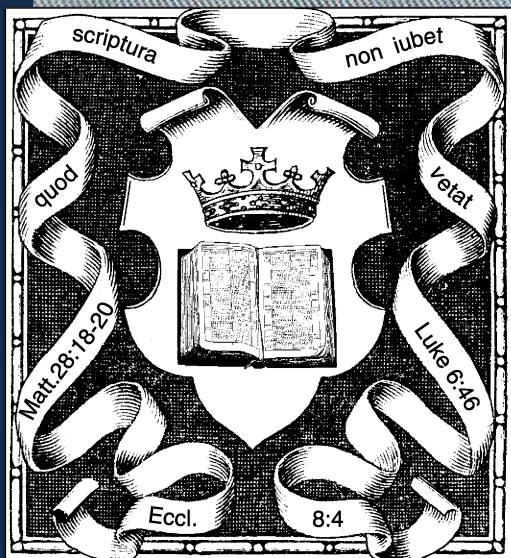
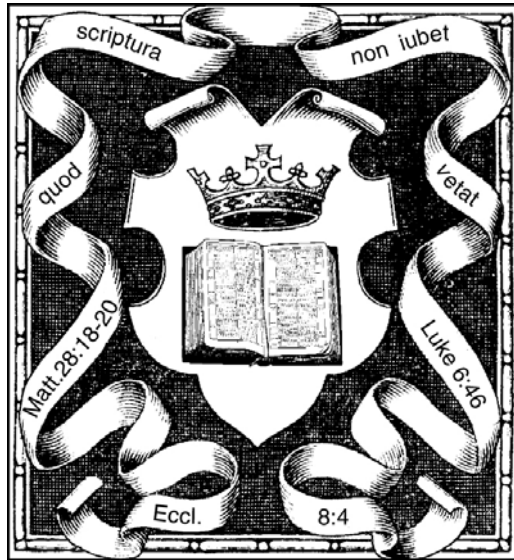


The Baptist Distinctives Series Number 39



Baptism, A Term of Communion

Joseph Kinghorn



Quod scriptura, non iubet velat

The Latin translates, “What is not commanded in scripture, is forbidden:”

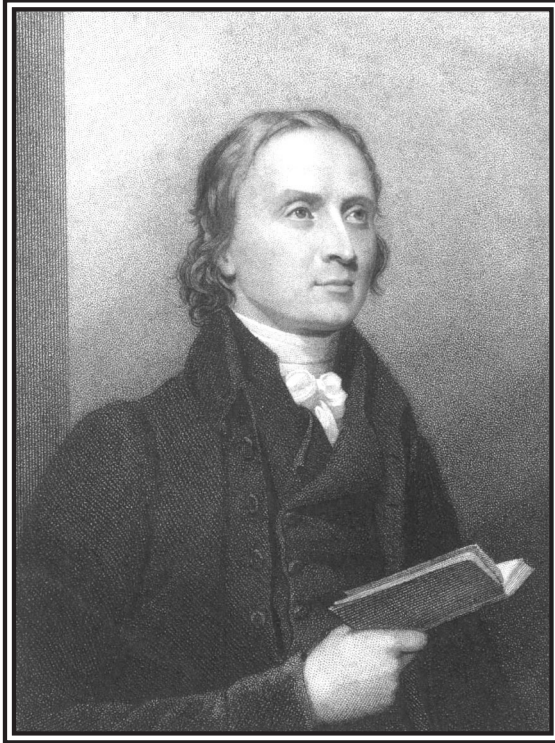
On the Cover: Baptists rejoice to hold in common with other evangelicals the main principles of the orthodox Christian faith. However, there are points of difference and these differences are significant. In fact, because these differences arise out of God’s revealed will, they are of vital importance. Hence, the barriers of separation between Baptists and others can hardly be considered a trifling matter. To suppose that Baptists are kept apart solely by their views on Baptism or the Lord’s Supper is a regrettable misunderstanding. Baptists hold views which distinguish them from Catholics, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Pentecostals, and Presbyterians, and the differences are so great as not only to justify, but to demand, the separate denominational existence of Baptists. Some people think Baptists ought not teach and emphasize their differences but as E.J. Forrester stated in 1893, “Any denomination that has views which justify its separate existence, is bound to promulgate those views. If those views are of sufficient importance to justify a separate existence, they are important enough to create a duty for their promulgation ... the very same reasons which justify the separate existence of any denomination make it the duty of that denomination to teach the distinctive doctrines upon which its separate existence rests.” If Baptists have a right to a separate denominational life, it is their duty to propagate their distinctive principles, without which their separate life cannot be justified or maintained.

Many among today’s professing Baptists have an agenda to revise the Baptist distinctives and redefine what it means to be a Baptist. Others don’t understand why it even matters. The books being reproduced in the *Baptist Distinctives Series* are republished in order that Baptists from the past may state, explain and defend the primary Baptist distinctives as they understood them. It is hoped that this Series will provide a more thorough historical perspective on what it means to be distinctively Baptist.

The Lord Jesus Christ asked, “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46). The immediate context surrounding this question explains what it means to be a true disciple of Christ. Addressing the same issue, Christ’s question is meant to show that a confession of discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ is inconsistent and untrue if it is not accompanied with a corresponding submission to His authoritative commands. Christ’s question teaches us that a true recognition of His authority as Lord inevitably includes a submission to the authority of His Word. Hence, with this question Christ has made it forever impossible to separate His authority as King from the authority of His Word. These two principles—the authority of Christ as King and the authority of His Word—are the two most fundamental Baptist distinctives. The first gives rise to the second and out of these two all the other Baptist distinctives emanate. As F.M. Jans wrote in 1894, “Loyalty to Christ as King, manifesting itself in a constant and unswerving obedience to His will as revealed in His written Word, is the real source of all the Baptist distinctives.” In the search for the *primary* Baptist distinctive many have settled on the Lordship of Christ as the most basic distinctive. Strangely, in doing this, some have attempted to separate Christ’s Lordship from the authority of Scripture, as if you could embrace Christ’s authority without submitting to what He commanded. However, while Christ’s Lordship and Kingly authority can be isolated and considered essentially for discussion’s sake, we see from Christ’s own words in Luke 6:46 that His Lordship is really inseparable from His Word and, with regard to real Christian discipleship, there can be no practical submission to the one without a practical submission to the other.

In the symbol above the Kingly Crown and the Open Bible represent the inseparable truths of Christ’s Kingly and Biblical authority. The Crown and Bible graphics are supplemented by three Bible verses (Ecclesiastes 8:4, Matthew 28:18-20, and Luke 6:46) that reiterate and reinforce the inextricable connection between the authority of Christ as King and the authority of His Word. The truths symbolized by these components are further emphasized by the Latin quotation - *quod scriptura, non iubet vetat*— *i.e.*, “What is not commanded in scripture, is forbidden.” This Latin quote has been considered historically as a summary statement of the regulative principle of Scripture. Together these various symbolic components converge to exhibit the two most foundational Baptist Distinctives out of which all the other Baptist Distinctives arise. Consequently, we have chosen this composite symbol as a logo to represent the primary truths set forth in the *Baptist Distinctives Series*.

BAPTISM,
A TERM OF
COMMUNION



JOSEPH KINGHORN
1766-1832

Photo courtesy of:
Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives,
Nashville, Tennessee

BAPTISM,
A TERM OF
COMMUNION

AT THE
Lord's Supper.

BY JOSEPH KINGHORN.

— THE FIRST CONSIDERATION IN EVERY ACT OF WORSHIP IS ITS CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD, WHICH WILL OFTEN JUSTIFY US IN DECLINING THE EXTERNAL COMMUNION OF A CHURCH, WITH WHICH WE CEASE NOT TO CULTIVATE A COMMUNION IN SPIRIT.

Robert Hall, *Terms of Communion*, p.6

With a Biographical Sketch of the Author by John Franklin Jones

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Thou hast given a *standard* to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth.
-- Psalm 60:4

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THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM

lux lucet in tenebris

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

ISBN# 1579786308

PREFACE.

As the introduction to the following work, takes a general view of the controversy between the advocates and opponents of mixed communion, it would be improper here to enter into particulars, or to detain the reader's attention. I am aware, that some will consider a defence of the conduct of those Baptists who oppose mixed communion, as of itself a proof, that they lay too much stress on the opinion by which they are distinguished from their brethren. Such persons, however, should recollect, that though a particular subject, when brought forward by debate, must unavoidably become prominent, it does not at all follow, that those who plead its cause, are esteeming it above its real importance.

He who thinks that baptism was only a temporary institution, should remember, that he differs not from the Baptists alone ; but also from the greater part of the Christian world.

Those Pædobaptists who believe that baptism (according to their views of the ordinance) is necessary to communion, surely will not blame the Baptists for thinking so too ; because, however the parties may differ, respecting either the mode or subjects of the institution, they agree in this principle, that obedience to the rite which the Lord enjoined, is requisite to orderly fellowship with his church.

If an objection be raised against the sentiments of those who are called strict Baptists, by any who allow baptism to be a law of Jesus Christ, but think, that whether it be regarded or not, is practically of little consequence ; let them inquire, how it came to be appointed by the Lord ? Let them account for his enacting a law, which they have discovered to be of trivial value, before they oppose such as maintain that it demands the steady obedience of his church, in submission to the authority by which it was promulgated.

Those who admit that baptism was intended to be permanent, it is presumed, will grant, that the appointment of the Lord should be punctually obeyed. Few will venture to assert, that one system was enacted for the early ages of the church, and another for those of later date ; we should, therefore, enquire what was the will of Christ, on the presumption, that, like his character, it continues unchanged. The whole controversy now before us, hinges on the question, whether we ought to obey the direct law of Christ, and the explanation given of it in the conduct of the apostles ;—or, whether we are justified in being guided by inferences, which, as I have endeavoured to shew in the following pages, are not correctly drawn from New Testament premises. The result of my own investigation of this question is now laid before the world ; and respectfully submitted to all those who feel interested in the subject.

INTRODUCTION.



IT is neither a fondness for controversy, nor a desire to promote it, nor a spirit of opposition to the friends of mixed communion, (many of whom are truly excellent men) but it is a conviction of the importance of the subject discussed in the following pages, which has led me to present this work to the Christian world.

Various causes have by degrees drawn the attention of Christians to the question of church communion ; and those who are called strict Baptists, who admit to the Lord's supper only such, as in their estimation, have been baptized, have long had, exclusively, to bear the charges of being narrow minded, bigotted, and illiberal. The zeal which of late years has been excited for spreading the knowledge of God, and calling sinners to attend to the gospel of salvation, has united together good men of different denominations in mutual attachment and exertions ; and thus eminently useful effects have been produced, both to the world, and to the parties themselves.

But with this good feeling and Christian exertion, there has often been mixed a portion of bad reasoning ; and it has appeared, as if some very excellent men were disposed too much to neglect the positive commands of the Lord, in their great zeal to unite all Christians in one body, and bury all party distinctions.

Hence many have been led to ask, why should our difference of opinion separate us from each other? Why not unite, as Christians, at the Lord's table, and in all the duties and privileges of our religious profession; not striving about inferior objects, but keeping solely in view the great and important truths, in which we are all agreed?

This fascinating theory, which in the present state of things cannot be realized, has often brought forward the question of communion, between the Baptists and Pædobaptists; yet it has seldom extended far; the attention of the religious public was not generally excited to it, and the discussion of course soon came to an end. But as the Rev. R. Hall, in his "Terms of Communion," has directed the minds of men to this subject in an elaborate treatise, in which the point at issue is represented, as the application of a general principle to a particular instance; the question is likely to be investigated by many, who hitherto have not considered it.

Every one who is acquainted with Mr. Hall, will readily bow to him with the greatest deference. I have for many years known him, and acknowledge myself under many obligations to him. His "works praise him in the gate;" his pre-eminent talents are confessed; his praise is in all our churches; still it must not be forgotten, that splendour of genius has often adorned mistaken opinions; and the influence of abilities may promote error, as well as support truth.

Although the work now presented to the public, would not have been written, had it not been for Mr. Hall's publication; yet it is designed, rather as an explanation and defence of the principles and conduct of the strict Baptists in general, than as a reply to the whole detail of his observations. I have noticed the principles of his reasoning; I have endeavoured to mark their tendency; and have given such replies as appear to me deserving

of attention. To have gone farther, would not only have been needless, but would have endangered personal controversy, which is always an evil, and particularly painful among friends. It is what I conceive to be the truth, and truth which is now of importance to the constitution of our dissenting churches at large, Pædobaptists as well as Baptists, for which I plead; and if this be only established, the less any good man's mind is hurt, the better. In examining the principles of an argument, it is not necessary to investigate all its minor operations; if a tree be cut at its root, the branches will wither and die without farther labour. I have also noticed many things which I have met with elsewhere; have marked the bearings of the subject as they occurred to my own mind; and have endeavoured to reply to what I thought might be advanced against my own opinion.

Though the strict Baptists have to bear all the blame of illiberality and want of candour, because they openly and practically maintain, that baptism is essential to communion, yet they are by no means the only persons who act on the system; who, if it be right, ought to support it; or, if it be wrong, ought to give it up. *Pædobaptist* churches generally act on the same principle. I believe the cases are comparatively few, in which they would openly acknowledge, that it is right to receive any to communion who have not been baptized, in that way which they deem sufficient. The constitution of their churches, the formularies to which they appeal as expressing their general sentiments, and the opinion of their leading characters, in the great majority of cases, favour the sentiment of the strict Baptists, that baptism is requisite to communion. For the question is not, whether they would refuse a person who had received baptism from another religious denomination, but whether they would receive such as have had none at all?

The practical cases which may require them to decide on this point are few; but that has nothing to do with the *principle* which Mr. Hall has laid down. His argument must either stand or fall by the decision of the question;—whether a person, in other respects unexceptionable, ought to be received as a member of a Christian church, who is on all hands acknowledged to be unbaptized?

And, not only are the Pædobaptists concerned in the controversy as much as the Baptists, but, if his principle be adopted, the constitution of all our dissenting churches will be altered; and then it deserves inquiry, whether by the alteration they will be *more like*, or *unlike* the churches of the primitive age. Nor does it rest here; the question of dissent is placed on new ground: and we must plead, *not for the liberty of copying the apostolic church*; but for the *additional liberty* of manifestly *departing from it*. How far this will be an advantage should be the subject of serious enquiry. If we ought to substitute our interpretation of the spirit of the New Testament precepts, for an attention to the literal appointments of the Lord, let it be proved that this is our duty. If the church of Christ ought to enquire into the faith and practice of those who wish to become members, but *not* into their baptism, let this also be proved. Whatever is truth, will in the end shine by its own lustre; but let it be remembered, that if these points are established, we have new positions to defend, and are liable to attacks in a new direction. If either a Baptist or Pædobaptist dissenter, be desirous of introducing the unbaptized to communion, it will be impossible for him to say, that he wishes to see the churches of his denomination, acting on the same plan with those of the purest ages; without he believes, that in the apostolic church some were admitted, who were not baptized at all: but I never heard of any who maintained this

opinion. The Society of Friends, and those few who think baptism was not designed to be permanent in the church, are of course not taken into the account, since they do not belong to either of the bodies above mentioned.

As I wish for nothing but the establishment of what I believe is the truth, I shall be glad to see it promoted by any means which God may condescend to use. If any one should be stimulated from the defects which he may perceive in the following work, to come forward and supply my "lack of service," I shall rejoice; and if any invitation of mine can animate him, I most cordially give it. It signifies little, who contributes the most to the support of the great cause of truth, if only it be maintained in the spirit of the gospel. The stone which sharpens a tool has its use, however blunt it may be in itself. I shall be thankful, if I serve a common cause in no higher capacity than this.

————— "fungar vice cotis; acutum

Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi."

HOR.

It has been said, that the cause of mixed communion is popular among our young ministers; especially those who have enjoyed a liberal education. It may be so. I have not had the opportunity either of affirming or of contradicting the assertion. But of one thing I feel certain, that the line of study by which our best educated ministers ought to be distinguished, will not promote that system. A general course, which may be of great use in forming the taste, and improving the mind, may accord with the sentiment of mixed communion; and if it extends no farther than to render those who pursue it, agreeable to the best informed classes of society with which they may mingle, it is not at all unlikely to have that effect. The fashion of the present day, among those who boast of any degree of superior

information, is to say much in favour of candour and liberality;—real excellencies, which we can scarcely prize too highly; but which are often little understood in their nature, or felt in their genuine operation. And while many affect to be more under their influence than they really are, others may be tempted to adopt, with too little consideration, such sentiments as will secure them from the charge of narrow mindedness and bigotry. Our young ministers may sometimes be surrounded by persons of these classes, and whilst from the purest motives, they wish to render themselves acceptable to those among whom they labour, it is not at all unlikely that the sentiments and feelings of their friends may have some influence: and if they have not had time to carry on their enquiries to any extent, or have not a taste for employing their literary acquirements in theological pursuits, there is nothing in the direct tendency of their education, that will oppose any system which good men adopt. But if, after devoting the prime of their attention and study to the sacred oracles, they investigate the opinions and history of the ancient church, they will be convinced, that the maxims of antiquity would never lead them to adopt the plan of mixed communion. They will see the truth of *Dr. Wall's* assertion, that, “*among all the absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained that, that any person should partake of the communion before he was baptized.**” They will find, that without arguing from the general manner in which the ancient writers speak of baptism, as the first external rite to which the converts to Christianity ought to attend, there are evidences which expressly prove that they were baptized, *before* they were admitted as members of the church:—that all the facts on record in the history of the ancient church, which

* *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* p. ii. c. ix. p. 518.—Ed. 2d:

bear on the subject;—all the impressions which those facts made on the minds of the primitive Christians;—and their reasonings, and decisions, on a variety of cases which came before them, respecting church fellowship, clearly shew, that mixed communion is both in principle and practice, *a modern invention*.

The question concerning communion, is intimately connected, both with the Constitution of the Church of Christ, and with the effects which must arise from the introduction of a plan different from that prescribed in the New Testament. A Baptist ought to enquire, how far he is justified, if he agrees to admit into a church, persons unbaptized, whose whole weight of example and influence, will be in opposition to that ordinance, by which believers were commanded to testify their faith in the Lord Jesus? It is a serious thing to patronize *in the church* a system which directly tends to set aside any of the commands of the Lord, whether moral or positive. For even supposing that in the issue, truth will overcome error, it does not follow, that the best way is to bear with what we believe to be wrong, under the persuasion that time will rectify it. For, the question returns, is this doing the will of the Lord? If we have “no law,” there can be “no transgression,” in adopting any system which our judgment or taste may prefer: but if there be a law for the formation and regulation of the church, then we ought to enquire, whether the admission of unbaptized persons as members of the church, be supported by the law, or not? All these considerations will engage the mind of the enquirer, while he is examining the subject of communion. I have endeavoured to turn the reader’s attention to the evidence which has struck me. Others will probably do the same. Thus, in time, the whole argument, and the whole evidence of the controversy will be brought to view. In the mean while, let those who are the most exposed to attack, recollect that

there is nothing surprising in the popularity of error, nor in its being supported by the most splendid talents. It has so often been the fate of the truth of God to be run down as unreasonable, or rejected as distasteful, that the cry raised against the strict Baptists, appears to me a presumption that they are right. Their great argument is, *the New Testament supports our practice*; and in all ages, those who in other things pleaded for truths, or practised duties, solely on this authority, have uniformly had a strong current of opinion to strive against.

In reviewing the history of this controversy, it is observable, that the strict Baptists have seldom been the assailants. Walking, as they believe, in the way of the Lord, they have repeatedly been called forward to defend themselves: they have done so: with what success it is not for them to say; but until it be proved, that the New Testament warrants the systematic omission of an ordinance, the nature of which is conceived to be understood, and the authority of which is acknowledged to be binding; they will think it right to persevere in their old plan. While any party can say, concerning a commanded Christian duty, "*so did the Apostolic Church, and therefore so do we,*" they have the support of an argument, which is *very short*,—*very plain*;—but *very forcible*.

The reader who is acquainted with the "*Apology for the Baptists,*" written by the late venerable ABRAHAM BOOTH, will find, that in the following pages I have taken ground somewhat different from his. He has said much that is excellent; nor do I see how many of his arguments can be answered, by those who believe that the positive ordinances of the gospel are of any consequence. My regard for his talents and character is *very high*; but I hope a common cause will not be injured, if I have adopted rather a different mode of defence.

It is not improbable, that it may be more needful in futurity, than it has been in times past, to plead for the authority of the institutions themselves. Many are inclining to the opinion, that Baptism is either of no authority, or, that it is not a rite of any great consequence. They do not know how to blame those who attend to it, but they do not like it; and find what reasons they can, either to oppose it, or to excuse themselves from it. All these persons are greatly pleased with mixed communion; and the tendency of the system is practically so much in their favour, that it cannot be a matter of surprise, if their opinion be promoted by it. For although it is granted, that those Baptists who plead for it, do not mean to deny the perpetuity of baptism, still it seems difficult to conceive, how any man can eagerly contend, that obedience to an ordinance, designed to shew our faith, and universally observed in the primitive church, is not necessary to communion, and yet have that sense of its authority which ought to attach to every specific command of the Saviour.

Nor will the practical influence of communion without baptism, be felt by the Baptists alone: the Pædobaptists will be equally affected by it. For if they adopt the wide principle laid down by Mr. Hall, they will not only change the constitution of their churches, but will find, that although they reason on the subject differently from the Baptists, yet a rite of any kind which is believed to be of so little consequence, that all the privileges of the church may be had without it, is soon held in very low estimation, and easily neglected. It is therefore their interest, quite as much as ours, to give the subject of the following work a thorough investigation: and if it only be done in the spirit of Christian meekness, truth will in the end be promoted.

CHAP. I.

The Controversy Stated.

IN every discussion it is desirable that the point in debate should be fairly stated. In the present instance, that point is, *whether persons who are acknowledged to be unbaptized ought to come to the Lord's table.* This is the simple question, and the whole question. Every thing else, however connected with it, is of importance in the present investigation, only so far as it may assist us to determine this enquiry.

But as a controversy has arisen on this subject between the Pædobaptists and Baptists, and particularly among the Baptists themselves, it may be expedient to state a little in detail, the sentiments of each party respecting baptism, and the requisite qualifications for church-membership.

The Pædobaptists believe, that baptism ought to be administered to infants; and that the mode in which it is administered is of little consequence, if only it be done in the prescribed form, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Those who have been thus baptized, whether by immersion or by sprinkling, they consider as fit subjects for Christian communion, if, when they grow up, they profess their faith in Christ, and live according to the rule of the gospel; and in general they believe that none ought to come to the Lord's supper who are not baptized.

The Baptists act on a different plan: they think that baptism ought to be administered to those only, who

profess repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and that it should be administered to them, on such profession, by immersion. And then, and not before, they consider such persons properly qualified according to the New Testament, for the reception of the Lord's supper.

Here arises a controversy between these two parties; not only respecting baptism, but also respecting their conduct to each other on the subject of communion. The greater part of Pædobaptist Dissenters have no objection to admit Baptists to communion with them in their churches; since they do not deny that the Baptists *are baptized*; and if they approve their character and conduct in general, they feel no difficulty in the case.

Many Baptists, on the other hand, do not think it right to admit Pædobaptists to communion with them in *their* churches, on this ground, that however excellent their characters, yet they are, *in their estimation*, not baptized: and they think that it is not according to the law of Christ, that persons not baptized should come to the Lord's table: these are called *strict Baptists*. Others are not only willing to admit Pædobaptists, but desirous that Baptist churches should generally admit them: these are the friends of what is called *open or mixed communion*. They plead for this practice by various arguments: they alledge, that they have seen reason to form a high opinion of many of their Pædobaptist brethren; and that communion on earth cannot be wrong, when held with those with whom we hope to enjoy communion in heaven. Besides, as their Pædobaptist brethren think themselves baptized, they are willing to admit them on that ground, since they do not object to baptism itself, but only differ from others in the *circumstan-*tials of the ordinance. And some lay down a still wider principle; that baptism has no connexion with church communion; and that in forming a Christian church,

the question ought not to be, are these persons who wish to unite in church fellowship *baptized*, whatever that term is considered as meaning; but are they, as far as we can judge, real Christians?

This last theory has received a powerful supporter in Mr. Hall; the aim of all whose argument, in his late work on "Terms of Communion," is to prove that baptism is not necessary to the communion of saints: and that they may and ought to meet at the Lord's supper, whatever be their views of that ordinance. This plan would equally include Baptists, Pædobaptists, and those who think that Baptism was only a temporary appointment, and is therefore now of no authority.

He says, (Preface p. iv.) "there is no position in the whole compass of theology, of the truth of which he (Mr. H.) feels a stronger persuasion, than that no man, or set of men, are entitled to prescribe *as an indispensable condition of communion, what the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation.* To establish *this position*, is the principal object of the following work; and though it is more immediately occupied in the discussion of a case of conduct, which respects the Baptists and Pædobaptists, that case is attempted to be decided entirely upon the principle now mentioned, and is *no more than the application of it to a particular instance.*" This "position" is, consequently in Mr. Hall's view, more extensive than the "particular instance" to which it is applied; and therefore necessarily will include those who deny baptism altogether, if they profess faith in Christ, and admit the perpetuity of the Lord's supper. For it is evident from the whole of his work, that he does not consider baptism as "a condition of salvation."

He confesses that if the dependance of the Lord's supper on baptism is proved, the debate is ended: but this dependance he denies, though he frequently and clearly asserts his conviction, that believers, and he-

lievers only, are the proper subjects of Christian baptism. His opinion on both these points, he brings together in a few lines; (p. 50, 51,) “we are far, however, from insinuating a doubt on the obligations of believers to submit to the ordinance of baptism, or of its being exclusively appropriated to such; but we affirm that in no part of scripture is it inculcated as a *preparative to the Lord’s supper*, and that this view of it is a *mere fiction of the imagination*.”

The eminence of Mr. Hall’s talents, seems to have led the friends of mixed communion to consider the case as decided. They look on those who have pleaded for strict communion as completely conquered; and they seem to stand waiting for the surrender of our arms, and an acknowledgement of our complete subjugation to the conqueror.

The battle, however, is not quite finished. Before the friends of strict communion can agree to consider themselves subdued, they call the attention of all their brethren, who are interested in the result, whether they are Baptists or Pædobaptists, to the PRINCIPLE on which the attack is founded. They ask all those, who may be highly gratified at finding the strict Baptists opposed, by a man of Mr. Hall’s vigour of mind, will you consent to act on his theory in all its extent?

I would say to a Pædobaptist, do you agree to the principle, that baptism and the Lord’s supper have no connexion; so that whether a person is, *in your view*, baptized or not, makes no difference as to the propriety of his being a member of the same church with yourself? Is this the plan which is recognised in the church to which you belong? Or, if the question has never been agitated, should it be brought forward at your church meeting, would you, taking the New Testament as your rule, give the proposition—that a person, who it is acknowledged is unbaptized, might be accepted as

a member without any baptism ;—your deliberate and decided support ?

My own knowledge of the private sentiments of the Pædobaptists, is too limited to enable me to say with certainty, how such a question would be answered ; but all my observation has led me to believe, that very few would be found willing, when it came home to their own case, to lay down this principle and fairly act upon it.

That popular organ of opinion among the Pædobaptists, *the Evangelical Magazine*, in the review of the new edition of Mr. Booth's Apology for the Baptists, clearly shews that its conductors would not think of adopting so wide a principle ; and it is not unfair to conclude, that what appears to be their decided, uncontradicted opinion, will be the general opinion of a large number of their readers.*

Among those Baptists who plead for mixed communion, I apprehend few will be found, who would fairly take Mr. Hall's principle in all its consequences. In general they palliate, and plead that many good

* After having noticed the plan of Mr. Booth's Apology, and added some remarks on the general character of the writer as " a clear writer, a close reasoner, and a complete advocate for strict communion," whose " arguments are so diversified pointed and strong, that a free communionist may find it no easy task to answer him," &c. they add, " it may be considered, that Pædobaptists, though they are no way engaged to answer this piece, are not, nor should they view themselves as unconcerned spectators. Were we to suppose Mr. Booth's premises, that immersion only is baptism, and adults the only proper subjects of that ordinance, capable of proof, the drift of his piece goes to nothing short of this serious consequence,—the unchurching of all the churches that are or have been in the world, except Baptist Churches."

Evang. Mag. for 1813, vol. xxi. p. 461.

men think themselves baptized, and *they* are willing to accept them on that footing, leaving it to their own consciences to decide, whether they had received such baptism as the word of God required; and they will hardly admit the possibility of any case occurring, which should require their acting on a wider principle. And here also, as far as my knowledge and observation have extended, I believe the cases are *very few*, in which the position would be fairly and boldly adopted, that Christian communion ought to be held with those, who deny altogether, the obligation to attend to Christian baptism.

Combined armies ought to know precisely the end for which they are fighting; and those who are the objects of their attack may justly ask, why do you turn your arms against *us*?

At least let us know who are the contending parties;—*who* thoroughly enter into the cause, and *who* only occasionally shoot an arrow, but always retire from the thickest of the battle? I do not wish to lessen the amount of those with whom we have to contend, for the purpose of making them appear either few, or weak. The ranks of men may by their mere number, completely retard the operation of carnal weapons; whilst the truth of God flies with undiminished force, and is not at all lessened in its *momentum*, by the opposition it has encountered. But if the field be cleared of those who are not really engaged in the conflict, we shall see better what we are about.

All those, who among the Pædobaptists will not admit *any* to communion, who *in their estimation*, are not baptized, cannot urge Mr. Hall's principle against us, for this plain reason; they do not act upon it themselves; and would not, if any case occurred which should put them to the test. They require what *they esteem* baptism;—*and we do no more*. The question between us and them, is not what is the principle of church

membership; but solely, what is the baptism required in the New Testament? This class of Pædobaptists, (which I apprehend forms by much the major part) cannot take up this controversy against us; nor will they do it, if they understand their own principles.

It is true, they will sometimes complain bitterly, and represent us as so illiberal and bigotted, that nothing can be done with us; but a moment's cool reflexion convinces, or may convince them, that the sole difference relates to the enquiry—what is baptism, and to whom ought it to be administered? For while they maintain that any mode of baptism is necessary to communion, the question is unanswerable, “what do ye more than others?”

So also, those among ourselves, who are favourable to mixed communion, but who would think it wrong if any were admitted to membership that had not, in some manner, recognised the law of baptism, ought to remember, that on *their* principles, the strict Communion Baptists are *in the right*. For since both parties believe that infant baptism is of no validity, if any baptism is requisite, that alone should be adopted, which the New Testament authorizes.

Still it may be said, a theory may be perfectly correct, which is not supported by numbers. It is granted; and we therefore willingly proceed in our examination of it.

CHAP. II.

What are the terms of Christian Profession and of Communion, pointed out in the New Testament.

THIS enquiry comes to the point. What saith the scripture? We begin with the commission which our Lord gave to his apostles after his resurrection. Whatever may be said concerning John's baptism, that which our Lord commanded his disciples to do after his ascension, must, in the strictest sense, belong to the Christian dispensation. To them he said, "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." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Or, as it is recorded by Mark, ch. xvi. 15, 16; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," &c. This is the LAW; the acts of the apostles is a commentary on this law: not leaving us to collect from mere precedents what ought to be done, but shewing us how the law was practically explained, by those who perfectly understood it. In every instance where the history descends to particulars, we find that they constantly adhered to this rule. When they *taught*, and men *believed*, the apostles *baptized* them; and then farther instructed them, in things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Such is the fact, clearly stated, and indeed not disputed. Perhaps no duty of Christianity is more frequently mentioned, or illustrated with such a variety of examples, as that of baptism.

It is granted, that baptism is not a term of membership with *any particular church*: for believers were first baptized, and then either formed into a church, or added to the church which already existed. But it is obvious, that their baptism was, *the term of professing their faith, by the special appointment of the Lord himself*: so that those only who were baptized, were the first communicants.

