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ARTICLE III.

FREE COMMUNION.¹

BY REV. SERENO D. CLARK, SECRETARY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL BOARD
OF PUBLICATION.

PART II.—THE SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES AND CANONS OF SCRIPTURE
PRESCRIBING AND REGULATING CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

As intimated in the previous part of this discussion, it is not our object to break down denominational distinctions, or to consolidate all visible saints into one church organization. It is the farthest possible from our design to obscure the cardinal doctrines of revelation. We have no sympathy with efforts towards Christian union which undervalue these, or descry zeal in their honest defence. Such endeavors indicate rather a feeble grasp of gospel realities than that calm, rational charity which "worketh no ill to his neighbor." There is nobler ground. It is the public recognition of the unity in Christ of all who have publicly entered into covenant with him. It is a unity of Christians and churches perfectly compatible with denominational distinctions, notwithstanding even the earnest defence of such distinctions; a unity which ought to be visibly recognized, and which we believe Christ intended should be specially recognized in the memorial supper, the family feast of the household of faith. While, therefore, the several denominational organizations may be retained in all their fixedness of outline, we affirm that the sacramental table of each should be free to all other denominations receiving Christ as their atoning Saviour. No bar-

¹ In the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. xix. pp. 133 sq., was inserted an Article by Rev. Alvah Hovey, D.D., entitled *Close Communion*. In the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. xxi. pp. 449, sq., was inserted the first part of the Article by Mr. Secretary Clark, entitled *Free Communion*. Both of these Articles belong to the series of *Essays on the Distinctive Peculiarities of the various Evangelical Denominations*. The second part of Mr. Clark's Article is not injured by its separation from the first part, as both parts form independent Essays.—Eds.

riers should be thrown around the sacramental board, save such as the nature of the ordinance demands.

In this discussion, therefore, we admit: 1. That believers alone may partake of the Lord's supper.¹ 2. That to commune with a church one must give the body credible evidence that he communes with Christ, and that the proper way of doing this is the profession of his faith by entering into covenant with God and with the brethren.² 3. That the church of Christ is purely a spiritual body; the scriptural practice of infant baptism not being incompatible with the idea of a church thus constituted.³ We are willing in argument even to admit that infant baptism is unscriptural, and that it tends to paralyze the church by introducing into it unsanctified elements; in a word, that the Baptist views regarding the rites and spirituality of the gospel church are correct.⁴ Our position lies below such supposed errors and their developments. It is, that actual life in Christ, under the conditions above stated, is the ground of eucharistic communion, not prospective life; nor is prospective paralysis or death the ground of disfellowship. All sin and error have the latter tendency. If the tendency of sin and error is to be adjudged a justifiable cause of withholding sacramental fellowship, we shall never enjoy it with any one.

We may illustrate our position by its application to the Puritan Congregational churches of New England. These, it is affirmed, have been brought to the very gates of death by infant baptism, and errors superinduced by it. But they have now utterly discarded these errors, are fully restored from their ill effects, and as strenuously maintain that none but true believers have a right to the Lord's supper as do our Baptist brethren. True, they still practise infant baptism, but it is in a manner not discernibly injuring the life of the churches, or chilling their zeal in the work of the Lord. Now, we argue that, while this spirituality, this zeal, self-denial, and heroic enterprise in the cause of Christ remains,

¹ See *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. xxi. p. 450.

² *Ibid.* p. 451.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 453, 454.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 457, 459.

the scriptural law of Christian fellowship requires those differing from these churches with respect to ritual practices, or other non-essential errors, to welcome them to their sacramental boards; and with them all in public covenant with God who evince a similar devotedness to the Redeemer. Hence our thesis "We are to receive to the sacramental board all whom, as a church, we have satisfactory evidence that Christ receives."¹

Having traced the proof of this proposition so far forth as derived from the scope and spirit of the New Testament, we proceed to show that the same is enjoined by the laws of church fellowship taught by Christ and his apostles, forming, with the genius of the gospel, one systematic whole.

SECTION I.

We argue free communion from the scriptural canons and principles bearing indirectly on our subject. Most of these our opponents regard as simply prescribing the intercourse of Christians, as such, in distinction from the closer communion of the sacramental board. We maintain, on the other hand, that while they require this, they have a much broader significance; demanding as their complement or logical result the highest communion enjoyed in the most endeared Christian relations. These, for the sake of distinction, we denominate the preceptive principles and laws of associated Christianity; though we are far from admitting, as the following sheets will show, that they are not in reality preceptive principles and laws of ecclesiastical Christianity as well. But as they are more general in their statements, are less apparently regulations of gospel church organizations, and as some of them are found in the Old Testament, we prefer to consider them as a code of laws for Christians viewed simply as social beings. They constitute a smaller circle of divine requirements within the larger circle of gospel teachings, but which, equally with the latter, demand, for the sake of congruity, the catholic law of church fellow-

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. xxi. p. 459.

ship. Before developing, therefore, this determinative law of unrestricted church communion taught in the New Testament (which we reserve for Section II.), we will glance at a few of those principles and laws enjoining a community of affections and interests among Christ's followers; so that, when we reach the consideration of the determinative law of church fellowship, we shall see that it is but the necessary outgrowth, not only of the spirit of the gospel, but of the principles and laws of associated Christianity. Without it the code has neither completeness nor symmetry. It remains an unfinished structure, weak and tottering, like a beautiful arch without its keystone. But while these preceptive principles are shown to point to the catholic law of sacramental communion as their necessary complement, each of itself constitutes an argument proving, if not the reality of the law, at least the inconsistency of denying it.

Of these principles and laws substantiating indirectly church communion, we name:

1. *The evangelical law of forgiveness and charity.* It is impossible to decide the question before us in a way pleasing to God without clear and impressive views of these duties. They are fundamental in Christian fellowship, and are no less binding than the inflexible requirement "to fulfil all righteousness." "Forgive," is the clearest accent that reaches us from the cross, demonstrating that the gospel, as a system of holy living, partakes of the nature of its foundation — God's sovereign purpose to forgive and save his enemies. Christ bids his disciples "love one another as I have loved you." He loved them with a forgiving love. Paul says: "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." "Perfectness" (*τῆς τελειότητος*) signifies an ending, a finishing, a perfecting. Hence, in the view of the apostle, charity is the consolidating, completing grace; that which gives finish of character to the church and to its individual members. When Peter says, "Above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves," he elevates the duty paramount to all others, the want of it vitiating the

whole conduct. Let it never be forgotten that the church of Christ is an organization whose corner-stone is forgiving love, whose brightest glory is charity; and that the dominant spirit of him who is the head of the body must of course be the life of its governing law.

2. *The nature and limit of Christian toleration and forbearance.* Toleration presupposes wrong doing or wrong opinions in those towards whom it is exercised. The same is true of forbearance. Christian toleration or forbearance is looking with indulgence on religious errors or wrong religious practices, and treating those involved in them as brethren in Christ. God's people are but partially sanctified. Probably no Christian on earth sees the whole circle of revealed truth with perfect distinctness; much less can we believe that any denomination, as such, has received all scriptural truth without mixture of error, or is free from moral delinquencies. If we enjoy Christian fellowship at all, it must be enjoyed with imperfect Christians. Hence, we must "forbear one another in love."

As this preceptive principle is as applicable to ecclesiastical as to associated Christianity, we will discuss its bearings on both viewed as one.

The question of church communion resolves itself into this: What known errors shall we tolerate in the church, and what shall we refuse to tolerate? We all grant that there are heresies and wrong practices which may not be suffered. Where and how shall the division be made? Plainly, by some clearly defined principle which shall be applicable to every act of Christian life alike, a line running through and so dividing the wide field of errors and wrong practices, that all on one side shall be deemed reconcilable with Christian character and fellowship, and all on the other side not so. Can such a principle be found?

To be Christlike is the great end of our being; and to be Christlike is to feel as Christ feels towards all objects and beings within the circumference of our knowledge, and to act accordingly in our several relations. Consequently it is

Christlike to embrace in our Christian fellowship all whom we have adequate evidence that Christ embraces in the arms of his forgiving love. If we are Christians our own experience informs us how Christ feels towards sinners whom he forgives. When pressed under the weight of our sins, we weep over them, bowing with broken hearts before the throne, and take hold of Christ as our sin-pardoning Saviour and only refuge in despair; when the serenity and joy of conscious peace which flows from a conscious lying at the foot of the cross suffuse the soul, we enjoy the delightful conviction that Christ smiles, and that his Father looks down well pleased. We feel assured that Christ accepts us, and will at last welcome us, though the chief of sinners, to his eternal communion. Now when we are rationally convinced that others are likewise sincere penitents, that it is the habit and purpose of their being to weep before the cross and cling to it as their only hope, we have satisfactory evidence from our own experience that Christ receives them as well as ourselves into his fellowship; and feeling as he does towards them, we, in like manner, receive them into our fellowship.

From this purest Christian experience, agreeing with the teaching of scripture, we derive a well-defined principle of church fellowship, or Christian toleration. It bids us tolerate all errors deemed consistent with holding to the Head, and all wrong practices not forfeiting Christian character. This is being Christlike in church fellowship. God will love the soul that loves him, and embrace it in eternal fellowship, whether we do or not. This is a law of the eternal mind. It is equally a law of every Godlike mind. The deepest tendency of its being, the cravings of its holiest affections, will attract it towards all of kindred spirit.

The advocates of close communion do not make the distinction between things to be tolerated and things not to be tolerated in the church thus radical or experimental. They draw it between things acknowledged to be of the same nature and character. God is pleased with the affections and conduct of some on both sides of the line. The distinction is

arbitrary. It is not laid in a universal principle, and hence gives free scope to caprice and prejudice. It involves its abettors in marked inconsistencies; for instance, refusing to fellowship sacramentally those whom they have evidence to believe Christ so fellowships; rejecting some of the best Christians from the Lord's supper, and receiving to it some of the most defective; placing an external observance above right affections of the heart, and making the communion of the spiritual church dependent on the mode of a rite. Would they receive to the sacramental feast all publicly acknowledged to be Christ's disciples, rejecting only those not thus acknowledged, they would avoid both these and other hurtful inconsistencies.

