian principle. For the conscientious Pedobaptist in his practice only conforms to the sincere, though erroneous, convictions of his heart; and his conduct, therefore, may consist, as it often does, with the manifested favor of God, and the most exalted attainment in piety. But the Baptist, in supporting such a practice, does so in direct opposition to his convictions, and with the sacrifice of what he deems Divine Truth. He supports that which he *knows* to be wrong. What in the conscientious Pedobaptist is only error, must, in the Baptist, be wilful sin against God.

2. The Baptist churches, if they invited all immersed members of other churches to the Table, would be involved in the obvious inconsistency of inviting persons to that highest symbol of church fellowship, to whom they would be compelled to refuse actual membership, or whom, if members, it would be their duty to exclude. For example: an individual may be excluded from a Baptist church for attending balls, theatres, or other places of sinful amusement. He can at once go and unite with an Episcopal church; for they commonly permit their members to indulge in these practices unrebuked. Now, if all immersed members of Pedobaptist churches were invited, that excluded person could come, by virtue of his membership in an Episcopal church, and sit down at the very Table

from which he had been excluded for his sin. It is obvious that this is only an example of a multitude of cases, where a Baptist church, in giving an invitation to all immersed persons to the Table, would be compelled to extend fellowship to its own excluded members, or persons holding sentiments and guilty of practices which, if they were members, would require their exclusion. Such inconsistency must tend to destroy all order and discipline in the church.

The Lord's Supper is the most solemn act of church fellowship. None ought, therefore, to partake, who are not members of the church, or who may not, from their position, be for the time regarded as such. This is the only consistent principle of occasional communion. Members of sister churches, of like faith and order, are invited to partake, because their principles and practice would render it consistent to admit them to actual membership, and their presence at the sacred Feast, placing them temporarily under the watchcare of the church, makes it proper to regard them as, for the time, really embraced within the church. But an invitation of those to this highest symbol of church fellowship, whose doctrine and practice would require us to refuse them admission to actual membership in the church, is surely, if not an act of hypocrisy, a most gross inconsistency. The ostentatious display of union at the Lord's Table sometimes made by churches radically opposed in their doctrinal and practical position, and in the interval of communion mutually assailing each other

from their own pulpits, is one of the most painful exhibitions, if not of the corruption, certainly of the frailty of human nature.

Secondly, it is urged: "Are not Pedobaptists sincere? If they really believe that sprinkling or pouring, whether of infants or adults, is valid baptism, why not invite them to the communion? They have answered their own consciences; why not leave the subject between them and God?"

We answer: This is precisely where we do leave it. We do not deny them the privilege of celebrating the Lord's Supper according to their own views of duty. But the administrator ought to have a conscience as well as the communicant. If he who presides at the Table believes the Lord of that Table has made baptism pre-requisite to approaching it, how can *he* presume to violate this law, and invite persons to partake whom he knows to be unbaptized? Plainly he cannot do it without sin.

Besides, the conscientious sincerity of the candidate, whatever may be its aspect in the sight of God, obviously cannot create the fact of baptism, where the act itself has not been performed. The practice of Pedobaptist churches illustrates this; for they do not administer the supper, except where they believe the candidate has been baptized. Suppose, for example, a person of approved piety should present himself to a Presbyterian church, and say: "I am not a believer in immersion, nor pouring, nor sprinkling: to me it is evident that baptism is the act of washing the feet in water. I

am sincere in my belief; and if I unite with you, the minister must wash my feet in water." Would he be received? Of course not. That church would reply: "Sir, we do not question your sincerity nor your piety; but we find no authority in the Bible for believing that washing the feet is scriptural baptism, and we cannot so administer the ordinance." They would not for a moment admit that the man's sincerity made the act of washing the feet valid baptism: although there is far more semblance of scriptural authority for that than for sprinkling or pouring. In like manner we respond to the Pedobaptist: "Sir, we do not impugn your sincerity nor your piety; but we find no scriptural reason for believing that sprinkling or pouring is valid baptism, or that infants are the proper subjects, and we cannot therefore regard you as baptized. Your sincerity cannot render that an ordinance of God which He has not constituted such."