To this statement there is not one exception; nor indeed is it supposed even by our opponents, that an exception could exist. Mr. Hall grants, that had a primitive convert refused compliance with this institution, he would have been deemed unworthy Christian communion. "By rejecting the only authority established on earth for the direction of conscience, and the termination of doubts and controversies, he would undoubtedly have been repelled as a *contumacious schismatic*." (P. 62.)

General reasoning may alledge many things in support of the "position" already mentioned, that men ought not "to prescribe as an indispensable condition of communion, what the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation;" and the unreasonableness of any other plan, may be the subject of much eloquence. We have seen the most consummate talent exerted in defence of this theory; and may fairly assume, that nothing more of any consequence, can be urged in its favour. But the fact still exists, that it pleased the Lord to make a *visible* and *ritual* observance, the appointed evidence of our believing in him. If obedience to a *rite* be not a term of salvation, (which no one supposes) yet it was ordered by the highest authority, as an evidence of our subjection to the author of salvation: and a Christian profession is not made *in Christ's own way* without it. It is now too late to say, this is not what the New Testament has

enjoined ; and it does not become us to alter what *is enacted* by infinite wisdom. There may be, and there are, differences of opinion respecting the subjects and mode of baptism : but as the ordinance itself was prescribed by the Lord, it ought to be visibly recognized in his church.

Mr. Hall's "position," when fairly examined, is open to many exceptions. The terms in which it is couched, will to some appear inaccurate, and at least seem to convey a sentiment which they cannot approve. They will ask, what has the New Testament "enjoined *as a condition* of salvation?" But suppose this expression was either altered, or explained, the "position" itself does not agree with the facts of the New Testament : or, if they are so interpreted as to agree with it, then it proves too much. It is freely granted, that "no man, or set of men, are entitled to prescribe" terms of communion to the church of Christ ; but the enquiry before us, is, what hath *the Lord* prescribed. Now, as he did require baptism as the evidence of faith in him, communion must *once* have required it also. This is in substance granted. But if baptism was *once* necessary to communion, either, it was then essential to salvation, or, that which was *not* essential to salvation, *was* necessary to communion. If it was *then* essential to salvation, how can it be proved not to be essential *now*? If it be argued that it was not essential to salvation *then* ; it must either be proved, that communion was held *without it*, or Mr. Hall's "position" must fall. If it be said,—baptism was *not* essential to *salvation*, but only essential to the evidence of a person's believing, the "position" is still untenable ; for if a ritual observance was essential to the evidence of a person's faith, that communion which required the profession of faith could not dispense with it. Clear as Mr. Hall's "position" seems, there are many enquiries arise out of it, which

ought to be answered, before we can thoroughly judge of it. What is the meaning of the term "condition?" In whatever sense this term can apply to the commission of our Lord, or to the declarations of the apostles, respecting repentance, faith, and baptism; is not baptism a "condition," either of communion, or of salvation, or of both? Do the conditions either of salvation or communion, change by time? Are they annulled by being misunderstood? How is it, that with the same rule for the guidance of the church, the *antient* Christians could not receive a person to communion without baptism, if the *modern*, both can and ought to receive him?

But whatever may be "the conditions of salvation," a plain question here occurs, which is, *ought the terms of Christian communion to be different from those of Christian profession?* The only answer which one would think could be given to this question would be, NO: Christian communion must require whatever the Lord required as a mark of Christian profession.

It has pleased God in his infinite wisdom, to give us the principal part of our information respecting his holy gospel, not in a didactic form, but in the discourses of our Lord;—in the history of the first planting of Christianity;—in the sermons of the apostles;—and in their epistles to the churches which they had planted. From these materials we derive our knowledge; and we should endeavour by patient investigation, to discover what common sentiment will agree with the various individual representations. In our enquiries respecting the nature of the Christian church, we find, that one distinct line is drawn around it, accurately shewing its boundary; *including* those who ought to be considered as its members; and *excluding* those who had not the prescribed title; which is, that in every instance, where the history of the first planting of a

church is detailed, we see it was composed of those who believed in Christ, and *were baptized in his name*. And in the epistles, whenever baptism is either directly mentioned, or only alluded to, we find that the churches are addressed as having submitted to it. Nor is there a single instance of an unbaptized member to be quoted. If we take the New Testament for our guide, such are the materials of which the church ought *now* to be formed. If we adopt a different plan, and form a society that does not realize this description, we may collect persons of the most distinguished character; they may be an assembly of the most superior stamp for their godliness, as well as for their other qualifications; but they will not agree with the *New Testament account* of a church of Christ. From the whole we derive one obvious principle, that baptism was intended to be a visible evidence of connexion with the Christian church.

Here I am particularly desirous of not being misunderstood; it is the *principle* for which I *now* contend, and not its application to my own ideas. If the Pædo-baptists can prove, that we are wrong in baptizing by immersion; or, that the solemn application of water, in any quantity, with the appointed form, fairly comes within the rule, by all means let them do so. If they can prove, that we are too rigid in administering baptism only to those who profess their faith in Christ, and that although the first subjects of baptism were necessarily believers, yet afterwards the apostles extended the application of baptism to the seed of believers, and thus introduced them into covenant with God, and membership with his church;—if they can find any thing which will establish this sentiment from the word of God, and which, like a *riider* to the law, will explain and extend its application, let it be done. But suppose it were done; suppose that we Baptists were completely conquered, and so convinced* that we had been in the

wrong, as to discontinue our practice, still *the principle* will remain unimpeached, that baptism ought to hold the place it once held, as a visible evidence of connexion with the Christian church.

It may be difficult for me to say precisely, how I should reason on Mr. Hall's system, if I maintained infant baptism; but with my present views, I think that the Pædobaptists ought to be very careful not to admit it, for it will annihilate the force of some of their most popular representations. The claims of baptized infants to a visible covenant relation with God, and membership with his church, are founded on their baptism, as the means by which they possess them: and their principal value is, that they are considered as forming a link which connects the subjects of baptism with the church, even from their infancy. But were I a Pædobaptist, and disposed to adopt Mr. Hall's theory, I should be afraid of being pressed with the question, of what use then, is infant baptism at all, since baptism is "*no indispensable condition of communion,*" and the connexion between it, and the *Lord's supper*, "*is a mere fiction of the imagination?*"

If, entering into the spirit of this representation, they should consider baptism as not necessary to communion, I shall expect to find them begin to neglect it; and then, those who grow up without having had *any* baptism, must, if they become serious characters, either defend their remaining destitute of baptism, by maintaining that it was not designed to be a standing ordinance; or, if their attention to the New Testament prevents this, the probability is, that they will either become Baptists, or, at least adopt one of our principles; since in whatever mode they are baptized, it will be on the profession of their faith.

Or, if this be not the case; if these persons still continue with their former connexions, and are admitted to

the Lord's table though unbaptized, the precedent is allowed, that baptism is of no consequence to communion: the number of the unbaptized in the church will probably increase; and thus one of the institutions of the gospel will fall into disuse, among the very people who unite together for the professed purpose of *keeping the ordinances of the Lord!*

If modern Pædobaptists act this part, it is certain that it will be a complete deviation from the principles of their predecessors. They must also find new arguments for their infant baptism; for the old arguments supposed the necessity of baptism to communion; and without attempting to devise what they can be, it is easy to see, that they will be open to the general objection, which always lies against every *new* defence of an *old* rite; especially where the great part of the debate consists in the question of fact, whether the rite itself, as now performed, is not a corruption?

It is granted, that Christian baptism once was practised universally:—that it is not possible to suppose it neglected:—nay farther, that “*the shew of conformity to apostolic precedent is with the advocates of strict communion.*” (P. 65.) It seems then, that there could not be a *mixed communion church in apostolic days*. All who were added to the church were baptized, “in deference to the apostolic injunction.” And, why should not that injunction still be obeyed?—But, “as they practised as they did, in deference to the will of God, so our Pædobaptist brethren in declining the practice which we adopt, regulate their conduct by the same principle.” (P. 64, 65.) Be it so: on this supposition they baptize infants, believing it to be agreeable to the “apostolic injunction;” and in exact proportion as they consider baptism to be a part of the primitive profession, they will support it in their churches, according to their own views. But it does not follow, that because *they* and

we agree, that the "apostolic injunction" should be obeyed, either party ought to omit what it believes the "injunction" means; and without this be proved, the principle of mixed communion is not established.

The above reasoning may be carried still farther, it may be said, that they who reject our ideas altogether, being by the supposition consciencious men, still "regulate their conduct by the same principle," as they suppose that the apostolic injunction does not apply to our present circumstances; and we then are brought to this conclusion, that "the apostolic injunction" is of *no real consequence*; since those who obey it, and those who oppose it, if they are both thought sincere, ought to be treated *exactly alike*: and this is the genuine result of the system which we are so strongly urged to adopt.

It is allowed that the whole body of New Testament precedents is on the side of the strict Baptists: an important circumstance of itself; and a strong reason for that line of conduct which is in conformity to these precedents. But Mr. Hall says, "to attempt to determine under what circumstances the highest precedent possesses universally the form of law, involves a difficult and delicate enquiry; for while it is acknowledged that much deference is due to primitive example, there were certain usages in apostolical times, which few would attempt to revive. There is one general rule, however, applicable to the subject, which is, that no matter of fact is entitled to be considered as an authoritative precedent, which *necessarily* arose out of the existing circumstances, so that in the then present state of things, it could not fail to have occurred. The foundation of this rule is obvious. *Nothing is of the nature of law, but what emanates from the will of the legislator*: but when a particular fact, recorded in an historical narration, is so situated, that the contrary would have

appeared incongruous or absurd ; or in other words, when it could not fail to be the result of previous occurrences, such a fact is destitute of the essential characteristic of a law ; it has no dependance upon a superior will." (P. 59.)

I have transcribed the above passage, because it contains the very hinge of that part of the controversy, which relates to the force of *precedents*, and apostolical example. It is granted that "*much deference is due to primitive example.*" It is, then, certainly better to have that *with us*, than *against us*. But—it is observed, "there were certain usages in apostolical times, which few would attempt to revive." (P. 59.) Suppose so—*was baptism one of them?* If this was a circumstantial, a temporary institution, the mere offspring of previous habits ; or, like certain customs of the times, perfectly proper then, but not so in after periods ; let it be proved that this was its character, and it shall be given up. The debate will then be ended, by shewing that all parties have been in the wrong. But this cannot be done, because the direction to baptize believers "*emanates from the will of the legislator*" as a positive command, and therefore possesses the "nature of law." And from the circumstances of its enactment it was *general* ; it applied to all succeeding believers who had the opportunity and ability to attend to it. So that however the question concerning the force of precedents be determined, we are not dependent on mere precedents : we have a rule by which the precedents themselves were formed. If then, for the sake of shortening the argument, it be allowed for a moment, that precedents are *not laws* ;—they are, in the present instance, *expositions* of the law : they are *numerous* ;—they are *uniform* ;—they are *inspired*.

If a law, supported and explained by such precedents, ought not to be strictly followed, I shall be

glad to know, what is the use, either of command, or example?

But it is argued, that the uniformity of practice, in the primitive church, was “the necessary consequence of the then actual situation of the church.” (P. 60.) Suppose it was, there is the *more reason* for our copying such an example, *when the church was at that time in circumstances which secured a correct attention to the will of Christ.*

An exception is pleaded, on examples which if they were analogous to the point in question, might have some force; but they have none, because they did not arise as the effects of *law*. “It is an unquestionable fact, that the encharist was first celebrated with unleavened bread, on the evening, in an upper room, and to Jews only; but as we distinctly perceive that these particulars originated in the peculiar circumstances of the time, we are far from considering them as binding. On the same principle we account for the members of the primitive church consisting only of such as were baptized, without erecting that circumstance into an invariable rule of action.” (P. 59, 60.)

Let it, however, be observed, that though these are the circumstances of the first example of the Lord’s supper, none of them were marked by the legislator, as essential to his institution; they were *for that reason* not binding. But the baptism of those who believed, as the *term of their Christian profession*, was distinctly prescribed, and illustrated by numerous cases; and obedience to a *law* itself, is a very different thing from the circumstances of time, place, or nation, for which the law has made no provision:

Besides, the first instance of the Lord’s supper was not accompanied, as far as we find, with any directions to the disciples respecting futurity; and we could not have proved that we ought to follow their example, had

it not been for the practice of the apostles, and the information which they give us; by which we find that the first institution of that rite was designed as a precedent for future ages. From this source, and from this alone, we gather that the Lord's supper is a standing ordinance in the Christian church. The apostle Paul's statement shews us how he understood the will of the Lord, and from his recital of what he had received, we see that the *kind* of bread was not prescribed; the time and place, whether in the evening or in the day, whether in an upper room, or on the ground floor, are not specified; and the communicants were not confined to Jews, because both the *precedents* given by the apostles, and the explanation as a guide to *Corinthians*, shewed, that it was not Jewish disciples, merely, who had a right to partake of it, but those also who had given themselves up to the Lord from the Gentile world. Here, the force of precedent and of apostolic exposition, are fully admitted, as sufficient explanations of the will of Christ, respecting the Lord's supper: why then should they not be equally admitted, as marking the track of our obedience, in receiving none to communion but those who have been baptized; especially, since these precedents support and explain a direct law? What can be the reason, for the endeavour to escape the inference, from the *decided, universal, apostolical* precedents, respecting the constituent parts of the church; when the Lord's supper itself, which occasions all the controversy, stands on ground, which though not disputed, is far less distinctly marked?

It is very justly stated by Mr. Fuller in his letter to a friend* (lately published), that there are instances in the New Testament in which baptism and the Lord's

* Entitled "The Admission of unbaptized Persons to the Lord's Supper, inconsistent with the New Testament." 1815.

supper, are evidently connected together in the writer's mind, though he is only alluding to Christian baptism, and not distinctly bringing it forward. In this number he places 1 Cor. x. 1—5. The apostle was desirous of warning the members of the church of Corinth against certain evils; and he did it by pointing their attention to the Israelites of old, "with many of whom God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Ver. 5. Yet these Israelites had a figurative baptism "in the cloud, and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ." Ver. 2, 3, 4. If the apostle had not connected baptism and the Lord's supper together in his mind, how came he so pointedly to allude to them both in this passage?

So also the allusion to the connection of the two ordinances, appears from 1 Cor. xii. 13, where the apostle says, "by one spirit, are we all *baptized into one body*, and have been all made *to drink into one spirit*."

But besides his allusions to this connexion, his address to the Ephesians shews how important the ordinance of baptism was to the church as *a body*. In his exhortation, ch. iv. 3, &c. he says, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, *one baptism*, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Here we cannot but remark, that in all these Unities, only *one body*, and *one baptism* were visible things: all the others were invisible. The Ephesians professed their faith and hope in God, and in Jesus Christ, *by their baptism*; and for this reason, St. Paul represents it as one of *the essentials of a Christian church*.

The apostle had given the Corinthians a general rule,

1 Ep. ch. xi. ver. 1. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." And he adds, "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and *keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.*" Ver. 2.

In writing to the Thessalonians, he warned them of the coming of an enormous antichristian power, which should rise up in the church, poison their sentiments at the very fountain head, and place himself on the very throne of God. As the means of preserving them from this dangerous foe, he says, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the *traditions* which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. 2 Thes. ii. 15. It is the same word which in the first of these passages is translated *ordinances*, and in the last *traditions*; and in both it refers to the directions which the apostle delivered to the churches for their regulation. Again, if a brother walked *disorderly*, and not *after the tradition* which the apostles had given, they were to *withdraw from him*. See 2 Thess. iii. 6.—Now, is it a conceivable case, that in thus calling on the churches to be followers of *him*, as he was of *Christ*, to keep *the ordinances*, and hold *the traditions* delivered to them, he would except from these directions,—the ONE BAPTISM?

Let it be remembered, that the command to baptize those who believed, was not accidentally mentioned, or brought to light by some incident, without which we might have known nothing of it; it was expressly enjoined by the Lord, before his ascension, and distinctly recorded in the history of his life. So that baptism demands our attention as an act of submission to him who is the Lord of the new dispensation, and head of his church. If it be passed by as not necessary, his authority is not supported: and very substantial reasons ought to be given for the omission.

It will probably be said, it is not denied, either that baptism is a divine command, or that it ought to be

obeyed; but it is affirmed, that there is no instituted connexion between baptism and the Lord's supper. But if the above evidence be justly stated, there is a real instituted connexion between baptism and the whole of the succeeding Christian profession. So that there is no reason why the connexion between baptism and the Lord's supper should be more distinctly marked, than between baptism, and any other duty or privilege.

Baptism, as "a preparative to the Lord's supper," is called "a mere fiction of the imagination:" but it is **NOT** *a fiction of the imagination* that baptism is the *first* visible mark of Christian profession which the Lord commanded, and the apostles required. And it may be left with any one to determine, whether our attention to the Lord's supper, should be *before*, or *after* the first visible, appointed evidence, of our putting on Jesus Christ. Gal. iii. 27.

It is granted, that it is not expressly "inculcated as a preparative to the Lord's supper;" neither is it inculcated as a "preparative" to any other duty or privilege, separately considered. But the *first* act of Christian obedience, is of course succeeded by the rest; and the required acknowledgment of our faith in Christ, in the nature of things, ought to *precede* the enjoyment of the privileges, which arise from faith.

Modern practice has frequently adopted a different theory; but our present enquiry is, what is the plan laid down in the New Testament; and how far ought that plan to be now followed? The hinge of this part of the controversy turns on the single point of the design of baptism. If, according to the inspired records, it was intended to be an open recognition of our faith in Christ, and an ostensible act of subjection to him, in the way which he prescribed; it was like an oath of allegiance on entering the service of our country; or like a matriculation on being admitted a member of a public

body; an act which is necessary, because it is legally required. And the unavoidable consequence then is, that communion without baptism, is as great a deviation from the principles of the New Testament, as it is *acknowledged* to be a departure from *primitive fact*.

An objection will here be raised; that this statement lays a great stress on baptism, and makes it of more importance than it really is. The Baptists frequently declare, that they do not consider baptism necessary to salvation; they do not depend on it for their acceptance before God; nor do they view any as fit subjects for that ordinance, who are not previously believers in Christ, and justified in the sight of God by their faith. But if their views of it are agreeable to the New Testament, it has, at least, the same degree of importance, that attaches to any other of the directions of the Lord, either respecting the profession of his name, or the structure of his church. If any of our brethren who plead for mixed communion, whether Baptists or Pædo-baptists, can prove that we are wrong in our statement of the design of the first Christian ordinance, we shall immediately submit: but if not, the subject will still demand consideration, whether we can do better, than closely follow the directions and examples, which the sacred oracles set before us; and whether any considerations, derived merely from inference and general reasoning, can justify our departing from them?

Arguing from analogy, both sides have brought forward the law of circumcision and the passover. Considered as an explanation of the nature of positive law, it deserves attention; and as it is brought forward against us, it requires examination. It is asserted, respecting the Christian ordinances, that "on no occasion are they mentioned in such a connection as to imply, much less to assert, that the one was enjoined *with a view* to the other. Such a connection, we acknowledge,

subsisted between the rites of circumcision and the passover." (Terms of Com. p. 53.) The express command, that no uncircumcised person shall eat of it, is referred to; and it is asked, "where is it asserted in the New Testament, that no unbaptized person shall partake of the eucharist?" (P. 49.)

An examination of this subject will not weaken the cause of strict communion, while it will lead us to some general principles which may have their use in this enquiry. Surely it will not be pleaded, that a command is not binding, except there be a prohibition of its opposite. If a direction be plainly delivered, and those who hear it, conceive that they clearly understand it, that ought to be enough. The New Testament does not prohibit the unbaptized from receiving the Lord's supper, because no circumstance arose which rendered such prohibition necessary. It is acknowledged, that the law of baptism was clearly understood, and that the unbaptized could not be received into the church. There was, therefore, no reason why a prohibitory declaration should exist. The law of circumcision was enjoined *four centuries* before the passover, and was distinct both in its nature and the time of its appointment from the latter Jewish institution. The passover was a *family* and *social* rite, and the statement, that the uncircumcised should not eat of it, (Exod. xii. 48) was therefore necessary to draw a line of distinction; otherwise uncircumcised members of the family might naturally have expected to have a share in the family provision: especially, as it appears, that a mixed "multitude" went up with Israel from Egypt, (ver. 38) who were attached to their general interests, and persuaded that God was with them. As the passover was intended for the natural and adopted family of Abraham, and not for others, a description was requisite; exactly on the same principle as it was needful to describe the qualifi-

cations for baptism, on our becoming professed disciples of Jesus Christ.

But it ought to be remembered here, that it was *not* THE DUTY of a Gentile resident in a Jewish family to be circumcised: no law required it, and he broke no covenant nor any command if he omitted it. He was completely at his liberty, and not blamed if he continued a Gentile. He might even offer his sacrifice to the Lord, according to an express direction for this purpose. Num. xv. 14, 15. And from all that appears, not only might such a sacrifice be accepted; but the offerer be eventually saved. Certainly many were proselytes to the great body of Jewish doctrine, who were not attached to the family of Abraham by circumcision, and who, all parties admit, might be devout men, accepted of God.*

Here it is easy to see, that the whole of the analogy in the present case, is *against* the system which we oppose. Had there been any professing Christians in the apostles' days, who were under no obligation to be baptized, a line of distinction might have been necessary, but other-

* It may not be improper here to observe the extent of the law of circumcision. It was enjoined on Abraham, on his seed after him in their generations, and on the permanent members of his family. "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised." See Gen. xvii. 10—13. By this law all the male offspring of Abraham, and all who might be the property of a Jew, were to be circumcised. But the stranger who was a *free man*, though he might be the hired servant of an Israelite, and intimately connected with him in the concerns of life, was under *no obligation* to this precept. Yet he was not excluded from the spiritual advantages of the Jewish dispensation; the law recognized him; permitted him to bring his sacrifice; and at the dedication of the temple, a special request was offered in his favour. See 1 Kings, viii. 41—43. 2 Chron. vi. 32, 33.

wise it could not be expected, that the unbaptized should be prohibited from the Lord's supper, because *unbaptized Christians were not to be found*. It is most evident, that there was *no mixed communion* in the Jewish church; and it is allowed, that while the apostles continued their ministrations, there could be *none* in the Christian church.

If the foregoing remarks are just, and the review of the law of Christ and of its application in the precedents of the New Testament, is correct; a profession of faith in Christ, either supposed that the person had been, or required that he should be, baptized; and if so, the *principle* on which mixed communion rests, cannot be maintained; and of course its application to any particular instance entirely fails. Either Christ required *too much* when he made baptism the term of Christian profession, or we require *too little* when we omit it as a term of communion.

In this argument we are in possession of an advantage which no talent, and no literature could possibly secure; which is, that all the facts on record are in our favour. And hence we are irresistibly led to ask, where is the expediency, or where is the duty, of deviating from the only line of inspired direction and example, with which we are acquainted?

But then, we are told, that many good men, who are the excellent of the earth, differ from the Baptists on the subject of the first Christian institute; that brotherly love pleads their cause, though we may view them as unbaptized; and that toleration and forbearance, which are duties enjoined on all Christians, demand that we should admit them to communion, however much in some things we may think them incorrect in their reasonings. We will examine all these pleas, and then, proceed in our investigation, to other topics connected with the general question.

CHAP. III.

The Plea from difference of Opinion—from brotherly Love—and from Christian forbearance, examined.

HITHERTO the general argument against mixed communion, has been derived from sources which are, for the most part, common both to the Pædobaptists and the Baptists; and which thoughtful Pædobaptists, who are not indifferent about baptism, will not readily give up. But as the enquiry proceeds, we come to the point where opinion divides respecting what baptism is, and to whom it ought to be administered.

Mr. Hall has stated this difference in various parts of his work, sometimes he dilutes it into an “involuntary error” in the Pædobaptists, which they would be eager to renounce, were they only convinced; and at other times, he represents them as influenced by “prejudice.” He observes, that “a disposition to fair and liberal concession, on the points at issue, is almost confined to the members of established churches;”—that “our *Dissenting* brethren” are displeased with concessions which the most celebrated divines, both Popish and Protestant, have made; and he even adds, “to such a height has this *animosity* been carried, that there are not wanting persons who seem anxious to revive the recollection of Munster, and by republishing the narrative of the enormities perpetrated there, under the title of *The History of the Baptists* to implicate us in the infamy and guilt of those transactions.” (P. 63. 182, 183.)

I do not mean to say, that these statements are incorrect, nor to ask, how Mr. Hall reconciles them together. I think he has, undesignedly, classed the Pædobaptists

under different heads. Some, with minds open to evidence, and who would follow the directions of the Lord, as soon as they were convinced what they were. Some, under the influence of "*prejudice*," and others of "*animosity*." The first class will be the least disposed to censure the Baptists: for they will acknowledge that every part of the will of Christ should have a fair investigation, and that both sides must abide by the result, according to the decision of their conscience. As to the other two classes, exactly so far as "*prejudice*" and "*animosity*" prevail, the glowing colours in which Mr. Hall paints their excellencies, fade away; and the eloquence with which he pleads their cause, as brethren who are under only an "*involuntary error*," loses its force.

Still the difference of opinion subsists, and the question returns, what ought to be done? Here the advocates for open communion say, let the strict Baptists give way, and admit those to their communion who in the point of baptism differ from them, on the grounds of brotherly love, and Christian forbearance; then every thing will fall into its proper place. They maintain that in so doing, the Christian temper and character will be eminently increased; and since it is supposed that the Lord's supper will be administered exactly in the same manner as before, it is asserted that "*no principle is violated, no practice is altered, no innovation is introduced.*" (P. 7.)

Let us examine this plea: it is offered with a soft and persuasive voice; and its subject, as well as its tone, demands our attention. We are, we trust, habitually willing to grant, that there are many excellent men in every denomination of Christians, whom God will bring to his kingdom and glory. Wherever we see the image of Jesus, we ought to love it. In this list we should place many who are of the Society of Friends,

called *Quakers*, with whom we can have no communion in the usual sense of the word, because they allow no external ordinances in the Christian church: yet in such society we have felt, that “he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” We also know and esteem many who are *members of the church of England*, who yet plead so earnestly, and doubtless, conscientiously, for what we consider the wood, hay, and stubble, of the system, as to offer a convincing proof that we must differ from them in communion. We acknowledge the ardent piety of many writers who have adorned the English Establishment. We confess the pleasure and improvement which we have derived from their valuable labours. No tribute is paid more willingly than that which is due on account of mental enjoyment. We make our thankful acknowledgments to the ministers of the *Scotch Establishment*, whose labours have often both instructed and gratified us. We pay a respectful tribute to many *foreign Protestant divines*, and have often been edified by the ardour manifested in their works while *living*, and by the accounts of their faith and hope while *dying*. We go farther still: and confess our obligations to excellent men in the *Church of Rome*. Most persons of any extent of reading, have cultivated an occasional acquaintance with the writers of that corrupted church: and will bear witness what ardour of devotion and love to God, some of them manifest. At first a degree of surprize was excited that such sentiments should exist among Catholics; at length, convinced that some among them were better men than we imagined, we read, in the expectation of deriving both improvement and gratification. How often have we sought for information in the works of their great literary characters, and been glad to sit at the feet of a *doctor of the Sorbonne*. We remember with admiration the character of **LUTHER**, even when

a *Catholic*, and before we can consider him in any other light, than as a priest in the *Romish Hierarchy*. And all serious Christians, who are acquainted with his life, feel an attachment to the aged Monk who lived in the same monastery, and who, at the time when Luther was pining under a threatening affliction, and with a conscience awakened to a sense of his danger, was alarmed at the prospect before him, paid frequent visits to his room, kindly listened to his sorrows, entered into his feelings, gave him the first view he ever had of salvation through the atonement of the Lord Jesus, and poured the balm of consolation into his wounded spirit. By this means that seed was sown, which afterwards grew, and became the great principle of THE REFORMATION.

In such instances, and in others nearer home, especially among our Pædobaptist friends, of whose Christian excellencies we are witnesses, we have felt, and wish to be alive to the feeling enjoined by the apostle, “ whatsoever things are lovely—think on these things.” But while we thus felt ourselves introduced into elevated society, enjoying the luxury which the union of talents, literature, and piety produced, we have often found that those whom we admired and revered, admitted a system which we could by no means adopt. Between them and us there was a great gulf fixed, so that more intimate communion was a hopeless thing: into their churches we could not go; into ours they could not come, without subverting, what is in our estimation, the will of the Lord.

True; it may be said, it might be so in many of the instances before mentioned; these, however, are extreme cases, and the objection would arise from many other things besides infant baptism: but in admitting Pædobaptists, who differ from you only in the mode and subjects of baptism, you violate no principle, and are joining in an act which “ hath no retrospective

view" to the ordinance of baptism, and which neither implies that they are baptized nor the contrary. (P. 97.) Here, I am at issue with our opponents. I maintain that a *principle is violated*; and that a constitution is by this means given to the church, which is in opposition to all the facts on record in the New Testament. *They come to you*, it may be said; they ask only for admission as Christians; they do not solicit you in any thing to alter your conduct. But their admission allows, that the terms of communion on which they are received, and those prescribed by the Lord as the evidence of our faith in him, are *not the same*; and a church thus formed, is built of materials different from those described in the New Testament. If some who are, and others who are not baptized, unite together in the same church, an order is introduced, confessedly unknown in the purest ages. What the friends of strict communion do, is, even on the acknowledgment of our opponents, what was done in apostolic times; and what *they* do, who practice mixed communion, is an "*innovation.*"

I maintain farther, that brotherly love, as love to the image of Christ, will and ought to lead us to walk with others as far as we walk in common in the ways of Christ; but should never induce us to act contrary to the will of Christ, or to shew love to *men*, at the expence of obedience to the directions of the *Lord*. Where our conduct would be understood as a surrender of what we believe to be a part of the will of Christ, no brotherly love for his sake, should lead us to this extent. We never ought to say to any man, however excellent he may be, 'we love you so much, that as a proof of it, we will give up an institution of the Lord, on your account.' And without there be a state of mind so far latitudinarian, as to be indifferent to the ordinances of the gospel, brotherly love itself would say, it is better for us to separate: we doubt not each others sincerity

in the points of difference;—but as we are imperfect in our knowledge, we see not alike; and as we are imperfect in our dispositions, we may not always feel as we ought. It would be criminal in either party, to give up what they are convinced is the command of the Lord: but without judging each other, let us walk in that path which we each think most agreeable to the New Testament; and as the points of difference will not then come before us, we shall be likely to have, on the whole, more brotherly love, than in any other way.

Another plea is urged, from “the express injunctions of scripture, respecting the conduct to be maintained by sincere Christians who differ in their religious sentiments.” It is said, we are expressly commanded to tolerate in the church those diversities of opinion which are not inconsistent with salvation.” (P. 98.) Here we are referred to the directions given in Romans, ch. xiv. and xv. Phil. iii. 15; and the general inference from these scriptures is, receive those whom Christ has received; a line of conduct which is urged by this general argument, “it will surely not be denied that the *precepts* of the gospel are entitled to at least as much reverence as *apostolical precedents*, when it is remembered that the language of the former, as is befitting laws, is clear and determinate, while inferences deduced from the latter are frequently subject to debate; not to remark, that if we consider the spirit of scripture precedent, it will be found entirely in our favour.” (P. 106.) It is also farther stated, “that the question at issue is not what were the individual errors we are commanded to tolerate, but what is the *ground* on which that measure is enforced, and whether it be sufficiently comprehensive to include the Pædobaptists.” (P. 107.)

I admit that this is the question at issue; and the decision of this question, will determine, whether the spirit of the precepts of the gospel will sanction us in

departing from apostolical precedents, especially when such precedents arose from obedience to a divine command; (thus forming a legal repeal of the obligation which we were under, to obey a prior law of Christ)—or whether the conclusion must not be, that the precepts delivered by the apostles, can never set aside the appointments of *the Lord*; but must always suppose that his *direct, positive* commands, either *have been, or ought to be* obeyed.