Objection. It may be said, This is not so drawing the line of separation that God sees all on one side to be his children, and all on the other not; you make a public profession as necessary to sacramental communion as we do. True; but our position, grounded on an immutable principle, is not limited by an act, only by another principle. Our line of distinction is not arbitrary. We can judge of the heart only by its manifestations. No church can intelligently commune with a brother as one with Christ till he has given the church evidence of oneness with him. This is not limiting sacramental fellowship simply by an act, or the mode of an act, but by that which cannot be altered without altering either our own minds or the significance of the sacramental rite.

3. *The superiority of moral to positive precepts or external rites.* A moral precept is one intuitively discerned, or when taught its justness is at once seen. It springs out of the nature of things. It is immutable, and as enduring as our existence. The authority of a positive precept subsists alone in the will of the lawgiver. It is transitory, alterable at the pleasure of the promulgator. "The former is commanded because it is right; the latter is right because commanded." Every moral precept is suggestive of other precepts, ever multiplying itself, ever presenting new aspects to meet new relations. Hence it is comprehensive. Love will prompt to

every feeling and act, which, as circumstances and relations arise, we ought to exercise under the divine government. Resignation, submission, faith, repentance, benevolence, forgiveness, justice, candor, all the social virtues, are equally comprehensive. God himself can never abrogate them while he retains the relation of moral governor. Fully obeyed or experienced on the heart, they constitute a personal likeness to God, and are just as important as that likeness; forming a bond of union which no finite power can sunder.

The fundamental truths of the gospel, which, when cordially received, indicate and inspire the same or similar states of mind demanded by the moral precepts, are equally universal in their influence. They originate and mould character.

No such efficacious or wide-spread influence belongs to a positive precept. Its force is confined to the act prescribed. It has no authority in new relations to prescribe new duties, not united to it by the will of the lawgiver. If in any change of circumstances it conflict with a moral precept it may and must be disregarded. Positive precepts may have the power of testing obedience to moral precepts, as had the Adamic prohibition; for the disposition to comply with an external observance indicates an obedient heart; and an unwillingness to comply, a disobedient heart. But a misunderstanding in regard to the requirement, or a conscientious mistake concerning the mode of its performance, by no means proves a disobedient heart. The mistaken mode of a rite, while believed to be the proper mode, has, in its administration, the same moral effect as the right mode. In either case the demands of the conscience are equally met. But this is not the case with a conscientious mistake relative to moral precepts or the doctrines of grace. These are elements of life; their misconception, elements of death. Every moral precept obeyed, and every fundamental truth of the gospel cordially received, gives spiritual life; but every moral precept disobeyed, and every essential truth of the gospel discarded, weakens the pulse of holy activity. While, therefore, very

slight errors concerning depravity, regeneration, justification, dependence, or accountability, owing to the subtle influence of these truths on the heart, may prevent the progress, even the origination, of holiness in the soul, the conscientious mistake respecting an external rite is comparatively harmless. The higher place, then, must be given to the moral precepts.

Our Baptist brethren acknowledge this, even with respect to church order and government (see Rev. A. Fuller, Vol. viii. p. 459). Dr. Arnold is equally explicit: "We do not by any means put baptism on an equality with that love which is the fulfilling of the law."

This is in exact agreement with the teachings of scripture (Micah vi. 6-8; Matt. xii. 7; Mark xii. 33). It is thus distinctly taught, both in the Old and New Testaments, that the moral precepts sustain more vital relations, and occupy a higher place in Christ's kingdom, than the positive. Consequently, the failure to administer an ordinance of the gospel in its precise form or order while its spirit is retained, we cannot reasonably judge to be so displeasing to God as the want of that love or charity which assimilates us to himself. Christians agreeing in obedience to the moral precepts should therefore unite harmoniously and lovingly, though they may disagree in opinion and practice respecting the positive. Satisfactory evidence of qualifications for spiritual communion like that of heaven is enough. On this principle we plant ourselves as the only standing-place consistent with the distinction we are considering; while all argumentation for strict communion proceeds on the ground of the superiority of the positive precepts to the moral, in direct opposition both to the decisions of reason and of inspired teaching.

4. *All institutes of the gospel attain their highest end in the edification or holiness of Christians*, answering to the ultimate end of Christ's mission: "That he might purify unto himself a peculiar people." The apostle, speaking of the manner of conducting the worship of the church, says: "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. xiv. 26; see also 1 Cor. xiv. 12; Eph. iv. 11-14). But in what specifically

consists the edification of God's people? In that which "maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." Cherishing or promoting the Christian graces, preparation for blessedness and everlasting communion with Christ, is the great end of all gospel institutes. Rev. A. Fuller, speaking of the **grand design of the apostles** in organizing churches, agrees with this view: "Whatever measures had a tendency to build up the church of God and individuals in their most holy faith, these they pursued. Whatever measures approved themselves to minds endued with holy wisdom as fit and lovely, and as tending to the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, these they followed, and inculcated on the churches. . . . In this process we perceive nothing of the air of ceremony, nothing like that of punctilious attention to forms, which marks obedience to a positive institute; but merely the conduct of men endued with wisdom from above. All things are done decently and in order; all things are done to edifying." Consequently, when this high and glorious end is better secured, when these graces assimilating us to God are better promoted by the neglect of the ordinances, they are, on scriptural authority, omitted or dispensed with for the occasion.

It was so in the old dispensation, in which rites seem almost living elements. On the day that Nadab and Abihu were destroyed by fire, Moses commanded Aaron and his surviving sons to take the meat-offering, as was their duty, and eat it before the Lord; but they did it not. Moses, discovering their neglect, was angry, and reproved them sharply. When Aaron, however, stated the reason, — his grief and that of his sons in view of the judicial death of those so dear to them, — Moses was content, because it would have been improper to eat it with sorrow of heart.

Hezekiah issued a proclamation to the Israelites to keep the passover, which had been for a long time neglected. Many had not cleansed themselves as the law required; nevertheless they ate. But Hezekiah prayed: "The good Lord

pardon every one that prepareth his heart" (2 Chron. xxx. 19); and the Lord accepted them.

The Israelites are attacked by the Philistines. They are alarmed, and beseech Samuel to cry unto the Lord for them. Samuel offers a sucking lamb as a burnt offering unto the Lord, and the Philistines are defeated. But Samuel was not a priest, and had no right, according to the Mosaic law, to offer the sacrifice, nor was Mizpeh the appointed place to offer it; yet the Lord accepted the offering. There seems, indeed, to have been a revival of religion during the whole judgeship of Samuel, although the worship of the people during the entire period was not performed precisely after the Sinaitic model.

Further, we find that, though circumcision was the entering ordinance into the Mosaic church, no one was to be admitted to the passover without it, could not even be received as one of Israel; yet, during most of their sojourn in the wilderness the rite was omitted in direct violation of the law of Sinai. And it is remarkable that in no period of their existence as a nation did God bestow upon them more extraordinary blessings, or manifest to them more signal marks of his favor. It is plain that God excused this neglect under the circumstances, and held them still in the very heart of his affections. The only reason we are justified in assigning is, that in the then existing circumstances of the church the administration of the rite was not necessary to secure their separation from other nations, or the promotion of holiness among themselves; their reception of Christ being a sufficient ground of their acceptableness to God; as Bunyan pithily remarks they "had that richer and better thing." "They did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink" (1 Cor. x. 3, 4).

If the rigidity of the Mosaic ritual could give way in certain circumstances, when the ends it was designed to secure were reached as well without it, we may certainly expect equal leniency under the freer dispensation of the gospel. Indeed, Christ has shown that this pliability or leniency

respecting positive institutes not only existed in the Mosaic economy, but also is a fundamental principle of action in the economy of grace: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. xii. 1-7). This is the spirit of all the ordinances of Christ's appointment (compare also Lev. xxiv. 5-9 and 1 Sam. xxi. 6 with Matt. xii. 3-8; Num. xxviii. 9 with John vii. 22).

Positive laws demanding ritual observances are not therefore, either in the old dispensation or in the new, unbending principles, which must, under all circumstances, be obeyed, like the great law of love, which can never be abrogated or relaxed. The Christian graces, the life of Christ in the soul, constitute all that is really pleasing to God in the institutes of his church. It is a principle of scripture never to be forgotten, that outward observances may be modified or omitted; the law requiring right affections, never. The whole superstructure of visible Christianity is arranged with reference to this one thing, — the advancement of God's people in holiness: "The knowledge of God is more than burnt-offerings." Shall we then greatly sin if we believe charity — mutual edification in love — to be of higher esteem in God's view than the right mode of administering an ordinance?

5. *The oneness of believers with Christ and with each other.* This is the deepest and broadest principle of associated Christian life. Christ, who came to make the redeemed one with himself, planted it in the centre of his church, to be there a living energy, an irrepressible force, working in the heart and working in the extremities; a preceptive element of universal authority, a ubiquitous and immutable law of existence, guiding now, guiding everywhere, guiding forever. This oneness of Christians, based on oneness with Christ, rose before the mind of Paul in all its beauty, dignity, and practical bearings, kindling his heart to a glow, and awakening his loftiest eloquence. He never seems weary of dwelling on the delightful theme.

Though this point is vital to our subject, yet as we have discussed it in Part I., and shall allude to it in other sections

of our argument, we will not now linger to draw out its full force by explicating the several passages in which it is taught. Commending them to the careful investigation of the reader, we will merely allude to a few.

In Eph. iv. 2-16, 1 Cor. xii., Col. ii. 19, Rom. xii. 4, 5, Pául compares the oneness of believers in Christ to the identity of the several members of the human body under the control of the indwelling spirit. He represents the Holy Ghost as the great transforming agent, working a radical change in their hearts, and engendering there a supernatural life, which creates among believers an inner spiritual organism — a sublime, mysterious unity, which no language so well expresses as “oneness with Christ.” It is as if the innumerable multitudes of Christ’s disciples were one person, animated by one soul, so that every member of his body is as dear to him, the Head, as every member of the natural body is to the person. Indeed, they are part of Christ (Eph. v. 30).

