

such a passage as "to be ready to every good work," is not as our author thinks to act on open-communication principles: for in being led by this general principle, we make light of no positive command of God; trample on no inspired precedent; but on the contrary, act in harmony with the whole Bible; while open-communication sets aside the entire current of inspired history, on the point at issue, and pleads, as a license, general principles, which have no more bearing upon the question than they have upon the dimensions of the moon.

Again this brother thinks that if the Apostles were now permitted to visit our earth, they, for reasons which he fancies, would do what, for lack of sufficient light we presume they utterly failed to do, when here, preach open communionism! Doubtless, every genuine sectary on earth would expect to be sustained in his favourite dogma, at least, in the event of such a visitation.

Our author again takes up the subject of precedent, and advances much that is true, and much that is erroneous. Because God has left us to wear a broad or a narrow brimmed hat—a coat with or without a collar, and to conform in some other social arrangements to the prevailing customs around us, it does not follow that such a license extends to the sanctioning of a course that subverts the revealed order of His house. On this subject Catholicism is sometimes perfectly wild. For example, he lays it down as an axiom, "*that no primitive action performed even in obedience to apostolic precept, can be adduced as authoritative precedent, irrespective of the circumstances in which it was performed; for as the circumstances constitute the grounds or conditions of the precedent, the mere external action, when the grounds do not exist, is of no authority whatever.*" (p. 25.) The man who can endorse such a statement as an authoritative canon, will find little difficulty in advocating open-communicationism, or any other *ism*, extant in so called Christendom. It is self-evidently erroneous, and its dangerous tendency is only mitigated by its extravagance. According to this, God's word does not mean what it says, but only what circumstances, of which every man is his own judge, make it say. What is green in our horizon, may be red in Europe, scarlet in Asia, and black in Africa; and yet in the Book of God it may be white. The commands of God, under the legitimate action of such a principle, change like the chameleon to suit the object that is nearest to it—change at the bidding of human caprice—change as error introduces variety—change as the inventions of men displace the ordinances of heaven and reign in their stead. Mark the application of this principle, as given by Catholicism upon the next page of his tract. He quotes 1 Cor. xiv. 40,—“Let all things be done decently,” and says, if we find any national or local practice enjoined in Scripture, to which it would be considered neither decent nor lovely for us to conform, we may depend upon it that among the primitive Christians, the case was very different, else the practice would never have been enforced upon them.” (p. 26) Precisely so, says the Pedo-Baptist—bathing in hot climates was a genteel local custom; but to immerse a lady publicly in Canada, is monstrously indelicate. True; it is an apostolic command; but our circumstances cry out for sprinkling. Not so, exclaims Catholicism; “baptism and the Lord's Supper ought to be observed by us, according to the manner in which we are convinced they were observed under the immediate eye of the Apostles; because these ordinances were observed in obedience to a standing law of the church, and did not originate in any local or temporary circumstances.”—(p. 27.) Stop! stop! rejoins the Pedo-Baptist, that is unrelieved close-communicationism; that, the very bulwark of the system; and besides, your principle, just quoted, is, that “NO primitive action, performed even in obedience to Apostolic

precept, can be adduced as authoritative precedent, irrespective of the circumstances in which it was performed.” Now the apostles immersed people, and admitted only the baptized to the table of the Lord; but I believe that they had a warm climate to immerse in, and you believe that there were no unbaptized believers in those days; so that putting your belief and mine together, we can, by following out your principle, very comfortably get rid of ancient order,—but your admission, that baptism and the Lord's supper must be observed as they were observed under the immediate eye of the apostles, blows my sprinkling and your open-communicationism to the winds of heaven. Stick to your text, brother.

It is sad, sad, to see good men thus stumbling about for the sake of sustaining an unscriptural dogma. In one breath laying down principles, which, if carried out, would subvert the entire canon of inspiration; and, in the next, denying the applicability of their own principles to the very point at issue. It is not wonderful that Dr. Howell should say, “I am still more thoroughly convinced, if possible, that with “open-communication” the maintenance of the truth of the gospel is impossible,” &c.

But this writer, like other open-communicationists, relies upon general principles to set aside apostolic example on the subject. Now we affirm, with the Bible before our eyes, that there is not a general principle within the lids of the book which in the remotest degree favours open-communicationism. That the truth of this statement may appear, let us examine some of the passages relied upon by Catholicism to sustain his practice. He introduces three classes,—1st. As to unity. “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those that thou hast given me that they may be one, as we are. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one,” &c. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for all who shall believe in me through their word, that they all may be one.”

Now, we ask, does open-communicationism tend to bring about this state of things for which the Lord prayed? Was the Father a strict-communicationist and the Son open? and did they keep the truth, wherever it lay, in abeyance for the sake of unity? Unity, at the expense of the revealed order of His house is not what Christ prayed for, and, to bring discordant sentiments together into church fellowship is not by any means the way to make God's people one. Therefore open-communicationism is opposed to our Lord's prayer; as it is to his legislation. Again, “For we being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of the one bread. The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ.” If our brethren could furnish one example of an inspired Apostle using such language with reference to a mixed-communication church it would settle the question at once and for ever; but to tell us what was done by a body constituted according to the order enjoined by the Holy Spirit, for the purpose of sustaining a practice unknown to the Apostles, is much more adapted to try our patience, than it is to strengthen our forbearance with our brethren. These are specimens of the first class of passages, and instead of sustaining they rebuke open-communicationists. The writer under this head speaks of our repelling Christians. In this he wrongs us. He also speaks of the sin of schism, but who create the schism? obviously those who subvert the ordinances of the Lord. And who widen the breach? obviously those who sustain the disorder.

The next class of passages adduced are such as the following:—“Wherefore receive ye one another,” &c. We have already replied to this; and would here only extend a hearty invitation to every Christian in Toronto to come into the fellowship of Bond Street Baptist Church, just as Christ has authorized them to come, and we will receive them, one and all, with open arms. But should any decli-