In considering this subject, it will be of use to examine all its circumstances; for though it is granted on both sides, that they have no relation to baptism, yet it is from this examination that we are to discover, whether the apostle's principle was intended to apply to those who opposed, *any law* that was acknowledged to be in force, or only to such, as entertained some peculiarities, which, though they might be troublesome to themselves, and vexatious to their brethren, yet did not infringe on a divine precept.

It appears, that some of the Christians at Rome, (probably those who were of Jewish origin) were anxious about “meats and drinks;” and were offended with the freedom of others, who ate what they thought improper, and perhaps unlawful food. They did not even eat the meat which Jews might lawfully enjoy;—they ate herbs. They appear to have been Christians who had been Jews, and, either they were afraid that the meat sold by Gentiles was defiled, by having been offered to idols; or, otherwise rendered unfit for Jewish consumption; or, they were tinctured with the opinions of the Essenes, and hesitated to partake of the mercies which God had given to be received with thankfulness. Now, says the apostle, receive such, notwithstanding their scruples concerning these things; they act according to their consciences. He that eateth food of various kinds ought not to despise

him that eateth not; and he that eateth not, ought not to judge him that eateth, *for God hath received him that eateth not*; “Why dost thou judge thy brother,” &c. “All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.” All that the apostle says, when fairly examined, proceeds on the principle, that there was no divine law then in force, which took cognizance of such things as these, and made uniformity of conduct necessary. As to different meats, it was, strictly speaking, lawful for men either to eat them, or not to eat them. “I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is *nothing unclean of itself*”; “the kingdom of God is *not meat and drink* :” men are left to the exercise of their private opinions; and where God had made no rule, we should make none. This is the drift of St. Paul’s reasoning.

So also the apostle, addressing the Philippians in the iii. ch. of his epistle, after an exhortation to beware of circumcision;—a declaration of his supreme attachment to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; an acknowledgment of his remaining imperfection, as not counting himself to have apprehended;—and his determination still to press forward;—adds, ver. 15, “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” Now even taking Mr. Hall’s interpretation, that “*otherwise minded*,” means *erroneously* minded, what is the proper inference? God will assist weak Christians, and correct their mistakes, let us all therefore strive after improvement; and let the strong bear with the weak. An important exhortation certainly; and it would be well if we attended to it more closely; but what has it to do with the question before us, whether the church be justified in receiving those who do not submit to a positive command of the Saviour?

But if the terms “*erroneously* minded” are to be extended so far, as to set aside the necessity of claiming attention to a positive and universal command, they may be applied against any precept or doctrine of the gospel whatever. It may be said in favour of any man who wishes to be a member of a church, it is true he is “*erroneously* minded,” but we are commanded to receive such. The friends of mixed communion will never consent to take this passage on such a wide interpretation: but if they limit it at all, why should a positive precept which is distinctly commanded, be marked out as the exception; so as practically to say, you may be “*erroneously* minded” about that, but not respecting other things?

On the supposition that the term *weak*, used in Romans, ch. xiv. means *erroneous*, Mr. Hall reasons, “that in order to determine whether we are to tolerate the supposed error of our Pædobaptist brethren, we have merely to consider, whether it necessarily excludes them from being of the number of those whom Christ has received, to the glory of the Father; whether it be possible to hold it with Christian sincerity; and finally, whether its abettors will stand or fall in the eternal judgment.” (P. 103, 104.) Thus he pleads for receiving *all* whom Christ has received, and considers this passage as legalizing the membership of Pædobaptists, among those who believe that they are unbaptized.

That *weakness* of faith, in a certain sense, supposes *error*, may be easily granted; for he who from weakness of mind, or deficiency of information, thinks that to be a part of the will of God which is not, *errs*. His view is more bounded than he imagines, and he is wrong in supposing the will of God to be limited to *his* speculations. But such weakness or error, as stood opposed to any distinct part of the revealed will of Christ concerning the kingdom of God, *could not* be the

object of St. Paul's directions in this place, even on Mr. Hall's concessions; for while the apostles continued in the church, none *could be received* who opposed or neglected their injunctions. Weakness of faith leading men to do what was *not enjoined*, or to avoid what was *not forbidden*, is very different from opposition to the least of those things which *were enjoined*: and the cases differ not merely in degree, but in their nature.

The gospel, as it was preached to Jews, was addressed to men who held opinions concerning meats and drinks, very different from those entertained by Gentiles: and, strictly speaking, *the gospel*, considered in itself, contained nothing more, than what was *equally* addressed to Jews as well as Gentiles. Whatever, therefore, was not enjoined on *both*, did not demand attention as a part of the kingdom of God. It might, and ought to be left free. Thus far the reasoning of the apostle extends; and it proceeds *no farther*. The *principle* of the whole is, as has been already stated, that there is no rule given in the gospel, requiring what meats shall be eaten, or what avoided; men are left to the decisions of their own minds: and therefore, says the apostle, receive the weak, despise them not, judge them not, they are servants of another, and shall give account to him; the kingdom of God does not consist in these things; and as they are not subject to an express law, you ought not to raise doubtful disputations about them.

But the very *principle* of the reasoning would be altered, if it applied to a part of the revealed will of Christ, which was binding both on Jews and Gentiles; for, if the apostle had decided that case, as he does this, he would virtually have said, that the will of the Lord was *not an object of consequence*; but that the great point was, for every man to be persuaded in his own mind respecting it. A position which certainly is not to be found in the apostolic writings.

Besides, the expression, *God hath received him*, ver. 3, deserves consideration. It clearly applies, as it is stated by the apostle, to the reception of *the Gentiles*; and is an argument with the *Jewish Christians*, not to reject those brethren, who eat *all things*. And suppose it be granted, that the expression applies to both parties, (which appears intended in ch. xv. 7), the sense then is evidently this, God receives not Gentiles *only*, but *also* Jews into the Christian church, though they are encumbered with their Jewish prejudices. There is nothing in the gospel but what the Jews can believe and obey, though they retain their national partialities to the law; and therefore, since God does not reject them, but receives them into the Christian dispensation, you should receive them also. But then, *he* receives them, *on their believing and obeying his gospel*; and it is neither stated, nor supposed, that he receives them, *notwithstanding they disobey it*. And unless this be proved, the cause of mixed communion is not promoted.

Many commentators think, that the phrase, “God hath received him,” refers to the out-pouring of the holy spirit on Jews as well as Gentiles, as proofs that believers of both descriptions were accepted of him. Though I do not think this interpretation is the intended sense, yet even on this plan, nothing more is proved, than that God gave this evidence of his receiving those who did believe and obey the gospel, though they were not free from Jewish prejudices, as well as those who were unfettered by them. But if we admit this paraphrase, the general purport of our explanation remains unaffected.

Farther, when Paul says, “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” ver. 17, he clearly means, that what belongs to the kingdom of God, has no relation to meat and drink; concerning which no specific rules are

given, but men are left to eat, or not to eat, according to their previous habits or inclinations: but it "is," or consists in, "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Now as far as the kingdom of God consists in *righteousness*, it must include obedience to practical precepts, both moral and positive. We have an eminent instance of submission to John's baptism being called *righteousness*, by our Lord. And if he so designated an attention to that ordinance, because it was then a part of the revealed will of God, it must apply to the baptism of the completed dispensation of the gospel, when promulgated by the authority of the Saviour, as one part, however small, of the "kingdom of God."

The conclusion is, this "kingdom" did not recognize the differences of opinion respecting meats and drinks, and therefore men of all sentiments and habits on this point, were received without enquiry or distinction; but it did exhibit certain doctrines to be believed, and certain precepts to be obeyed, as its constituent parts; these it impressed on *all* men. And whether they were many or few, is of no consequence in this part of our enquiry; for the reasoning and exhortation of the apostle concerning the brethren who were "weak in the faith," related to other things: and therefore no inferences deduced from this source, can justify our receiving such as oppose or neglect any thing, that was in the days of the apostles, a part of "the kingdom of God."

If toleration and forbearance be applied so far, as to induce us to receive those who in our view, are opposed to a divine command, it should be proved, that the apostle pleaded for the reception of those weak brethren *while he knew that THEY were either opposing, or neglecting, not only what was considered on general principles, as a part of the will of God; but what was acknowledged to be a part of his will, which was sanctioned*

by direct command. Without this, there is no similarity in the cases.

But such a charge cannot be exhibited against these weak brethren. The peculiarities of the Jewish Christians at Rome, who were perplexed about meats and drinks, interfered with *no divine command*. If their scruples were founded on their supposed obligations to obey the ceremonial law; that law did not command men to live upon herbs; and if they reasoned thus, 'we are so apprehensive of ceremonial defilement by our intercourse with Gentiles, that we think ourselves bound, as being Jews by birth, to live on a vegetable diet for the sake of a safe conscience,' the reply would be, the ceremonial law is abrogated, and therefore is *now* no divine command: and as Jesus Christ has not given us any directions concerning food, every man is left to his liberty. Whether, therefore, these good men did, or did not eat the same food with other people, their *Christian* character was not affected: nothing which Christ had commanded as a law, was broken; nor are they accused of neglecting any thing which he enjoined. These brethren were perplexed by scruples which had nothing to do with the Christian dispensation.

But again, if the ceremonial law was then in force, it does not appear that they broke it *by living on herbs*: so that even on that supposition, they could not be accused of transgressing a divine precept. Moses did not command the Jews to eat meat, except the appointment of the passover, can be called a command for that purpose; and if so, this could not affect the Jewish Christians at *Rome*, because it was not eaten *there*, but at Jerusalem. Daniel and his companions in the captivity, lest they should be defiled, took a similar course, and lived on vegetable diet. See Dan. i. 5—16. The "weak brethren" at Rome might have this example in their eye; but whether they had or not, the

instance of Daniel shews that they did not break the ceremonial law. Thus the result of the enquiry concerning the scruples of these brethren respecting "meat and drink" is, that they did not by their peculiarities oppose, or neglect, any precept which either *was*, or ever *had been* delivered by divine authority.

And as to the observance of days, the apostle not only shewed elsewhere, that Jewish authority on this subject was not binding; see Gal. iv. 10. Col. iii. 16—17. but even some Jews themselves, who lived in the time of the apostles, used expressions very similar to those which are here ascribed to these Jewish Christians. PHILO JUDÆUS has presented us with a passage in his book on the ten first days, which explains St. Paul's words, Rom. xiv. 5, &c. "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike," &c. Philo says, "there are ten feasts which the law mentions. The first you will be surprized to hear named; it is *every day*. The second is the seventh day, which the Hebrews call the Sabbath." &c. After enumerating the other feasts, he returns to speak of each in order: and he begins by saying, "the law calls *every day*, a feast which is devoted to a blameless life." &c. He then (having made such remarks as he thought proper,) proceeds, "after this continued, unremitting, and immoveable feast, another succeeds, which is the holy seventh day," &c.* This passage admirably illustrates the apostle's words. Some Jews thought there was a special holiness in particular days; others of a more contemplative disposition, thought they all ought to be alike holy, though *some* were freed from bodily labour which others were not. These were speculations on the law, which did not suppose any practical inattention to it. If then the question had been of consequence whether

* Op. Philo Judæi, p. 1174 et 1176. Ed. Lut. Par. 1640.

these Jewish Christians did or did not observe the ceremonial law of their fathers; it appeared that they had only refined upon it; not that they had broken it.

Thus, when the difficulties respecting these weak brethren come to be examined, the *ground* on which the measure of toleration and forbearance is enforced, is *totally inapplicable* to the case of mixed communion.—The apostle says, receive these weak brethren;—they are conscientious sincere Christians, though they reason incorrectly: Christ has received them; and their speculations about meats and drinks and days, though trivial, and perhaps vexatious, are not infractions on *the divine law*, or on any thing that *ever was* a divine law. But no Baptist *can* say, that the opinions and conduct of his Pædobaptist brethren, however highly he may esteem them, merit the same eulogy.

The case is very similar to the following: at no great distance of time back, the popular opinion was, that the earth was a fixed body, and that the sun and stars made, not an apparent, but an actual revolution round the earth every day. The contrary appeared so unlikely, so contrary to daily observation, that numbers knew not how to admit it. Some reasoned; others took a shorter way, and laughed at what they thought was absurd; another party appealed to the bible as settling the point, by asserting that the sun *did* rise and *did* set, and on one distinguished day was commanded to stand still. Good men were to be found on both sides of the question. Suppose now, that some serious characters in a Christian church, tenacious believers that the *earth stood still*, and that it was *the sun* which *moved*, had occasioned a little unpleasant controversy with some of their brethren who were better informed; and the latter, provoked at their remarks, were for excommunicating them, for want of sense, if not for want of religion; how fitly would the apostle's reasoning

apply? It might be said exactly on his principles, these good men are not charged with breaking *any divine law*: their whole crime is that they are bad astronomers, and talk nonsense; but “God hath received them;” do you, therefore, receive them in the spirit of meekness and love. Another illustration is supplied, in the case of such as may think it right conscientiously to observe what are called the Christian festivals, Easter, Christmas, &c. The ancient church thought these seasons of consequence; many do so now. As there is no command in the word of God, there can be no transgression in not venerating these periods as *holy days*. But difference of opinion and of practice in such things, should be no bars to friendship, or to Christian communion; because they affect neither command nor prohibition. But only in instances where divine precepts are neither neglected nor broken, can the reasoning of the apostle be applied; because, as he himself shews us, this was the state of the case which he had before him, and from which his reasoning was drawn. Admitting, therefore, that we ought to apply his *principle*, it does not follow, that it is applicable to cases totally dissimilar, not only in their circumstances, but in their very nature. I believe the truth is, that *there is not a case on record, in which forbearance and toleration were urged as reasons for setting aside ANY divine institute, which at the time was in force*. If one of this kind can be produced, let it be done.

It is true, forbearance is recommended, where such a difference of opinion arose between Christians as led to contention: “forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” Col. iii. 13. But I think no one will apply this direction to the case of mixed communion, or suppose that it could apply to any thing relative to the positive institutions of the

gospel. That we ought to be guarded against the effects of an angry temper and provoking language, is fully acknowledged; that we should exercise a forgiving spirit towards a good man whose besetting sin consists in an undue warmth of feeling and expression when any thing opposes him, and for which he often feels humbled before God, is granted; and no small exercise of Christian forbearance is sometimes required to do this. But if it be confirmed as a rule, that we ought so to forbear with a man who quarrelled with us because we maintained the authority of the divine appointments, as, on that account, not to support them, it would prove that we ought always to give them up, when any thought fit to oppose them; and thus, their practical authority would depend not on the command of the Lord, but on the opinion of men, and must ultimately be regulated by the judgment or inclination of those men who wander the farthest from the truth, supposing we think that they are really Christians.

Precedents which favour mixed communion, it will be allowed, are wanting, but some of a different nature can be found. When Hezekiah called the attention of Israel to the passover, after it had been a long time neglected, it is remarkable that even those who had prepared their hearts to seek the Lord, but who "eat of the passover otherwise than it was written," were not considered as guiltless. And as it proved that this had been the case with many, Hezekiah prayed that the "good Lord would pardon" them. "And the Lord healed the people." A clear proof, that however the preparation of the heart exceeded external purification, yet that God required the *externals* of his appointment to be punctually obeyed. 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19, 20.

This, it may be said, is taken from the Old Testament; and many exceptions will be made against it. It proves, however, all that it is brought to prove, which

is, that many things may be pardoned which ought not to be repeated; and that this striking instance of *mixed communion* in the Jewish church, was, when discovered, acknowledged to be an irregularity, and not viewed as a precedent for future conduct.

An instance is furnished by the New Testament which, though not relating either to baptism or the Lord's supper, shews that the apostles were not disposed to give up what they considered as established by the general consent of the churches, though on a point very far inferior to a direct command of the Lord. In 1 Cor. xi. ch. Paul begins by laying down the important principle which has been already noticed, "be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ." As I follow Christ, so do you follow me; and for this reason, that in so doing, ye are following Christ. He then adds, "now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them unto you." After this introduction, he proceeds to notice a local debate concerning female dress, which always was, and always must be, in a great degree, an affair of taste. It seems that some women who were members of the church of Corinth, had appeared in their public assemblies praying and prophesying without their veils. The apostle thought this indecorous in point of appearance, besides the objections which might arise from other considerations. And though he knew that there was a party in the Christian church that pleaded for it, and also, though it was not contrary to any divine command, yet he cut the matter short by saying, *if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.* ver. 16. Compare this decision with the direction in the first verse, and let any one judge whether the apostles who refused to depart from the practice of the church, in a matter infinitely beneath the notice of a

direct law, would have agreed to pass by any institution, which was clearly of divine appointment.

Again, the supposition itself, that toleration and forbearance will justify us in allowing an omission of a law of Christ in his church, operates as a repeal of that law; and introduces a rule of action, which would generally be deemed unreasonable.

I do not know a case in which a law is left to the interpretation of the parties who are to obey that law, so that they shall be considered as keeping it, in whatever way they may explain, and professedly regard it. But we know, that both in the world and in the church, we all act on a different plan. A statute in this kingdom, requires that a representative in parliament should possess a certain quantity of landed property; if a gentleman who has not the required property, should offer himself at an election as a candidate, he would necessarily be rejected as *ineligible*. He might plead, that the statute was old, and the mode of acquiring property was now very different from what it was when that law was made:—that the proportion of property marked by the statute, was, in the spirit of the enactment, nothing more than a declaration of what the legislature deemed needful, in order that a man might have a sufficient stake in the country, to render him zealous in her interests; to enable him to bear the expences attendant on a public situation; and to raise him above the temptations of corruption. He might add, that liberality of interpretation required his fellow citizens to consider him as eligible; for though he had not the prescribed landed estate, he possessed ten times more property than most of those who were in parliament; and though it was personal estate, still it gave him a deep interest in the common concerns of the country. Yet all this would not repeal the law. If it be said, that the reason why such a gentleman must

be rejected is, that toleration and forbearance, and the interpretation of acts by their general spirit, are no parts of our statute law, which must be applied according to the literal sense of the words: I answer, true; and the same remark applies to *every* law; to the laws of Christ as well as to all others. Neither toleration nor forbearance, nor any thing else can be a substitute for obedience, in any instance whatever.

Admit such a mode of reasoning as Mr. Hall adopts, and what would follow? No divine appointment could be considered as binding by the authority of Christ; and the church could not act upon it as *his* command. It might be said concerning any new case, the New Testament seems to oppose it, but we can dispense with that authority, as we do respecting baptism, and for the same general reasons. Thus a practical repeal of any thing which Christ has appointed, might be effected; and the declarations of the New Testament be rendered *not* THE RULE of our conduct, but only a system subservient to our inclinations. Where we thought proper, we could apply them, and say much concerning their authority; but whenever we were inclined to admit those whose sentiments and practice differed from what is sanctioned in the New Testament, we might always have a plea of toleration and forbearance to excuse our deviations.

In closing this chapter, I would direct the reader's attention once more to the turning point of the whole, that until it be shewn, that the apostles pleaded for the admission of men into the church, *on the ground of their being good men, while they refused obedience to a command of Christ, the principle on which mixed communion is placed, as founded on toleration and forbearance, is NOT established; and the directions of the apostle respecting weak brethren, ARE PERVERTED.*

CHAP. IV.

The Argument considered, that Pædobaptists are a part of the true Church ; and that their exclusion from the Communion of the Baptists is a Punishment.

IT is urged, that if we admit Pædobaptists to be a part of the true church, (using the term in its wide sense) and partakers of the spirit of Christ, we ought not to exclude them from partaking of the Lord's supper with us.

As to our suffrage to the excellence of character maintained by many Pædobaptists, enough has been said on that subject. It has been granted to belong to many, even in the Church of Rome. But if we have no right to refuse their communion with us, till they conform to what we are convinced is the will of Christ, we had no right to leave them because they deviated from his will. The ground is in both cases the same. Once take away the obligation of conforming to the will of Christ, and THE REFORMATION is declared a mischievous insurrection, in which all Protestants are involved as aiding and abetting a needless and schismatical project. But if it be right to leave good men, because they have left Jesus Christ, it is right not to admit them, till they come to HIS TERMS. If this be not granted, we have to place the Reformation from Popery, and our dissent from the Establishment of our country, on a basis entirely new; and a basis very different from the obligation to obey the will of Christ, as expressed in the New Testament; for the law of the Lord, and

the practice of the primitive church, are not to be accounted our standard.

Mr. Hall grants that “ whenever it becomes impossible to continue in a religious community, without concurring in practices, and sanctioning abuses, which the word of God condemns, a secession is justified.” (P. 123, 124.) On this principle Baptists separate from Pædobaptists; they do not allow that the plan of gathering a church, composed of persons unbaptized, is *the scriptural plan*. They appeal to the New Testament for proof of their sentiments. They say, the Lord commanded his apostles to baptize those who believed: they did so; and united those only in church fellowship. We do the same; and simply for this reason, that *such* was the command of the saviour, and *such* the exposition of it by the facts which are recorded. And we ask in the calmest spirit of enquiry, can it be wrong, to take the New Testament for our guide;—to go where that leads us;—to go no farther than that goes before us;—and not to walk in a path opposite to its constant example? We say more; shew us only *one* example of the admission of the unbaptized to communion, after our Lord had directed his disciples to baptize those who believed; and we will give up our system. Nay, still farther, shew us in any case, that the forbearance and toleration enjoined by the apostles repealed a clear and direct appointment of Christ, and left it to circumstances whether it should be obeyed or not, and we will plead for strict communion no more: we will agree to act on a principle which appears to us, at least, mysterious. But if we are justified in our practice till such proof be produced, we are perfectly secure; our days may be extended to “ hoar hairs;” we shall never be required to reconsider the subject, or to alter our conduct.

But what is Mr. Hall’s representation of the conduct and spirit of the strict Baptists? “ They are not en-

gaged in preserving their own liberty, but in an attack on the liberty of others: their object is not to preserve the worship in which they join, pure from contamination; but to sit in judgment on the consciences of their brethren, and to deny them the privilege of the visible church on account of a difference of opinion, which is neither imposed on themselves, nor deemed fundamental. They propose to build a church on the principle of an absolute exclusion of a multitude of societies, which they must either acknowledge to be true churches, or be convicted, as we have seen, of the greatest absurdity!" &c. (P. 124, 125.) Mr. H. goes farther, and applies the epithets "*monstrous*," and "*unnatural*," to the conduct of those whom he reprobates.

Is this representation accurate? I appeal to the whole body of Baptists, wherever they are to be found. I would put the various parts of the above heavy charges into the form of interrogations, and ask every individual who has joined us, if *he*, when he united himself to us, *did* or *did not* consider himself as engaged in preserving his own liberty, while he fulfilled what he was convinced was the will of Christ? Or, if he was actually influenced by the motive of making an attack on the liberty of others? &c.—Let every one answer for himself. For my part, I deny these charges. And were I ever so much disposed to censure the temper and conduct of my brethren, by holding them up as acting on these principles, I know not where I should find *one* that would deserve such a brand of reproach, as is here cast on many thousands.

Severe, and especially general charges, ought to be either *visibly true*, or supported by very distinct and marked evidence. Where is such evidence to be found? Let the men be produced, who have acted on these principles; let the proof be fairly brought forward, that these were the motives for which they formed those

“*hostile confederacies*,” (p. 127) called Baptist Churches, and we will agree to expel them from our communion; (for if they are *in* our churches we can *expel* them,) but as they are charged with heavy crimes, and their hearts are judged, let them first be tried, and not condemned, till they ^{are} proved guilty.

In a calmer style, Mr. Hall says, “upon the principle for which I am contending, they (the Baptists) are not called to renounce their peculiar tenets on the subject of baptism, nor to express their disapprobation of a contrary practice; but simply not to sever themselves from the body of Christ, nor refuse to unite with his church.” (P. 125.)

But here the case is not stated at its full length: the friends of strict communion do not object to mixed communion, because the individual act of their communion with Pædobaptists, would produce an immediate unpleasant effect on their worship; but because it would be the acknowledgment of a principle which they cannot admit; which is, that in forming a part of the church of Christ, there is no occasion to regard the term of Christian profession which he himself has appointed: and thus the introduction of mixed communion, would itself immediately alter the constitution of every church that adopts it.

This they conceive is a sufficient answer to one of those “propositions which produce on a mind free from prejudice, such instantaneous conviction as scarcely to admit of formal proof. Of this nature is the following position, that it is presumptuous to aspire to a greater purity and strictness in selecting the materials of a church, than are observed by its Divine founder, and those whom he forms and actuates by his spirit, and admits to communion with himself are sufficiently qualified for the communion of mortals.” (P. 128.) Taking this sentence in its extent, there is an end of all

reformation in the church for the purposes of fulfilling the will of Christ; for it is "presumptuous" to set up his laws in opposition to the opinion of those who are believed to have communion with him. There are few cases in which this maxim might not be pleaded, against those who are constrained to depart from others, for the sake of the commands of the Lord. How often have we heard something of the kind, levelled against all classes of dissenters in the land!

But without being alarmed at such "a position," let us examine it. *Is it presumptuous* to select the *same kind* of materials as the apostles selected before us? Did *they* unite those who *did*, and those who did *not* make a profession of the gospel in the appointed way? In copying their example, and in joining with those who we hope are admitted to communion with the Lord, and are baptized, *we know* that we are doing right. *Is it equally certain* that in doing what the apostles *never* did, and in consenting to the neglect of one thing which they *never omitted*, we are as exactly fulfilling the will of Christ? These are plain questions, and they are addressed to men's understandings and consciences, as in the sight of God.

But the refusal of the Lord's supper to a Pædobaptist in Baptist churches is "a punishment," and "can be justified only on the ground of his supposed criminality:" it is an "exclusion," which is stated to be the severest sentence which the church can inflict, and is the subject of many heavy censures. Here let it not be forgotten, that all the severity with which the strict Baptists are attacked, equally applies to those Pædobaptists who do not admit to communion such as *they deem* unbaptized, while the first alone are represented as deserving the blame.

Looking, however, this charge fairly in the face; *is it* a punishment inflicted on *others*, that we have with-

drawn from them, or, originally joined ourselves to the Baptists, for the purpose of acting, as we believe, more conformably to the will of Christ? *Is* the non-admission of those who were *never* united with us, strictly speaking, *an exclusion*? If so, words have strangely changed their meaning. It is not *intended* as a punishment by the Baptists. It is not *considered as such* by sensible Pædobaptists, as far as I have had the opportunity of acquaintance with them. They *know*, and they *confess*, that if the Baptists act consistently with their principles, strict communion must be adopted. And it is not *felt* as a punishment by those who give the subject a fair hearing, if they are not goaded by others into a morbid sensibility.

The censure of "excommunication," and "the wound which it inflicts," as applied to other cases, may be what Mr. Hall represents it. "Its accordance with the moral nature of man," (p. 142) may, and does, give it authority and weight. In such an instance as the incestuous person at Corinth, it does become an instrument of punishment. He was *in* the church, and could be expelled *from* it. But which way the censure, or punishment of excommunication and expulsion, can take place on one who never was *in* a society, the strict Baptists have yet to learn.

Still an attempt is made to confound these two cases. "When the incestuous person was separated from the church at Corinth, it was regarded by St. Paul as a *punishment*, and that of no ordinary magnitude: "sufficient," said he, "is this punishment, which was inflicted of many." Nor is there *any difference*, with respect to the present enquiry, betwixt the refusal of a candidate, and the expulsion of a member; since nothing will justify the former of these measures, which might not be equally alledged in vindication of the latter. *Both* amount to a declaration of the parties

being *unworthy* to communicate." (P. 133.) Not *any difference!*—Is charging a man with crimes like that above mentioned, and telling him, that they would be glad to receive him *on* his having professed his faith in the way which the Lord commanded—the same thing? If so, both the precept and example of the New Testament are reduced to a very low estimation; and however forcibly they may impress our minds, we must not make them our guide in the government of the church!

But, "both amount to a declaration of the parties being *unworthy* to communicate." In one case, the party is declared *unworthy* from moral delinquency: in the other, he is not declared *unworthy*, but only *unqualified*: and whether this be, or be not true, is to be settled by an appeal to the New Testament.

If persons ask for admission into any voluntary society, they must submit to its terms. If no terms are required, but those prescribed by the founder of the society, who in the present case, is allowed to be its King and Lord, and they will not accede to such terms; *who excludes them?*—Let this question be seriously considered. If in the days of the apostles, they would have been esteemed "*contumacious schismatics*," who had opposed the act of profession which the Baptists require;—if it be acknowledged, "that he who, convinced of the divine origin of Christianity by the ministry of the apostles, had refused to be baptized, would at that period have been debarred from receiving the sacramental elements;" (p. 60) on what principle can such persons be received at present? Let it be proved, that the terms of communion are altered by divine authority, so that those who would have been Baptists *then*, need not be Baptists *now*, and the debate will be settled. Even on Mr. Hall's concession, the unbaptized could not find a church that would have admitted them, had they lived in primitive times.

It is amusing to observe, how reasoning recoils, when carried too far. Mr. Booth had said, "it is not every one that is received of Jesus Christ who is entitled to communion at his table; but such, and such only, as revere his authority, submit to his ordinances, and obey the laws of his house." Mr. Hall remarks on this passage, "Hence to be consistent with themselves, they (the strict Baptists) must impute to Pædobaptists universally, a degree of delinquency equal to that which attaches to the most flagrant breaches of immorality; and deem them *equally guilty* in the sight of God, with those unjust persons, idolaters, revellers, and extortioners, who are declared incapable of entering into the kingdom of heaven. For if the guilt imputed in this instance is acknowledged to be of a totally different order from that which belongs to the openly vicious and profane, how come they to be included in the same sentence; and where is the equity of animadverting upon unequal faults, with equal severity. (P. 134.)

This statement may be retorted. As Protestants, and as Dissenters, we object to the communion of the Churches of Rome and of England, and in part, on the ground of Mr. Booth's position; that in our esteem they do not "revere Christ's authority, submit to his ordinances, and obey the laws of his house." The imposition of rites which Christ has not commanded, and the combination of those sentiments with the structure of the church which we think injurious to its nature, and contrary to the will of the Lord, have rendered it necessary for us to establish *a separate communion*. Here *the fact is*, that we feel ourselves called on to say, that we can have no fellowship with them, in communion at the Lord's supper. On this ground, it would be a very easy thing to represent the conduct of Protestants and of Protestant Dissenters, in the same dark colouring as Mr. Hall has applied to the strict Baptists. Let a man

of talent exclaim against them for departing from the *true church*; and represent their conduct in establishing a communion of their own, as declaring in the strongest form, that they deem others unworthy of *their* society; and that in so doing, they pronounce the sentence of "expulsion," of "excommunication," and of the severest "punishment" which the church can inflict, on those from whom they have withdrawn; and he will do no more than Mr. Hall has done in the whole of this part of his reasoning. He might even adopt his words, and by altering the single term "*Pædobaptists*," into *Churchmen* or *Roman Catholics*, he might apply the whole paragraph in opposition to any exertions which were ever made in the cause of Christian liberty.

If it be true, that "to be consistent," the strict Baptist must impute the worst of crimes to the Pædobaptists, because he refuses to admit them to communion as not being baptized; it must also be true, that in withdrawing from others, Pædobaptists ought to charge upon *them* the vilest criminalities. This inference *they* would repel; and the strict Baptist repels it also. There is no colour of reason for it: and the attempt to fix it on either party, is an endeavour to prove too much, which always defeats its own design.

It may be said, that Mr. Hall's argument applies to the *refusal* of a Pædobaptist, whereas the separate communions of the Church of England, and of Protestant Dissenters, arose from necessity; because Protestants could not commune with the church of Rome; and Dissenters could not comply with what was established. But, besides what has already been remarked, that there *is* a separation of communion among those who are deemed true Christians; and that the separation itself supposes that there are some reasons why we cannot communicate with that part of the *true church*; there is a farther observation necessary, which is, that

should a Roman Catholic ask for communion in the Church of England, he would *ipso facto* renounce the main part of his Popery : and *should* a Churchman solicit communion with a church of Pædobaptist Dissenters, he also would give up the chief points by which a Churchman and a Dissenter are distinguished ; but if a Pædobaptist ask for communion among Baptists, he necessarily asks for one of these two things ; either, that they would give up their opinion respecting baptism, by admitting him *as baptized* ; or, that they would give up the idea, that baptism is in any way necessary to communion. Thus, *they* are to surrender *their sentiments*, while *he* surrenders nothing.