The apostle also compares this oneness to the oneness of husband and wife (Eph. v. 22-32); to the unity of a temple resting on its foundation (Eph. ii. 21-22); to the unity of a family (Gal. vi. 10; Eph. ii. 19; Heb. vi. 11); to the unity of the civil state; of the shepherd and his flock (John x. 19); of the vine and its branches (John xv. 1-5); to the vital connection (*σύνφυτος*) between the scion and the stock (Rom. vi. 5). See Olshausen, Calvin.

The equality of believers reveals the same truth as lying underneath, and demanding it (Rom. x. 12; Gal. iii. 26-28). It is also implied in the command, so often repeated, enjoining Christlike love on the universal brotherhood (John xiii. 34; xv. 12; Eph. iv. 32.)

It is taught negatively: 1. By the severe reprimands for dissensions and divisions among Christians uttered both by Christ and his apostles (Matt. xii. 25; Rom. xvi. 17, 18; 1 Cor. i. 11-13; iii. 3, 4; Gal. v. 15; 1 John iii. 14, 15; iv. 20; Col. ii. 2). 2. By the prohibition, “there should be no schism in the body.” The scriptural idea of schism, in a

single sentence, is dividing the body of Christ. This is evident from Paul's illustration of the unity of which schism is the rupture. The sin is named at the close of that beautiful analogy he traces between the unity in the members of the human body and the oneness of believers in Christ. *Σχίσμα*, signifies primarily a rent, a breach, the division of a substance in two. Applied to a unity subsisting in moral affections and sentiments, it signifies any disturbance of kindly feelings, any estrangement creating parties or factions. Hence, any quarrel among brethren in Christ, though it may not proceed so far as separation, is called by the apostle, schism; and such was the division he so severely censured among the Corinthians.

But if such limited estrangement is schism, the division which actually severs the body of Christ, refusing fellowship to those freely acknowledged to be Christians and in covenant with God, even going so far as to set up a separate church organization, not allowing those rejected so much as occasional communion, is schism in a far higher sense. If Paul, in view of the alienations in the Corinthian church, where all, notwithstanding differences, remained in one communion, deeming each other brethren in the Lord, could, with a kind of wonderment at the strangeness of the act, reprovably ask: "Is Christ divided?" with how much more astonishment and severity would he have put the question had they actually divided into separate communions, one party counting the other unworthy to partake of the sacramental emblems.

Now, by gathering into one view the various representations of the unity of Christ's disciples, and the several strong expressions teaching it, such as: "We being many are one body in Christ"; "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones"; "The fulness of him that filleth all in all"; "Till we all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"; "That the members should have the same care one of another"; "The whole body fitly joined together and compacted"; "Whether one

member suffer all the members suffer with it," as if a vital consciousness beat through all, identifying them as one person;— we say by gathering these expressions and illustrations, some of them reiterated again and again, into one view, in connection with the fact that Christ prayed that his disciples might be one with him, as his Father and he are one, the mind reaches the inevitable conclusion that the members of Christ's body should, by divine right, enjoy the privilege of communing with all his acknowledged disciples in partaking of the emblems of his literal body, broken for the sins of all. Surely, they who partake of Christ, the heavenly bread, who dwell in Christ, and Christ in them, should have the privilege of partaking of the symbols of that bread and that indwelling, which symbols he designated in the solemn and tender hour of the institution, "my body," "my blood."

The symbolizing of this unity is, indeed, the essential idea of the sacramental board. 1. This is apparent from those touching words which Christ addressed to his disciples at the institution of the supper, recorded in John xiii., xiv., xv., xvi., the central idea of which is the unity of his disciples with himself; and closing with that sublimest prayer, in which, as intercessor, he pleads with his Father, "that they may be one, as we are." The manifest significance of this address and prayer, uttered in immediate connection with the institution of the supper, must have been, in the view of the disciples— this memorial feast is for all who are, or shall be, interested in his death; for all who are, or shall be, one with the Master as the branch is one with the vine,— participation of the spiritual bread entitling then and evermore, to commune with him in the symbolic bread.

2. Divisions and subdivisions, sectarian and denominational lines between true disciples, though then present to the Saviour's omniscient view, evidently presented no barrier to the fellowship of his table. All one in him had then, and ever will have, an equal interest in commemorating his death in sacramental love.

3. In agreement with the teachings of Christ on that touch-

ing occasion, Paul represents the unity of believers in their Head both as furnishing just ground of communion in 'the highest token of fellowship, the Lord's supper, and as implied in its reception (1 Cor. x. 16, 17). "We" refers to those whom he addresses in this epistle (chap. i. 2),—we, all Christians who are in Christ, are as the particles of flour which compose the loaf eaten in communion, personally distinct, yet organically one. Being such, all have the same title to and interest in the sacrament where we enjoy communion with our common Lord, and with all who are in him.

4. Surely if visible membership of Christ's "body, of his flesh, and of his bones," does not entitle to the highest form of fraternal communion, at what point does the title fail? Reckoning the highest point at one hundred degrees, does it fail at fifty, sixty, ninety, ninety-nine? Where may the dividing wedge be driven? It is incumbent on our opponents, recognizing the nature of the institution, to say where the schism in that body "fitly joined together and compacted" may be made. It is demonstrable that the point cannot be logically found.

5. The richest Christian experience accords with this decision. One prostrated in utter lowliness before his Saviour, burdened with sin, groaning under a sense of inward depravity which forces from him the exclamation of Paul, "Oh, wretched man that I am!" while his eye is fixed on the cross, and the excruciating anguish there endured to procure for him, and all like him, pardon and an immortal crown, can scarcely have the heart to say to a professed brother in Christ by his side, bowed as he is bowed, and weeping as he is weeping, and looking up to Christ with the same affectionate interest: "Stand thou aside; thou hast no part in this feast of dying love; for thou hast mistaken sprinkling for baptism, and by thy practice art sanctioning the application of the initiatory rite of the church to infants." Hence, many warm-hearted Christians among close communionists have expressed a desire to sit at the table of dying love with members of other denominations; and, only restrained by a sense

of obligation to what they deem a principle of order in their church, have heartily wished the barrier removed.

The proposition announced to be proved in section I. established. The above conclusion is the decisive result deduced from one of the principles and laws of Christian communion or association. In view of them all combined, the logical inference, that they demand sacramental communion as their complement, is irresistible. The feelings and conduct they prescribe are incomplete without it. In view of the reason they culminate in this as inevitably as the vegetable laws of the shrub culminate in the flower or the fruit.

This conclusion is denied by our opponents. They admit the obligations of reciprocal fellowship growing out of the unity of believers in Christ; but maintain that these obligations of holiest sympathies may be met without uniting in sacramental ordinances. They make a distinction between "Christian and sacramental communion." They affirm that the scriptures indicate two kinds of fellowship in the body of Christ — the one enjoyed with the invisible church and with unbaptized visible Christians, and the other with the visible baptized church. The same distinction they sometimes denominate "church communion" and the "communion of the saints" (see Curtis, pp. 35, 45; ¹ Howell, p. 113; ² Remington, p. 71).³ This position supposes the visible body of Christ divided for the purpose of sacramental communion;

¹ The Distinction between Christian and Church Communion, and between Communion and its Symbols. By T. F. Curtis, A.M., Professor of Theology, Howard College, Ala. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society.

² Terms of Communion at the Lord's Table. By R. B. C. Howell, D.D. Ninth thousand. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society.

³ A Defence of Restricted Communion. By Rev. S. Remington, A.M. Fifty-first thousand. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society. In this discussion we have taken the works published by this society as authoritative with respect to the principles of the Baptists. For it is the object of the society, as stated by themselves, "To provide and put in circulation a Sunday school and general literature, such as illustrates and enforces the peculiar and, as we believe, scriptural principles of the Baptist denomination." Also, "That others should be enabled to learn what Baptists are from our own presentation of our principles."

one part qualified, the other unqualified. They conceive baptism to be the divisive principle, and maintain :

I. That they find verbal authority for their opinion in the fact that the primitive Christians are said to have been baptized into the church or the body of Christ. Passages relied on are 1 Cor. xii. 13 ; Gal. iii. 27 ; Eph. iv. 5. But " baptism " and " baptize " in these passages may signify regeneration, or the reception of Christ's life into the soul. Dr. Gill, Dr. Hodge, Dr. Armstrong, Olshausen, Neander, and others support this interpretation.

II. It is argued that the office of baptism, as the only public act by which a scriptural profession is made, divides the visible body of Christ for the purposes of sacramental communion. In consistency with relying alone on the express declaration of the New Testament so emphatically asserted by our opponents, they assume by this distinction that two classes of accredited Christians are known in scripture. The modern division in the religious world between professing and non-professing Christians is carried back to apostolic times, and reasoned from as then existing. The simple question therefore, is: Did this distinction then obtain? We reply in the negative. For,

1. It divides mankind into three distinct classes : (1) Unbelievers ; (2) Christians qualified for the communion ; (3) Christians unqualified for the communion. But the Bible divides mankind into two distinctive classes only, believers and unbelievers ; saints and sinners.

2. We have no knowledge in scripture of a class of Christians acknowledged spiritually qualified for a sacramental rite, even desirous of it, but who were refused it. This is conceded relative to baptism. It is equally true relative to the Lord's supper.

3. By a position which the Baptists themselves take on another point, they virtually deny the existence of a recognized class of Christians in apostolic times to whom " the communion of the saints " was allowable, but " church communion " forbidden. If such a class existed they were of

course visible Christians ; and visibility is the result only of some significant act. But the Baptists maintain that the initiatory rite to the church was the first public act spoken of in the Acts and in the Epistles after believing in Christ. This rite, baptism, they say, was "placed at the beginning of the Christian life, as the introduction to a course of obedience." "It followed immediately as the first duty after the exercise of saving faith." All visible Christians then belonged to one class.