The Baptists, in thus declining to extend an invitation to the Lord's Table, do not cast an imputation upon the christian character of their brethren. christian character is not the only pre-requisite to the Supper; the Divine rule requires also scriptural baptism and consistent church membership; and the Baptists dare not disregard the revealed law of the Supper. The laws of this country, for example, do not admit the foreigner to the right of citizenship until he has passed through the legal process of naturalization, however pure may be his intentions or eminent his virtues. This restriction, how-

ever, does not impeach his character ; for the rights of the citizen are freely offered him, if he will pass through this preliminary process. Was the Jew uncharitable when, in accordance with the Divine law, he invited none but the circumcised to the Passover? Even Enoch, Melchisedec, and Job, had they been present, could not have partaken, unless first circumcised. Was it a want of charity in Christ, when, at the institution of the Supper, He did not invite the "above five hundred brethren," nor Lazarus, nor the Marys, nor even His own mother? Certainly this was not an impeachment of their Christian character, but an exact observance of the law of the ordinance ; for they were not then, like the apostles, united with Christ in the peculiar fellowship of a church. The Lord's Supper, so far as it indicates the mutual relations of the communicants, is a symbol of church fellowship. It symbolizes the *church relation* of the partakers, or the communion of the members of that body of Christ with their great Head. Non-invitation to the Lord's Table, therefore, does not denote a lack of confidence in christian character, but the absence of church relation.

Third, it is urged : "All true Christians expect to commune together in Heaven ; the Baptist will there for ever commune with the Pedobaptist. Why not then commune on earth?" We answer,

1. This objection, if valid at all, recoils upon those who offer it : for by insisting on baptism previous to communion, they exclude, as already shown, many real Christians from the Lord's Table. If it

has force, therefore, against the Baptist position, it may be pressed with equal weight against the Pedobaptist.

2. The objection, however, implies a total misconception of the Lord's Supper. The primary design of this ordinance is to commemorate the sufferings and death of Christ; and the word *communion*, when applied to it, does not signify communion with fellow-Christians, but communion with Christ. What communion have Christians at the Lord's Table? There is absolutely no intercourse whatever among them; but each heart is singly in the act of communion with Christ the Lord. The bread and the wine remind the believer, not of his fellow-disciples, but of his absent Lord; and, in these symbols, present to faith the body broken, and blood shed on Calvary. This is communion, not with Christians, but with Christ.

Communion with saints is a widely different thing. It is that heavenly fellowship, the children of God enjoy in social worship, or in spiritual intercourse, where, in mutual prayer, instruction, and exhortation, they comfort and strengthen each other, and soul blends with soul in fraternal, holy love. This is Christian communion; and in this Baptists delight to commune with every child of God on earth, whatever be his peculiar denomination. They covet such communion with saints; and whenever the image of Christ is impressed upon any soul, whatever his distinctive name, they would have their souls united with him as a brother in the Lord. But the Lord's Table is not the place of any

such communion ; there Christians commune, not with one another, but with Christ the Lord.

How frivolous, then, is the objection so often heard, " You expect to commune with us in Heaven, and why not commune with us on earth ? " Does the communion of heaven consist in partaking of bread and wine, the symbols of an absent Saviour ? Is the celebration of the Lord's Supper the communion which " the spirits of just men made perfect " have in the heavenly Jerusalem ? Surely not. Christians in that world of light have no need of the memorials of a departed Lord. " Absent from the body " they are there " present with the Lord. " They behold in actual vision that sacred body which was once broken and " bathed in its own blood " for them. The communion of saints in Heaven, like that of saints of every name on earth, is the mutual intercourse of redeemed souls, in holy companionship and holy praises before the throne of God.

" There saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet ;
While anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

This objection, then, confounds the sweet intercourse of saints in Christian communion, with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, an act in which there is no Christian intercourse, but each believer is singly in communion with the Lord. Baptists *do* commune with all Christians in every act of Christian communion ; they humbly hope to be permitted,

also, to commune with them in heaven; but what has this to do with the Lord's Supper? No intelligent Christian ought to confound things so widely different as Christian communion, and the act of celebrating the communion of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

V.—MIXED COMMUNION INEXPEDIENT.

INTERCOMMUNION AMONG DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS OF CHRISTIANS, WHILE IT HAS NO REAL ADVANTAGES, IS ATTENDED WITH MANIFEST INCONSISTENCIES AND EVILS.