It is a question of *refusal* either way, different only in circumstances, not in nature. The Protestants, and Protestant Dissenters, *refuse* to unite with Roman Catholics, and the Establishment, because in so doing, they would sanction what they believe are corrupt appendages to the law of the saviour. The strict Baptist *refuses* to admit those whom he considers as unbaptized, because in so doing, he would sanction the omission of an express part of the law itself ; though he grants the individual excellency of many men in all the churches from which he differs.

Still the complaint against the strict Baptists is urged on this ground, that “ to be consistent also, they must invariably refuse to tolerate every species of imperfection in their members, which in their judgment is equally criminal with the Pædobaptist error ; but how far they are from maintaining this impartiality, is too obvious to admit of a question.”—Again, “ many are tolerated, who are chargeable with conduct more offensive in the sight of God, than a misconception of the nature of a positive institute :”—and after bringing forward the cases of Brainerd, Doddridge, and Leighton, Mr. Hall adds ; “ we wish only to be informed, on what

principle of equity it is proposed, in the infliction of ecclesiastical censures to equalize things which are not equal. P. 134, 135.

Let the principles of this reasoning be observed;—the strict Baptists are *inconsistent*;—they tolerate worse evils than infants baptism. Suppose this is the case, will they be justified in omitting *one* institution of Christ in his church, because they are not sufficiently strict respecting some other things.* Besides, the case is not fairly exhibited. The Pædobaptists are represented as “chargeable” with nothing more than “*a misconception of the nature of a positive institute.*” P. 135. But this is NOT the question before us: the present controversy relates to the “*institute*” *itself*. It is NOT whether the members of a church have fully and properly conceived the nature of the institute to which they have submitted. If this were the whole, we might be represented as expelling the ignorant and the weak, instead of instructing and encouraging them. But it is, whether an institute delivered by Christ, is to be maintained, or is to be given up.

And as to the charge of equalizing things which are not equal, if in the present instance it proves any thing, it will prove too much; and furnishes an excellent argument for either a Churchman or a Roman Catholic. Each of them might say to any class of Protestant Dissenters, you cannot establish a separate communion, without a declaration, by your actions, that you ought not to commune with *us*, and your church thus inflicts a censure upon us. Now to convince you of our candour, we will meet you on your own ground; suppose our venerable church has been incautious, in adding a little too much to its ceremonies, and rather over tena-

* See an excellent remark on this point, in Fuller's Letter, p. 26.

cious in claiming attention to them ; yet if you make a schism by departing from us, you declare us unworthy of your communion ; or, if you denounce *us* as the schismatics, you then make the same declaration in a still stronger form : but if, from an involuntary misconception on a few non-essentials, some share of guilt does attach to us, we only request, that you would listen to the arguments of one of your own body. Observe their force. What he urges against his strict communion brethren, we urge against you all, that “ *to be consistent*” *with yourselves*, you must impute to *us*, “ *universally*, a degree of delinquency equal to that which attaches to the most flagrant breaches of immorality.” “ For if the guilt imputed in this instance, is acknowledged to be of a totally different order from that which belongs to the vicious and profane, how came they to be included in the same sentence ; and where is the equity of animadverting upon unequal faults, with equal severity.”—“ We wish only to be informed, on what principle of equity it is proposed, in the infliction of ecclesiastical censures, to equalize things which are not equal.”

On whatever principle a reply is made to these charges against the Dissenters as a body, a strict Baptist may answer Mr. Hall’s reasoning.

The question of the propriety of Pædobaptists attending to the Lord’s supper in their own churches, is brought forward, and the strict Baptists are urged with the consequences. Mr. Hall says, “ in the instance before us, it must be assumed that Pædobaptists are *morally culpable* in approaching the sacred symbols, or the attempt to criminate us for *sanctioning* them in that practice would be ridiculous.” And he asks, “ are the advocates of infant baptism criminal in approaching the Lord’s table ?” (P. 144, 145.) On his own principles they are *not baptized*: and though he does not de-

termine how far they are either erroneous or blameable, yet he grants that *some* blame does attach to them both for their *error*, and for their *prejudice*, in opposing what he allows is the only baptism recognized in the New Testament. As the Pædobaptists are parties deeply interested in this discussion, let us consider how this part of the argument affects them. I would address a respectful, but serious appeal to them. I would say, I leave this subject to your own decision. According to Mr. Hall's statement, you are not baptized; if he be correct, are you doing right in receiving the Lord's supper? I am sure, few of them would not confess instantly, the necessity of the previous question being settled: and if they felt any hesitation respecting the validity of their own baptism, from whatever cause it might arise, they would shrink at the thought of coming to the Lord's table unbaptized; and would appear there no more, till they could come with minds satisfied on the subject.

Here the strict Baptists shew, that they understand the proper distinction, between judging for others, and acting on their own responsibility. They allow, that their Pædobaptist brethren, *on their own principles*, do right in forming themselves into churches, and in commemorating the death of their Lord. Though they differ from the Baptists, yet they unite together those whom *they deem* properly baptized, and walk with them in Christian fellowship. In this the Baptists blame them not. They consider them wrong in their opinion of the first ordinance; yet, with *their views*, they consider them right in the second; and doubt not their conscientious regard to it. The objection of the strict Baptists to communion with them does not arise from suspicions attaching to their Christian character, to which, they trust, they are always willing to render ample justice; but from the necessary consequence of such communion,

as a practical deviation from what they believe was the original constitution of the church. And when they censure their own brethren who are in the practice of mixed communion, it is, because they consider them as acting inconsistently with their sentiments, and more to blame than the Pædobaptists who join with them. The latter surrender *no* principle; they do not unite with those whom *they deem* unbaptized; whatever they may think of us, they never hesitate to allow the validity of *our* baptism. But the Baptists stand in a different situation with respect to *them*, and the *strict* Baptists do no more than fairly follow a principle recognized by the Pædobaptists as a body, that the subjects of Christian communion should be baptized. If this be not the fair, unavoidable inference from the New Testament representations, they confess that they are in the wrong; but they believe it to be correct, and they agree to refer it to the decision of him that judgeth righteously. They have no doubt of the piety of many, who on the subject of baptism differ from them; nor of their meeting with a ready welcome into the joy of their Lord. But as they believe that in this one point, their brethren are mistaken, they expect that a change of view will instantly take place, on their discovering in the clear light of eternity, that the Saviour and his apostles were *all Baptists*. As to themselves, they do not wish to plead their own cause, yet they may be permitted to say, that they do not place their acceptance before the Lord on the ground of their baptism. They look to the same source of hope as the rest of their brethren; they rely on the same atonement, they apply to the same throne of grace "that they may obtain mercy and grace to help," and they have to lament a variety of imperfections, which render this daily necessary. But they are satisfied, that they need not fear the reproof of the Lord for walking in *his steps*, and

submitting to his command, in an ordinance, which though despised of men, they have conscientiously obeyed, and *consistently* supported.

They consider themselves as having the honour of holding up to notice *one* neglected truth. They conceive it to be of importance, because it is the command of the LORD. They see that it is intimately connected with the *primitive* constitution of the church, and has a variety of important bearings on different parts of the Christian system. They ask none to unite with them but those who come with full conviction of its evidence. They are supported only by a succession of volunteers, who agree to meet the scorn of the world, and they wish they were not obliged to add, on many occasions, the censure of some, from whom they hoped better things. They persevere in the firm faith, that by patient continuance in well doing; by holding up to view, on proper occasions, the direct evidence of the subjects and mode of primitive baptism, and of the character of the primitive Christian church, they shall, with the blessing and assistance of the Lord, see his cause gain the universal attention of all good men. When they began to come forth from their retirement soon after the Reformation, they were but very few. Their "little is become a thousand," and their "small one a great nation;" and the outcry now raised against them for bigotry and illiberality is, they believe, greatly owing to their exciting an increasing attention in the Christian world. They are aware of their difficulties; they feel that they have to strive against the stream of popular opinion; but they bear right onward. They exclude none who give credible evidence of the sincerity of their profession, and who do not exclude themselves, by refusing to obey what appears (in their estimation) a plain appointment. They pretend not to judge the hearts of those who say, that after due examination, they still remain

conscientiously Pædobaptists. They are persuaded that the wisdom of the Lord would enable him to draw the best possible plan for the erection of his church. They are thankful for the various specimens which he has given them of the manner in which he would have the structure completed; and they are more desirous that what little they can do, should be according to the direction of the great "Master Builder," than they are of gaining applause from any quarter, by working on a design which he has not drawn, or using materials different from those which he originally employed.

Besides, they are surprized that *Baptists* above all people, should condemn them for holding principles which exclude others from communion; since one popular argument against them, as a body, is, that if their peculiar sentiment be right, they *unchurch the whole world*. Men of discernment see clearly, that if *infant sprinkling* can be proved not to be Christian baptism, a large portion of the world has been for ages without baptism. Here they take the alarm, and say, this cannot be correct; Pædobaptists are the true church, and therefore their baptism must be valid. It is inconceivable, that God should have suffered such a corruption in his churches as would in reality *unchurch* them. Thus they argue, exactly on the principles urged against us as strict Baptists; Pædobaptists are the true church, and therefore ought not to be excluded by the Baptists from their communion. In both instances the reasoning is general, and without respect to the evidence of the case. Hence the Pædobaptists who are viewing the tendency of our general principles, do not so much censure the Baptists for their strict communion, (which they instantly see is the necessary result of their opinion) as apply the inference to their own persons, that if the Baptists are right in their main point, they themselves, on New Testament principles, are not entitled to communion.

To say nothing of those times when *Anabaptism* was denounced as such woeful heresy, both by the ecclesiastical and civil rulers, that both parties gratified their hatred of such *pravity* by burning those who professed it: to say nothing of the alarm addressed to parliament by Dr. Featly in 1644, on account of their having uttered the wicked sentiment, (which in justice appears to lie at their door) that the magistrates had nothing to do with religion, but to protect those who professed it:* it is quite amusing to notice the various currents which have set against the poor despised Baptists at different periods. When their dreadful opinions came to be better known, *Richard Baxter* defended the charge he had made against the Anabaptists, that "they played the Divil's part," in his book entitled "*Plain Scripture proof of Infant's Church Mem-*

* The following passages shew the temper of the man, and reflect the highest honour on those "Heretiques" against whom they were directed. "Now because these heretiques *ALONE professedly teach* the exautorating all Christian magistrates, and in *expresse termes deny* both the legislative power of the Commons to propound or enact lawes *in matter of religion*, and all *coercive* power in the house of Peers, or any other, to inflict *civil punishment for the violation of them*, and so much as in them lyeth, they endeavour to break both these staves of the prophet, (beauty and bands) they deserve the smartest stroak of both." No wonder that a man who was for using the persecuting sword should take fire at such sentiments, (which though now generally admitted, were then, and for a long time before, held only by the Baptists,) and should say, "— now of all *Heretiques* and *Schismaticques* the Anabaptists ought to be most carefully looked unto, and severely punished, *if not utterly exterminated and banished out of the church and kingdome.*"

Dr. Daniel Featly's Dippers dipt. Epistle Dedicatory to the Parliament. Printed in 1645.

bership and Baptism." Printed in 1653. One short extract will be sufficient for our purpose; "but now we come to the main business; Mr. T. (Tombes) thinks I speak hainously, to say, they play the Divil's part. But let me tell him, that truly I speak not those words inconsiderately, but upon most serious consideration; not in the bitterness of passion, but in judgment and compassion; and in the same sort shall now say this much more, that I do verily believe that the matter and substance of your fact, (separated from the malicious intention) is *not only playing of the Divil's part, but worse; yea, very far worse* in several respects, then if it were the Divil that did it." P. 174. Twenty years after, in a number of "cases of conscience about matters ecclesiastical," at the end of the third part of his *Christian Directory*, this same Mr. Baxter brings forward a question of grave and serious import; "may *Anabaptists*, that have no other error, *be permitted in church communion?*" And now he replies, "yes, and be tolerated in their own practice also."* This however seems the full stretch of charity then, and certainly was an improvement on his former opinions.

At this time lived *John Tombes*, a great *Anabaptist*, who pleaded their cause with vigour, and it was said by some, who were not at all favourable to his sentiments, that at a public dispute, he had the advantage over Richard Baxter. But he appeared rather to agree with the Baptists in one point, than to be one of their body; for he had a great notion of *unity* in the church, was much afraid of *schism*, and settled in the communion of the Establishment. His conduct in this point excited attention among churchmen; but they approved it. For though they looked upon him as having some peculiarities, yet they applauded him for not

* *Christian Directory*, p. 826.

breaking the communion of the established church. And on their own principles they were right. They knew very well, that the influence of an individual who continued among them himself, and pleaded against separating from the Establishment, would be very little, and would die with him : for if others did not espouse his faith with more practical zeal than he did, it might be a peculiarity in the belief of some, but it would go no farther.

The Baptists found, both before and after this period, that on the plan adopted by Mr. Tombes, they could not fulfil the will of Christ; and therefore they were compelled to separate, that they might walk in the path of the primitive church. Through the blessing of the Lord, they are since become what men call respectable; and are assailed in a new direction. Pædobaptists, who hitherto had made it a serious subject of consideration, whether to tolerate a Baptist among them, (though they did not question *his* baptism,) now, want to unite with Baptists. And though they know the point on which the Baptists feel themselves obliged to separate from the Pædobaptists at large; and though they cannot deny, that according to the general persuasion of their own body, the Baptists are right in the principle, that the church should not be formed of persons *unbaptized*, yet they represent their conduct as excluding the true church;—as persecution;—as excommunication;—as a combination of the worst of evils. All this the strict Baptists bear. Used to hear hard epithets, they are very little affected by them. They sometimes smile at the different grounds on which they are attacked, and the various tests by which they and their sentiments are tried; whilst the New Testament, which they consider as their ultimate object of appeal, from age to age, holds out the same language, and con-

tinually exhibits the primitive church, as *all baptized on the profession of their faith.*

It is said, that strict communion is not reducible to any general principle. If the preceding remarks are just, it *is* reducible to a general principle, and a principle undoubtedly comprehensive; and that is, the obligation of taking the directions of the Lord, and fulfilling them in the order in which they are prescribed, and for the purposes for which they were designed; in preference either to a compliance with any addition, or a concurrence in any omission, sanctioned only by the approbation of men. Our Lord, to whom all power in heaven and earth was given, laid down a rule by which his disciples were to be guided in evangelizing the world; they were to go, and teach, and baptize those that believed;—and still continue teaching them whatever it was desirable they should know. The apostles did so; and thus arose the first churches. The strict Baptists endeavour, according to their ability, to walk by this rule, in obedience to Christ as their Lord, and according to the example of the apostles, who were the inspired expositors of his holy will by their conduct. This is the *general principle* on which they act. They are sorry that others mistake, in their estimation, the rule of the Lord, but they are not accountable for their mistakes. They maintain that it has not yet been shewn that the general rule which he laid down is repealed, or that it can consistently be passed by, on the authority of any of the maxims of the New Testament. They conceive, that every legislative enactment is binding on all to whom it was designed to apply; till either its appointed term expires, (if it was intended to be temporary,) or till it be set aside by some succeeding act, proceeding from the same or equal authority. All minor, or subsequent regulations, are made on the supposition, that the existing general law is in force, and is,

in possible cases, regularly obeyed : if they go beyond this point, and attach the same privileges to those who have neglected the law, as to those who have obeyed it, in these instances they would *repeal* it.

They maintain, also, that the arguments urged from brotherly love, and from Pædobaptists being part of the true church, do not oppose the general comprehensive principle on which they act;—that the regulations which are supposed to apply to the case before us do not, in their principle, apply to it. And so little are the arguments which are brought against the strict Baptists, applicable to *any* general principle, which is believed to exist in the New Testament, that their opponents do not themselves act upon them. We do not mean to accuse the friends of mixed communion with any want of regard to those whom they consider as parts of the true church; but we observe, that whenever these brethren, whose cause they so pathetically plead, have formed an ecclesiastical polity, which they think contrary to the purity and simplicity of the Christian institute, they conceive themselves justified in leaving them, and establishing a separate communion: and they do not think it enough to be told by them, that all they wish to bring forward, they conscientiously believe is right. If our opponents think that the sentiments which *they* inculcate, or the practices which *these parts of the true church* would introduce, are not conformable to the will of the Lord, they do not surrender the right of pleading the “general principle” of the will and authority of the great head of the church, in forming the “Christian institute” on his own design. And while the strict Baptists blame them not for so doing, they assert, that this is the very principle on which *they* act; and the question between *them*, and *their* opponents, eventually comes to this point, *not* whether brotherly love, and the consideration of others

being parts of the true church, ought to influence them to act in opposition to what they consider as the will of Christ; for on this subject, the advocates for the most open species of communion, retain the right of determining what will justify "a secession" from those they admit to be real partakers of divine grace;—BUT, *whether the admission of mixed communion does not of itself, introduce into the church a system of action which is NOT a just interpretation of the rule given by the Lord, and NOT a copy of the precedents of the New Testament, NOR a just application of its maxims.* All that does not bear on *this* inquiry, is of no consequence to the present investigation: while the strict Baptists thus state their general principle, and their application of it, with the reasons on which it is founded, they know that these are disapproved by some of their own body; but they are convinced that in the progress of truth, this evil will, with many others, be rectified by growing light. When Christians more generally become Baptists, the temptation to plead a cause which *they* think indefensible, will lessen. They grant that this opposition of their friends proceeds from good motives, but they look on the plan to which they are so partial as an *expedient* which is not correct in its principle, and which time will shew was not *necessary*.

The strict Baptists grow bold in their claims, as the discussion advances; and they ask their opponents if the "general principle" now laid down, is not clear and intelligible? Whether it be correct or not, they feel convinced, that they have not brought forward a puzzling theory, so complex as not to be comprehensible. They know that many things in the government of God have difficulties which *he* only can explain. And while they wait till he shall elucidate his own designs, they desire to go straight forward in the path of his own appointment. Why he has permitted such difference

of opinion in his church, they know not. They have endeavoured to account for this singular fact, and have often looked at the varieties of aspect which it presents, for the purpose of trying if some general and comprehensive view might not be taken of the whole, which would explain it. They confess that they have not been able to succeed to their own satisfaction : nor have they succeeded better, when they have placed themselves on the ground of their opponents, for the purpose of looking at its bearings from a new position. But the history of the church has sufficiently shewn, that a great deal more good has been visibly effected by the direct guidance of single and tangible truths, than by endeavouring to bring the precepts of God, and human expedien- cies into a coalition. Reasonings may often be plausible, which are not just : and there is always cause to suspect them, when all the New Testament *facts* lie on one side : and when the other is supported only by distant inferences. In this point, the arguments for infant baptism, and mixed communion, have a *striking affinity*. Mixed communion displays also another genuine character of error ; it is only to be found, (even on the concessions of its warmest supporters) in that mingled state of things which takes place between the first purity of the church, and the ultimate display of gospel light. In the times of the apostles it had no place ; nor do we expect that it will be found, when “ the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

CHAP. V.

The Plea that Pædobaptists think themselves baptized, considered.

PÆDOBAPTISTS in general allow the connection between baptism and the Lord's supper, and in proportion to the firmness of their belief in infant baptism, is their tenacity in requiring that what they account baptism, should precede church communion. But being sufficiently satisfied with their own baptism, they say to the Baptists, why will you not agree to take us into your communion, upon the principle that we believe the baptism which we have already received, is all that is necessary? They will farther say, we leave you to your own opinion, and to the enjoyment of your full liberty respecting what you think the best way of administering this ordinance. If we were convinced by your arguments, we would immediately offer ourselves as candidates; but as there is a difference of opinion, why will you not take us, on the ground that we *conceive ourselves baptized*?*

This is the most plausible proposal that is made on

* "Some Baptists upon the *liberal consideration* that those who differ from them *conceive themselves baptized*, admit them to the Lord's supper, which is called open, or more properly, mixed communion. As those independents, who practice infant baptism, generally admit Baptists to their communion; in some churches there has been such an intermixture, both of pastors and of members, *that it would be difficult to know under which denomination they should be placed.*"

History of Dissenters by Bogue and Bennet, vol. i. p. 143.

this subject. It comes before us with the appearance of so much liberality, leaving every one in full possession of his Christian liberty, that it seems to demand acquiescence. And since it is agreed, that the commands of Christ ought to be obeyed, the different parties are invited in the most friendly manner, to unite in communion, on the common ground, that each conscientiously believes the previous institution has been complied with.

Before I enter into a farther consideration of this proposal, I would ask those Pædobaptists who are zealous for it, whether *they* would consent to the membership of a person with them, whom they considered as unbaptized? And whether in case they were united with Baptists, they would think it right, that persons acknowledged by both parties to be *unbaptized*, should be introduced into their communion? As far as my observation has extended, I am convinced, that they would *generally* say, no: this was not the plan of our Lord, and his disciples. And few, who were not so lax about the ordinance of baptism, as to consider it of very little account, would judge differently.

I would ask then, if so, does not your proposal amount to this, *we would not admit a person whom we thought unbaptized, but we wish you to admit us, though on your own principles, you must deem us so.* That is, we have nothing to give up, for we do not consider you (Baptists) as not baptized, but we wish you to admit those whom you think unbaptized to communion, and thus grant to us, what we would not grant to others!

This is the ultimate state of the case, *in all the instances* where the plea is used that the Pædobaptists *think themselves baptized*. The two parties never do fairly meet on ground equally common, and it is impossible that they ever should. But as many are partial to the plea now before us, believing it to be an approxima-

tion to a general principle, which is sufficiently near for all practical purposes; it deserves examination. It is here supposed, that the necessity of baptism to communion is admitted, since the Baptists are solicited to receive the Pædobaptists *on the consideration* that they are *in their own estimation* baptized. For if those who use this argument, did not mean to rest their title to membership upon it, it is taken for granted, that they would not have placed their plea on such a ground.

The question here assumes a new shape, and requires a discussion, on principles entirely different from any that have hitherto claimed our attention. The leading point now before us is, ought we to accept a candidate for church membership, *on his own judgment of his own case?* Are we bound by the laws of Christian liberty, or Christian forbearance, to receive him as baptized, although we think him not to be so?

The reply to these inquiries is, no: and the reason is, that such a plan would practically annihilate all regulations for the admission of members into any society, either civil or religious.

In common life, it is never acted upon, in any case which is deemed to be of importance; and it cannot be acted upon. No man is admitted into any society on his own idea of his own qualifications. If he be voted in, it is by others, who judge whether he has them or not. If a man can persuade those concerned, that he has the requisite qualifications, he may be admitted, though he has them not. But then he is admitted on the belief that he has such qualifications. But to say, we do not believe you have them; yet we admit you, because *in your own opinion you possess them*, was never heard of. If a person be appointed a member of a public body, by individual authority, as by the command of the King, a Commoner may be invested with nobility and raised to the house of Peers, yet he who makes the

appointment, considers him fit for the situation. There may be a case, in which a gentleman may say to a man who is seeking employment, I know your character, and I can rely on you; if you think you understand my business sufficiently, to compleat the work that I may put into your hands, I will employ you. Here he takes the opinion of his servant respecting his qualification; but it is, because he confides in him, that he would not attempt to do the work without such qualification as his employer will approve on trial. But the case would be altered, were the servant to say, Sir, give me leave to do such a piece of work; for though *you* do not think me qualified I think myself so. Still more objectionable would it appear, if he magnified this request into a *claim*, and put the right he had of being accepted, on the ground of his own opinion of his own qualifications. Only let the principle be fairly tried in civil society, and it will immediately meet with unqualified opposition.

In religious societies, we constantly see, that the body in which the right of admitting members resides, *necessarily* judge of a candidate's qualifications. They hear his reasons for desiring to be admitted among them; and the profession of his faith; and then they *always* decide whether they ought to receive or reject him, on the grounds of the profession which he has made, the knowledge that they have of his character, or the credible testimony of others on which they can rely. If any man came forward with the plea—I think myself a believer in Christ, and qualified for membership with you, and therefore you ought to accept me accordingly; it would be immediately discovered, that this reasoning was not conclusive. Yet this is the ground on which the plea for mixed communion is placed, whenever it is said—Baptists ought to admit Pædobaptists, because they *conceive themselves* baptized.

With respect to *doctrine*, it is admitted that the church must judge whether the sentiments of those who desire membership, are, or are not, agreeable to the Christian system at large. What they consider as opposite to it, they cannot admit; because in their view, such opinions are not the religion of Jesus. Yet, though all will agree, that some sentiments are fundamental, still it will be found, that to settle, in all cases, what these are, and how far they ought to be extended;—how little knowledge in some instances is all that is needful to the Christian character, and how much in others ought to be required, as an evidence of the submission of the heart to the faith of the gospel,—will involve questions of far greater difficulty, than the single enquiry, whether a person has professed his faith in Christ *in the way prescribed by the Saviour himself*.

In the address to the church at Pergamos, Rev. ii. ver. 14, 15, we find that the Lord reproveth them, because they had among them those that held the doctrine of Balaam, and those that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Though they were praised, that as a body they held fast the name of Christ, and had not denied his faith. Ver. 13. From the state of opinions at the time when these epistles to the seven churches were written, there is great reason to believe, that there is a reference to the Gnostic system, which some Jewish teachers had circulated. And in the epistle to the church at Thyatira, ver. 18, &c. the Lord reproveth them for *suffering* certain persons *to teach* false doctrine and practice wickedness among them; while on the whole, they also were praised for having kept the faith. Now it is manifest, that they were considered so far responsible, as to have the right of excluding those whose sentiments were dangerously opposed to the will of Christ. For they could not be reproveth for having such persons among them, if they ought not to have

put them away. If so, surely it would never be admitted as a reason for receiving a man whose faith was of a dubious cast, that *he* thinks his sentiments agreeable to the will of Christ; he denies not any particular doctrine; he only gives his own explanation of it; and he ought to be accepted on his own belief, that his manner of explaining it, is according to the design of the New Testament.

As it is impossible to admit the principle of receiving a person on his *own opinion* of the justness of his *doctrinal* sentiments; so it is equally impossible to receive a man on his own opinion of his *practical* sentiments. There may be varieties of these allied to great excellencies, yet so questionable in both their nature and tendency, that a Christian church in justice to itself and to the world at large, may feel obliged to protest against them. A circumstance in our English biography will illustrate this position. The celebrated JOHN MILTON, whose genius as a poet is unrivalled, and soars beyond the reach of attack; whose general character was highly dignified; whose independence of mind was such, that he dared in evil times, to think freely, and to speak what he thought; whose character stood so high as to protect him, when political changes put him in the power of his enemies; and whose talents, by their grandeur, have so over-awed all his opponents, as to demand their admiration: yet had a speculation which few would approve on the subject of *divorce*. Not long after his marriage with his first wife, she went to visit her friends, and as it seems she did not much relish his society, she refused to return. Some disagreements had taken place; Milton was chagrined, and was led to imagine that circumstances might occur, different from those which are usually considered as the sole allowable causes of divorce, which would justify a man in putting away his wife, and marrying another. He published

his sentiments on the subject to the world ; and was so completely satisfied that his theory was correct, that he actually paid his respects to another lady, with the design of marrying her. Suppose a man of excellent general character and sound understanding, but avowedly a patron of such a theory, and in the circumstances of Milton at the time above mentioned, should offer himself as a candidate for communion, to any Christian church in the kingdom ; is there a single society, which pays the least attention to the reception of its members, that would not suppose it had the complete right to investigate the propriety of receiving him ? If a friend of such a person, either from partiality to his talents and character, or with a view to try the question on a strong case, should say, he thinks himself justified in the sight of God ; and although his views of divorce are not the same with yours, he does not wish to impose his speculation on you ; he only requests that you will exercise forbearance towards him, as believing himself to be right. Would such an argument be deemed valid, and silence enquiry as to the justice or expediency of receiving him as a member of a Christian church ? Let the question come home, and every one will be convinced, that *the principle* would never be admitted. Every one would say, let us first carefully examine this theory ; for as we are considered responsible for the sentiments which are avowed in our body, let us be convinced that so singular a system is *justifiable*, before we consent, even in appearance, to sanction it.

If it be said, admitting the right of each church to judge of the qualifications of those who wish to unite with them, yet might they not exercise forbearance towards those who differ from them *only* on the subject and mode of baptism ?

This plea may be urged on two grounds : either, the difference is *a trifle*, and therefore may be passed by ;

or, *that* may be granted as a favour in the exercise of forbearance, which cannot be claimed as a right.

The first of these pleas contains what, I believe, many people *think*, but which is always open to one condemning inquiry ;—did Jesus Christ command *trifles*? Is the ordinance by which he directed a profession of faith in him to be manifested—*a trifle*? And here let it be observed, that the difference between us and the Pædobaptists is not about a mere circumstantial in the administration, which might or might not take place, and yet the institution not be affected; it is concerning the *ordinance itself*. We assert that our Pædobaptist brethren are on this point entirely wrong: that they have not the authority of Christ and his apostles, for considering infants as subjects of baptism; and that what they administer to them is not baptism at all. Thus the debate between us, relates to the whole question of baptism, and if the difference be a trifle, then baptism itself is so.

As to the other ground, that of granting as a favour, what could not be claimed as a right, we have now to view the subject in rather a new light. Generally, the friends of mixed communion have represented our Pædobaptist brethren as having a claim, which it is unjust to refuse; but as it is also put on the footing of a favour, in the exercise of forbearance, it deserves consideration.

Forbearance, in this case, supposes a right not to forbear, and leaves the subject open to inquiries on the justice and expediency of the proposal; for if we are to forbear in every thing, forbearance repeals all law. Here then the inquiry is, are we allowed, by the authority of the Lord, to exercise such forbearance, or to grant such favour? If we are, it *still* becomes a question of expediency, to what cases it should apply: but if we are not, the point is settled.

It may be said, that forbearance supposes the presence

of evils ; and if we forbear nothing, the direction which inculcates it is of no use. This is granted : but there is a wide difference between what we believe is true, as being in our estimation, a fair deduction from acknowledged principles ; and what we receive from Christ as a direct and positive injunction. We all agree, that a manifest opposition to the moral part of the Christian code is not to be tolerated. But there may be many things in the conduct of our brethren, which we may be persuaded are wrong, against which we cannot bring a direct charge, because we cannot search the heart. Here, then, is a fair ground of inquiry, how far, judging of character from general principles, we are called on to exercise forbearance ; or, are required to proceed a step farther. There are also numberless instances, in which very sincere persons, from weakness of mind, or false impressions, draw wrong conclusions ; and it is practically impossible to convince them of their mistake. But though all these cases call for the exercise of the kindness of the Christian spirit, they do not prove that we ought to pass by a direct opposition to the moral precepts of Christ. In the same mode of reasoning, we are led to the conclusion, that though many differences of opinion respecting the ordinances of the gospel may take place, which may both call for our forbearance, and require a considerable extent of Christian charity to bear with them ; yet it does not follow, that direct opposition to any part of the positive code ought to be tolerated ; not from want of kindness to those who differ from us, but from the allegiance which we owe to the great head of the church.