4. The inscriptions of Paul's Epistles show that he held to no such distinction among Christians. The Epistle to the Romans is addressed "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints";—to all whose "faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." The inscription to the first Epistle to the Corinthians is: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." The arguments and persuasions to unity, the requirements of brotherly love, the reprimands against estrangement and schism, enforced in those epistles were addressed to the same individuals as those referred to in the inscriptions. They indicate but one class of visible believers.

5. Admitting that Paul in his epistles addressed only the members of the particular churches to which they were severally directed, and consequently only the baptized, the result is the same. It may prove that all known Christians were baptized ; but it equally disproves that the body of visible believers was divided into two classes.

6. Indeed, the Baptists themselves virtually deny that the peculiar significance or office of baptism, as the act of profession, has this discriminating power. Baptism, with them, is always a sign of what was previously possessed. It does not, then, form the mystical union of Christ's body, but indicates that union as already existing. It does not give visibility to the body. It is the profession of faith which the rite presupposes that gives visibility (Curtis p. 93).

Our reply to the argument for two classes of recognized believers drawn from the necessary precedence of baptism to the Lord's supper we reserve for Part III.

But while most strict communionists concede that the New Testament furnishes no direct testimony respecting such a distinction among primitive Christians as answers to the modern distinction of Christian and sacramental communion, they maintain that it does teach, at least by implication, certain principles of church organization and order, which involve laws of church fellowship warranting such a division in the body of Christ. We will mention a few of them.

Principle I. is, that the Lord's supper is not expressive of communion with the brethren, only with Christ (Denison, pp. 18, 22).¹ This theory, if it can be established, is an easy method of settling the question in debate. It is undermining all argumentations for free communion by a single stroke. Alexander-like, it is not loosening, but cutting, the Gordian knot. But the theory may be sufficiently refuted by the following considerations :

1. The language which Christ employed in the institution of the supper shows that it was intended to be symbolical of fraternal love. It may be shown that the words, "this is my blood of the new testament," indicate that the covenant of the gospel dispensation is sealed with blood, as was the Mosaic; that the supper is the great sealing ordinance of the gospel covenant, as the passover was of the Mosaic; that the significance and communal extent of the passover is to interpret the significance and communal extent of the supper; that as the former was expressive of fraternal regard, so is the latter. The same may be further shown from the fact that a covenant implies a law or commandments, and its sealing ordinance implies a pledge of obedience to its law or commandments. The law of the gospel covenant which is sealed in the Lord's supper is that which Christ uttered in immediate connection with its institution: "A new commandment

¹ The Supper Institution. By Rev. Frederic Denison, A.M. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society.

I give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Hence the supper is expressive of the purest fraternal love. The same is implied in the mutual thanksgiving or prayer in which the disciples joined with the Lord in the consecration of the bread and wine, and in the song of mutual praise which they sang at the close of the instituting service. The prophetic declaration: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," is expressive of the same.

2. The theory conflicts with the essential idea of the supper as a social feast. That it is a social institution our opponents earnestly maintain. But if a social institution, it must have some significance relative to those with whom it is enjoyed (Curtis, p. 74 ; Arnold, 59).

3. The instruction and prayer of Christ at and immediately after the supper show that fraternal love was especially symbolized by it. The address of Christ contained in the latter part of the thirteenth chapter of John, and closing with the sixteenth, was probably delivered in the chamber where the supper was instituted (Steir, Bloomfield), or on their way to Gethsemane, to which they immediately repaired. The central and all-pervading thought of the address is, the union of believers in Christ—brotherly love in its highest and richest form. The address may be safely taken as explanatory of the import of the supper just instituted.

4. The advocates of this theory regard the supper as expressive of the whole scheme of gospel truth (Denison, pp. 47, 48). If so, it must of course be expressive of its determinative, essential idea—the ultimate end to which it tends, the union of all Christ's disciples in one (Eph. i. 9, 10).

5. The theory conflicts with 1 Cor. x. 16. (See Calvin, Bloomfield, Alford, Hodge, Olshausen, Neander, Stanley, etc).

6. The theory is incompatible with the fact that the sacramental supper was primarily taken in connection with the "agape." This practice, on the supposition that the holy

supper has no relevancy to fraternal regard, would have been exceedingly apt to mislead.

7. The theory conflicts with the psychological nature of union with Christ. Communion with Christ implies communion with all like him. It is impossible to partake of the supper aright, or with feelings of full communion with Christ, and not enjoy communion with the brethren.

8. It conflicts with the testimony of antiquity and with the almost universal sentiment of the Christian church (Neander, Schaff, Blunt, Coleman).

9. The theory is denied by other Baptist writers, such as Drs. Hovey, Arnold, Howell, Hiscox, and Professor Curtis.

Principle II. is, that the Lord's supper expresses communion in intellectual views, in doctrinal sentiments, and ritual practices.¹ The fallacy of this position lies in its representing the supper as a symbol of intellectual harmonies, whereas it is a symbol of spiritual harmonies only. The oneness of believers is the oneness of love and faith — of the Christian sympathies. A commingling of these at the feast of dying love is perfectly compatible with diversities of sentiment.

Principle III. is, that discrepancies in religious opinions justifying denominational organizations justify exclusion from each other's communion tables. But it may be shown : 1. That diversities of opinion justifying different denominational organizations may not necessarily justify exclusion from each other's communion tables ; for while they might hinder church fellowship, they might not hinder sacramental fellowship. 2. The fact that evangelical Christians are divided into different denominations may be shown to be one of the strongest reasons for manifesting their oneness in Christ by partaking together of the holy supper, an ordinance in which all have an equal interest.

Principle IV. is, that the Lord's supper is a " church ordinance " ; i.e. an ordinance belonging to each particular church, to be celebrated only by its members in church ca-

¹ The Communion Question. Pamphlet published by the Baptist Convention, Ohio.

capacity, symbolizing church relations, betokening fellowship exclusively between Christ and themselves. In the same sense that the passover was committed to each family of Israel, the Christian passover is committed to each particular church. It is given to the church as a body, in distinction from its individual members. Hence we have no right to carry it to the families of the church, to administer it to those unable to go to the place of public celebration. Nor have professed Christians, members of churches, and ministers assembled in associations, in councils, in presbyteries, in synods, in conventions or conferences, even although all belong to one denomination, any right to celebrate the Lord's supper as a symbol of their oneness with Christ. It must be administered to each church in its church capacity, and in no other way. Membership in one church neither guarantees the right, nor gives the privilege of partaking of it in another (Curtis, pp. 85-94; Denison, pp. 20-24; Remington, pp. 67-72; Hovey, p. 154; Arnold, pp. 43-45).

The main grounds of this theory are two. The first ground is the alleged fact that the Christian church was organized at the institution of the supper; that the twelve were the "ecclesia," the small company of disciples called out from the whole company of the disciples to form the first gathering of Christ's visible church, to whom he committed the sacramental feast; thereby declaring that it was an ordinance belonging to an individual church, and must ever be celebrated by the church in its corporate capacity. This is the simple averment of a fact. But is it a fact? Its certainty cannot be demonstrated.

1. To affirm that the company or family of the twelve disciples was organized into the visible church of Christ at the institution of the supper is mere assertion. There is no proof of it. Thousands, both learned and unlearned, have read the account of the institution of the supper, and never suspected that the visible church of Christ, as distinguished from the Mosaic, was then inaugurated. It cannot receive rational credence till demonstrated.

2. According to the eternal counsels of the Godhead, all the persons in the Trinity were to have specific work to do and to be glorified in human redemption—in forming the Christian church, and imparting to it its efficiency and beauty.

3. Christ was not to be installed mediatorial king till he had purchased his kingdom. It was to be given him as a reward for his death (Isa. liii. 10–12; Ps. ii. 8; Philip. ii. 8–11). We cannot reasonably suppose the king would be installed before his kingdom was given him.

4. The Holy Spirit was to be the divine agent to create the materials out of which the gospel church was to be erected, and by whom, as an inward formative power, it was to be perpetuated, a vital corporation in the world—a fact of special importance in determining the time of its commencement. This is apparent from John xiv. 16, 17, 20, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7–13.

5. Christ was to be exalted as mediatorial king before he sent the Spirit in its greater fulness and power. This is evident from John vii. 39; xvi. 7; xiv. 16. “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter.” This prayer was to be offered as intercessor. The twenty-sixth verse implies the same thing, “whom the Father will send in my name” (Acts ii. 33, 36).

6. The twelve disciples were to be the human agents in setting up the visible church (Luke xxiv. 47–48; John xv. 27; Acts i. 8; ii. 32). They were to be qualified for this important work, (a) by the instructions of Christ (Acts i. 3); (b) by the enlightening and guiding power of the Spirit. This last was done in the glorious effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of pentecost (Acts i. 4, 5, 8; ii. 2–4).

7. The testimony of church historians is in favor of the first founding of Christ's visible church on the day of pentecost (Neander, Schaff, Gieseler, Milner).