The great privilege of uniting with other denominations in celebrating the Lord's Supper, is often insisted upon. It is charged upon the Baptist rule of communion, that it debars Christians from their privilege, and is even an invasion of their Heaven-given rights! But if this really is a privilege, why do not members of different religious denominations oftener enjoy it? How many Presbyterians ever joined in the Lord's Supper in a Methodist or an Episcopal church? How many Methodists or Episcopalians ever did so in a Presbyterian church? Probably not one in a hundred ever thought of doing so. How great a privilege can that be which hardly any one, it seems, wants to enjoy? The truth is, Christians instinctively feel the impropriety of uniting in that symbol of church-fellowship in churches, with which they could not conscientiously,

also, unite in membership. Every church, moreover, celebrates the Lord's Supper as often as it seems to them desirable; and there is absolutely no need of intercommunion.

The spirit of brotherly love among Christians, also, is supposed to be repressed by this rule of communion in the Baptist churches. It is charged with fostering alienation and bitterness in the great "household of faith." But we ask, what practical tendency has intercommunion to cultivate charitable sentiments among different denominations? Does it actually produce that effect? Look at Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians. They can, if they will, sit down together at the Lord's Table. Is there, however, any more real love, any heartier Christian communion, in exercise between these three denominations than between the Baptists and them? No candid observer can be at a loss for the answer. Experience has plainly shown, that the mere right to unite in the celebration of the Lord's Supper does not, and cannot create Christian love. Indeed, the spirit of contention and recrimination, often manifested between these denominations, renders the ostentatious display sometimes made of their intercommunion not only absurd, but even scandalous to the Christian religion.

Christian union is also supposed to be greatly obstructed by the practice of restricted communion. One might think, from the frequency of this objection, that this practice was the only bar to prevent the union of all Protestants in one body. But is it so? What are the facts? Are those denomina-

tions that invite each other to the Lord's Table coming any nearer to a union? Are their differences melting away? Is the work of consolidation going on hopefully among them? Alas! the reverse is sadly true. The din of war, rather than the voice of peace, is heard among them. The simple truth is, that the differences among Christians lie farther back than the Lord's Table; they originate in radically opposite views of the constitution and ordinances of the church; and if intercommunion were a common thing, it could have no tendency to harmonize the jarring creeds of different denominations. The higher unity of spirit, which the recent gracious revival has developed, is the result, not of union in celebrating the Supper, but of union in prayer and in Christian exertion.

The system of intercommunion, however, is not only productive of no practical benefit; it actually involves most serious inconsistencies and evils. For whenever sufficient reasons exist for the separation of Christians into distinct denominations, those reasons are also sufficient for restricting the Lord's Supper within each denomination. None ought to partake together in this symbol of church-fellowship, who cannot, from their views of truth and duty, also conscientiously unite in real church fellowship. Common honesty requires this; and a departure from this rule must always result in evil. Among numerous illustrations of this already before the public, we select the following, which occurred in Jefferson county, New York:—

“A devoted and conscientious deacon of a Con-

gregational church commenced a labor with a member of the same church for unchristianlike conduct, but could obtain no satisfaction. He then took one or two brethren with him, and spread out all the circumstances before them; but the man still justified himself. The church was at last compelled to exclude the offender. He then went to a neighboring Methodist church, represented himself as persecuted because he had honestly changed his sentiments, and was cordially received. The next communion season which this Congregational church enjoyed (or would have enjoyed but for mixed communion), he came forward, and with great care takes his seat by the side of the deacon, who took up the labor with him, for the express purpose of aggravating his feelings. The good deacon says to a member of the Baptist church present (with whom he was very intimate), 'Brother, what shall I do? I do not feel as though I could commune with that man.' The Baptist replied: 'I pity you, deacon, from the bottom of my heart, but I cannot relieve you; this is the effect of your wrong view of communion.' The church was thrown into such a state of perturbation as to disqualify them to receive so holy an ordinance with pleasure or profit." This well authenticated fact is but a single illustration of the necessary working of intercommunion.