It is often said,—obedience is better than sacrifice ; and the moral parts of the gospel are far superior to the ritual. This is granted ; yet how many, on this ground, degrade the positive institutions of the New Testament, as much below their proper place, as others exalt them

above it. We have high authority for saying, "these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Uncommanded sacrifice is of no account before God: but the sacrifice which *he* requires, is sanctioned by the strongest moral obligations. It was by the breach of a positive command that Adam lost Paradise, and involved the world in ruin; but his disobedience was evidently a great moral evil. To say nothing of the Old Testament dispensation, where so many of the commands were ritual, and the most trivial parts of which were enjoined by the authority of God himself; let us come to the time of our Lord. Baptism was to him, as far as we can judge, of infinitely less moral use, than it is to us; yet because the baptism of John was "from heaven," he submitted to it, and gave this as a reason, "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." When he gave his disciples the last directions which they received respecting baptism, in which he pointed out its subjects, its design, and the form to be used in the administration, he made this positive ordinance eminently prominent, as it was appointed to be the evidence of faith in him. And by his superintendance in the writing of the New Testament, he more frequently brought it to view, than either the Lord's supper, or perhaps any other single part of Christian obedience. These remarks are not made for the purpose of raising this institution to an undue height; nor in any respect designed to exalt it in the place of the Saviour, or of faith in him, or of obedience to the least of his moral precepts; but as they lie on the surface of the New Testament, and have a strong bearing on the present subject, we ought not to pass them without notice.

Every truly serious Baptist knows, that the ordinance of baptism is admirably fitted to try the moral qualities of the heart. When it first engaged his attention, he felt, on the strongest of all principles, an appeal made

to him, to follow the Lord; though he might have to deny himself and take up his cross. And even long after he had fulfilled a command, the weight of which, till he had obeyed it, lay heavy on his mind, he still felt the appeal return though in a different form, calling him to consider, that he had been "baptized into Christ," and therefore should "put on Christ." On a review, he has often been surprized at the wisdom, which combined with an œconomy of so pure and elevated a nature as the gospel, an introductory positive rite, uniting the exercise of faith in Christ working in *the heart*, with an evidence of submission to him: *in the presence of men*.

Under the impression of this weight of authority, the mind of a man in the fullest exercise of Christian candour, may well pause on the question, whether we are permitted to grant that communion as a favour, which supposes, at least, the neglect of a command, so decided, useful, and universal. As it is the *Lord's* ordinance, not ours; *his* church, which we enter on our baptism, not a society of our own forming, if we presume to grant what he has not directed, let us seriously reflect what answer we must give to the solemn question, "who hath required this at your hands?" Shew us only one instance in the New Testament, of such a favour being granted to any, who from weakness, ignorance, or prejudice, opposed any part of the standing law of Christ, and we will be satisfied. We are willing to place the issue of our cause, on the decision of this single point.

CHAP. VI.

The responsibility which attaches to the admission of unbaptized Persons to Church Communion.

IT is the ardent desire of many to see mixed communion introduced into our churches, for, if once introduced, they expect it will continue; because it is found much more difficult to discard a system which is already adopted, than to prevent its admission. In the midst of their zeal, however, it should be considered, that an alteration, which brings forward new terms of communion, ought only to be made under a full conviction that we are right; because it will be followed by certain effects through all futurity. If the principles are sound, the results will be good: but if they are at all deviations from the will of Christ, the effects will be baneful, and the mischief irremediable, except by returning to the original plan. The apostle Paul, as the only preservative against the evils of the grand apostacy, exhorts his friends at Thessalonica, “to stand fast, and hold the traditions which *ye have been taught*, whether by word or our epistle.” (2 Thess. ii. 15.) Is the introduction of the unbaptized into the church, one of the things which we are *taught* in the New Testament?—This is the simple question which we ought to keep in view. *In practice* the strict Baptists have all the odium to bear, of copying the plan which it is confessed was acted upon by the apostles of the Saviour. But the Pædobaptists, as well as the Baptists, will ultimately have to meet this question

in the face: are we warranted in practically declaring, that what we deem baptism, and believe to have been the appointment of the Lord, and the duty of all his disciples, is now *not necessary to be maintained in his church?* The argument concerning mixed communion, directed against *us*, is acknowledged to be only the application of a general principle, to one particular instance; but that principle strikes at the root of nearly all the Dissenting Churches in the kingdom.

Here the following questions deserve our serious regard. *First.* Have we any right to dispense with a clear command of Jesus Christ?

Mr. Hall says, "there is a happy equivocation in the word *dispense*, which has contributed not a little to its introduction into the present controversy." (P. 75.) As I mean no equivocation in the use which I shall make of it, I will endeavour to explain myself, on grounds common to Dissenters at large. In general, Pædobaptists as well as Baptists believe, that baptism, either as an introduction to our Christian profession, or as a mark of it, is requisite to communion: because the direction concerning baptism was given before Christian churches were gathered; was universal in its operation; and, according to all the examples on record, was never omitted. Now, have we any authority to deviate from the general direction, by not requiring baptism as the prescribed evidence of Christian profession, and thus to exercise "a dispensing power," respecting an institution, which, it is acknowledged, was in the purest days of the church, universal?

The expression, "dispensing power," used by Mr. Booth and others in this controversy, and which Mr. Hall so much disapproves, was suggested, I apprehend, by a circumstance in our English history. Charles the Second, for purposes of his own, granted Dissenters an indulgence beyond the law, as it then stood; and when

on one occasion, this measure was discussed in Parliament, “the House of Commons declared against the *dispensing power*, and argued that though the King had a power to pardon offenders, *he had not a right to authorize men to break the laws,*” &c.* The same scheme was tried by James the Second, and the discussion was renewed. These events brought forward the phrase, as applied to the exercise of authority in opposition to the plain directions of statute law.

The question entirely concerns *the right*. If the two monarchs just mentioned could have proved, that in certain instances they *had* a right to go beyond the law; and thus, *by law*, could authorize men to break the law, they would have gained their desire. And if the patrons of mixed communion can fairly establish their right to infringe a part of the statute law of the church of Christ, the debate will be finished; as far as they can prove the right extends, they may with justice act upon it. But I maintain that this has not been done, and that the attempt to establish such a right has utterly failed.

Viewing the authority of the divine legislator; his wisdom; and his knowledge of futurity; what an imputation do we cast upon him, if we imagine that one of the few general laws which he has appointed, may be passed by, because, in the varieties of opinion, some men reason wrongly concerning it, and plead for setting it aside? It is not to be expected that such regulations would be given as could never be misunderstood, or misapplied. For the wanderings of the human mind, no rule can be prescribed; but in following a clear direction, we know that we cannot be wrong. Duty always attends the evident expression of the divine will. Now it is not possible in the nature of things, *so clearly to*

* Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. iv. p. 533.

prove, that the will of Christ requires us to receive persons to communion *without* baptism, as we can prove that it *is* his will that believers should profess their faith *by* their baptism; since we have both precept and example in one case, and neither in the other. The argument for mixed communion can, therefore, never be *direct* and *decisive*: and its patrons ought seriously to inquire, how they can be justified in admitting the unbaptized to communion, which they *cannot prove* is right; while in admitting those who are baptized, they *know* that they are fulfilling the will of their Lord. In one case, we maintain, (and the fact, we think, speaks for itself,) that the authority of Christ is practically lowered; in the other it is supported. Now the question is plain and forcible, *what right have we to do any thing, that will render an institution of his of less consequence in the church, than it was when he appointed it?*

Secondly. Are we acting as safely, when we deviate from what it is acknowledged was the universal practice of the apostolic church, as when we closely adhere to it?

This question also demands the attention of all parties, as it concerns our responsibility to the great head of the church. In dubious cases it is desirable to be right; and when we clearly discern one line of procedure which cannot be wrong, it deserves consideration whether that be not the only line by which we should be guided.

It is granted by our opponents, that there was no mixed communion in the primitive apostolic church: and it admits of no doubt, that the communion of believers baptized on the profession of their faith, *is* according to the will of Christ. Communion with the unbaptized, (whomsoever we consider as of that class,) is, then, not according to the rule, as it is illustrated by New Testament examples. Is this to be considered an *excepted case*? Is the proof of the exception as clear as

the sense of the rule? Adduce only one instance from sufficient authority, and we will rest satisfied. But this it is acknowledged cannot be done: and some ingenious reasoning is given to shew, *why no such instance could exist!* (Terms of Com. p. 60, &c.) Surely then the argument comes home with increased force, that we ought not to adopt a system which could have no place in the apostolic churches. An explanation that neutralizes a law, destroys its effect. Considering our responsibility to the Saviour, are we equally safe in adopting a plan, which can have no precedent, and for which, we maintain, no direction has been given; as in acting according to the commission of the Lord and Saviour, explained by the practice of the apostles, and supported by the example of the whole primitive church?

When a servant, whose Lord is from home, deviates from a plan laid down for him, he ought to be quite sure that he has discovered an amendment which his master would have adopted, had he been present. If, before his departure, he had left him a number of directions, stating how he was to proceed in admitting others into the family, and how he was to conduct himself towards them; and, if, as a general rule, he had said, you will act according to your prudence, taking care to secure the well being of your fellow servants while they are doing my work; would he suppose, that the direction which regulated the manner of introducing new servants into the family, might be neglected? If it be remarked, that one part of his duty was, not to quarrel with his fellow servants, but to bear and forbear with them, even though they might misunderstand the will of their Lord: yet surely it will not follow, that he is to treat those who oppose a part of his master's will (whatever may be the cause of their opposition) with special cordiality, and to run down those who he can-

not but confess are more correct in their obedience, with hard and degrading epithets; and all this out of the kindness of forbearance! Forbearance may regard weaknesses; it may be exercised in personal differences; it may have place where we feel difficulties concerning the path of duty, and cannot clearly see on which side the truth is to be found;—but if we forbear with those, who are opposing the will of Christ so far as to abrogate *his* institutions in his *own church*, we are shewing more love to the servant in his errors, than we do to the Lord in his wisdom.

It may probably be said, that we are not responsible for the conduct of others in their mistakes concerning baptism, but we are responsible for our own conduct towards them. This is true: and therefore, as our conduct will affect, not only individuals, but the church as a body, our responsibility is of a serious nature: particularly when we are warned by past occurrences, of the evil which arises from departing from the New Testament institutions. This leads me to propose a

Third question: if we adopt the system of mixed communion, do we not alter the constitution of the church from what it was in the apostles' days? ❧

According to the New Testament, the church of Christ was composed of those who *professed their faith in Jesus by baptism, and who gave themselves up to the Lord, to walk in his ways*. Hence, a profession of faith—baptism—and union with others in our obedience to Christ, form the constitution of a Christian church. The two first, are expressly marked in our Lord's commission to his disciples, in which the command requiring the baptism of believers, extends to the whole number of those who after that time should be brought to the knowledge of Christ. The last, is so frequently inculcated by the apostles in their epistles to the churches, and received

so many illustrations from the history of the church at Jerusalem, and of those planted afterwards in other places, that it is presumed, no one will call it in question.

Without these three things, there can be no New Testament church. In primitive times no church did exist, or *could exist* without them. If we attempt to collect a church *without baptism*, we declare that the direct appointment of the Lord on that subject is not needful; and we form a body *visibly* different from that which distinguished the church in the age of inspiration. If we collect some who *are*, and others who are *not* baptized, we cannot maintain, that such an assembly resembles the apostolic church in its *unity*; for they had **ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism**. These general principles apply to Pædobaptists as well as to Baptists; but particularly to the latter, who consider the commission of Christ and the practice of the apostolic church, as shewing that baptism should be administered *only* to those who profess their faith. Above all people, they ought not to say, that baptism is not requisite to communion, because they maintain, that Christ required his disciples to manifest their faith **BY** their baptism: and as far as my observation has extended, *they never do make such an assertion, without being considered by Pædobaptists as giving up one distinguishing principle of their denomination*.

I ask, then, seriously and solemnly, where is our authority for collecting those into a church, who, we believe, have not made their Christian profession in the way which Christ commanded; and how are we justified in seeking to increase a church, *by* the neglect of his own institution?

It may be said, that if baptism be the appointed means of shewing our faith in Christ, yet we should look, not to the sign, but to the thing signified, which is

the faith professed; and the manner in which that faith was professed at first, we may leave to the individual, who is responsible for his conduct, to Christ, rather than to his church.

This argument supposes two things: *first*, that the sign is of so little value, that whether it be regarded or not, is of no consequence; and *secondly*, that the church ought not to take cognizance of the baptism of its members. But how can this be conformable to the apostolic exhortation, "endeavouring to keep the *unity* of the spirit in the bond of peace: there is *one* body, and *one* spirit, even as ye are called in *one* hope of your calling; *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism?" (Eph. iv. 3, 4.) No society can properly be called a church of *Christ*, which is not formed of those who unite together as his disciples, to keep his commands, and to edify each other in the ways of his appointment. It is, therefore, the necessary duty of such a society to regard the obedience, as well as the faith, of its members; and to enquire after their qualifications, before they are admitted. And here the question is not, whether baptism be the greatest or the smallest part of the duty required; but whether it be required at all. If it does belong to the Christian profession by divine appointment, the Christian church has, from its nature, a right to inquire concerning it, and cannot consistently neglect it. Besides, to suppose that a society ought not to inquire into the proper qualifications of those who wish to enter it, (whatever may constitute such qualifications,) is repugnant to the principles which must exist in all voluntary societies.

In the history of the church we have seen a train of evidence, so long, so minute, so varied; every part of which has shewn how many evils followed the corruption of its primitive constitution, that we ought to be on our guard against every thing which may carry us away from the simplicity that is in Christ.

When infant baptism was introduced, a new system was brought forward; church members of a new class were added to those who formerly were the only body of professing Christians. These were succeeded by others still more remote from the character of the primitive believers; till the world and the church were thus united together, and kept together. Conviction of the truth of the gospel, and a solemn profession of faith in it, did not, as before, precede a connexion with the assembly of the faithful. Persons who were introduced there in infancy, when they grew up, claimed their place, as a matter of course. A medium of connexion was thus formed between those who really did embrace the gospel in its spirit, and those who did not. The Christian party was out-numbered, and the world gained, and kept the dominion. At the first, these evils were not foreseen; they were probably not in the least anticipated. They entered, as the silent, but certain consequence of having departed from the constitutional principles of the church as it was first established. What was wanted to keep them out, was the firm adherence of men to the plain dictates of the New Testament;—who would resolutely say, NO: the Lord required baptism to be administered to persons *on* their believing; not to those who cannot believe, but who are baptized, because it is promised for them that *they shall believe*. Such men would have had to bear the charge of being the illiberal, narrow, uncharitable bigots of their day, who were eager for “the shew of conformity to apostolic precedent,” but for nothing more. But if the early church had possessed, in any considerable number, a phalanx of such pleaders for primitive simplicity, the world would not have seen that great corruption, infant baptism, taking such root, and bringing forth such abundance of fruit. They might have been called a “hostile confederacy,” but they would not have been

“hostile” to the great ends of the Saviour’s kingdom. These things the mixed communion Baptists cannot deny. Let them, then, learn a lesson from past ages. They are exactly acting the part of those whose conduct they deplore, and which they are obliged to oppose. The first abettors of infant baptism would, doubtless, plead *not guilty* to the consequences which followed it, but which did not, on that account, the less certainly ensue. Whereas, had they urged on their brethren, to be content with being the “followers of the churches of God which were in Judea,” (1 Thess. ii. 14) our ancestors in a common cause, would have been spared the toil of many exertions, in defending one of the plainest parts of the gospel; nor should we now have needed to insist on this plain reason for our conduct—*so did the apostles*, (on the concession of our opponents) *and therefore so do we*.

We think, that such a departure from the primitive plan of forming the church, will produce many effects unfavourable to its general interests. But as it is no part of our duty to be prophets, nor to act on what may be the future results of our present conduct, in those cases where subjection to a prescribed law is required; if we saw no unpleasant effect likely to follow, it ought to be enough for us, to obey a plain rule and example; to trust the wisdom of the legislator; and neither to practice the baptism of infants, nor to admit communion with the unbaptized, *for the very same reason*; because neither of them can be inferred, from the precepts of the Lord, or from the directions and examples of the apostles. By keeping in this path, we may have to encounter difficulties; but we shall glorify God; we are in the way marked out in his word, and may safely leave the result to him. By deviating from it, we shall, in a degree, counteract our best designs, and ensure certain difficulties to our successors, if not to

ourselves. Genius may adorn, and learning and acuteness may defend the church ; but neither their single, or combined efforts, can atone for the evils which are introduced, when they are employed to embellish false reasoning, or to apologize for a departure from the simplicity of the truth. Which of the corruptions that ever defiled the temple of God, did not number persons of the first talents, among its most ardent supporters? And what reformation has ever been effected, but by bringing men back to the facts and instructions which are actually on record in the word of God?

CHAP. VII.

On the expediency and policy of mixed Communion.

I AM aware that many may be found who could say much more on this part of the subject than I can, in consequence of their having had better opportunities of observing the effects of mixed communion, than ever I possessed. But all my observation has led me to believe, that this plan does not possess so many advantages as its friends boast of. Expediency and policy are best tried by time. It has been frequently seen, that what appeared very politic in theory, was not so in practice; the operation of unobserved causes came forward in actual fact, and the result was very different from what was expected. Perhaps it would not be too much to say, that this is always the case, in matters of mere expediency; and that nothing can ultimately be trusted, but sound principle.

The history of Dissenters strongly illustrates this position. Had our forefathers acted on the grounds of expediency and policy, rather than on those of a sterner kind, the state of things would have been very different from what it now is; and it would have been much worse.

It has been remarked by those who certainly are not favourable to the Baptists, that *John Tombes*, who, though a Baptist, was very much afraid of schism, and lived and died in the communion of the Church of England, did not promote, either the cause of non-conformity in general, or of his own sentiments in particular, like many others who might be named; and the obvious

reason is, that he was not struck with the practical importance of what he believed to be true.

We are recommended to observe the conduct of the Albigenses and the Waldenses, who had many Baptists among them, but yet were a mixed body. This is a most unfortunate reference. If their conduct is a model of expediency, it becomes a beacon, a complete warning, calling on us to avoid such expediency; for there is no evidence of its succeeding. Baptists might proceed from them, and when separated and acting for themselves, they increased; but I never saw it proved, that the mixed plan on which that venerable body acted, produced any marked effect in making them generally Baptists.

The expediency and policy of this system may be considered in reference to *Ministers*, and to *Congregations* and *Churches*.

To *Ministers*;—where is the expediency of such a mixture of sentiments and feeling in a congregation, as shall lay a temptation in the way of a minister to refrain from openly speaking his mind, paralyze his address, and prevent him from fully declaring the whole counsel of God, because some of his friends will be hurt at his so doing? As far as a man possesses true integrity, he will resolve to obey God rather than men; and such is human nature, that he may be induced sometimes to say more than is necessary, that he may not be misunderstood, and that he may discharge his conscience. But this calls forth an exertion of mind, which one would rather wish to see employed in other things, than divided between his subject, and the discharge of his conscience in thus treating it.

I would ask the greatest friends of mixed communion, and those who have most completely seen its operation, whether they have not known congrega-

tions, who, for a course of years, never heard their minister deliver a single sermon on Christian Baptism? There is a tendency in mixed communion to produce this effect, and I do not wonder at it. But, if baptism is one of the commands of Christ, I cannot conceive either the expediency or the policy of such conduct.

If the people of themselves, by reading the New Testament become Baptists, and solicit to have the ordinance administered to them, (provided they are proper subjects), they cannot be refused. And if the minister be a man of zeal, he may privately point their attention to this duty. But the structure of such a church, from the general principles recognized in it, does not encourage the open display of this part of the divine will, on the contrary, it says, *let that subject alone*. When it is introduced, it is rather *endured* by many who hear it, than considered of sufficient consequence to claim attention as a part of the will of the Lord.

Where the mixture of Pædobaptists is considerable, and the minister is a Baptist, he not only runs the risk of giving umbrage, if he does speak his sentiments on the subject of baptism, but he is tempted to do so in the style of a person who begs pardon for presuming to think differently from so many better and greater men than himself; and seems to say, that he would not be a Baptist if he could help it. Thus he makes apologies for stating his sentiments on a command of Christ, instead of coming forward with the boldness of conviction, resting what he delivers, on the plain solemn declarations of the New Testament, and considering them as quite sufficient authority for it.

Apart from all controversy, this state of mind is always uncomfortable; the causes which produce it are undesirable, and the consequences are hurtful; the fair front of one of the truths of God's word is seldom seen,

and the just weight of its motives, is not likely to be properly felt.

For the purpose of viewing the subject in another light, suppose, that we Baptists are in an error; and that it proves on farther examination, that we have been depriving infants of a privilege, hindering parents from doing their duty, and from taking the advantage of an impressive appeal to their rising race; and that we have been laying an obstacle in the way of their coming into the church, so that when they grow up, they have two institutions to obey, at one of which they revolt; whereas we might have spared them the difficulty of attending to the first as a duty, and only left them the other to be enjoyed as a privilege. These consequences it is allowed are chargeable on the Baptists, if their practice cannot be proved to be right. Hence, on this ground, in all instances where the minister is a Baptist, and the congregation contains Pædobaptists, that part of his hearers who are supposed to be in the right, lose a portion of those instructions, and the excitement of those motives which it would be their privilege to enjoy. Prove that we are in the wrong, as Baptists, and it will immediately be confessed, that this great evil lies at our door. The church should never be deprived of its food, from whatever part of the pasture of the Lord it ought to be gathered. Yet this must be the case, in the estimation of Pædobaptists, where they are connected with a Baptist minister. I have put this illustration in the present form, that it may be more easily seen by all parties; removing it from my own side of the question, that others may the more fully feel its force. It will instantly be seen, that if the Baptists are right, the converse is equally true.

This consideration has often excited surprize in my mind, when I have looked at the sentiments and conduct of some Pædobaptists, whose general character is

superior to all suspicion, whose attachment to what they receive as the *principles* of the New Testament, both in doctrine and duty, is obviously marked; and who are not at all disposed to give up a right, or to exchange it on the ground of expediency, for any advantage that may be offered them; I have been ready to ask, why should they be so desirous, as some of them are, to be admitted as members of Baptist churches? I judge them not: the case lies open to their own explanation. But the inquiry will *irresistibly* rise,—if they really and heartily believe, that infant baptism is an institution of Christ, why do they wish to unite with people by whom one of his institutions is, in their view, so manifestly opposed? How can they in justice to their families, unite with Baptists? How can they act as some of them do, if they believe that infant baptism is a command of Christ, and a matter of any importance? Is it the fact, that though they do not like our opinion, yet they do not think there is sufficient evidence clearly to establish their own? Or, is it, that in many of them there is a considerable degree of indifference concerning it; so that though they may oppose us, more from disliking our mode, than from any argument which they can bring against us, yet they do not think that it is a matter of much consequence?

The expediency and policy of mixed communion in reference to *Churches* and *Congregations*, also deserves to be considered.

One effect arising from this practice, and which I have heard distinctly acknowledged, is, that such congregations think themselves in an advanced state, when they consider the ritual parts of religion as of comparatively little importance, like the ceremonial observances of the Jewish law, which once, in the infancy of religious society, had their use, but now, when it has become advanced, may be laid aside,

or left to the determination of every individual, as an unimportant private speculation. This is the natural effect of mixed communion. Where this system prevails, good men are often induced to hold back their opinions, lest they should hurt the minds of those with whom they are in fellowship. Particularly is this the case, when it is understood between the two parties, as a private article, that they agree to bear and forbear respecting baptism, and cover all differences with what is called the mantle of love. Thus they neutralize each other. The secret influence which arises from example, and the feelings of those whom they respect, and with whom they move in society, tend to promote this effect still farther; and the result is, that whether the Baptists or the Pædobaptists are in the right, the church loses the practical influence of one of the institutions of the Lord. The conduct of each party is considered by the other as a private prejudice, arising from an attachment to a system, which though it retains its hold on the mind, is of no great consequence. And thus the command of Christ which calls all his disciples to an external act of submission to his authority, is either entirely kept back, or, clogged with difficulties from being in known opposition to one part of the church, instead of being brought forward in its proper place, and obeyed "heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men." Matters of mere opinion or taste, and partialities to things which are not express duty, may consistently enough be gratified in private; but a command of Christ respecting the profession of his gospel, should be recognized *in* the church, and there placed on its proper footing; otherwise we practically lower the authority of the great lawgiver.

I never could see, either the expediency or policy of a Baptist congregation having a Pædobaptist minister settled over them: and I doubt not, the Pædobaptists

have not seen the expediency of having a Baptist minister, in congregations of which they formed the principal part. Such cases have occurred, from the parties not being impressed with the importance of acting upon their sentiments, and they may continue peaceable enough for a time; but unless a spirit of indifference prevails, sooner or later, effects will arise of an unpleasant nature. So that eventually the best way is, for each party to state their conviction of the importance of what they believe, and without pretending to judge their brethren, to act for themselves. On this plan, they will meet upon common ground with more pleasure; there will be less jealousy between them, and on the whole, more friendship.

Mixed communion is urged, as a very likely means of increasing the number of Baptists. This is an argument which is very popular among some persons. But however they may think it deserving attention, the Pædobaptists must surely feel obliged by its distinct avowal. To them it is a complete warning. Those who think the principle of mixed communion *right*, (for I by no means would insinuate that they plead for the plan in opposition to their persuasion of its being defensible) argue that it is *true policy*, as the means of engaging others, in the most effectual manner, to an attention to the will of God. They look at what they hope to see produced, without sufficiently considering the whole effect of the system. They say, without hesitation, that they do not think the Pædobaptists have the same conviction of the scriptural evidence of infant baptism, which they themselves feel for the baptism of believers, and that a considerable portion of indifference exists in the minds of the Pædobaptists respecting the baptism of infants. They take it for granted, that the evidence of their own system is so strong when fairly stated, that if men can be disarmed of their

prejudices by being admitted to communion, they will, sooner or later, be in general overcome, and will form a still more intimate union with the Baptists, by practically confessing, that they are in the right: and they quote instances of success which have attended the practice of mixed communion, as proofs that the theory is correct.* If they thought it would have a different operation, we should soon find them bringing forward arguments of another kind. Few theories are entirely unsupported. I doubt not, but a degree of success of this kind has attended the plan. My objection is not, that it has never produced this effect; but that it produces others, which are not counterbalanced by any success that ever has, or ever can follow it. I have had reason to believe, that when this scheme has been tried, the church was divided into two parties, which were considerably distinct; the sentiments and practice of the Baptists were not relished by the rest, and it has been thought that one cause was the "offence of the cross." I believe it cannot be denied, that unpleasant remarks have been made in churches practising mixed communion, on a person's commencing a Baptist; so that notwithstanding all that is said about liberality and candour, communion itself has not cured the opposite evils.

It is not to be expected that many Pædobaptists should join the Baptists, where they have the opportunity of uniting with those of their own connexion; if they do, they are either indifferent to their own senti-

* "Baptists and Pædobaptists, by participating in the same privileges, become closely united in the ties of friendship: of which the effect is *uniformly found to be* a perpetual increase in the number of the former, compared to the latter, till in some societies the *opposite sentiments* have nearly subsided and disappeared."—(Terms. of Com. p. 185.)

ments, or are under the influence of some motives which overcome their repugnance to the peculiar opinions of the Baptists. From visible causes, they will find themselves, in such a connexion, thrown into the back ground; and cannot help feeling, how much more they would be at home in their own denomination. It would often happen, that the mixed plan *would keep out more than it would admit*. The strict Baptists who think it wrong, are as much repelled by it, as the Pædobaptists are in the opposite case; so that the policy on the whole, is for this, as well as for other reasons, very questionable. And as to the state of the fact, I have met with no evidence, that the Baptists as a body, are in a better situation on the whole, in places where mixed communion is the most popular, than in others where it is not practised. This is a part of the subject on which more than the general result of observation, cannot be stated with propriety. Let every one who has had the opportunity judge for himself.

My own attention was first turned to the comparative state of the Baptist and Pædobaptist connexions, by a conversation which I had many years since, with a very respectable minister who was a Pædobaptist. The subject which engaged us, had no relation to the present discussion. He surprized me by saying, that he always observed the number of members in Baptist churches to be larger, in proportion to the size of the congregation, than in other denominations. He mentioned a variety of instances in proof of the remark; and stated many circumstances which had more or less bearing on the situation of the respective bodies. I believe the observation is perfectly correct: and as far as I have had the means of obtaining information, I have found, that those Baptist congregations which contained the greatest number of church members have been *strict Baptists*. It can strike no one as surprizing, that

churches which hold mixed communion should have fewer members than we might expect, according to the size of the congregation, if he considers the fact above-mentioned. For whatever prevents Pædobaptists from becoming church members in their own connexions, will not have less influence, when they are mingled with Baptists. So that the argument, from *policy*, when examined by fact, has not the force that many suppose. Nor have I met with evidence, that mixed communion has increased the members of the church in the proportion that is commonly imagined, even where it may have produced an increase of the congregation.

A debate in America in the last century, illustrates the argument drawn from *success*, and also affords some excellent observations that will apply to other parts of this discussion. PRESIDENT EDWARDS wrote a book, intitled “An humble inquiry into the rules of the word of God, concerning the qualifications requisite to a complete standing and full communion in the Christian church.” This work was occasioned by an opinion which had long been entertained in Mr. Edwards’s church, and on which he had himself acted for many years, that unconverted persons, as such, might come to the Lord’s table:—that in a certain sense it was their duty to do so; and that it was sometimes the means of converting sinners to God. This sentiment had been introduced by Mr. Stoddard, the President’s grandfather; and was generally received in and about Northampton. Mr. Edwards hesitated concerning it when he first settled in that town, but on the whole, thinking it right, he had complied with it for twenty years. Circumstances produced a more full examination of the question; his opinion altered, and a controversy was one of the results. Mr. Edwards would not have drawn the line with great strictness; but he thought that none

ought to be admitted into full communion with the church, except such, as in the judgment of Christian charity, were pious persons, and made in consequence, some visible, credible profession of religion. In the course of this discussion he replied to a number of objections which had been urged against his plan, and among others, to this; "Some ministers have been greatly blessed in the other way of proceeding, *and some men have been converted at the Lord's supper.*"* Mr. Edwards discusses this objection at some length. *He does not deny the fact* on which it was founded, but he contends that this would not prove the plan to be right. In the estimation of some persons, the objection contained an unanswerable argument; but as it may be applied in contrary ways it proves nothing. I have heard it urged in favour of infant baptism, that there have been instances in which the minds of persons present have been usefully impressed by what was said on the occasion. A similar argument is used in support of the confirmation of the church of England. And the Baptists can quote instances of persons in their own body, who have stated, that the first serious impressions of any consequence which they ever felt, arose from their attending the administration of baptism to professed believers, and from the appeal which was made to those present, on the nature and importance of personal religion. So that if the argument from success is to be urged, it may be pleaded in causes perfectly opposite.

But let us observe how Mr. Edwards meets the objection; I will extract a few sentences, and then leave the reader to consider, whether they do not apply to the case before us. He says, "though we are to eye the providence of God, and not disregard his *works*, yet

* Edwards's Works, vol. vii, p. 160.

to interpret them to a sense, or apply them to an use inconsistent with the scope of the *word* of God, is a misconstruction, and misapplication of them. *God has not given us his PROVIDENCE, but his WORD to be our governing rule.* God is sovereign in his dispensations of providence; he bestowed the blessing on Jacob, even when he had a lie in his mouth. He was pleased to meet Solomon and make known himself to him, and bless him in an extraordinary manner, while he was worshipping in an *high place*.—The conduct of divine providence, with its reasons, is too little understood by us to be improved as our rule. ‘God has his way in the sea, his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known: and he gives none account of any of his matters.’ *But God has given us his WORD, to this very end, that it might be our RULE, and therefore has so ordered it, that it may be understood by us; and strictly speaking, this is our ONLY rule.* If we join any thing else to it, as making it our *rule*, we do that which we have no warrant for, yea, that which God himself has forbidden. See Deut. iv. 2. Prov. xxx. 6. And with regard to God’s blessing and succeeding ministers, *have not some had remarkable experience of it in the way which I plead for, as well as some who have been for the way I oppose?* However, we cannot conclude, that God sees nothing at all *amiss* in ministers, because he *blesses* them. In general, he may see those things in them which are very right and excellent; these he approves and regards, while he overlooks and pardons their mistakes in opinion or practice, and notwithstanding these, is pleased to crown their labours with his blessing.—I might here mention many things not yet noticed, which some object as *inconveniences* attending the scheme I have maintained. If men should set up their own wit and wisdom in opposition to God’s revealed will, *there is no end of objections of this kind, WHICH*

MIGHT BE RAISED AGAINST ANY OF GOD'S INSTITUTIONS.—But however God's altar may appear homely to us, yet if we lift up our hand to mend it, we shall pollute it. Laws and institutions are given for the *general good*, and not to avoid every particular inconvenience."*

I need not remark, how exactly these principles apply to the inquiry respecting mixed communion, and how completely they oppose the system.