8. Some of the ablest Baptist writers affirm the same.

9. But could it be proved that Christ's visible church was organized at the institution of the supper, it would not demonstrably follow that the supper was committed to particu-

lar churches in such sense that the members of one might not communicate at the table of another.

a. The passover was a symbol of union and fellowship with the Hebrew nation, expressive of their common deliverances, their common interests, and their common hopes as God's people. This has been shown above in our confutation of principle I.

b. The Israelites were all to kill the paschal lamb at the same hour, and to eat it at the same hour. Order and decorum were distinctive features of their ritualistic worship. No passing from one table to another could therefore have been allowed. It would have rendered the festival a scene of disorder and confusion. There was a necessity for confining each person to a particular table. The churches of Christ in evangelical Christendom do not celebrate the Christian passover at the same time. There is not therefore the same necessity for confining each communicant to the same table.

c. The families or groups for the participation of the paschal feast were not permanent bodies. Neither order nor convenience would permit all the paschal lambs to be spread on one table, and the assembled nation to gather around it. The people must of necessity be parcelled off into groups or societies. Division into families was most convenient and suitable, as commemorative of the preservation of families in the slaying of the first-born. But another point was to be secured. Lambs enough must be slain, but not a superabundance (Ex. xii. 3, 4). The paschal group was a family only generically. Josephus informs us that their number ranged from ten to twenty. Bush remarks on the phrase, "Every man according to his eating" — "every man according to the mouth of his eating. That is, in making out a suitable number to participate of the lamb, or form the paschal society, ye shall include every one who is capable of eating a certain quantity, to the exception of the sick, the very aged, and the very young. This quantity the Jewish writers say was to be equal to the size of an olive." These

groups were made up in the annual arrangements for the observance of the passover. They varied from year to year. Some in a group this year might be assigned to another the next. They were by no means permanent bodies like particular churches. No just inference concerning the point in discussion can be drawn from the variable paschal societies, circumstanced as these societies were, in relation to permanent societies situated so differently as are Christian churches.

d. Neither in the Jewish nor gospel economy are ceremonies and ordinances ends in themselves. Their end is always edification in holiness. When this could be secured without their performance, or **without** a rigid regard to their forms, they were, in scripture times, either modified or entirely neglected, even under the ritual economy of the Jews. (See above; Indirect Canons for Free Communion, No. 4.)

The symbolization of union and fellowship among the Israelites, one grand end of the paschal festival, was transferred to the Lord's supper. This principle is therefore common to both ordinances. But while a principle itself is not mutable, the mode of carrying it out according to the soundest logic is mutable. This eucharistic principle, consequently, may, on grounds both of reason and scripture, be modified by the new relations and circumstances of the gospel.

Now, because in a ritualistic system of extremest precision of modes, one end of the passover, fellowship, was best expressed by its being partaken of by small societies exclusively among themselves—societies annually composed for each annual observance, so that the members of one were strictly forbidden to pass from one to another, is it demonstrable that the fellowship of Christian churches is to be expressed exactly in the same manner; especially when in the new circumstances, another mode is more expressive, and in perfect keeping with the freer economy of grace in which we live? From this premise can it be demonstrated that the members of one Christian church may not partake of the emblems of Christ's death with another; or that one

church is under obligation, in order to a proper celebration of the supper, to debar from its communion board the members of all other churches? Certainly, if the ordinances of the gospel are not ends in themselves, if the end of all is the edification of believers in holiness, the intelligent and candid must see that such is not the logical inference from the hypothesis of our opponents, were it even proved true. This asserted fact therefore would avail nothing could it be substantiated.

Besides, the assumption that the visible church was inaugurated at the institution of the supper involves its advocates in several difficulties:

1. It conducts them from the New Testament to the Old to find proof, if not of the institution of a Christian rite, at least proof of one of its essential practical elements. The argument is, the Mosaic ritual required the passover to be eaten, each family by itself; therefore the Lord's supper is a church ordinance to be celebrated invariably and exclusively by a church in its corporate capacity. The Jewish ordinance is made the exact mould in which the Christian ordinance, as a symbol of fraternal fellowship is cast; so that we have it precisely in the same shape, restricted by the same limits. Can there be a more decisive resort to the Mosaic ritual and dependence upon it for the ascertainment of the essential element of a gospel rite? But this is directly contrary to one of the avowed principles of our opponents (Hovey, p. 134; Denison, p. 14).

2. If Christ intended the supper to take the same place in the New Testament church that the passover occupied in the Old Testament church, and if by first celebrating it with his disciples as his family, he meant to show that it was to retain its characteristic as a family rite, it is the legitimate conclusion that it was designed to be a rite, celebrated, not in the gospel church as such, but in the families of the gospel church. But this would completely overthrow the hypothesis that it is to be invariably celebrated by the church, as such, never to be carried out of it into the association, council,

synod, or family. It would prove just the reverse. Its supporters save themselves only by changing what they term the family of Christ into the church of Christ at the moment when he took bread, blessed, and brake, without the least intimation of such a change.

3. The theory compels its advocates to put upon "ecclesia," church, a sense diverse from its accepted ecclesiastical usage. Its received signification is, "called out by authority from the world into the family of Christ." This is very clearly stated by Flacius Illyricus, quoted with approbation by R. C. Trench; also by Coleman, Schaff, and Neander. Our restrictive friends admit that "ecclesia" purports "called out by authority," but not distinctively out of the world, — indirectly, perhaps, out of the world, but distinctively out of the company of believers. The very object of the hypothesis is to show that Christ enjoyed sacramental communion with only a part of those with whom he enjoyed Christian communion. The twelve were called out by authority for this distinctive purpose. According to the hypothesis, they were called out from his known and avowed disciples — from the seventy, the family of Bethany, separated even from his own mother, from those, so far as we know, who were as dear to him, and with whom he enjoyed as endeared communion, as with the twelve. Nor were they called out from the invisible company of believers to be formed into a visible company, but from a company of believers already visible.

4. The ground of excluding Pedobaptists from the sacramental table is by the hypothesis shifted from those usually assigned as justifiable. That which rises high above all others is baptism (Curtis p. 240; Terms of Communion p.8).¹ But Christ plainly did not exclude his other followers because they had not been baptized or immersed. There is the same reason to believe that they had been baptized as that the twelve had been. He did not exclude them because they were "walking disorderly"; for they were walking as orderly as those he welcomed to the supper. He did not exclude

¹ Tract by American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia.

them because they had embraced any error, or were guilty of ill practices or misdemeanors. They were as sound in the faith, as correct in ritual usages, and as exemplary in deportment as those to whom he broke bread. He did not exclude them because he loved them less affectionately. We have every reason to believe that he loved his mother and the family at Bethany as warmly as his chosen disciples. He did not exclude *all* of them certainly because they did not or might not have belonged to his family or "paschal society." He might have introduced eight more to make up the number twenty. The family of Bethany must have united with some other family, for they were too small to compose of themselves a paschal group. His mother might surely have been reckoned as one of his family. Thus the hypothesis excludes all his disciples except the twelve on entirely new ground. That is,

5. It excludes them simply on the ground of sovereignty. There was no apparent cause in the excluded disciples either subjectively or objectively; none in what they had done, thought, believed, said, felt, or purposed; none in what they had failed to do, think, speak, feel, or desire. On the hypothesis, the cause lay alone in Christ's sovereign will, because so it seemed good in his sight.

6. Since Christ's example in matters of church order constitutes law in view of our opponents, a just inference from their hypothesis is, that he intends to incorporate but a small proportion of his followers into his visible church. If at the institution of the supper the twelve and seventy constituted the whole number of disciples, he designs only about one in seven to belong to his visible church. If the whole number were an hundred and twenty, he designs only one in ten. If the whole number were five hundred, he designs only about one in forty. Thus the hypothesis belittles the whole subject of church organization and church ordinances. Even sacramental communion is of little consequence. Christ excluded from it his own mother, the dearest of all his friends, the friend who held the deepest place in his affections amid

his dying agonies. Would he shut her out from any privilege of great moment? Was there any one by whom he more desired to be remembered?

The second ground of argument, proving that the sacramental supper is exclusively a church ordinance, to be administered in and by the church as such, and never to be carried out of it, is the alleged fact that the apostolic churches met severally "in one place" to enjoy it; met as a body, and not in detached companies or families. The scripture mainly relied upon in proof of this position is 1 Cor. xi. 21-33.

The argument from the facts narrated in this passage is very simple and direct. Based on the principle that Paul "exalted the customs of all the churches to the position of a moral law for believers," it is this: "No less than four times within the space of a few verses does Paul connect the coming together" of the Corinthian Christians "in one place with the celebration of the eucharist"; therefore the holy supper must always be observed by each particular church as a body; it may never be celebrated by a portion of it separately, never by members of different churches assembled to promote important Christian enterprises; never be carried out of the church into the family for the comfort of the sick and aged; it may be observed only by the several particular churches in their respective corporate capacities assembled in one place. Between these bodies there may be no intercommunion in the memorial feast of Christ's love, though it is extremely desirable that they extend to each other all other Christian courtesies and forms of Christian fellowship.

We have no disposition to deny or obscure one of these facts. Indeed, they accord precisely with the views of Pedobaptist Congregationalists. It is a leading idea with them that a church should ordinarily be composed of those who can conveniently meet in one place. This was the opinion of Thomas Goodwin, the great champion of Puritan Congregationalism in the seventeenth century. He says "a church is an instituted body assembling in one place." Punchard lays it down as a fundamental principle of Congregationalism,

“that a church should ordinarily consist of only so many members as can conveniently assemble together for public worship, the celebration of religious ordinances, and the transaction of church business.” Besides, the law of open communion for which we are contending, grounded in the union and oneness of Christ’s disciples, demands that a church meet together to celebrate the Lord’s supper, as a general rule. We should deem it in the highest degree disorderly for a church to split up into factions and parties, to show their partizan views on inimical preferences over the sealing ordinance of their covenant vows—that touching emblem of Christian unity. Thus the facts recorded in 1 Cor. xi. as decidedly favor us as our opponents.

This is sufficient to show the inconsequence of the inference. But its unwarrantableness may be shown by other considerations :

1. Other reasons may have led the Corinthian and other apostolic churches to partake of the communion severally among themselves, aside from the special command of Christ requiring each particular church to celebrate the ordinance in her corporate capacity, as a symbol alone of their particular fellowship.

a. The vividness of their Christian consciousness drew the early disciples together. The true idea of Christian unity, their mutual oneness with Christ and with each other, seemed wrought by the Holy Ghost into their deepest experience. The feeling that they were mutually one in interest and affection and purpose with Christ was intense. They viewed themselves as one family. They had “all things common.”

b. The Jewish idea of worship which lingered in the minds of the early Christians, greatly modifying the method of their public devotions, might have led the apostolic churches to partake of the eucharist together. The Jewish religion was emphatically a social religion. It abounded in public services. It would be, therefore, very natural for the primitive churches to assemble in one place for the purpose of public worship, and in connection with it, for the celebration of

sacrificial love, though Christ had not expressly taught them to do so.