Suppose this evil were removed, as is sometimes attempted, by a special rule, that no excluded person, by virtue of subsequent connexion with another church, shall be entitled to come to the Table; still the fundamental difficulty remains unobviated. The

mixed communion church invites to the highest symbol of church fellowship those whom it could not conscientiously receive to actual church fellowship, or whom, if members, it would be compelled to exclude. The words of an eminent Pedobaptist, deprecating mixed communion, will illustrate the inconsistency of this. He remarks: "I object to the practice because it clearly implies that our church creeds or confessions contain certain items of faith and practice, *the belief of which, or conformity to which, is not necessary to the right of church privilege.* This implies either that these things are not based on Divine authority, on which supposition they are the works of men; they are schismatical too, dividing the church where there is no conscientious principle involved, and, therefore, ought to be rejected as evils; or it implies that, notwithstanding they are based on Divine authority, they are indifferent—of little importance, may be practised or not, as we may see proper, with impunity; which last conclusion is to me revolting. I suppose a case which I think is in point. An individual applies to you for admission to baptism and the Lord's Supper. After examining him to full satisfaction as to his experimental religion, you inquire of him whether he will conform to the order of God's house, in submitting to discipline, the discharge of religious duty, such as family discipline, the baptism of his children, &c. But he replies, I do not approve of this government, and as to the baptism of children, I consider it unauthorized. You would reply, I presume, that you make subjec

tion to this duty a condition of membership, and of privileges connected with it. But on the supposition you practise open communion, he would reply: You admit to all the privilege I desire without such subjection, for you admit *Baptists*, and those who neither believe nor practise it. You reply—because they submit to their own order. He takes his departure, connects himself with those who will not require this thing, and returns, and, at your invitation, enjoys with you all he asked. I see in such a case a predicament I should not envy. For what is your attitude now in the eyes of your own members? Most assuredly you appear inconsistent, and they must feel in consequence that they lie under a condition, a compliance with which guarantees them no privilege. You lay every distinguishing feature of your own church liable to prejudice and reproach. To me the inference would be, your conduct being right, that your church ought forthwith to relinquish its own distinctiveness, and sink into the church catholic, and every other church practising the same ought to do likewise.” It is plain that mixed communion tends thus to the destruction of all consistent discipline; for how can any church discipline its own members for false doctrine or wrong practice, while cordially inviting to the highest act of church fellowship those who publicly adhere to such doctrine and practice?

Besides, if intercommunion is practised, where shall the limits be placed? If no line is drawn, and all who regard themselves as Christians are invited, then the door is open, and you must sit down at the

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Sacred Feast with Unitarians, Universalists, and every man who professes to believe the Bible, however erroneous his doctrine or immoral his conduct. Certainly this cannot be right; for it destroys all the symbolic import of the ordinance, and converts it into an impious mockery of truth. If, however, you draw any line, you are a strict communionist. Suppose the door is opened wide enough for the admission of the members of all evangelical churches, then you are bound to state what churches are evangelical—a point never yet accurately defined. You then also exclude all Christians belonging to non-evangelical churches; and surely in the various shades of opinion existing within the Unitarian churches, and even in the bosom of the Catholic church, we may hope there are some of the true children of God. If you restrict the invitation to those who are baptized and members of evangelical churches, then, as we have shown, you debar from the Table many real saints who have never entered into church relation; and you are a “close communionist” after all.

Now, the restriction of communion at the Lord's Table within each denomination, avoids all these evils. It is a measure which consistency evidently requires. It is founded upon the obviously scriptural principle, that the Lord's Supper, being an act of church fellowship, should be administered only to members of the church, or those who, from their views of doctrine and duty, may be consistently received as such. It implies no christian disfellowship. It leaves ample scope for christian charity,

christian co-operation, and christian communion. It simply restricts the Lord's Supper, the symbol of church relationship, within each denomination ; and, deeply as we must deplore the divisions existing among the children of God, it is plain that, while this diversity remains such as to require a separation into distinct denominations of churches, it does equally require that all acts of church fellowship be restricted within each denomination.

RECAPITULATION.

The following conclusions seem to us established in the foregoing discussion :—That the scriptural terms of communion require in the communicant, a personal profession of faith in baptism, and a consistent membership in some christian church : That the church, being intrusted with the administration of the ordinances, and responsible for their purity, is under obligation to maintain this law of the communion, and is the ultimate authority in deciding whether these qualifications exist in those approaching the Table : That the principle of restricted communion is not peculiar to Baptists, but has had the almost unanimous sanction of Christendom in all ages : That the common objections urged against restricted communion are the result of misapprehension, having no foundation either in reason or facts : and, That mixed communion, while productive of no really beneficial results, is attended with serious inconsistency, confusion, and scandal.