The question of the expediency or policy of any line of conduct should always regard the state of the respective parties, and the result of the opinions which must necessarily follow such conduct. In communing with Baptists, the Pædobaptist does not *give up* his views of the necessity of baptism to communion. Whether the Baptists consider him as baptized, or as unbaptized, they receive him; they do not call on him to confess that he is unbaptized, but leave him in possession of his own idea of his qualifications. Yet their admitting him, is so generally considered by Pædobaptists as giving up their own sentiments, that the expediency of the measure, if there was no objection on the ground of propriety, ought to be very evidently marked before it is adopted.

A striking passage in Dr. Williams's "Anti-Pædobaptism examined," will shew his opinion on this point. "As far as we are authorized to form a judgment on the conduct of the free Baptists, they refer these points of difference about baptism to the *private judgment* of the subject; for when a communicant is dissatisfied with his infant baptism, the minister and the church admit him to the bath, according to their own custom of baptizing; which otherwise they could not do, without deserving the name of Anabaptists; but if

he is satisfied without it, they liberally acknowledge, that they have no right to impose those circumstances of baptism which Christ has left free. And that those Baptist ministers and churches who practice free communion, and who are considerably numerous, as they are also on account of their learning and piety not less respectable than their brethren, do regard *baptism*, though not *immersion*, as an essential prerequisite for Christian communion appears hence; if any are proposed to strict fellowship, who, according to their own judgment and profession, were never baptized, as are the children born of Anti-Pædobaptist parents, they are never admitted if I mistake not, without previous baptism. *I do not pretend to say, that every part of their conduct in these matters is right; but it is sufficient for me to infer thence, what appears fairly inferable, that their actions and habitual conduct concede my principle.*"*

Such is the view which Dr. Williams takes of the conduct of the mixed communion Baptists, and it admits not of a doubt that a large portion of the Pædobaptists agree with him. Where is the expediency of laying ourselves open to such an imputation as this? Expediencies are often surrenders, for some advantage which we expect to receive in return; but in this case, the Baptists are plainly told, that they are considered as *surrendering their principles*.

Even admitting that Dr. Williams has over-stated the point, still his observations forcibly apply to those who allow that some kind of baptism is necessary, though they leave it to the conscience of the person who makes the application for communion, to judge what that baptism is: nor do I see how they can exonerate

* Williams's Anti-Pædobaptism examined, vol. ii. p. 118, 119.

themselves from a great part of the charge which he brings against them.

Suppose they should change their position, and say, that they deny his principle; they do not consider infant baptism as *baptism at all*, but they agree to receive those whom they consider as good men, though they believe them to be unbaptized, and would receive them, even if they were not baptized *in any way*, supposing that they professed conscientiously to believe, that it was not their duty to be baptized:—the inquiry then assumes another form; and the question of *expediency* comes home to the *Pædobaptists themselves*. Nothing can be expedient, that is not in its consequences wise and consistent. Let them then consider, whether *they* act wisely, or consistently, if they join with Baptists who receive them on these grounds. If on their part, it be connected with a sacrifice of principle, they will confess that it is indefensible. It has commonly been represented as a piece of intolerable bigotry in the strict Baptists, to raise any objection to the admission of Pædobaptists; but it deserves the attention of the Pædobaptists, how far they either can, or ought to unite with Baptists. There are only three views which they can take of their situation in a Baptist church: they must either consider themselves as *unbaptized*; or, as *satisfied with their own baptism*, and willing to be admitted, whatever others may think of it: or, as agreeing with the maxim, that *baptism in any form, is of no consequence to communion*.

The *first* they cannot admit, if they consider their own baptism in infancy as valid. The *second*, which is probably the most common view, places them in such a situation, that if they reflect on it for a moment, they will feel it *degrading*. They may say, that they use the liberty which is granted them, by the liberality of their friends, while they are neither involved

in the reasonings of the Baptists on the subject, nor amenable for their consequences. But then it may be replied, do not the principles of the Baptists, and the apologies which they make for mixed communion, declare plainly, that when they receive Pædobaptists, it is as persons *unbaptized*, who are admitted on grounds separate from any considerations respecting the validity of their baptism? The Pædobaptists not only ought to know this, but to have their attention pointed to it. In exact proportion as they think the baptism which they have received sufficient, they cannot comfortably unite with those who esteem it a corruption, and a nullity: especially since they generally consider baptism as what ought regularly to precede communion. If they give it the slightest attention, they must see, that in their communion with Baptists, they cannot stand on the ground which in justice they think they can claim. In their own estimation they *are* baptized, and believe that they ought to be admitted as such; in the opinion of the Baptists they *are not* baptized, and though they *may be* admitted, yet they are declared *unbaptized*, whenever the opinion of their Baptist brethren is clearly brought forward.

Let them also consider, whether this is not a surrender of their principles, in a manner altogether inconsistent with their views of the law of Christ. They agree to be received, in the character of persons who have *not fulfilled* the will of their Lord, in the very point in which they believe that they *have fulfilled* it. They know that the Baptists disallow *their* baptism: the claim, which if they are consistent Pædobaptists they conceive they could make, is given up; and they in fact say, receive us then, on your own plan, and we will bear the imputation of being *unbaptized*. If they place mixed communion on this ground, they unite with Baptists on terms of inferiority. Mr. Hall himself,

notwithstanding all his pleading for them, calls them "*imperfect Christians.*" (P. 73.) It must be left with them to judge of the propriety of such conduct, when viewed in this light; but it appears to me, that a Pædobaptist who refuses to commune with Baptists, because in so doing he tacitly allows himself to be considered as not so complete a disciple of Jesus as he thinks he is, acts a part which is justifiable and dignified. He refuses to accept a station in the church by sufferance, as unbaptized, when he humbly hopes he ought to hold that of a person who is baptized; and he equally refuses to commute one institution of Christ for another, by practically saying he considers baptism of little consequence, provided he is only admitted to the Lord's supper.

But there is a *third* view which Pædobaptists may take of communion with Baptists;—they may unite with them on the broad principle, that baptism is not necessary to communion; and that they meet at the Lord's table merely as professors of their faith in Christ, and not as having been previously baptized. Those who adopt this statement think very little of infant baptism, and as far as the effect of their reasoning and example extends, they will be found ultimately undermining the practice. They cannot plead for it, on the ground of its giving the seed of believers a partial membership, which is recognized and completed when they profess their faith in mature years. Thus one leading, popular representation of its utility is given up. This might tempt the Baptists to listen with a favourable ear to a plan, which would tend rapidly to bring down what they esteem an error; and, on some it doubtless has a degree of influence on this account. But others say, no: we will not sacrifice any portion of one divine institution to destroy what we believe is a corruption in another: truth will make its own way; it

is most effectual when it works alone; and is too valuable to be given up for any purposes of supposed expediency.

If the Pædobaptist believes that baptism in any form, is a commanded duty, he must wish to see it maintained in the church in its proper place. But if he unites with Baptists, on the ground that baptism is not needful to communion, he ceases to maintain that it holds a higher station than that of a private opinion. He may say, it is the individual duty of Christians to be baptized according to the command of Christ, but the church has no business to require it, or to make any inquiries about it. This is the proper *unavoidable* result of the system of mixed communion. Here then the case comes to this point;—Jesus Christ commanded his apostles to go, to “teach and baptize all nations;”—“he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved:” the Baptists say, this applies to professing believers only; the Pædobaptists say, this interpretation is too narrow, it applies both to believers and their offspring; but *both parties* when they adopt the plan of mixed communion, in its full extent, are compelled to confess, that though the command of Christ was general, was universally obeyed, and continues still in force; yet, in the church, where Christians meet for the purpose of obeying the law of the Lord, *the first appointment which he gave to his disciples is a matter of mere private interpretation, and not subject to their cognizance!* I ask the Pædobaptists whether they will agree to this conclusion. If they hesitate, I ask again, how they can avoid it, without they maintain that baptism is *not* necessary to communion? Individuals who are on the verge of giving up the perpetuity and importance of baptism altogether, may admit the result above mentioned; but those who believe the ordinance of baptism, as they view it, to be of any consequence, will not adopt it. *As Pædobaptists* I think them wrong, and am

often surprized at their mode of reasoning; but when they plead for the regard due to what they believe is an institution of their Lord, I respect them for their consistency. In the whole of our discussion concerning the revealed will of Christ, particularly as to his positive institutions, expediency and policy ought to have no weight. Let his truth make its own way: let its march not be impeded by things which never belonged to it: it will not succeed the worse, for the absence of such attendants.

CHAP. VIII.

The Principles of mixed Communion considered, as they affect the Ground of our Dissent from the Establishment.

IF the principles on which mixed communion is at present defended, are admitted, our dissent from the establishment of our country, must be maintained by arguments, different in their radical principles from those which we have hitherto used. It is true, it will not follow, that any mode of reasoning is necessarily good, because it has been long and generally adopted; but before new ground is chosen, and the old positions which had many peculiar advantages are deserted, it is desirable to reconnoitre, and compare the bearings of the different objects from each of the points of observation.

I have often been surprized, that in the various attacks which of late years have been made on Dissenters by members of the Establishment, none, that I have observed, have ever proceeded on the ground of their admitting mixed communion. I can conceive only two reasons which can be given for this omission: the *first* is, that Churchmen are seldom acquainted with the opinions and reasonings of Dissenters concerning the nature of a Christian church; so that we rarely meet with a member of the Establishment, who knows how the subject is viewed by a Dissenter. Probab'ly also, very few of them are acquainted with the bearings of the present controversy. And, the *second*, that they are willing to consider the conduct of those who practice

mixed communion as an approximation to themselves; since it is a practical acknowledgment that persons who have had no other baptism than what they received in their infancy, are not on that account ineligible as church members.

The old Nonconformists who believed that the baptism of infants was agreeable to the will of Christ, did not object to the church of England because the baptism of infants was maintained in the Establishment; but because sentiments were asserted in the offices for baptism, and ceremonies ordered to be used, which they believed were not founded on the Bible. And since they were required to declare their assent and consent to these offices, as containing nothing contrary to the word of God, they said, we must dissent, because the church of England is adopting *unscriptural* representations, and requiring *unscriptural* ceremonies.

The grounds of objection on the subject of Baptism were these: 1. "The doctrine of real baptismal regeneration, and certain salvation, consequent thereupon." 2. "The use of godfathers and godmothers in baptism, to the exclusion of parents." 3. The obligation laid on ministers to deny "the ordinance of baptism to such as had not sponsors, although they had a real right to that ordinance, and to be thereby solemnly recognized as born members of the visible church." And, 4. The injunction, "to sign the infants, in the administration of baptism, with the transient sign of the cross, and to deny baptism to the children of such as refuse it." On all these points the Nonconformists felt great difficulties. The requisitions of the church they thought useless, arbitrary, dangerous, and unscriptural. On the last-mentioned objection, concerning the sign of the cross, they said, "they could not herein agree, because they found that such a promise and covenant as was required, always to use that sign in baptism, was a con-

senting to the *altering the terms of Christ's covenant and sacrament*, and to contradict one of his fundamental laws. Baptize, saith Christ, all that are made disciples ; all that repent and believe. *No*, saith the convocation, baptize none that are proposed, though they have all that is necessary to make them disciples of Christ, unless they will take the transient image of a cross, for their farther obligation. Here was a manifest encroachment upon the kingly power of our Saviour, in making *new terms of communion*, which they durst not concur in : a turning the keys upon those whom they knew Christ was ready to receive : and a positive rejecting such as he required them to baptize. And this, (as light as others made of it) was in their esteem a sin of an high nature, and so would their consenting to it also."*

In dealing with Baptists, the Churchman has to meet arguments of a different nature, but which still are pointed with scripture authority and example. The Baptists say, we are obliged to differ both from the the Establishment and from Pædobaptist Dissenters ; for we reject infant baptism entirely, and all that is built upon it : we believe that baptism is to be administered only to those who first profess their faith in Christ. Here the appeal is to the scripture, and to the scripture alone. If the Churchman can prove from the word of God, that baptism ought to be given to infants, the Baptist must give up his cause : but if not, the Baptist follows up his argument, and says, the ordinances of Christ, as they are *his* institutions ought to be peculiarly marked by obedience to *his* directions, for the purposes which *he* designed them to answer ; for as they are instituted by his command, we ought to be careful never to infringe his authority in the use which we make of them. And here, he adds, I have a reason

* See Calamy's *Life of Baxter*, chap. x. p. 505, &c.—513.

for dissent which is clear, and forcible. For if baptism ought not to be administered to any, but those who previously professed their faith in Christ, such only can be considered as the materials of which the church should be erected; and hence the whole frame of the Establishment falls at once. For if none ought to be baptized till they believe, there is no evidence whatever, that infants can in their baptism be "made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." Thus the system of the Establishment itself, depends on the issue of the inquiry concerning baptism. For if a church is wrong in the class of members which it admits, not from occasionally mistaking their characters, but from receiving them on an erroneous principle; the evil is so deeply rooted, so extensive, and, in a national church, so irremediable, that the only thing to be done is, "to come out from among them."*

* **BISHOP HALL**, in his "Apologie against Brownists," sect. 12, shews that he clearly saw the intimate connection between the baptism of the church and its constitution. A pamphlet had been published in defence of what was then called "Seperation," in which the author objected to the "visible constitution" of the Establishment. The bishop in reply, after many arguments in favour of the church, closes this part of his defence in the following singular manner; "To shut up your constitution then—there is no remedy: either you must goe forward to Anabaptisme, or come back to us. All your Rabbins cannot answer that charge of your rebaptized brother: if we be a true church, you must returne; if we be not (as a false church is no church of God) you must rebaptize: if our baptisme be good, then is our constitution good. Thus your own principles teach. The outward part of a true visible church is a vow, promise, oath, or covenant betwixt God and the saints. Now I ask, is this made by us in baptisme, or no? If it be, then we have by your confession (for

Thus far the Baptist maintains bold ground, and while he pleads for the necessity of administering the ordinances of Christ according to the scripture rule and example, and for the importance of forming the church on the model of the New Testament, the Churchman will find, that if his adversary is acquainted with his subject, he must not only use his greatest skill in making his attack, but also in so securing his retreat as not to be foiled by a pursuing foe.

But if it should be discovered, that notwithstanding all this zeal for the command of Christ, and the purity of the church according to the apostolic example, the Baptist can admit to communion, and treat as members of the church of Christ, those who *never had any baptism at all*; the Churchman rallies, and says, then I find that the law of Christ, and the uniform precedents of the apostolic church are not *the last appeal*! Here is a forbearance pleaded for, in relation to cases, which you confess could not have existed in the apostles days; and which is extended so far, as to tolerate *in the church*, the non-observance of what you yourselves believe was an institution of Christ! On what principles of common consistency, then, can you object to us, that we want scriptural authority for things which we never plead for, as more than decent, expedient, or venerable customs, when *you* make no scruple in tolerating in the church the neglect of an institution, which you are convinced was universally obeyed in apostolic times, and which was appointed by the highest authority in earth or heaven? *We*, in the established church, omit

so much as is outwardly required) a true visible church: so your separation is unjust: if it be not, then you must re-baptize; for the first baptisme is a nullity: and (if ours be not) you were never thereby as yet entered into any visible church."

no ordinance of Christ; the worst charge laid against us, is, that we add a few things, which we never represent as of divine authority; and which we only plead for, on the principle of general uniformity to the suffrage of wise and good men in the church for time immemorial; while *you* pass by an ordinance itself, though you acknowledge its binding authority on all Christians in all ages.

But, says the advocate for mixed communion, the difference of opinion respecting baptism is a *new case*, which could not take place while the law of Christ was clearly understood; we therefore apply the maxim of forbearance to it, as a part of the will of our great legislator. Very well, replies the Churchman; and when the emperors and kings of former days were converted to the Christian faith, and were desirous of sanctioning the gospel by their character, their property, and their influence, another *new case* appeared, of which apostolic times knew nothing. When nations became generally Christian, other *new cases* arose out of the new events of the times. And why should not the maxims of the New Testament, which require forbearance to the mistakes and prejudices of weak brethren be applied to those who came from Paganism, as well as to those who were converted from Judaism? Why should not the general sentiments and feelings of spiritual rulers, be in these *new cases* considered as demanding respectful attention, as well as the scruples of individuals concerning a plainly commanded duty? Why, also, should not the commands, or even requests of civil superiors, concerning things not directly, and in themselves unlawful, be regarded, especially when the civil rulers became Christians? *They* never required the church to omit an ordinance; all that they ever did, was to surround it with a few *decent* rites for the sake of attending to it “decently and in order,” according to

what they conceived to be the spirit of an injunction, which was as clear, as general, and as authoritative, as that concerning forbearance.

Besides, the Churchman may add, is not forbearance to be granted to *us* also in what we deem right and expedient? Suppose that we are *weak brethren*, as weak as you choose to represent us; why should you not, even in pity to our weaknesses, tolerate us in adding a few things to the original institutions of the Lord, rather than leave us, and by schism rend “the seamless garment of Christ,” especially as we should be glad to see you continue in our communion?* Which requires the

* In a review of Mr. Hall’s work in the *Bible Magazine*, a publication which is conducted by *Churchmen*, and, at least, principally supported by them, this sentiment is clearly stated: “But the great question after all, is, if the Baptists, who hold strict communion, should cede their opinions upon a point that is not essential in the estimation of their more liberal brethren, in order that the door may be open to all who profess faith in Christ; *Why should any individuals separate from the general body of Christians? Why should any leave the ESTABLISHMENT*, whose doctrines are sound, and in the mode of administering the ordinances do not, we maintain, *essentially* differ, from either Baptists or Independents?”—*Bible Mag.* for Nov. 1815, p. 700.—So also the *Christian Observer* for the same month, p. 676, praises the Church of England as “*very far from an exclusive strictness of communion;*” and adduces as proofs, “that Roman Catholic baptism is held good” in the Establishment; and that a “Lutheran or a Scotch baptism, though these are not administered by ministers episcopally ordained, would be esteemed a valid title to church communion;” of which instances are given. And I doubt not the church would admit a *Baptist*, on the same general principle. All this, however, does not prove that the Churchman would receive a person who had *not* been baptized in any way, however high he might stand in the

greatest exercise of forbearance,—our mistakes (as you esteem them) respecting an ordinance, the importance of which we stedfastly maintain; or,—the tolerating of others, who deny the institution altogether? Does it not come to this, that *you* can tolerate *disobedience to the Lord*, when you suppose that it arises from *mistaken* views, but you cannot tolerate *our* manner of *obeying* him, when that does not exactly agree with your notions of it?

scale of Christian excellence in general. So that it amounts to nothing more than this,—we are willing to receive you, for we admit *all* that have had *any* baptism. This is the utmost extent to which a Churchman can go. From the last-named respectable publication, much might be quoted in proof of this point. The Reviewers speak with high praise of Mr. Hall's talents and temper, and deliver their own opinion with great moderation of manner; but it is manifest that they do not adopt Mr. Hall's main principle. Speaking of the obligation to attend to a second duty, when the first had been disregarded; in reference to p. 51, 52 of the "Terms of Communion," they say, "The truth we should presume to be, that a neglect of the great initiatory rite of Christianity *must always operate, on the face of it, as a disqualification for Christian communion*; and the question is, whether an exception is to be allowed where that which appears to be a neglect, has in fact been an erroneous, though sincere, performance." P. 675. Again, "— Our Saviour having expressly commanded the use of baptism, and of the eucharist, not only as symbols, but as means of grace, we trust it may without offence be held, that a compliance with that sacred injunction in both points, is absolutely necessary to him who would be saved. And if it be said, that there are very sincere Christians who contrive to refine away both institutions, and in point of external observance shew no respect to either, we can only answer, that we judge them not. They are in the hands of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. *But the sincerity and worth of such persons cannot be clearer, than the direct obligation of the commands*

If the patrons of mixed communion object, that going this length would lead them to do many things which are not in the record of the New Testament, and which are different from the practice of the primitive apostolic church; the reply would instantly be,—if you do not keep to what you believe was the uniform practice of the first ages, you ought not to lay such stress on primitive Christianity, as to refuse our applying a line of interpretation to New Testament maxims, equally extensive with that which allows the omission of an institution of divine appointment.

So long as the Baptist maintains his sentiments respecting the primitive mode and subjects of baptism, and can establish his propositions by sufficient proof, he sets a churchman at defiance. He tells him respectfully, but plainly, that his church is wrong in its very constitution; that it is formed of materials different from those used by the Saviour, and that these materials are united together in a way totally diverse from that of his institution. The whole body is, therefore, taken in the aggregate, of a different character from that which is in the New Testament called the Church of Christ. And while this is the case, the reason for leaving the Establishment of our country, and for supporting a cause which we, as Baptists, believe to be of the New Testament, is so visible, that all farther discussion on the subject is needless. The minor points may be canvassed

they are virtually presuming to abrogate; nor, however warmly we might wish to include these respectable anomalies within the pale of our church, could we venture to purchase that advantage by striking out of our ritual the Christian sacraments. In one word, such cases must be looked on as anomalous; and for anomalous cases, no system can well make a provision." P. 677, 678. Such is the opinion of serious and intelligent Churchmen.

for amusement; but the great question is decided by the result of the inquiry concerning baptism.

But if we quit our strong hold of scripture direction and precedent, and grant, that though the church has not “power to *decree* rites and ceremonies,” yet it has the power to *omit* those which were established by divine authority, and to receive persons as members who do not submit to a rite appointed by the LORD; we may expect to be told—that after all that we say about New Testament rule and authority, when it suits our own purposes or reasonings, we can make plain injunctions give way to uncertain conclusions, and plead for a mixture in the church, which we acknowledge, could not have existed in the days of the apostles:—that there is more of fancy than faith; more of mere like and dislike, of prejudice and passion, than of plain straightforward principle, in our professed imitation of the New Testament churches. And what can we reply, when the fact of mixed communion, like a *corps de reserve*, is brought up against us?

It will be alledged, that though baptism is one point on which Dissenters in general, and Baptists in particular, differ from the Establishment, yet that the main argument against it is, its alliance with the state; thus making the church a worldly association, under the rule of men of the world, and governed of course by their principles. It is freely granted, that this is a forcible consideration; but what makes the Establishment a worldly corporation? Its baptism: other causes assist, but this is the chief agent. Infants indiscriminately, are enrolled among its members at their baptism, “wherein” (to give their claim validity) they are said to be “made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven!” Thus the church becomes *national*; the distinction between the world and the church is annihilated; both are closely linked

together; and nothing can so completely hew the links asunder, and dissolve the connection, as the restoration of primitive baptism.

It may be said, this is reasoning and feeling as a Baptist; I grant it: and I now quit that ground, for another which is common to Dissenters in general. I am quite aware that our Pædobaptist friends object to the baptism of the Establishment in one part of its principle. I need not say any thing to them, concerning the way to defend their own dissent from the church; but I would solicit them to consider, how they are to support their cause against the attack of a Churchman, if they admit those to communion, who are in their view unbaptized. He might justly say, you object to our representation of baptismal regeneration as incorrect, and to godfathers, and to the sign of the cross, as unscriptural additions to the ordinance, but it is manifest that these objections do not arise from any zeal for the purity of its administration as a Christian institution; since you think it of so little moment, that it may be omitted altogether. Whatever reasons may lead you to feel so strong an objection to those rites, which in our church accompany baptism, yet if you believed the institution itself of importance, you would maintain it in your churches; and if your object was to be as near to what you thought was the order of the apostolic churches as you could, you would support the authority of the Saviour by preserving his appointments. But how can you plead for your separation from the Establishment of your country, on the ground of attachment to the primitive church, when you set up a church, which practically *dissents* from what you yourselves believe was the practice of the purest ages?

If it be replied, that the spirit of our Lord's dispensation ought to over-rule the letter of his commandments, and for this reason we ought to receive those whom

Christ receives, which the Establishment will not do; the Churchman may reply, then one reason of your dissent from us, is, because our church adheres to the ordinances of Christ, and you want the liberty of departing from them!

Thus the Churchman and the Dissenter have changed places in the controversy. The former pleads for attention to the will of Christ on scriptural authority; while the latter, quits the ground of his forefathers the Nonconformists, and now argues, not for conformity to a divine precept, but *for liberty to omit it altogether*.

It may be said, that if he does plead for the liberty of judging what the Lord would approve in particular cases, he conceives that he is guided by the *principles* of the New Testament, and is completely adverse to every idea of acting contrary to what he thinks is the will of Christ. This is fully granted: but here lies the difficulty;—if Jesus Christ did appoint baptism to be one of the ordinances of the gospel, and left the appointment unaltered, how can it cease to be his will *now*? Is it of no consequence whether his commands be, or be not fulfilled? Are they of less account because they are now grown old? And if it be urged, that we ought to receive those whom Christ receives; and that since he receives the unbaptized, we should do so too; it will amount to this; *he thinks his own institutions are of very little consequence, by receiving those who do not submit to them; and therefore we need not be exact in maintaining their authority!* A principle which would entirely prevent our reforming any abuse which good men may have sanctioned; or, opposing any innovation which may have their concurrence; and which would completely undermine the regard due to Christ's positive appointments. The same argument would have applied to PROTESTANTS, as a reason why they ought not to have departed from the ROMAN CATHOLIC

church: there have been so many good men in the Romish church, that the difference of opinion between us and them cannot be of any importance. So also, it may be said to *Dissenters* by *Churchmen*, the principles and practices which we admit, and you dislike, cannot be of any account, for Christ has received us; you therefore, ought to receive us also, and not separate from us. Thus the authority of the Lord may be reduced to nothing; and the argument against the strict **Baptists** be applied to an unlimited extent. It is most manifest, that there has been a growing indifference to the positive parts of the divine will, in proportion as generalizing views of the gospel have become popular. That *there are good men in all parties*;—and, that the inquiries in question relate to *non-essentials*,—have been considered by some, as sufficient reasons why the will of Christ respecting his ordinances, and the structure of his church should either not be investigated, or not carried into action: whilst others are denying the binding authority of the gospel institutions, and disregarding the obligation to keep up any society that can be called, *the Church of Christ*. All these varieties receive some sanction and support from the friends of mixed communion, who practically declare, that they consider an ordinance of Christ as of so little consequence that they equally receive those who conform to it, and those who do not. Thus, after the apostles had carefully laid the foundations of a temple for the Lord, according to the dimensions which he had prescribed, and succeeding Christians have for ages been labouring to complete the edifice; it is at length discovered, that the basis is *too small*; and that the best thing which can be done, is to pull the whole down, to extend the plan, and rebuild it on a design, which shall comprize all the latest and best improvements of modern times!

CHAP. IX.

The Argument from John's Baptism considered.

THE baptism of John was considered by Mr. Booth, as on the whole, so similar to Christian baptism, that one of his reasons for strict communion, was derived from the priority of baptism to the Lord's supper.* This argument Mr. Hall opposes at considerable length, and endeavours to prove that John's baptism was not Christian baptism; and that if so, the argument from priority is reversed, and the Lord's supper was instituted before Christian baptism existed. And he concludes the section where this subject is discussed with these words, "it now appears that the original communicants at the Lord's table, at the time they partook of it, were with respect to the Christian baptism, precisely in the same situation with the persons they (the strict Baptists) exclude." (P. 43.)

It does not appear to me that this argument is of much weight; but as many have thought it forcible in favour of mixed communion, it demands consideration. The inference drawn from it is this; if the apostles had not *Christian* baptism, others need not have it as a qualification for church membership: and these instances prove that the Lord's supper was not only received, but dispensed, by ministers who were *unbaptized*. Not that they had had *no baptism*, but that they were partakers of John's baptism only, which was not *Christian* baptism. "It is almost certain that some, probably most of them, had been baptized by John, but for the reasons

* See his Apology, sect. 3.

which have been already amply assigned, this will not account for their not submitting to the *Christian* ordinance." (P. 41.)

John's baptism was distinguished by these particulars; it was a divine institution, and not a human appointment. This clothed it with authority. It was not a mere Jewish rite, but an ordinance which John was sent to dispense to those who received his message. It was administered to his followers, on a profession of repentance, when accompanied with such general evidence of sincerity as appeared to him satisfactory; and he then told them, "that they were to believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus." Acts, xix. 4. So that an assent to the truth revealed by John, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and that when the Messiah appeared, they ought to believe on him, was necessarily implied:—Hence we see that they were baptized *on a profession of their faith in all the truth which God had at that time revealed.* Farther, this baptism was "*for the remission of sins:*" so that those who submitted to it in the exercise of the repentance and faith which John required, had additional ground to hope that their sins were forgiven, beyond whatever they enjoyed before. It was designed to bring forward the Messiah to the observation of the people; and thus make his person, and ultimately his whole character known to Israel; that those who were baptized might be led to believe in him. John very expressly pointed him out. When he saw him coming unto him, he said, "*behold the LAMB OF GOD which taketh AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD. This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me. And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I*

knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending, and remaining upon him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that THIS IS THE SON OF GOD. John i. 29—34. In addition to the other ends of John's baptism, we may add, that it brought to view the example of Christ, who was baptized by John, for this as well as other reasons, that we might see the regard due to whatever is appointed by divine authority. For though the baptism of John was only a positive rite, designed to continue for a very short time, and, respecting more than one of its purposes, inapplicable to the case of the Lord, yet the holy one of God, who had no sins to confess, submitted to it, saying, *thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* Matt. iii. 15.

We learn from the gospel history, that Jesus also baptized, by means of his disciples. This baptism without doubt was in one strong sense *Christian baptism*: as it was administered by the authority of Christ himself. It is allowed to be "almost certain, that some, probably most" of the disciples of the Lord had been baptized by John; for we cannot suppose them liable to the reproach cast on the Pharisees, that they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, by not being baptized with his baptism. Nor, if any of those became the immediate followers of Christ, who had not received John's baptism, will it be doubted, that they were baptized by some of Christ's disciples, on their professing themselves believers in him. For it is not a supposable case, that after he had instituted a baptism of his own, those who attached themselves to him, would refuse to fulfil a command which he had enjoined.

The Apostle John states the following particulars: "after these things (which he had been relating) came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there

he tarried with them, and *baptized.*” Ch. iii. 23. This took place *before* the imprisonment of John the Baptist; for, we find in the next verse, that “John *also* was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there, and they came and were baptized.” The success attending our Lord’s ministry raised the report, that he “made and baptized more disciples than John,” ch. iv. 1. which may mean, not that the disciples of Christ were, as a body, more numerous than those of John, but that Jesus baptized more *at that time*, than his fore-runner, which would agree with John’s statement, ch. iii. 30, “He must increase, but I must decrease,” and with the complaint of his disciples, ver. 26, “the same baptizeth, and *all* men come to him.” In one respect, what the Pharisees “had heard” was not correct, for they were informed that “HE made and baptized more disciples than John.” This led the sacred writer to rectify the mistake by observing, that “Jesus *himself* baptized not, *but his disciples,*” ver. 2. and by this means he grants that what the Pharisees “had heard,” was in other points true. So that the facts of the case were these, John *began* his ministry by preaching repentance and announcing the coming of the Lord; and he baptized his disciples on a profession of their “repentance, for the remission of their sins;” Matt. iii. 6. Mark, i. 4. Luke, iii. 3. “saying unto the people, that they should believe in him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus.” Acts, xix. 4. In the *progress* of his ministry Jesus appeared, and John then bore witness that “this is he—the lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world—the Son of God.” John, i. 29, 34, 36. *Before the end* of his ministry, Jesus began to preach “the gospel of the kingdom;” was received by many as the Messiah; instituted a baptism of his own, and “all men came to him.” Thus we see a progress in the information

given to men; while it is evident, that the baptism of John and of Christ differed chiefly in one particular; the *first*, announced the coming and revelation of the Messiah: the *second*, was the institution of the Messiah himself after he was "made manifest to Israel."