It is undeniable that the intense and vital consciousness of their unity in Christ cherished by the early Christians, wrought as a plastic organizing power in the formation and well-ordering of the apostolic churches. It concentrated into a particular church all who could conveniently assemble in one place to celebrate the ordinances together.

2. This consciousness of unity must have led the churches to extend their Christian sympathy and fellowship beyond their respective limits. It surely would not have rendered them repellent exclusionists and conducted them to the position that the limits of the particular church were the limits of fellowship. It must have led them to join in commemorating the death of their common Redeemer in the touching emblems of sacramental love, when circumstances and consistency with covenant obligations to their own particular church rendered it justifiable. Exactly this is affirmed by one of the advocates of the theory to have been the custom of the primitive Christians. "The apostles and the members of the churches, when with any of the churches, united with these churches in observing the institution" (Denison, p. 69). Thus the principle underlying the scriptural facts on which our opponents depend for the establishment of their restrictive policy, proves precisely our sacramental views. Its free workings forbid close communion.

3. Other passages of scripture militate directly against the inferences of our opponents.

a. Acts ii. 42, 46. That the breaking of bread in these verses indicates the dispensation of the Lord's supper is acknowledged by the advocates of the inference in question. For further proof the reader is referred to A. P. Stanley's note on 1 Cor. xi. 20, where the argument is fully drawn out.

If "breaking bread" denotes the Lord's supper, we have very decided evidence that it was not always celebrated by the church as a body; and that this was not to be an essen-

tial element in its right administration, as was the observance of the passover separately by Jewish families. In verse forty-six, "in the temple" is contrasted with "from house to house," public with private. While they went up to the temple and joined in public worship, they celebrated the eucharist in private houses. Robinson interprets *κατ' οἶκον*, *κατ' οἴκους*, "in private houses." In Acts v. 42, viii. 3, the words are translated, "in every house." On Acts xx. 20, where they again occur, Bloomfield comments: "It is plain from the foregoing term *δημοσίᾳ*, which has reference to meetings of the whole congregation at once, that *κατ' οἴκους* must mean not 'from house to house,' but 'in private houses' (the *κατά* only denoting rotation), namely, those where separate parts of the whole number of Christians met." Professors Hackett and J. A. Alexander confirm the same interpretation (see also Olshausen, Bengel, Pool, Alford). Besides, it is not probable that Christians at Jerusalem who belonged to the poorer classes had houses large enough to accommodate, for the orderly administration of the holy supper, their whole number, which soon amounted to more than five thousand; and, before they were scattered by persecution, became much larger. And we have no reason to believe they would have been permitted to administer the holy supper, the memorial of Christ's death in any public room; as Dr. Hovey says: "It may be taken for granted that they could use neither temple nor synagogue for any service distinctly and visibly Christian." Neander, approved by Hackett, observes "that a single room would hardly have contained the present number of converts. He supposes that in addition to their daily resort to the temple, they met in smaller companies, at different places; that they here received instruction from their teachers or one another, and prayed and sang together; and, as the members of a common family, closed their interview with a repast, at which bread and wine were distributed in memory of the Saviour's last meal with his disciples." We have, therefore, no decisive evidence that the commemorative ordinance was celebrated

by the church as a body in one place at its first setting up; but was observed in private houses, where but a portion of the whole number of Christians could be accommodated.

b. The apostle speaks of the church in the house, or as belonging to the household (Rom. xvi. 5). This phrase unquestionably denotes either that the whole family were members of the church, or designates those who were in the habit of worshipping at the house of him who is named the head. The church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila were undeniably not the whole of the church at Rome. The apostle not only salutes others as members of the church, but two other companies belonging to households (vs. 10, 11; see Bloomfield, Stuart, Hodge, Barnes).

Now, as it is a well-attested fact, that the primitive Christians usually partook of the holy supper at the close of their seasons of social worship, if a part of the church met for worship at different houses, a part of the church observed the sacramental ordinance separately from the body. This conclusion is undeniable. But if this conclusion is established, the hypothesis we are considering is untenable.

4. History decides against the hypothesis (see Gieseler, Vol. i. p. 92; Neander's *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, Vol. i. p. 23, also p. 151; Neander's *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. i. p. 152; Schaff's *Apostolic Church*, p. 549).

5. Certain facts militate inferentially against the hypothesis. The first fact is, that there were no church edifices forming public centres of the several churches until about the beginning of the third century. The second fact, that, persecuted and hunted by their enemies, the primitive Christians were often compelled to worship in obscure places, now here, and now there, where a few could safely collect together (see Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 127, 370; Coleman, p. 306). These facts show that the members of different churches would be exceedingly liable to become temporarily or occasionally intermingled; many finding it convenient to worship, and therefore to commune with other

churches than those to which they specifically belonged. But since this, on the hypothesis we are contemplating, would have been the violation of an essential law of the eucharist, we might reasonably expect to find some instruction of the apostles guarding against the sin; some caution, some intimation that in the circumstances of the times they were in peculiar danger of thus offending their master. But no such instruction, caution, or intimation appears in the apostolic history. Not even in the Epistle to the Galatians, in which several approximate churches are addressed. He addresses them all as one; for he declares them to be one in Christ, all standing on a perfect equality in him (Gal. iii. 28; iv. 6, 7). He taught them that they were free from bondage to forms and ceremonies (iv. 22-31); that by love they must "serve one another"; that they were to walk in the spirit, which, working in them fraternal affection, drew them together in one indissoluble union with Christ. Such instruction would have led them to conclude that not only as individual members, but as churches, they were one; grouped together as a band of sisters; and that as such they might occasionally, at least, mingle together in partaking of the emblems of that body of which they all were mystical members. In connection with the enforcement of such sentiments, on the supposition that the hypothesis we are considering is true, we might anticipate some caution or admonition of this kind: "Now remember, dear brethren, that, while as individuals and as churches you are all one in Christ, and while you may freely mingle in both capacities in worship and social intercourse, yet you may not partake of the Lord's supper, which specially indicates your oneness in this free, unrestrained, manner; because it would denote that membership in one church gives right to the sacramental ordinance in another. This would be a violation of a fundamental law of the eucharist, which was designed simply as a symbol of communion with the individual church celebrating it, and not with other Christians or other churches. Hence, I wish you, as churches, to be particularly careful to

exclude each other from this feast of love — emblem of your eternal fellowship with Christ and all that are his in the eternal world.”

We find, however, nothing of this sort ; indicating that the churches in all their intercourse were to act on the high principle of their entire equality, of their oneness as adopted children, crying Abba, Father.

This is the decisive point. Sure are we that the warm gushings of Christian unity, untaught, could never have thought of the discrimination of welcoming members of other churches to seasons of social worship, and of excluding them from sacramental fellowship at their close, according to the practice of modern exclusionists. Partizan zeal may have done it, but conscious Christian oneness, never.

Rev. Cornelius Winter, that most exemplary Christian and devoted minister, of whom a contemporary “very remote from adulation, and of very discriminating judgment,” said: “I have long thought he is more like Jesus Christ than any man on earth,” “was once desired by a Baptist minister to preach for him. The sermon immediately preceded the Lord’s supper, to which his discourse was preparatory. When the public service was over, he was informed that he must excuse their asking him to communicate, as it was contrary to the law of the house.”¹ Did the apostles know of any such “law of the house?”

6. The supporters of this hypothesis make concessions which really undermine it. One of them, speaking of occasional communion, says: “It is the custom of the Baptists to invite members of other churches of the same denomination to participate with them in the Lord’s supper. This might, at first view, be thought a deviation from the principle we have laid down, that the Lord’s supper is designed to express the communion subsisting between the members of a particular church as a church. As, however, the individuals so invited are such persons as we should be willing to admit to our permanent church fellowship if they were permanently

¹ Memoir of Rev. Cornelius Winter, by Rev. Wm. Jay

located amongst us, and may therefore, for the time being, be considered as members of the churches with which they unite in worship, they may with perfect propriety be invited to partake of the Lord's supper" (Curtis p. 96).

This concession virtually overthrows the principle endeavored to be established.

a. All Christians for the two or three first centuries belonged to one denomination. Then, during all that period the members of different particular churches permanently located near any other particular church might be considered, for the time being, as belonging to it, and might be invited to partake of the Lord's supper. If they might be considered as members of the church and invited, it was a duty to invite them. The supper was not therefore in apostolic times considered a church ordinance, in which there might be no mingling of other churches, in the same sense as the passover was a family feast. For all worshippers in the several primitive churches might be invited to the table, because they might "be considered as members." Consequently, this concession forbids the establishment of the theory, that "membership in one church does not imply membership in others" on scriptural authority in the sense of our opponents, and sanctions all that is really contended for in free communion. They who might and ought to be invited to the table might and ought to be united in divinest fellowship. Sacramental communion, therefore, as practised in the times of the apostles, was identical with Christian communion. It was as broad as professed Christianity. If the principle of our opponents was then included in Christ's instructions, it was a hidden principle. But to suppose that an essential element in the administration of the crowning ordinance of the gospel church was concealed or unknown during the apostolic age is an absurdity.

b. By the concession, here is an exception to the principle equally essential to the right administration of the holy supper (neither known nor suspected) till sectarian divisions arose in the body of Christ; in fact, not dreamed of for cen-

turies after such divisions existed. At length it came tardily to light, sternly requiring each denomination to exclude the membership of all other denominations from the table commemorative of atoning blood, a principle intensifying sectarian zeal and embittering sectarian animosities, and thus driving sections of brethren in Christ farther and farther asunder. Can it be that the requisitions of the memorial of the Saviour's love wraps up such a divisive and exacerbating element? Besides, the fact that it is confessedly the discovery of a partizan spirit throws around it the suspicion that it is the offspring of that spirit.

c. How great a difference of views and feelings in his body did Christ intend should justify a denominational division? Who shall decide this point? Is it replied, Christians are to decide? But conscientious and devoted Christians would decide differently. They would equally vary in judgment as to the character of those whom they might justly "admit to permanent church fellowship." The concession thus makes the line of demarcation between Christian and sacramental communion exceedingly ill-defined and tortuous.