CONCLUSION.

In closing this discussion, we would address, with all sincerity and affection, christian brethren of other denominations, who may read these pages.

Some of you have charged us with the crime of schism, in dividing the children of God at the Table of the Lord. If, however, the views now presented are candidly considered, it must be plain that you have condemned us for acting upon the Biblical principle of communion, sanctioned as such by nearly all Christendom ; nay, the very principle upon which you also exclude the unbaptized from the Lord's Supper. Were we to invite you to the Table with us, or to accept of an invitation to join with you, we must violate what you yourselves regard as a scriptural law. Can you, therefore, hereafter make this charge, without being both uncharitable and unjust ?

Moreover, if a separation at the Lord's Table be schism, ought you not to ponder seriously the question, who are the authors of it ? On whom rests the responsibility of division ? Certainly not on those who confessedly adhere to the simplicity of the Bible. Three distinctive tenets, relating to church order, now distinguish the Baptists from other evangelical Christians :

1. We believe that the Great Head of the church has constituted each congregation an independent body, and given it a democratic organization ; so that its acts are subject to revisal by no

earthly tribunal, whether hierarchical or synodal : it is accountable only to Christ, its Head. This constitution of the church is of Divine institution ; no man may rightly alter it. We deny the scriptural authority of Episcopal hierarchies or Presbyterian synods and assemblies ; and affirm that the substitution of these merely human institutions in place of the simple institution of God, has been, since the early ages, a fruitful source of evil to the cause of Christ. Now in this we may be in error ; but, believing as we do, should we not be recreant to our faith, and to common honesty, if we invited to the symbols of church fellowship christian bodies whose organization subverts the divinely instituted constitution of the church ? Plainly, we could neither respect ourselves, nor ask you to respect us while directly countenancing what we believed an infraction of the law of Christ.

Many of you, however, hold that God has delineated no particular form of the church, but left its constitution to the wisdom of His people, as circumstances may dictate. Why not, then, adopt the congregational form ? You can do this with no surrender of principle ; but it is obvious that we cannot change the constitution of our churches without a wilful violation of what we recognise as the revealed will of God ? The constitution of the church with you is a matter of mere opinion ; with us, it is a matter of religious principle. If union is really desired, ought not opinion to give way before principle ?

2. We believe that baptism should be adminis-

tered only to those who make an intelligent, personal profession of faith: hence we reject the baptism of infants. Initiation into the church by baptism in infancy is, in our view, a subversion of the Divine design of the ordinance, as the conscious, intelligent act of redeemed man, personally professing in this symbol his death to sin and new life in Christ. Its tendency, by admitting all to the church in infancy, is to destroy all distinction between the church and the world. It has been a fountain of corruption in the midst of Christianity for ages: no other invention of man has been so prolific of evil, in causing deterioration of the doctrine and the life of the church. Such is our belief: and it is apparent that, with these conscientious convictions, it would be incompatible with christian principle and honor, either to recognise the infant rite as valid baptism, or to offer the symbols of church fellowship to those whose erroneous practice in this is subverting the purity and order of the church.

But many among you do not hold infant-baptism as a divine institution; it is considered only as a convenient, appropriate method of dedicating a child to God. Your most learned writers admit, with Prof. Stuart, that "neither precepts nor certain examples of it are found in the New Testament;" they fully concede that the Biblical proof, if any exist, is purely inferential. Ecclesiastical History utterly disproves its existence in the Apostolic age, and finds no trace of it before the third century after Christ. With many of you, therefore, it could be no violation of conscientious convictions to give

up a rite which, even in your own view, has no certain authorization in God's word. Multitudes in your midst have already abandoned its observance, although still inconsistently sanctioning it by remaining in Pedobaptist churches. Infant baptism is now with comparatively few a matter of conscience; it is widely regarded as a thing indifferent. If therefore either party must relinquish its position for the sake of union, certainly, so far as that rite is held by you as a matter of preference and not of Divine command, it ought to yield to the conscientious convictions of your brethren. Of course, in those individual cases, where the infant rite is still held as of Divine obligation, neither party can, without a change of views, recede from its position: but ought they, therefore, to hurl at each other the charge of schism? Should they not rather pray that the Spirit of light and peace may make plain even this truth to them, and guide them into perfect unity?