From this short view of the subject, we are led to observe, 1. That those whom our Lord admitted to his table, had the baptism of the dispensation under which they were brought to the acknowledgment of the truth. Now, if we grant that this was not in any case, strictly speaking, *Christian* baptism; since it was not in the form which Christ afterwards appointed, and in the instances of those who were baptized by John, was not on a profession of faith in him *as already come*; yet it was all that was then required by any existing law. And whether it would be valid *now*, or not, it was valid *then*. We ask no more in any case, than a submission to the baptism which is *at the time* in force. They were baptized on their profession of repentance, and of their believing the truth *then* revealed. Let others follow their example *now*, and the debate will end: nor will a single argument be needed against the practice of mixed communion.

2. The baptism of the apostles, and their first reception of the Lord's supper, were both marked with the ignorance of the time. If they had not the baptism which was required afterwards, they had not the same views of the Lord's supper which they entertained after the Saviour's ascension, when their minds were led into all truth, and they knew, what they knew not (so fully at least) before. It is remarkable, that the institutions of the passover, and of the Lord's supper, which were both ordinances of memorial, were at their first appointment, anticipations of facts not at that time in existence. The houses where the Israelites dwelt in Egypt, and on the doors of which the blood of the Paschal lamb

was sprinkled, were during the night in which that sacrifice was first eaten, *passed over*, by the destroying angel; and yet this institution was declared to be a "memorial;" and the day was ordered to be kept as "a feast unto the Lord, throughout their generations; a feast by an ordinance for ever," *before* the fact of which it was to be a commemoration had taken place. Exod. xii. 14. So also, the Lord's supper was to be celebrated in remembrance of Christ, although he was then present with his disciples; and it was intended to be a memorial of that love, the great display of which was not then completed. The disciples, therefore could not surround the table of the Lord the first time, with the same sentiments and feelings which they had afterwards. If then, their baptism was imperfect, so was also their regard to the other ordinance of Christ's appointment. Both were enriched and rendered more significant and impressive, by the additional light and glory with which they were invested.

But, it may be said, the apostles were never afterwards baptized. Granted. It appears that those who believed in Christ during his life, and who were then admitted among the number of his disciples, were not baptized again; the baptism which they had already received was deemed by him sufficient. They were baptized by John on their professing that they would believe on him who was to come, and when he did appear, they received him. The end of their baptism was thus answered, and the Saviour acknowledged them as his. As no other law of baptism was then made known, they were guilty of no neglect of his commands, though they had only the baptism of John. Or, if any of them were not originally John's disciples, they would be baptized by the authority of Christ, as believers in him. So that, when the new law was propounded, it did not affect *them*, but such only who had

not before believed in Jesus. All those persons, therefore, who were afterwards brought to believe in Christ, were subject to that law; those who had already believed in him were not within its limits. On this principle I agree with Mr. Hall, that the disciples at Ephesus WERE baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, notwithstanding they had been before baptized into John's baptism; because they came under the law of Christian baptism, since they had not believed in Christ before he delivered the commission. This consideration draws a line which is very visible, between the cases in which John's baptism was valid, and those in which it was not.*

* The very learned J. D. Michaelis proposes an explanation of this passage, which is founded on a curious fact, and deserves more examination than it has yet received. It appears that there was a class of people in the East who called themselves *Galilæans*, and were in reality *disciples of John the Baptist*. They are said to be slightly noticed, both in the *Clementines*, and in the *Koran*. So late as the year 1779, this people were to be found about a day's journey East of Lebanon, at a place called Elmarkah; and at that time, they were in number from 13 to 14,000 persons. They say, that they call themselves *Galilæans*, because their sect arose from Galilee. They are not Christians, but profess to be the disciples of John. They use some expressions which throw considerable light on the phraseology of particular parts of the New Testament. They baptize children at forty days old; they perform it by three immersions; and their form is, '*I baptize thee with the baptism with which John the Baptist baptized.*' They say, they know not the words which John used, and therefore they think the above form preferable to any other.

Walch, in his *Observations de Sabæis*, remarks, that Christians and *Sabæans* (which is another name for this people and signifies *Baptists*), were in the most ancient times known by the common term *disciples*.

Suppose, then, it be granted, that the apostles in general, had not, in the extent of the term, *Christian* baptism, as it is *now* understood and practised, they had what the Lord esteemed requisite, and this ought to satisfy us. But it will not follow, that at present any ought to be admitted to the Lord's table without baptism: or, that any were *ever* admitted who had not that baptism, which, according to his decision, was valid. And if this be not proved, the argument attempted to be drawn from John's baptism not being Christian baptism, is, in the present case, of no force.

3. Farther, the practical question is, whether the law of Christian baptism, which our Lord promulgated just before his ascension, be not binding on all who after that time were led to believe in him. If it be, the next inquiry is, how can we profess our faith in Christ, in the way which he has appointed, unless we are baptized? And if baptism is necessary to Christian profession, as the appointed mode of testifying our faith, how can we

From the account given by Michaelis it is evident, that they have made additions to whatever might have been the opinions and practices of their predecessors; but if we suppose that a few of this class of disciples in their original state, were at Ephesus, the passage in Acts xix. appears so clear, that it needs no explanation. The former comments are in that case, entirely useless. For, as Michaelis justly observes, "*John's* baptism was baptism *into Christ*, as he said that the person baptized should believe on him who should come after him, but *this*, was merely baptism *into John*, by a kind of implicit faith, and was not Christian baptism." On this principle the argument from this passage, against the baptism which John administered entirely fails, for none would confound the rite which he dispensed, with such an imitation of it, as has been just described.—See J. D. Michaelis *Orientalische und Exegetische Bibliothek*. Th. xv. No. 248. and Th. xviii. No. 271. and Anmerk. zu Apostelgesch. c. xix. ver. 5.

come as *his disciples* to the Lord's supper, without that very evidence of our *being his disciples*, which he specifically required?—Whether we can enter into all the reasons of his conduct or not; or, whether he, in the plenitude of his authority and wisdom did, or did not, admit unbaptized disciples to his table, while he was with them; the path of duty is *now* settled by a direct and general precept, and the baptism which he commanded (whatever that rite shall prove to be) is the first public evidence of our subjection to his laws. Nor can the church of Christ, acting upon the rule which he has laid down, recognize *any person* as his disciple, who is not baptized in his name.

Some may object to this statement; but let them lay before them the commission of the Lord, and the practical comment given by the conduct of the apostles, and then come to another conclusion if they can. As Baptists, we say, that the commission directs the apostles to “Go,” and “teach all nations,”—and then, on their receiving the gospel, to proceed by “baptizing them” in the sacred name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This forms the great rule which the apostles followed, and which we are to follow also. The Pædobaptists are partial to a different representation; they plead that the word here used, *μαθητευειν*, signifies “to proselyte, to disciple, or, to make disciples:”—“receive into discipleship all nations, baptizing them in the name, &c. making this form of baptism their ceremony of receiving them.”* The excellent RICH. BAXTER pleads for the same idea:—“The word translated teach, signifieth, disciple to me, or make nations my disciples.—Baptism is christening, and is the badge of those that must love and take each other for Chris-

* Dr. Williams's *Antipædobaptism Examined*, vol. i. p. 325. 326.

tians; and the term of Church Unity, till it be nullified by verbal or actual apostacy.”* Without entering into the debate between the two parties, or bringing forward that evidence which would shew how the term “*teach*,” was understood while the Greek was a living language, there is one common sentiment in all these different explanations;—that according to the appointment of the Lord, *instruction* and *baptism* are intimately connected, so that his will is not practically regarded, as he intended it should be, when *both* do not exist. Indeed the Pædobaptist interpretation in this point, goes farther than that of the Baptists; for while the latter pleads that men should be instructed *first*, and in this sense be disciples *before* they are baptized, the former maintains, that they are made disciples *by* their baptism. On this plan unbaptized persons are clearly *not* disciples, and cannot be recognized as such. And on the explanation of the Baptists, how can those who have not obeyed the command of their Lord, by which they were to shew their faith in him, be recognized by a church, as having made that profession which Christ required? If we may act on a different plan from that which the Lord appointed and his apostles followed, I grant we may admit the unbaptized, and with equal reason, may admit many other deviations from the New Testament. For if the law which required the baptism of *all* who believed in him, may, out of regard to the “weakness” of some men’s faith, be passed over, it is impossible to say what we may not be required to surrender on the same principle. It would be in vain to object to any new demand which might be made upon us, that it is not according to the New Testament rule, when it might be retorted, neither the New Testament rule, nor the conduct of the apostles, nor the practice of the primitive

* Paraphrase on Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

church, gives any sanction to the communion of the unbaptized; but on the contrary, they all manifest, that such persons were not received to church fellowship; yet *you* admit them, and even plead that the forbearance required in the New Testament, amounts to a *legal toleration* of an omission of a divine precept.—Where may not such a principle lead us?

I am perfectly aware, that in the hands of *many* it would never be applied beyond the admission of those to the Lord's table who had been sprinkled in their infancy. *Some* who plead for it, might probably admit a person of peculiarly excellent religious character, who never had any baptism at all; provided he himself thought none were necessary. But they would consider this an extreme case, and on every other point, they would agree in language and in heart, with their brethren around. *A few* might go still farther, and say, that the Lord's supper had no connexion with baptism at all; so that whether a person was or was not baptized, made no difference: if he was a Christian he was a fit subject for church fellowship. But whether the theory of mixed communion be carried to its full extent, or not, my objection is the same. The ground on which I stand is, that the PRINCIPLE of obedience to the law of Christ in his church, is GIVEN UP; and instead of it, are substituted, reasonings on new cases, and such explanations of scriptural expressions, as tend to make the church in the present day, in its leading features, unlike the church which the apostles of the Lord gathered together.

CHAP. X.

The Principle of mixed Communion not known in the ancient Church, and not sanctioned by modern Pædobaptist Writers.

MR. Booth, in his defence of the Baptists, had said, that “ it never was disputed prior to the sixteenth century, by orthodox or heterodox, by Papist or Protestant, whether *unbaptized* believers should be admitted to the Lord’s table ; they *all* agreeing in the contrary practice,” &c. This referred to a question of fact, and is a fair source of reasoning against any charge of novelty, to which we may be exposed for holding strict communion. Mr. Hall notices Mr. Booth’s argument from history, in his fourth section, p. 76, &c. which he intitles, “ our *supposed* opposition to the universal suffrages of the Church considered.” Here I would respectfully ask, in what instances have the suffrages of the church, at any early period, been in favour of communion *without baptism* ? Was there ever a time, when this “ *supposed* opposition ” was not *real* ? If there had been such a time, we should have heard of it. If, in consequence of *our* ignorance, *we* had known nothing of it, the learning and sagacity of our opponents would certainly both have discovered, and improved it against us. But no evidence of this kind is yet brought forward, and we believe that none exists. Mr. Booth urged the novelty of the principle and practice of mixed communion, against those who pleaded for it in his day. Mr. Hall says, that this “ is merely an *argumentum ad verecundiam*, an attempt to overawe by the weight of

authority, without pretending to enter into the merits of the controversy. It assumes for its basis the impossibility of the universal prevalence of error, which if it be once admitted, all hopes of extending the boundaries of knowledge must be relinquished. My next observation is, that it comes with peculiar infelicity from the members of a sect, who upon a subject of much greater moment, have presumed to relinquish the precedent, and arraign the practice of the whole Christian world, as far at least as they have been exhibited in these later ages.

Quis tulerit Gracchos, de seditione querentes.

After setting an example of revolt, it is too late for them to inculcate the duty of submission." P. 76, 77.

Had Mr. Hall recollected what Mr. Booth states in the preface to his Apology, he would not have gone this length. Mr. Booth says, "it is entirely on the *defensive* that the author takes up his pen; for had not the principles and practice of those professors who are invidiously called STRICT BAPTISTS, been severely censured, by many who maintain, and by some who deny, the divine authority of infant baptism, these pages would never have seen the light." Every one knows how much the abettors of infant baptism are continually pleading the authority of antiquity. These Mr. Booth considered as forming the greater part of his opponents. It was, therefore, perfectly fair that he should urge, at least against *them*, the argument from antiquity; for in their opposition to him as a Baptist, they always assumed that it was an argument of consequence. Mr. Hall confesses that there was NO *infant baptism*, and NO *mixed communion* in the apostles' days; ALL Christians were then *Baptists*, both in principle and practice: and the man who *then* had refused to submit to the apostolic authority, by being baptized, was only a "pretended convert," and "would have been repelled as a *contu-*

macious schismatic." P. 62. Now, it is of no consequence on what principle this would have been done; if such was the state of the case, there was *then* no mixed communion; and whenever it was introduced, it must be *since* the apostles' days. The inquiry is, therefore, deserving attention, *when* did the practice first appear? The reply is, *ONLY in modern times*. Nor does Mr. Hall attempt to refute this statement.

But then, he asserts, that this argument "assumes for its basis the impossibility of the universal prevalence of error," &c. No: it assumes a very different principle;—that the human mind in all its wanderings never took this direction before. The precepts of the New Testament were frequently misunderstood and misapplied: but none ever thought of setting a positive ordinance aside, till modern refinement explained it away. The argument is also said to come "with *peculiar infelicity* from the members of a sect, who upon a subject of much greater importance have agreed to relinquish the precedent, and arraign the practice of the whole Christian world, as far at least as they have been exhibited in these later ages," but, surely when this sentence was written, the claims of the Baptists were not in recollection; or else, *one of the number*, who has to bear his share of responsibility for opposing the popular opinion of the world, would never have left it so unguarded. Still less would he have pointed the censure with his Latin quotation; and given a close to the whole, by saying, "after setting an example of revolt, it is too late for them to inculcate the duty of submission."

The reason why the Baptists oppose the general sentiment of the Christian world, is not because they feel any pleasure in contradicting the opinion of others, but because they are convinced that both the precepts and practice of the Lord and the apostles, are

in their favour, and that they ought to bow to such authority as the last appeal. They are also convinced, (and the more they are led to examine, the more their conviction strengthens,) that their sentiments and practice were *once* universal. They maintain that there is a body of evidence producible, which cannot be annulled,—that there are not only proofs through all antiquity, of the practice of *immersion* being considered as the proper authorized mode of baptism, but more numerous evidences than can be accounted for on any principles but their own, that in the two first centuries, *only those* were baptized, who professed their faith in Christ:—that *before* infant baptism began to make its appearance, a class of causes were in operation, which prepared its way; and,—*when it appeared*, it came at a time, and in a manner, which shewed that it was a deviation from the doctrine of the church, an appendage attached to it by the authority of man, not a part of its primitive structure. Hence the Baptists assert, that the *earliest antiquity* is on **THEIR side**, and that the bulk of the Christian world has departed from the purity of the truth. Mr. Hall, I presume, fully believes that these claims are well founded: and probably will allow, that during this period, there was no mixed communion. None had received baptism in infancy; sprinkling was unknown in any case; and as he frankly confesses, that no unbaptized persons could be found in the apostolic church, and states the very high notions which the early ages had of the importance and efficacy of baptism, I think it impossible that he should suppose, any would then be received into the church, who had not been baptized. Thus far, we probably agree. After this period, infant baptism, and its attendant evils, became popular; and when the Baptists came forward to notice, it is granted, (in Mr. Hall's strong style) that they did “arraign the Christian

world," and set "the example of revolt;" that they might follow precedents of higher antiquity, and conform to the state of the church in purer and earlier days; and they are glad that they have Mr. Hall with them, to assist them in pleading their common cause. But the friends of strict communion beg leave to remind him, and those patrons of mixed communion who are Baptists, that if this statement be correct, mixed communion must be *subsequent* to infant baptism; and those who plead for it, are placed in the predicament, of favouring the legitimate offspring of what they acknowledge is one of the greatest corruptions of the primitive church. Prior to all argument, this forms a just prejudice against it.

Granting then, that Mr. Booth, and the strict Baptists, adduce the sanction of *corrupt* as well as of *pure* apostolic antiquity, in favour of the opinion that none were ever received into the church without baptism, to what does it amount? Only to this;—that some vestiges of primitive truth were preserved; and that the ancient church did not run into every possible absurdity. It *did*, we grant, corrupt an institution of the Lord; but it *did not* reject every thing which once belonged to it. It is allowed, that in the apostolic age, none were received without baptism; and this remnant of former ages, like a column in a ruin, shews the elevation of the building, to which it once afforded both ornament and support.

A detail of the evidence which might be adduced, in proof that baptism was always considered necessary to communion in the ancient church, would be tedious: but a few authorities will I hope be tolerated. I begin with JUSTIN MARTYR'S express declaration, "it is not lawful for any one to partake of the eucharist, except he believes the things which we teach, and is washed in the laver (of baptism) for the remission of

sins, and regeneration.”* In the Apostolic Constitutions, a work which exhibits the practice and general sentiments of the fourth century, at the latest, we read that “none who are not initiated, (or baptized) should partake, (of the Lord’s supper) but those *only*, who have been baptized into the death of the Lord.”† The works of the most learned and diligent investigators of Christian antiquities also inform us, that such *only* as had been baptized partook at the Lord’s table; the Catechumens not being baptized, were required to withdraw when the ordinance of the supper was administered.‡ And when infants were admitted, they were those who had been baptized, and to whom the ancients thought the Lord’s supper was necessary; for they considered it, at that time, essential to everlasting happiness.—When the mode of baptism first began to be altered from the primitive practice of immersion, to that of pouring, which was introduced in extreme cases where

* Ης ἴδενι ἀλλω μετὰρχην ἐξον εἶσιν, ἢ ἴω πιστῆυοῦσι ἀληθῆ εἶναι τὰ δεδιδαγμένα υἱῶν, καὶ λυσάμενω ἴο ὑπερ ἀφεσεως ἀμαρτιῶν καὶ εἰς ἀναγεννησιν λήτρον. Apol. ii. p. 98. Opera. Ed. Colon. 1686.

† Μηδεις δε εσθιετω εξ αυτων, ἴων ἀμυήτων. ἀλλὰ μοι οἱ βεβαπίσμενοι εἰς ἴον τῆ Κυριε θανάτον. Apost. Const. lib. viii. cap. 25. p. 370, in Cotel. Pat. Apost.

‡ Vide Suicer. Thesaur. Eccl. voce Συμμεξίς. Vol. ii. p. 1135. Ed. Amstel. 1682, where a number of authorities are quoted. Also Bingham’s Antiquities of the Christian Church, book x. ch. 2. The nearest approach to mixed communion was, that the Catechumens were allowed to partake of a small portion of salt, which with some other things were attached to the institutions of the gospel, and considered as of consequence; but this was expressly marked as distinct from the Lord’s supper. See Bingham ut supra, sect. 16, and the note from St. Augustine;—quod accipiunt catechumeni, *quamvis non sit corpus Christi*, sanctum est tamen, &c.

death was apprehended; the ancients apologized for what they *knew*, and even *confessed* was a departure from the apostolic system; * they pleaded necessity, and argued (as others have done since) that the solemn application of water with the appointed form, where there was true faith, was sufficiently within the construction of the law of Christ, to be admitted as baptism. But, designedly to receive those to the Lord's supper, whom they believed were unbaptized, was *never heard of*.

I am perfectly aware, that this track of inquiry is the taste of few, and the scorn of many: but it is not on that account, of the less importance in its proper place. Our common cause owes much to investigations pursued in silence and retirement. The information of the present age, would never have been what it is, had not others preceded us, and brought forward the re-

* Cyprian's Letter to Magnus (Ep. 76) clearly shews this. A difficulty existed whether persons who received baptism in sickness, by *sprinkling* or *pouring*, ought to be considered as *baptized*. Cyprian pleads, that where the faith was compleat, the baptism might be admitted: and argues from analogy taken from the purification by sprinkling under the law. But knowing that it might be replied, this was mere matter of opinion; that the sense of the word, and the practice of the church were against it; and that many might still scruple its propriety;— he says, “or, if any one shall think that they are not at all benefitted, who are only *besprinkled* with the water of salvation; let them not be imposed on; and if they recover let them be *baptized*! But if they *cannot* be baptized, as having been already sanctified with the ecclesiastical baptism, why are they distressed with scruples?” I have given this passage in *Dr. Williams's translation*, to preclude the suspicion that my own sentiments have turned it to the purpose which I wished. Vide Cypriani Op. Ed. 1593. p. 249, 250. Williams's *Antipædobaptism Examined*, vol. ii. p. 99.

sults of their labours. And it is the more needful now to inquire into the ancient practice, than it has yet been, since we are told, that the strict Baptists “have violated more maxims of antiquity, and receded farther from the example of the apostles, than any class of Christians on record.” (Terms of Com. p. 65.)

A very slight acquaintance with antiquity, or with the writings of those eminently learned men who have explored its treasures, is sufficient to shew that this is a great mistake. The applause with which Cyprian is quoted, and the prominent situation given to a passage from that eloquent father in Mr. Hall’s work, might lead those who knew nothing of him, except from quotations on the importance of unity, and the evils of schism, to suppose that he completely entered into the spirit of the system of mixed communion. But go to the writings which he has left, and let them be read with a competent knowledge of the history of the time when he lived, and the vision passes away. Cyprian is discovered to be completely adverse to the *principle of mixed communion*. He maintained, that when persons who had been *Heretics* and *Schismatics*, were convinced of their error, and wished to be united to that church which was then considered as having continued in the apostolic doctrine, and assumed the title of orthodox, they ought to be *baptized*;—that the baptism which they had already received was *not baptism*;—that there was only *one* baptism and one faith;—that these were not to be found out of the church;—and therefore, when Heretics and Schismatics offered themselves for communion, they were *NOT RE-baptized*, for, strictly speaking, they had not been baptized before.* Nor was Cyprian alone in this opinion: “MANY of the ORIENTAL,” as well as the “AFRICAN Christians, placed recanting heretics in

* Cypriani Epist. 73. ad Jubianum, p. 218, &c.

the rank of catechumeas, and admitted them by *baptism*, into the communion of the faithful.”* Two African councils expressly sanctioned the same sentiment. The Bishop of Rome, Stephen, was enraged at a decision which he doubtless considered as very illiberal. He thought that such as had been baptized in other communions, ought to be received by imposition of hands and prayer, without being baptized again. For this practice he pleaded the authority of apostolic tradition; and as his last argument, he excluded Cyprian from communion with the church of Rome.

The African father was not at all abashed by this treatment, and happily was not so much out of temper with the Pope as might have been expected. But his opinion was unchanged, and he obtained the sanction of an additional council in its favour. His friend Firmilianus, of Cæsarea in Cappodocia, wrote him a long epistle on the subject, in which he shewed that he was of the same opinion with Cyprian; urged against the haughty pontiff his own argument, the authority of *apostolic tradition*; and did not hesitate to call *the Bishop of Rome* a Schismatic.†

Thus it appears, that the maxim on which Cyprian argued and acted, was not that of *mixed*, but of *strict communion*. Even his angry opponent never attempted to maintain that Heretics and Schismatics were to be received *without* baptism; but only—that the baptism which they had received in other communions was *sufficient*.

But though Mr. Hall does not deny that the ancient

* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 285. Lond. 1806.

† See his Eplst. Cypriano, which is among Cyprian's Letters; No. 75; and a long and curious examination of this dispute in Mosheim's Comment. de rebus Christ. ante Constantinum. P. 533, &c.

church did require baptism previous to communion, yet he asserts that “the argument from authority, however, when fairly stated, is intirely in our favour; nor would it be easy to assign an example of bolder deviation from the universal practice of the Christian church, than the conduct of our opponents supplies. They are the only persons in the world of whom we have either heard, or read, who contend for the exclusion of genuine Christians from the Lord’s table,” &c. Again, “did it ever enter the conception of any but Baptists, that a right to the sign could be separated from the thing signified; or that there could be a description of persons interested in all the blessings of the Christian covenant, yet not intitled to partake of its sacraments and seals?” P. 84, 85. The notorious, long extended controversy which has been already noticed, concerning the baptism of those who had been in the communion of Heretics and Schismatics, but who wished to be united to the general body of Christians, is a complete refutation of the above assertion. When those who had been members of other communions, desired to join the Catholic church, they were not to be called *Heretics* in their sentiments, since they left the societies where heresy was professed, acknowledged their former error, and requested to be numbered with the orthodox. The charge of *Schism* no longer attached to them, for the same reason. They were not accused of being bad characters, for this would have been a specific objection, rendering other inquiries needless. Besides, we have strong reason to believe, that many of those who then were called *Schismatics*, were excellent men, such as would be an honour to any community. Their interest in “the blessings of the Christian covenant,” was not doubted, yet their right to the Lord’s supper *was* doubted, because the validity of their baptism was questioned.

Nor was this the only instance which antiquity fur-

nishes. The Donatists, a party whose doctrine was sound, who broke off from their former religious connexions, principally because they thought the church fallen from its original purity, so far, that they conceived its sacraments were invalidated, acted exactly on the principle which Mr. Hall reprobates, and baptized those who came over to them, though they had been baptized before. The above classes of Christians considered this to be necessary, that they might fulfil the will of the Lord: and whether their conduct be worthy of censure or of praise, it shews that Mr. Hall's view of this part of the subject is not correct.

It is astonishing that any one who has had the opportunity of knowing the sentiments of the Baptists, should lay such a charge on them as is here done by Mr. Hall; and particularly when he wishes to represent them as opposite to all antiquity. The Baptists *do* say, that he who has the thing signified has a *right* to the sign; and therefore, whoever believes in Jesus Christ in the scriptural sense of the term, has a right to baptism and the Lord's supper. Their marked sentiment is, that a person ought to adduce credible evidence that he has the *thing signified*, to give him a right to *the sign*. It *never did* enter into the conception of *any* professing Christians, in any age, that such persons ought not to be admitted to the ordinances of the church. And till a late period it was equally far from their conception, that they should partake of the *second* Christian institute, before they had obeyed the *first*. I here leave out those heretics (as they were called) mentioned by Irenæus, who denied baptism altogether; because their singularities, both in doctrine and practice, were so great, that no party would quote them as authority. With this exception, the Baptists do no more than was *always done* throughout all Christian antiquity. Only, here lies the difference between former and present

times, *anciently*, no man was considered as having proved his Christian character, till he was baptized ; it was not admitted that he was a “ genuine Christian,” before he had thus shewn his faith in his obedience. *At present*, we do not call in question the Christianity of those who differ from us ; but aware of the deep-rooted influence of infant baptism, we admit, that those who we believe are mistaken upon that point, are very sincere in their faith in Christ, considered in general ; and on their own principles, are right in attending to the Lord’s supper. On this admission, Mr. Hall forms the sweeping censure mentioned above. Taking the present state of opinion, and applying it to former ages when it did not exist, he endeavours to throw the greatest opprobrium possible on the Baptists. But the plain question is, *did the ancient church ever admit those to the Lord’s table who then were considered as unbaptized?* This Mr. Hall does not assert, and for the best possible reason : but he draws up a charge, which is calculated to leave the impression on the minds of those unacquainted with the subject, that the conduct of the Baptists is a bold deviation from the universal practice of the Christian church !

Not content with what he has asserted concerning ancient Christians, Mr. Hall descends to those of modern times : he says, “ the right of rejecting those whom Christ has received ; of refusing the communion of eminently holy men, on account of unessential differences of opinion, is not the avowed tenet of any sect or community in Christendom, with the exception of the majority of the Baptists, who, while they are at variance with the whole world on a point of such magnitude, are loud in accusing their brethren of singularity.” P. 87.

Look at the plain facts which are constantly before us, and compare them with these assertions. The mem-

bers of the Church of England as a body, do not deny that there have been “eminently holy men,” who were not in their communion, yet would they receive any of them, without they conformed to the ceremonies of the church? Would they not at the same time confess, that “the differences of opinion” and of practice were “*unessential?*” Nay farther, would they not maintain, that though the points of difference were not essential, in many respects related to things not even commanded, and were only of consequence as matters of order, or of expediency; yet, that standing as they did, on generally approved principles, they ought not to be given up? This is the spirit of the defences of the Establishment, from the days of HOOKER to the present time. If we go to the Church of Scotland, we shall find a distinct confession, that “although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance (baptism), yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed to it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it; or, that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.”* But how would an application for communion be received from one who was known not to be baptized?

The sentiments of Pædobaptists in later times have generally been the same with those of the ancients. And though the authority of the best and greatest men will not justify what is wrong, yet, in the present inquiry, it will not be amiss briefly to shew, that the opinion which Pædobaptists have in general adopted, is *in its principle* the same with that which is embraced by the strict Baptists: so that the charge of novelty does not attach to *us*, when we say, that the *baptized only*, ought to partake of the Lord’s supper.

A few evidences on this point will be sufficient: and

* Confession of Faith of Public Authority in the Church of Scotland; ch. xxviii. sect. 5.

these I shall take from the Nonconformists, and from those Pædobaptists, who, since their time, have dissented from the Establishment.

The WESTMINSTER CONFESSION of Faith, the larger and shorter Catechisms, and the Directory for Public Worship, were generally acknowledged by the Nonconformists of the day when the work was published, and by the majority of Pædobaptists since, to contain a just view of both the doctrines and duties of Christianity. In the Confession, ch. xxvii. sect. 1, it is said;—“ Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits; and to confirm our interest in him; *as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world;* and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word.” Sect. 4. “ There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, *baptism, and the supper of the Lord,*” &c. In ch. xxviii. sect. 1, it is said—“ Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, *not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be to him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his engrafting into Christ,*” &c.

In the Directory for the public worship of God, at the administration of baptism, “ the minister,” we are informed, “ is to use some words of instruction, touching the institution, nature, use, and ends of this sacrament; shewing, that it is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, *that children, by baptism, are solemnly received into the bosom of the visible church, distinguished from the world, and them that are without, and united with believers,*” &c.

After the ceremony, the minister is directed “ to give thanks and pray;—acknowledging with all thankul-

ness, that the Lord is true and faithful in keeping covenant and mercy— and praying, that he would receive the infant now *baptized, and solemnly entered into the household of faith*, into his fatherly tuition and defence,” &c.

RICHARD BAXTER in his *Christian Directory*, meets the inquiry respecting the unbaptized: In his *Cases of Conscience about matters Ecclesiastical*, Qu. 34, he asks, “Whether an unbaptized person who yet maketh a public profession of Christianity, be a member of the visible church? And so of the infants of believers unbaptized.” And he replies, “Ans. 1. Such persons have a certain imperfect, irregular, kind of profession, and so of membership; their visibility or visible Christianity, is *not such as Christ hath appointed*. As those that are married, but not by legal celebration, and as those that in cases of necessity are ministers without ordination, so are such Christians as Constantine and many of old, without baptism.—2. Such persons *ordinarily are NOT to be admitted to the rights and communion of the visible church*, because we must know Christ’s sheep by his own mark: but yet they are so far visible Christians, as that we may be persuaded nevertheless of their salvation. As to visible communion, they have but a remote and incompleat *jus ad rem* (right to it), and no *jus in re* (right in it), or legal investiture and possession.”—*Christian Directory*, p. 806.

If we come down to the present time; the late Rev. Alexander Pirie has frequently been represented as an unanswerable defender of infant baptism. In his “*Letters on the Sinai Covenant*,” annexed to his “*Dissertation on Baptism*,” he says, “the truth is, circumcision and baptism were *both instituted to initiate the professors of the faith of Abraham into the visible church of God, as a sign of right to the visible ordinances*.” (P. 213; see also p. 215.) Again, “Every circumcised

child had a right to eat the passover; but this he was not bound to do, till arrived at a certain age; although in the mean time, he was to be carefully instructed in the nature, design, and obligation of this ordinance. So *every baptized child has a right to eat the Lord's supper; but as it is required of every observer of this institution, that he discern the Lord's body in its observance, none are bound to keep it till capable of such discernment.*" (P. 223, 224.) The inference is direct; according to Mr. Pirie, the *uncircumcised*, and the *unbaptized*, can have no right to visible ordinances.