Principle V. is, that the distinction between the invisible church and the visible demands the alleged distinction in communion which we are considering (Curtis, pp. 179, 253). The distinction between the invisible church and the visible is very distinctly drawn by Dr. Dick. He says (Vol. ii. p. 457): "I consider the invisible church to be the congregation of those who have been called by divine grace into the fellowship of the gospel and sanctified by the truth. . . . This church is said to be invisible, because it cannot be discovered by the eye. It is not separated from the world in respect of place, but of state. It lies hidden in the visible church, from which it cannot certainly be distinguished. The qualifications of its members are internal. Their faith and love are not the objects of sense. . . . It is unseen by every eye but that which 'searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men.'" "

We admit the distinction, but deny, on the following

grounds, the inferences deduced from it relative to sacramental recognition. But before entering on the discussion, two or three points must be premised.

1. The communion we are advocating in these pages is spiritual — sympathy of spirit with spirit, whether it be denominated Christian or church communion. It is the outgoing of holy souls towards each other. 2. But while thus spiritual, it is manifested. It comes forth in reciprocal action. This is recognized by Professor Curtis (p. 21). 3. It is manifested by required action — by laws (Curtis, p. 45).

These points being premised, we reject the inferences of our opponents drawn from the distinction of the church visible and invisible, touching communion.

1. Because required manifested communion with the invisible church is an absurdity. The invisible church is unseen; its members are personally unknown. Its fellowship is invisible, subsisting in unseen sympathies. It sustains no visible relations. It has neither sign nor token by which it is visibly or tangibly recognized. But law regulating human conduct implies visibility. Again, law implies organization — a law demanding visible action, a visible organization, a governmental constitution, in which the law inheres. Not a law, civil or ecclesiastical can be named not thus adhering. The very idea is an absurdity. Again, a law of fellowship must be reciprocal. If I am required to commune with another, because he is one with Christ, he is required to commune with me for the same reason. But such a law in the invisible church or in relation to it, obeyed or realized in action, at once brings the church into a state of visibility, or transforms the invisible church into the visible.

This effect of supposable law in the invisible church is virtually admitted by the advocates of this theory (Professor Curtis, p. 39; Denison, p. 107). Laws of fellowship are as impossible as ordinances. The author of *Theodosia* says: "The ordinances of this kingdom were visible ordinances, symbolizing to the eye as well as the heart. The laws of the kingdom were visible laws." Indeed, the invisible church is

just what Dr. Arnold argues that the visible would become should Robert Hall's principles universally obtain (p. 33). "When we attempt to carry out this theory of the visible church, we find that it is utterly impracticable. Nothing but a 'poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,' can 'glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,' with sufficient rapidity to catch this unsubstantial vision; nothing but a poet's imagination can 'body forth the form of' this 'thing unknown'; and not even the 'poet's pen' can 'give' to this 'airy nothing a local habitation.' The visible church has all at once become invisible. To speak soberly, no church ever did, or ever could, manage its affairs, or even exist as a church, on this theory."

Thus there are no commands or persuasions to commune with the invisible church; no exhortations to strengthen the bonds uniting her members, nor admonitions against weakening those bonds. It is indeed a body composed of men, but placed far above the influence of man: it was not made by man, nor can it be destroyed by man: it can neither be divided, nor drawn closer together by man. Fellowship with the invisible church is a mere spontaneity: it is the mutual sympathy of holy souls: it would exist, whether commanded or not. It is not so much a creature of authority as of life.

2. Our opponents seem not quite satisfied with this sharply defined distinction between the church visible and invisible. They therefore sometimes draw the line of difference as above, and sometimes make the invisible church synonymous with the universal (Curtis, p. 37): "He [Robert Hall] takes for granted, as a matter of course, rather than attempts to prove that the universal church (which is an invisible body) 'differs from a particular assembly of Christians (which is a visible body) only as the whole differs from a part.' The invisible or universal church is entirely a spiritual body." In agreement with this wavering distinction they sometimes speak of spiritual communion, and sometimes of Christian communion.

This view of the invisible church furnishes as little ground
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for the distinction in communion which we are considering as the one already discussed. This universal church is still, in the sense of our opponents, invisible — “invisible” and “universal” being convertible designations of it. It is unorganized. It contains organized parts or societies, but is not, as a whole, an organized church. It has no organism in which law can inhere. It is the same invisible church, composed indeed of visible as well as invisible Christians, but taken in its entirety is the same as that of which our Baptist friends affirm the impossibility of ordinances, and consequently of laws.

3. Agreeably to the above decisions of reason relative to the impossibility of laws of fellowship in the invisible or unorganized church, the scriptures nowhere inculcate such fellowship. All fellowship enjoined in the New Testament on the disciples of Christ is enjoined on his professed disciples or on the visible church. Professor Curtis, who has labored this point ably, has utterly failed to find in the New Testament a single precept commanding Christian communion or fellowship with the invisible or unorganized church, though he has devoted an entire chapter to its elucidation and proof. The texts he adduces as proving Christian communion, or communion with the invisible church, are John xiii. 34, 35; xv. 12, 13. But according to the Professor, and those agreeing with him, the twelve disciples, to whom these precepts were primarily addressed, had already been organized into a particular visible church at the institution of the supper. On the principle of these distinguished advocates of restricted communion, therefore, these precepts were given to an organized visible church; and consequently demand, not Christian communion, but church communion.

4. In the nature of the visible and invisible churches there is no intrinsic difference, which may serve as a basis of the two kinds of spiritual communion. A difference in kind of communion enjoyed with different bodies of Christians implies a difference in their intrinsic character, not in their extrinsic circumstances. Our opponents affirm that the visi-

ble and invisible churches are utterly unlike, "as unlike as possible in everything but name." But this is expressed too strongly. Their difference is entirely objective. They are subjectively the same. In all that determines the character of communion they are the same. There is not even an objective difference between the Baptist and Orthodox Congregational Pedobaptist churches. Both have made a public profession, and made it solemnly by baptism in the form they conscientiously believe to be scriptural — one by immersion, the other by sprinkling. Can this slight difference lay a foundation for two kinds of holy communion? Has baptism by immersion power to bring Christians into a state of visibility, while baptism by sprinkling, though performed with equal publicity, with equal consecration and joy in Christ as Redeemer, and is followed by the same earnest efforts to spread the savor of his name, has no such power? the Christians who have submitted to it still left enveloped in the same invisibility as before? Hence,

5. It is an absurdity to regard evangelical Pedobaptist churches as belonging to the invisible church; Christians, as they are by profession and covenant, who have for centuries been doing the peculiar work of Christian churches, and whose light is to-day streaming over every ocean, and illuminating every benighted shore.

6. It cannot be proved that Christ does not own the evangelical Pedobaptist churches as visible churches.

This may be denied; it may be asserted with great positiveness that nothing but immersion can raise Christians into the state of visible church relations. But can it be demonstrated that Christ, who will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax; who always looks at the heart and judges of character by the intention; who is far more ready to receive an erring brother to favor than we are, does not regard evangelical Pedobaptists as members of his visible body? Yet on this demonstration depends the entire force of the argument of restricted communion as based on the distinction between the visible and invisible church. We who have

tasted the pleasures of communion with him at his table, cannot doubt his recognition of us as members of his visible family.

VI. Our opponents find ground for their peculiar hypothesis of two kinds of communion, Christian and sacramental, in the appropriate significance and limitation of symbols. The theory is, that symbols represent particular ideas, affections, and relations. Every symbol is limited to those it was appointed to shadow forth, and can never be appropriately employed in their absence. The Lord's supper was designed to symbolize the relation of the members of a particular church to each other and to Christ. It can never be scripturally celebrated only when these relations co-exist. Consequently, it can be lawfully celebrated only in and by a particular church. All other Christians and churches are by right excluded. Professor Curtis has more systematically unfolded this theory than any other writer. His object, he says, is to establish close communion on a principle rather than a rule. The principle is (p. 3), "that the Lord's supper is a symbol of church relations between those who unite in its celebration." He defines a symbol (p. 65), as "an emblem or sign by which any moral truth or idea is intelligibly represented." In defining more particularly the design and limitation of the symbolic supper, he adds (p. 65): "Where any symbol represents several relations, it is not sufficient that one of them exist in reality as represented by the symbol. To be appropriate, all of them must subsist in the measure indicated. For example, the Lord's supper is, first of all, a symbol of our participation in the benefits of the death of Christ. But inasmuch as it also indicates, as we shall show, certain relations as subsisting between the parties who celebrate together, it would not be proper for those persons to unite, between whom all the relations indicated did not exist, however appropriate the symbol might be, so far as it related to the great Head of the Church." He then unfolds the groundwork of his argument, as already passed over, and signifies the application he intends to make of it to the proper use of

symbols (p. 66). "In the former part [of my work] we have seen that our communion, as followers of the Lamb, has for its objects: 1. Christ, the Head of the church; and 2. The church which is his body; this latter being again divisible into (1) communion with Christians as such, and (2) with the members of some particular visible church. Corresponding to this, the symbols of communion may be classified according to their objects thus:

I. Symbols of communion with Christ.

II. Symbols of Christian communion, or with Christians, as such.

III. Symbols of church communion."

The strength of the argument is, that the holy supper was designed to symbolize the relations of a particular church. It can never represent the communion of Christians as such; but simply and alone the communion of the individual church.

We agree with Professor Curtis, that a symbol is a representation of certain ideas, affections, sympathies, and relations; and that the representative power of a scriptural symbol is just what God has given it, nothing more, nothing less. It is as great a sin, therefore, to circumscribe its import, as to extend it. The sacramental supper is, in our creed, not less than in his, a symbol of union to Christ and the brethren. We are willing to denominate it a symbol of church relations. We differ from him only in his application of the principle. We therefore regard the theory as insufficient to establish the doctrine of two kinds of communion.

1. Because the principle that the eucharist belongs exclusively to the particular church, and is to be dispensed only in and by the particular church, upon which the argument from symbols is erected, and which it is designed to illustrate, is groundless. This we have shown above. If the principle is groundless, of course the argument attempted to be built upon it by way of illustration is inconclusive.