3. We believe that immersion in water is the divine form of the baptismal symbol, and is essential to its scriptural validity: its import is lost by substituting sprinkling or pouring. Consider candidly the Baptist position. God has two methods of revealing His truth to men; one, by written language, the other, by significant symbols, or visible representation. The two symbols of the New Dispensation represent the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. Spiritual regeneration—death to the old life of sin, and resurrection to a new and holy life in Christ—is symbolized in Baptism: the Atone-

ment, accepted by faith, as the only ground of justification with God and the only support of this new life, is, with equal clearness, symbolized in the Lord's Supper. Now it is evident that the significance of a symbol must depend upon the distinctness and accuracy of its form: if that form is changed, it no longer conveys the truth God designed. What horror would you feel, were we to change or obliterate the solemn declaration of Christ, "Ye must be born again!" Would it not be daring impiety to expunge from the sacred volume, or venture to alter the words relating to the doctrine of Regeneration? It seems to us equally impious to set aside, or alter the Heaven-given SYMBOL, by which this important truth is visibly revealed to the world. No finite mind can measure the guilt incurred, or the injury done to the cause of vital godliness, by so altering this divine symbol as to destroy its power to set forth that fundamental truth. The substitution of sprinkling or pouring, therefore, for scriptural baptism, is, in our view, a wrong in the sight of God, and an evil of no slight magnitude in its results upon the cause of Truth.

Among you, however, immersion is universally acknowledged to be one scriptural form of baptism. Most of your candid and learned theologians, admit, that it was, at least, the ordinary mode in the Apostolic age. The ripest scholars of this day, both in Europe and America, are nearly unanimous in regarding it as the original import of the term baptism, and the only primitive form of its administration. Conscientious scruples with you, therefore,

could present no obstacles to the universal practice of immersion: it could be, in your view, merely a change from a more to a less convenient, but equally scriptural, form of administering it. Surely, if you are really anxious for the visible unity of God's people on earth, you cannot hesitate to sacrifice a mere matter of convenience to the conscientious convictions of your brethren; especially when, in doing so, you would confessedly only return to the ordinary Apostolic practice.

It will be perceived that the Baptist position does not result from a mere captiousness about unimportant forms; it is founded, in their view, upon principles vital to the supremacy of God's Word, and the purity and power of the Gospel. We dare not abandon that position; to do so, we must violate our profoundest convictions of truth and duty, and imperil our salvation. The Pedobaptist position is widely different. Though some, doubtless, hold it from Biblical convictions, and, like us, could not, without a change of view, conscientiously relinquish it, yet to a large extent it is confessedly a simple matter of preference, a thing of taste. Multitudes, probably a large proportion in your churches, could abandon it with no sacrifice of conscientious conviction. If, then, a separation at the Lord's Table be a schism, we ask with all sincerity, upon whom rests the responsibility? Is it with those who refuse to recede from conscientious convictions of Biblical truth, or with those who tenaciously adhere to their preference of taste and convenience? Here is the practical test of sincerity

in that oft expressed desire for union at the Lord's Table. The conscience is sacred ; no man may act against its decisions ; but for a mere matter of taste or convenience ought christian men to rend the body of Christ ?

For that day, when there shall be "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," we shall ever pray. The peace of Jerusalem, the visible unity of the saints in Zion, is with us an object of most fervent desire, and for its attainment we would sacrifice everything, save principle. But no union can be safe except in the truth. God forbid that we should lay impious hands upon divine institutions, to alter or remove them, for the sake of external union. In doing this we should only bring upon us the displeasure of Heaven, and our foolish compromises would only increase discord and dissension among the followers of Christ.

We frankly confess that we regard the Baptist churches, founded as they are upon the immutable truth of God, as the one grand hope of union among the disciples of Christ on earth. We rejoice in the rapid progress of the great principles that distinguish us, as the chief betokening omen of the near approach of that millennial day, when "the watchmen shall see eye to eye," and there shall be "one fold and one shepherd." Though it may subject us now to the charge of "bigotry," "intolerance," "exclusiveness,"—from misguided and prejudiced men ; better will it be in the day of Jesus Christ to be acknowledged as the humble defenders of the great truths for which we plead,

than to seek the praise of "liberality" and "catholicity" on earth, and at last be found to have compromised and trifled with the institutions of God's word.

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