No longer ago than the year 1809, a new edition was published in London, of some discourses "on Baptism, and the nature and design of a Christian Church," by Drs. Osgood and Lathrop. These gentlemen lived in America, but their discourses are recommended to the attention of Pædobaptists in *this* country, as "judicious and scriptural," by six eminent Independent Ministers who live in, or near London; and the recommendation is circulated with the book. Of course, we are to conclude, that they approve the sentiments which it contains. Dr. Osgood says, "As many as should receive the gospel were, *by baptism, to be made visible disciples and members of the Christian church.* As 'Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised;' so Cornelius and his friends received baptism as a seal of what they had already experienced in the gift and grace of the holy spirit. Neither the one ordinance or the other did of itself, convey faith or any other inward grace to the subjects of it; but denote their *regular entrance into the visible church*, and covenant relation to God as his professing people. As the one denoted a relation to the Jewish church, so the other denotes a relation to the *Christian church.* In this respect both rites have the

same import, and were evidently intended for the same purpose." (P. 3, 4.)

Omitting other extracts which might be made;—after an enumeration of various classes of Christians, Dr. Osgood says, "all these denominations, however, are pronounced *unbaptized*, and *virtually* excommunicated, by the *little modern* sect of Baptists. Infant baptism is denounced a deviation from the footsteps of Christ's flock so gross, a corruption of his ordinance so essential, as renders it an *absolute nullity*. Of course, our pious forefathers, the first settlers of New England, whom we have been accustomed to esteem and venerate, as possessing more of the spirit and customs of primitive Christianity than any other description of people since the apostolic age, *absolutely failed* OF AN ENTRANCE INTO CHRIST'S CHURCH, *lived and died without the seal of God's covenant, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and destitute of* ALL FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH." (P. 53, 54.)

What, then, must Dr. Osgood, or the Pædobaptist ministers, who recommend his "judicious and scriptural" discourses, think of those who maintain, that baptism is not necessary to communion!

I shall close this list of witnesses with the high authority of DR. WILLIAMS. "The eucharistic rite is applicable to *those only* who may be deemed proper subjects of a particular church, or Christian congregation. They ought to be *FIRST baptized* if it is true; but this alone is not a sufficient qualification. For as DR. GILL well observes: 'Baptism—is not a church ordinance; I mean it is not an ordinance administered in the church, but out of it, and in order to admission into it, and communion with it; it is preparatory to it, and a *qualification* for it; it does not make a person a member of a church, or admit him into a visible church; persons must *FIRST be baptized*, and *THEN* added to the

church, as the three thousand converts were; a church has nothing to do with the baptism of any, but to be satisfied they *are baptized* before they are admitted into communion with it.’”*

Thus we see, that eminent *modern* Pædobaptists consider baptism as requisite to communion, and this is *ALL that the strict Baptists ever require*. Yet, though both ancient and modern Christians have uniformly acted upon the same plan, we are told, that our “singularity is replete with the most alarming consequences, destroys at once the unity of the church, and pronounces a sentence of excommunication on the whole Christian world!” P. 87. The strict Baptists take the fair consequences of their sentiments; they believe that baptism is to be administered only to believers, and to them by immersion. If in this they are wrong, they allow that the severe consequences charged on them must follow; if they are right, they may be reviled, (this they have so often been that they think little of it) but they cannot be proved to have acted contrary to principles which the Christian world at large has acknowledged to be just. Whereas the defenders of mixed communion who

* Antipædobaptism Examined, vol. ii. p. 241. A slight error in the quotation from Dr. Gill, is in the above copy corrected.—See also an article “on Baptism,” in the *Evangelical Magazine* for February, 1816, p. 52—55, in which “the necessity” of baptism “to visible connexions with Christ’s church on earth,” is distinctly asserted. The editors of that magazine say, (referring to the present controversy) “we do not pledge ourselves to the support of our correspondent’s opinion; it may probably be more fully considered in our review of Mr. Hall’s publication on this subject.” Time only will discover, whether they will maintain Mr. Hall’s *principle*; but in the mean while, they have thought proper to give extensive publicity to a paper in opposition to it.

are Baptists, believe that their Pædobaptist friends are *not baptized*,—that baptism ought to be administered only to those who profess faith in Christ:—that this ordinance is in full force, and demanding attention on the authority of the Lord;—and yet, that it is not necessary for communion with his church! Here, then, the “singularity” attaches *to themselves*; for the “Christian world” has always supposed baptism essential to communion; and has always raised a clamour against the *Baptists as such* for this reason, that the tendency of their sentiment in itself, is to declare Pædobaptists not qualified to be members of the Christian church, because they are *unbaptized*.

I am surprized also to find, that another of “the alarming consequences,” which follow strict communion, is, that “it destroys at once *the unity of the church!*” Had a Roman Catholic used this phrase, I should have understood him. Had a Churchman used it, still I should have thought the expression intelligible; especially taking into the account, how nearly some members of the Establishment approach to Roman Catholics, in the theory of their principles. But what it means when used by a *Protestant Dissenter*, (not to say a *Baptist*) I cannot conceive. Is the unity of the church destroyed by nothing but *strict communion*? Or, is there any sense in which the Church of God is, or can be considered as *one*, in this imperfect state, except in that which will include all those good men, who, from conscientious differences, cannot unite together on earth? Every cause which leads any class of Christians to establish a separate communion, may be denounced in a similar way; and we must never, on this plan, follow the commands of Jesus Christ, by departing from a corrupt society, lest we should “destroy the unity of the church!” We can neither be Baptists, nor Dissenters, nor even Protestants, without incurring this charge.

The great question is, are we doing the will of Christ? If we are, we may leave the rest to him. He knew what his church wanted; and we are best subserving his designs, when we are most closely following his injunctions. In every reformation, some breach of unity is unavoidable. It is only by this means, that we approach more nearly to the primitive standard. The question now in debate is, whether we ought to conform to the primitive plan *entirely*, or only *in part*? The strict Baptists say, conform to it *entirely*, and leave the consequences to his overruling management who gave the law. Their opponents think differently, and (doubtless conscientiously) receive into the church as members, not only those who have made their profession of faith in the way prescribed by Christ, but also those who think that this mode of professing faith is not required, and is altogether *erroneous*. Taking the New Testament for our guide, which of these methods is the most exact obedience to the will of Christ?—This is the subject of our present inquiry.

Much is often said concerning fundamentals and essentials, and many quiet their consciences, when they are urged with the arguments of the Baptists, by replying, the whole question relates to a *non-essential*. The same argument, we have seen, is used against the strict Baptists by their opponents, that they do not admit good men to communion, on account of a difference on a mere *NON-essential*: which is occasionally magnified into a great crime. That may be essential to the *scriptural existence of a church*, which is *not* essential to the salvation of the Christian. It is essential to the salvation of the individual Christian, that he repent and believe the gospel: but it is not essential to his salvation, that he be baptized and be a member of a church, since it is a possible case, that he may have *no opportunity of fulfilling either of these duties*. But

if he has the opportunity of obeying the command of Christ by being baptized, it is essential to his obedience, that he submits to this ordinance. Like the Ethiopian eunuch he may be a solitary believer, without the opportunity of joining a Christian church; but if he, and others, whom he may afterwards meet with, unite together as a body of Christians, it is essential to the *existence* of that society as a *Christian church*, that it be formed according to the rule laid down by Christ, and the explanations given us in the precedents of the New Testament. Without this, it may be composed of excellent characters, who may meet with the best intentions; but in whatever instances they are not the same kind of materials of which the assembly of the faithful was originally formed, nor united for the same purposes, they have not the *scriptural character* of the church of Christ. This principle is general, but it appears to me so reasonable, that I do not see how any party can oppose it.

CHAP. XI.

Objections answered: Miscellaneous Observations.

I SHALL now notice some of the objections which are brought against our sentiments, and offer a few observations in reply.

It may be said, in defending strict communion, we are *pleading for a RITE, and laying great stress on a CEREMONY*: I reply, we are doing no more than pleading the cause of *a divine institution*. Jesus Christ in his wisdom thought fit to appoint a ceremonial rite, as an expression of faith in him; he made the appointment at a time when it would apply to all who received the new dispensation, since it was before the apostles had preached his gospel in its completed state. The appointment supposes, that in practicable cases it is the duty of every believer to obey it, as the positive command of the Lord: and all we ask is, that he may not be deprived of the obedience due to his will; nor the church of one of his ordinances. The system of mixed communion tends to *both* these evils; it makes an apology for neglecting baptism in the church; and endeavours to silence an appeal to the New Testament in its favour, by representing the desire to preserve an institution of Christ, as nothing better than illiberal party zeal for a mere ceremony. It is freely granted, that many other things are of much greater consequence than baptism; but still it holds its place as one part of the will of the Lord, and should be regarded accordingly.

Besides, what is the Lord's supper, which occasions this controversy;—is not that a *ceremonial rite*, quite as much as baptism? Why should there be so much earnestness for having that part of the Christian ceremonial open to all who profess faith in Christ? Is it, because of its happy tendency, and its great significance? And does baptism tend to no desirable end? Does that ordinance point out nothing—or make no valuable impression? Was all the wisdom and benevolence of the legislator expended on the Lord's supper? Is that to be exalted as the only *ritual observance* for which we should be earnest; and is baptism to be thrown into the shade as a *mere ceremonial*, to make way for another institution which is *equally ceremonial*? The direct effect of mixed communion, as far as I can discover, justifies this expostulation. The Lord thought fit to appoint a ritual observance, as the declaration of our trust in him, and subjection to him; and thus obedience to *one rite*, opens the way for attention to another. Nor can any object, that men are debarred from communion on account of a rite, when communion itself is supported by ritual observances. Jesus Christ has commanded only *two* ordinances, and we ought to uphold the authority of each. Like children of the same parent they are equally *his*, and have an equal claim on our attention. The church of Christ is as much called to support the one as the other: the authority is as express—“Go teach all nations, baptizing them,” &c. “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;” as—“do this in remembrance of me.” If we admit that there ought to be a communion of Christians at the Lord's table, is there no communion with the visible church in the ordinance of baptism?—There is a popularity attending the Lord's supper, which makes many wish to partake of it, who had rather not make any inquiries concerning baptism, or, who are satisfied with

the baptism they had in infancy. The rite by which our Lord directed his disciples to shew their subjection to him, has much in it that is trying to their character; and whatever is of this nature we too frequently wish to avoid. But if *he* who knew all things perfectly, who designed his dispensation to spread over the whole earth, and continue to the end of time, thought it necessary, we ought to maintain it, because it is *his*, and not the less, because it is a trial of a person's faith.

But then, *the error in the Pædobaptists is "INVOLUNTARY."* Be it so;—so far as this pleads for them, it pleads also for us. If an error it be, we assure the friends of mixed communion, that it is an "involuntary error" in us, to require baptism in the communicants at the Lord's supper. Since baptism is a term of Christian profession in the New Testament, and Christian profession is admitted to be a term of communion, we have not discovered a fallacy in our reasoning; and as it is granted, that there could be no mixed communion in the apostle's days, it is clear that no mistake has been detected in our view of the scriptural fact. The Baptists who favour mixed communion, admit that infant baptism, when first introduced, was followed by a variety of evil consequences; but surely they will not say, that the doctrine and authority of the Lord and his apostles, were *repealed by the introduction of a corruption*. Yet practically we arrive at this conclusion, if the attachment even of good men to a mistake, be pleaded as a reason for omitting an institution, which it is believed and confessed has the highest possible sanction.

Still, it may be objected, *it is a hard case to refuse communion with acknowledged Christians for so trifling a difference*.—On the supposition that the Baptists are right in their views and practice respecting baptism, we are led to inquire, whether the difference *be* trifling? And whether the introduction of a plan which will omit

one out of only *two* positive institutions of Jesus Christ, be not a far greater evil, than that of refusing communion with those, who we consider as, at least, erroneous in their judgments, respecting the appointed way of professing faith in Christ? It is also a little singular that it should be represented as so hard a case, when it not unfrequently happens, that those who wish to be received by the Baptists, say the most about their bigotry and intolerance, and are in reality, among their most vehement opponents. In an inquiry respecting the value of truth, numbers, advantages, and personal gratifications, have little weight; especially when the objects to be compared are, on the one hand, the gratification of a few;* and on the other, the practical surrender of an ordinance of the gospel, and a change in the constitution of a Christian church. Let the question be considered, how much is *one ordinance* of CHRIST worth? Experience ought to teach us wisdom: it was by small deviations, by giving way to the feelings of pious people, by the seduction of specious reasoning, by not keeping clearly in view the directions of the New Testament, and by not acting upon them in simple obedience to what they point out, that every corruption first entered the church. Infant baptism came in, as Mr. Hall allows, from the false view of baptism being necessary to salvation; and when that opinion began to obtain credit, it would doubtless be thought cruel, that infants who were in danger of dying, should not have every thing possible done for them, that might promote their happiness after death; and hard, for any to interpret so rigidly the directions in the New

* I have said *a few*, not for the purpose of disparaging them; but because for reasons before alledged, it can seldom be more: Christians of every denomination naturally feel most at home among their own body.—See p. 107, 108.

Testament, as to scruple to baptize them. It would be pleaded, that baptizing them would ease the aching hearts of distressed friends;—and at the worst, could do no hurt. Thus an institution of the Lord was displaced at first a little;—and then a little more; till at length it disappeared. So respecting the Lord's supper, the abuses which were in time attached to its administration in every possible direction, arose from the labour of centuries, and were not the work of a day; nor can we suppose that their tendency would be at first perceived. Antichrist was once an infant, small in size, and apparently gentle and manageable in disposition: but when his stature and vigour attained their maturity, all his supposed docility disappeared. He acquired his popularity and power by deviating from the directions of the gospel; and when he had established his throne, he pleaded these deviations as the laws of his kingdom.

Again it is urged;—*there is no scriptural authority against mixed communion; nor are there any directions that the unbaptized were not to partake of the Lord's supper.* The reply is, none were necessary. Our rule is the direction which *is* given, and not speculations concerning what directions *might have been* given, had it been the design of the legislator to meet the theories of modern times. There is no prohibition of kneeling at the Lord's supper; nor of many of the follies which have disgraced the Roman ritual; but it does not follow, that these are permitted, much less that they are agreeable to scripture, because they are not forbidden. It is not said in direct terms, that infants ought not to be baptized; but we cannot argue, that because there is no direct scriptural authority against it, therefore they *may be*, and that it is right they *should be*, baptized. The cases of mixed communion and of infant baptism, are here exactly alike; neither direction nor example is to be found in scripture which favours either of them. Why then should they

not both be received or rejected together? Infant baptism is not commanded, neither is it forbidden; here it stands on a par with mixed communion. It could not exist in the apostolic times; neither could mixed communion. But, it may be said, if we baptize infants, we shall do that which we consider as contrary to the will of Christ: and *we* reply, that in the practice of mixed communion, *we* also should do what we consider as opposite to the will of Christ and the apostles,—and leave undone what it is granted the apostolic church always required. Besides this equality of argument on each side, it might be alledged, in favour of baptizing infants, that it would so highly gratify many pious minds, display such liberality, and prevent so much unpleasant feeling; that it is a pity it should not be practised, if it were even only on the ground of forbearance to the prejudices of weak brethren: and farther, it would be a fine practical copy of the conduct and temper of the apostle Paul; *though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to the weak, became I as weak that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* I Cor. ix. 19, &c.

Perhaps it will here be replied by the Baptists, but can we imagine that the apostle would extend this spirit of accommodation so far, as to administer an institution of Christ to improper subjects? Certainly not: and on the same principle, I ask, can we imagine that either in his practice or precepts, he would sanction the *omission* of any specific part of the will of his Lord? Not a single circumstance in his life or character, leads us, in the least, to such a supposition.

There are two striking instances in the New Testa-

ment of persons who were baptized, when their circumstances might have pleaded some excuse, had there been any disposition in the apostles, to have omitted one of the ordinances of Christ. When Peter preached to the family of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. This was not common : and it might have been said, these have the last great promise of the gospel dispensation ; they have the thing signified in so unusual and distinguished a manner, that they need no initiation by any sign ; Christ has evidently received them, and by gifts which were never before bestowed on the unbaptized, has placed it beyond a doubt, that they may be admitted into the church without the ordinance of baptism. But Peter did not argue thus ; on the contrary, he considered these gifts, not as a reason why baptism was unnecessary, but as a warrant that those who enjoyed them, might be baptized without scruple. Acts, x. 44—48.

The disciples at Ephesus, who were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus though they had received the baptism of John, are another evidence how much the apostles thought baptism requisite to Christian profession. The argument would have been very plausible, these men have been baptized, and that too on a profession of repentance, and of faith in all that God had at the time revealed ; or, at least, in all that had come to their knowledge ; and now they complete their former profession of a willingness to receive the truth, by believing in Jesus. Yet, it is granted that the apostles baptized them ; shewing us by a striking example, that where there was no knowledge of Christ, and no possibility of professing faith in him, the baptism which such persons had received was a nullity. Nor have we any reason to suppose, that they were considered as a Christian church, or partook of the Lord's supper, before their baptism. The history gives us no such

information, but as far as we can gather from it, their baptism was the result of the first conversation which they had with the apostle; and the epistle which he afterwards addressed to them shews that he thought the *one baptism* an important part of Christian unity.

I have heard the case of *David* and his companions eating the shew-bread alledged *as an instance of deviation from prescribed law, which, in its spirit, justifies the Baptists in practising mixed communion*. But when this is examined it utterly fails. The shew-bread was given to David and his attendants, for the preservation of their lives. 1 Sam. xxi. 1—6. Matt. xii. 3, 4. The priest who gave it, thought that under the urgency of the case he might stretch the point of law. And our Lord quoted his conduct in opposition to the Pharisees, as a proof that the ceremonial law ought not to be urged with a strictness which would endanger life. But it would not follow, that because necessity justified such a departure from the letter of the law in the case of David, therefore the priest might bring forward the holy bread to any company who should happen to visit him: and without this consequence is established, no application can be made of the fact, as a precedent for us respecting communion. For it will not be pretended that there is any necessity for mixed communion, either from danger of life or salvation: and as little can it be urged, that what was *once* done from necessity, and justified merely on that ground, is to be established as a daily practice, and to set aside the regular operation of a law.

Many persons seem to think, that *if only they assemble with serious Christians, and partake with them of the Lord's supper, inquiries respecting the nature of a Christian church are trifles deserving no consideration*. This may not apply to all who are advocates for mixed communion, but it does to a great number, who are deserving

of regard for many estimable qualities. But they, and also all those who reject baptism as a term of communion, ought to consider, that the existence of the Christian church depends on the authority of Christ; and that so far as they deviate from the rule which he has given them, they forfeit the character of being his church. What, then, is the first precept which he gave his disciples? That those who believed in him should be baptized. If it be said concerning any who desire admission as members, *they are already baptized*; other things become the subject of investigation. If it be said, they are baptized in their own view, though not in yours; the principle is acknowledged, that baptism is requisite to scriptural communion; and the inquiry then is, what is baptism? But if it be said—no; they are not baptized, and they do not think it needful; then the question is, are we justified in forming a church on a plan which omits the first visible evidence required by the Lord, of subjection to his authority? This is the ultimate point of the whole controversy.

It has been said,—*it is impossible to act on the plan of strict communion*; and the ground of this assertion is, that there will be differences of opinion respecting it, even in churches which do not admit Pædobaptists. Now, if we maintained, that unity of sentiment on this point was essential to communion, the objection would have weight. It would then be necessary to inquire, how far those who agree in their practice, ought to agree in their reasonings, in order to unite together as members of the same church. But this is no part of the present debate. What we have to settle is the question of fact; ought not a candidate for communion to be baptized? Because the Lord required this mark of obedience, we conceive, that we should require it also: and where is the *impossibility* of acting on this plan? All admit that those who are baptized, may, if otherwise qualified, be

received to communion. On this ground the Baptists do not object to each other, though they may draw different inferences from the statements of the New Testament on the point of baptism. They are bound to obey the clear commands of their Saviour: they are not bound to judge their brethren in their speculations upon them. This objection, therefore, when fairly examined, is of no force.

The strict Baptists meet with much censure, because they will not give up their principles; and while they are considered as acting on a plan which is very narrow and bigotted, they are also accused of being *inconsistent, in having any religious intercourse with Pædobaptists*. They are represented as holding *some species of communion with them, and refraining from others: willing to unite with them in many duties, and to partake with them in many enjoyments, in which a communion of spirit is felt; but not willing to join with them in an institution which is peculiarly the privilege of the church of God.*

If the rule of their conduct be examined fairly, it will be seen, that far from stretching the line in opposition to the Pædobaptists, they have only done that which their sentiments respecting the ordinances of Christ, compelled them to do. And as to the charge of inconsistency, in professing to esteem good men wherever they find them, though they cannot unite with them in church fellowship, they are willing to meet it. Besides other things which might be alledged, they do nothing more than their opponents; and where their conduct is deemed the most objectionable, they only copy the example which the Pædobaptists set before them, and support by pre-eminent talent.

The strict Baptists have on many occasions acted in conjunction with Pædobaptists; and they have felt pleasure in so doing. They have also frequently been

assisted by them, and doubt not the aid which they received, proceeded from the best feelings of Christianity. They confess the right which the Pædobaptists, as well as every other class of men, have, to judge for themselves with perfect freedom, in every thing which relates to conscience: and do not presume to accuse them of insincerity, because they have formed opinions opposite to theirs. To their own master they stand or fall. But since the Baptists cannot consider them as baptized, they are obliged to view them much in the same light as the apostle Paul did the disciples of John at Ephesus; and are compelled to separate from them, on the point of baptism. Here the Baptists believe that they have the New Testament authority in their favour, and the apostolic church as their guide. But, not to repeat the reasonings which have been already produced in their defence; they maintain, that so far from delighting in separation, or desiring to keep Christians asunder, *it is the least which they can do*, peaceably to continue treading the “*old paths*,” in which their opponents confess, the apostles and primitive Christians walked before them. Where any thing else is concerned than a divine institution, they conceive that they are at liberty to decide from their own views of what is right or expedient. But where a command of Christ calls for regard, their duty is to obey it; and they distrust those reasonings which would practically repeal it.

It is also objected, *since we hold communion with Pædobaptists in the exercises of prayer and praise, which call forth spiritual feelings, and where a communion of spirit is felt and enjoyed; why should we make such a distinction between these, and the Lord's supper, as to unite freely with Pædobaptists in the first, but not in the last?*

I reply, because the exercises of prayer and praise, and the variety of means by which the word of God may

be communicated, so as to become the source of spiritual edification, are not *exclusively* ordinances of the *Christian church*. They were in being before it was formed: they have been parts of true religion under every dispensation. Jesus Christ found them in use, and he confirmed them; but they are not the peculiarities of Christianity. Whereas the ordinances of the gospel were established *by him*, and as they owe their existence to him, the question is, what is his will concerning them?

The union of Baptist and Pædobaptist ministers in preaching for each other, and in promoting the gospel of Christ in different ways, has often been a source of great enjoyment to both. They met on *common ground*; questions which related to the structure of the church, or the ordinances of the gospel, were on both sides avoided. Each party conceded the full right which the other had, to follow their own views of the will of the Lord. Thus far they could coincide. But whenever either of them transgressed this boundary, a difference of feeling, and a debate, or else a separation, was the unavoidable consequence.

The Baptists, even those who are called *strict*, hope that they can say with the apostle, if Christ be preached, they “do rejoice, and will rejoice;” and that they are glad at seeing ministers of any denomination, successful in turning sinners to God. They are acquainted with valuable men in the Establishment, whose labours have been, and are of great importance, and they esteem them very highly in love, both as Christians, and also for their works’ sake in their public exertions. But though in various respects they can hold communion with them in spirit, yet such is the difference of opinion, on many things relative to the nature and institutions of the church of Christ, that probably *neither* party could comfortably commune with the other, if

even they were agreed on the question of baptism, and certainly they cannot, with their present sentiments on that ordinance: since each professes that he could not comply with the practice of his friend, without either doing what he disapproves, or sanctioning a system which he considers as not authorized by the gospel. And here they are supported by Mr. Hall's authority. He has borne public testimony to the excellency of a late minister of the Establishment; he doubtless rejoiced in his success, and in many respects did hold communion with him. But notwithstanding this, he cannot become a member of the Establishment himself. The principles of the church of England he conscientiously rejects. He cannot admit that our national church is formed on the plan of the New Testament; and he too highly prizes his Christian liberty, and his allegiance to the Lord as the sole head of his church, to give them up for the sake of communion, even "with the excellent of the earth in whom is all his delight." He pleads, that Pædobaptists are part of the "true church," yet he thinks it necessary to form a separate communion. He feels justified without doubt in so doing, notwithstanding all that he has said about the evils of schism, and separation: wherein, then, so far as this point is concerned, does he differ *in principle* from the strict Baptists? He judges for himself, taking the New Testament for his guide, and considers the separation of the Nonconformists in general, as an act of "self preservation, rendered unavoidable by the highest necessity, that of declining to concur in practices at which their consciences revolted." (P. 124.) And what more is done by his opponents?—HE *says*; "they propose to build a church upon the principle of an absolute exclusion of a multitude of societies, which they must either acknowledge to be true churches, or be convicted of the greatest absurdity." (P. 125.) THEY *say*, they propose to build a church upon the

principle of obeying the directions of the Lord, and following the example of the apostles and first Christians. If they misunderstand and misapply the New Testament language, they build on the sand, and their church will fall: but if their church be builded on just interpretations of the law of the Lord Jesus, it stands on a rock; it may be assailed by storms, but it cannot be destroyed.

The strict Baptists, do not feel at all pressed with the inferences that are drawn from *those practices, which once were in use in the New Testament churches, but which are now given up nearly by all*. Some have represented what is said concerning washing feet, the kiss of charity, and the *Agapæ*, or love feasts, (so far as these were distinct from the Lord's supper) as pointing out institutions which are still binding on Christian churches. An argument has also been from thence urged, that the strict Baptists ought to practice all these, to be consistent with their avowed principles. But, they reply, none of these things owed their existence to the appointment of Christ; nor were they commanded to be observed as the permanent ordinances of his church, and evidences of obedience and love to him. Whereas baptism and the Lord's supper were the general, distinguishing marks of the gospel dispensation, obligatory on all Christians by the special command of their Lord. They are therefore called upon in their peculiar capacity, as believers in Christ, to regard them. If, when we have the opportunity of doing the will of the Lord, we pass it by, we ought to have strong reasons to justify our conduct. Many will confess that this is true, in relation to the Lord's supper, who think it of little force respecting baptism. But the latter as well as the former, is the command of the Lord. It was the first open, distinguishing act of obedience, in those who believed in him as the risen Saviour, and was uni-

versally required of all who received the truth in the love of it. It still continues to demand attention, and how can we prove that its authority should not be supported?

The whole of this inquiry may be summed up in a few short questions:—Were the apostolic churches, *Baptist*, or *Pædobaptist* churches? Our opponents reply, *BAPTIST churches*.

Were they on the plan of *strict* communion, or of *mixed* communion? It is confessed,—of *STRICT communion!*

Why then should another plan be adopted?

I hope that the discussion which this subject has received, and may yet receive, will tend in some measure to engage the Christian world to consider, what is the constitution of the church of *CHRIST*, as he formed it; and what are the nature and obligations of the positive ordinances which he instituted. If through the blessing of God, these are better understood, and more earnestly obeyed in simplicity of heart, our “labour will not be in vain in the Lord.”

**A
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
JOSEPH KINGHORN
(1766-1932)**

**BY
JOHN FRANKLIN JONES**

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
JOSEPH KINGHORN
(1766-1932)

Joseph Kinghorn was born January 17, 1766 at Gateshead, Co. Durham, England to David Kinghorn and was the eldest son of his second wife, Elizabeth. The elder Kinghorn was a shoemaker-became-Baptist-minister in rural Yorkshire and baptized Joseph when the boy was seventeen (*DEB*).

Classically educated, Joseph was apprenticed to a watchmaker in Hull and, later, to clerk in white-lead works in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He trained for the ministry at Bristol College and ministered briefly at Fairford, Gloucestershire. Considered by some as too low in his Calvinism, he removed to Norwich (*DEB*).

Ordained at Norwich in May 1790, he served there from 1789 till his death. The church prospered to point of requiring new construction, and Kinghorn started a new church in Aylsham (*DEB*).

Kinghorn questioned the ethics of believers taking up arms and consequently, was active in repealing the Test and Corporation Acts. He took wardship of the eight-year-old son of a friend, W. W. Wilkin, even though he himself was a bachelor (*DEB*).

A Greek, Latin, and Hebrew scholar, he first completed reading the Hebrew Old Testament daily in 1796. He managed a school in his ward and trained young ministers.

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He was an avid reader; a skilled preacher; and a member of the Speculative Society, a discussion group consisted mainly of Unitarians (*DEB*).

He declined the presidency of Northern Education Society's new academy in Bradford (1804) and the principalship of the new Stepney College (1809) (*DEB*).

He embraced Calvinistic theology, but rejected the Hyper-Calvinist opposition to reasoning with, exhorting, or beseeching sinners to turn to the Lord. He had cordial relations with Arminians and early argued for mixed communion. Reversing his position on the subject, he controverted with Robert Hall over open/mixed communion, advocating the closed position (*DEB*).

He contributed a critique of a Hebrew New Testament and opposed the circulation of Apocrypha with the biblical text by the Bible Society. Kinghorn was appealed to as an authority in Carey's controversy over using "immerse" for Greek "baptize." He contributed to the BMS, served on its committee, and traveled on its behalf (*DEB*).

He authored *Baptism, A Term of Communion* (1816) and frequently contributed to *The Baptist Magazine*, the *Eclectic Review*, and the *Evangelical Magazine* (*DEB*).

Kinghorn died unmarried September 1, 1832, Norwich, Norfolk, England (*DEB*).

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BY JOHN FRANKLIN JONES
CORDOVA, TENNESSEE
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Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the truth. — Psalm 60:4

“REASONS WHY BAPTISTS OUGHT TO TEACH THEIR DISTINCTIVE VIEWS . . . First, *it is a duty we owe to ourselves*. We must teach these views in order to be consistent in holding them. Because of these we stand apart from other Christians, in separate organizations. . . We have no right thus to stand apart unless the matters of difference have real importance; and if they are really important, we certainly ought to teach them.”

JOHN A. BROADUS

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“No religious denomination has a moral right to a separate existence unless it differs essentially from others. Ecclesiastical differences ought always to spring from profound doctrinal differences. *To divide Christians, except for reasons of gravest import, is criminal schism*. Separate religious denominations are justifiable only for matters of conscience growing out of clear scriptural precept.”

J. L. M. CURRY

A Baptist Church Radically Different From Paedobaptist Churches.
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1889).

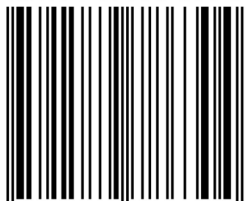
“There is something distinctive in the principles of Baptists. They differ from all other denominations; and the difference is so great as not only to justify, but to demand, their separate existence as a people . . . What distinctive mission have the Baptists, if this is not their mission? - to present the truth in love on the matters wherein they differ from Pedobaptists. What is there but this that justifies their separate denominational existence and saves them from the reproach of being schismatics? *If they have a right to denominational life, it is their duty to propagate their distinctive principles, without which that life cannot be justified or maintained.*”

J. M. PENDLETON

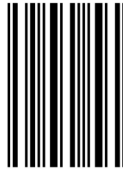
Distinctive Principles of Baptists.
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1882).

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