2. The author confounds facts or social acts with symbols. A symbol properly indicates something more than the act or fact in which it subsists. A proper symbol points to some-

thing beyond itself. It is a designed representative. A social act, to be appropriately deemed a symbol, must be so designated in scripture.

3. We can see no psychological reason for the institution of the Lord's supper as a symbol of communion on the ground that it is simply a symbol of fellowship with those partaking of it, indicating no fellowship beyond. That such are "one body," united for worship and mutual help is a fact. That they profess themselves one with Christ and with one another by solemn covenant is a fact. These facts stand apparent to all. Nothing can make them more evident to the senses. We can see no psychological reason, therefore, for any symbol to represent them, or exhibit them more palpably to the senses. Hence,

4. It is more consonant to reason to suppose the eucharist instituted as a symbol of fellowship with all the members of Christ's family, or with those recognized as such, than to suppose its symbolical significance narrowed to the limits of a particular church, on the ground that the supper pre-eminently symbolizes the vital principles of Christianity — faith, hope, life in Christ, and the oneness of those who possess that life. Why take this emblem, so precious to all believers alike, and so capable of universal significance, and restrict it to such narrow limits? For these, thousands of symbols might have answered as well; while, for universal communion no other could have been so appropriate.

5. If the Lord's supper is admitted to symbolize fellowship with the particular church celebrating it, it cannot be proved, not to symbolize a more extended fellowship. If it indicates the fellowship of those receiving it because Christ's life dwells in them, and they belong to his visible body, why does it not symbolize fellowship with all others in whom Christ's life dwells, and who belong to his visible body? Reason cannot negative the question.

6. There are no symbols of Christian communion in distinction from church communion appointed in the scriptures. Professor Curtis labors hard to find symbols of Christian

communion ; for on this discovery depends his argument for two kinds of communion based on symbolic significance ; and he names some which he deems such. But they all turn out to be symbols of church communion. He first speaks of Jewish symbols ; but Jewish symbols were church symbols. "In former ages," he says, it was "supposed by almost all, that Christian fellowship or communion consisted in praying together." But history shows that prayer was considered a sign of church fellowship, and not merely of Christian fellowship. "The Apostolic Constitutions" (p. 246) direct : "If any one pray with a person excommunicated, let him be suspended." "If any clergyman pray with one deposed, let him also himself be deposed." He also speaks of uniting with other Christians in benevolent enterprises, as a symbol of Christian communion (p. 81). But Christians meet in missionary, bible, tract societies, etc. 1. Not to make a show, but to do a work. 2. As denominations, not simply as Christians. Mention is also made of the contributions of charity given to assist the apostles and poor saints as symbols of Christian fellowship. But these were acts of church fellowship, or between those who were publicly recognized as visible Christians. The truth is, he can find in scripture no symbols of Christian communion in distinction from church communion. All that he imagines he finds are of human device. As we previously showed that no Christian fellowship is enjoined by Christ and his apostles not implying church or sacramental fellowship ; so there are no symbols of brotherly fellowship which are not symbols of church or sacramental fellowship. This failure is fatal to his theory.

VII. Pedobaptists, it is affirmed, practise strict communion as well as Baptists, and thus virtually maintain the doctrine of two kinds of fellowship. It is said : "You do not receive to the communion table converts to Christ as soon as they hopefully experience a change. Sometimes they remain for years hoping, yet not professing. Many continue through life in this condition ; they trust they are Christians, and you trust they are ; but as they make no formal profession of

their faith, you admit them not to the sacramental service." This is true. But such by no means stand in the same relation to our churches as other professing Christians stand in to close communions. The latter exclude Pedobaptists from the sacramental board because they have not professed Christ in the prescribed form. We exclude those above referred to because they have not professed Christ at all; and consequently have not given us that decisive evidence of piety which, in the circumstances, we have a right to claim. They either have not had time to test their piety in the conflict of life, or are not willing to come out from the world and be separate. They have been instructed in their duty, urged perhaps to come forward; but all to no purpose. There they stand. We hope they are Christians. But their continued holding back from duty detracts from that evidence of personal union to Christ which they are capable of giving. The ground on which we withhold from such the emblems of Christ's atoning death, is altogether different from that on which the Baptists refuse sacramental recognition to other evangelical denominations. We exclude those above named because seemingly unwilling to take a stand for Christ before the world. They exclude those who have taken the decided stand. Our refusing the sacramental emblems to recent converts before they have sufficient opportunity to test their allegiance to Christ, or to those apparent Christians in our congregations who decline submitting to the discipline of any evangelical church, can never, therefore, be justly cited by our opponents in justification of their exclusive policy. To attempt it is to confound things radically different.

VIII. Christian communion is more important than sacramental. The falsity of this position may be easily shown. 1. It belittles the whole subject of church existence and relations. On this ground the Christian world is not specially benefitted, nor Christian sympathies specially gratified by church fellowship. 2. Sacramental communion includes Christian communion. The former cannot exist without the

latter. That moral sentiment or relation which includes another must be the greater or more important of the two.

3. Sacramental communion is covenant communion. It implies covenant relations with God and with the brotherhood. It signifies to the world that one has chosen God for his portion. It is an act by which he gives his fellow-Christians increased evidence of his union to Christ, and thereby draws towards him more warmly and more rationally their Christian regards.

4. The scriptures represent sacramental communion as the highest form of Christian intercourse. It is eating Christ's body and drinking his blood, denoting that we dwell in Christ and Christ dwells in us. The purest and richest experiences of the Christian also testify that he never gets so near his Saviour, nor enjoys such endeared communion with those who are like him, as at the memorial feast.

5. The persistent refusal of sacramental communion renders full Christian communion impossible. Communion is more than love; it is mutual love, or rather the result of mutual love. It is a reciprocity of the social principle. Hence, it always implies a choice in each mutually directed to each—a delightful mingling of mutual sympathies. I may love another when he makes no return, may even pursue him with tenderest compassion while he repels it. But I cannot commune with another unless his affections flow out and meet mine flowing towards him. Communion is the confluence of two smoothly flowing streams. If one ceases its onward flow, or becomes reflux, communion ceases. Communion also implies reciprocal confidence and esteem. The least perception of the want of confidence in a supposed friend, especially the indication that he deems us unqualified for the intimacy of his family, at once disturbs our affections and diminishes the pleasure of our intercourse.

The affections are regulated by certain laws, and close communion cannot be disengaged from these laws. It will be almost sure to hold back the Christian sympathies of the excluded from gushing forth as they otherwise would towards their excluders. On the other hand the close communionist

checks the warm flow of his own Christian sympathies towards the excluded. Hear a free communionist among the Baptists on this point: "There seems to be the same spontaneity of mind toward open communion on the part of the young convert as towards immersion. . . . How many a babe in Christ has felt a chill run through his new heart of love, and a certain crushing of his free sympathies, when the close communionist has begun to bring down upon him his logical propositions, which he may not answer, but which he feels to be lead and iron upon his soul. Moreover, is it not the desire of most in our churches to receive at the Lord's table some unbaptized ones whom they know? They wish it were the Lord's will that they should do it. But they check their sympathies by calling to mind the old dictum: 'Baptism is prerequisite to the communion.' And so, nerving themselves up, and pacifying themselves in the thought that they are true to a principle, they shut down the gate of sympathy, and conscientiously proceed with the sacred ordinance."

This sentiment we heartily endorse. Hence, we believe entire obedience to the law of Christian love, or the full realization of the unity for which the Saviour prayed between bodies of acknowledged Christians, is a psychological impossibility, while one shuts the other from the sacramental board.

The above are a few of the alleged principles which are supposed to justify the distinction between "Christian and sacramental communion," forming a basis for restricted communion. This brief review is enough to show their untenableness. Consequently, the thesis that the laws of associated Christianity demand free sacramental communion as their complement stands unimpaired.¹ Indeed, the bare fact that these principles, theories, and hypotheses, put forth by the acutest and most scholarly minds to establish this arbitrary distinction — a distinction hidden from the church for generations after the apostles were in their graves, and the book

¹ Above, pp. 496, 498.

of revelation was finished, are found indefensible, strongly indicates that the distinction itself is undemonstrable; and that the position, "Accredited membership of Christ's visible body entitles to communion in the sacramental emblems of his body natural," is impregnable.

ARTICLE IV.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.¹

BY REV. GEORGE F. MAGOUN, PRESIDENT OF IOWA COLLEGE.

[The object of this Article is to set forth the condition, progress, and prospects of theological education among English Congregationalists. Most of the public institutions in Great Britain for the training of Congregational² ministers are in England. One is in Scotland — the Theological

¹ 1. Minutes of the Proceedings of a Conference of Delegates from the Committees of various Theological Colleges connected with the Independent Churches of England and Wales, held in the Congregational Library, Blomfield Street, London, Jan. 7th and 8th, 1845. pp. 73. London: Published by the Conference.

2. Minutes of a Similar Conference (Wales not represented), same place, Jan. 24th and 25th, 1865. pp. 89.

3. The Congregational Year Book, 1865, 1867. pp. 380, 424.

4. Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Theological Training (of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland), 1863. pp. 21. Appendix, "Vidimus of the Theological training of different Denominations." pp. 16-21.

5. The Patriot (newspaper) London, 1865-66. The English Independent (the Patriot and British Standard united.) London, 1867.

6. Pamphlet Reports of different Colleges.

² Twenty years ago, as these pamphlets show, the names "Independent" and "Congregational" were used interchangeably in Great Britain, and to some extent, though less frequently, are still. Dr. Robert Vaughan, in his "Notes on the United States since the War" (British Quarterly Review, Oct. 1865), mentions as "one point in which the Congregationalism of the United States is wiser" than that of England — "it eschews the name 'Independency.'" Dr. Vaughan himself, however, finds the old habit too strong for him. So does the Year Book, whose list of Congregational ministers has for the running-title, "Independent." In the second pamphlet named above, this title does not once