

having the same doctrine, continued, and do still continue, the custom of communicating infants.'
—Dr. Wall—History of Infant Baptism.

He, then, who will accept infant baptism because it existed in the third century must take infant communion along with it, and very much more that every person present will reject. But, gentlemen, could you prove it to have been practised immediately after the death of the Apostles, you would do nothing. We, as Protestants, demand Bible authority. I refuse to admit the divine origin of an ordinance for which Bible sanction cannot be produced—and now I call upon you who hold infant baptism to give your strong reason from the one unerring book."

Mr. Maitland assured the meeting that he knew nothing of the early writers they had been discussing. He agreed with M. Bell, "that the question must be settled by the Bible and that if infants are baptized on account of what the fathers say they must on the same authority receive the Lord's Supper." He considered that the matter could be soon settled. "Let those who say that the baptism of infants is wrong shew that the Bible forbids it. Let Mr. Bell do this, or let him mind his own preaching and say nothing against a baptism with which men as good as he are satisfied and against which he cannot bring a thus saith the Lord."

"Our friend is not at all logical," responded Mr. Clearthought. "The burden of proof does not rest with Mr. Bell. Those who practice infant baptism either view it as an unauthorized expedient or claim for it Bible authority. If the former then it must stand with penance, holy water, the baptism of bells and other vagaries of the Scarlet Lady—but those who claim Bible authority must produce that authority. To call upon the Baptists to shew that the Bible forbids it is absurd. If a text cannot be found which forbids dancing as a part of Christian worship must we therefore conclude that leg-service of that kind is of divine authority?"

Mr. Maitland expressed his surprise at Mr. Clearthought's speaking against his own practice. "Let," said he, "such persons go over to the other side—we don't want the support of men who practice one thing and speak in favor of another."

"I do not," replied Mr. C. "speak against what I practice, nor am I speaking against infant baptism. I would not however support it by false reasoning. If we have divine authority it is our business to produce it, and if we cannot then it behoves us to give it up or maintain it as a human tradition. Mr. Bell has really nothing to prove—we have to produce Bible authority, he has merely to examine what we present, shew its insufficiency, or admit the reverse."

Mr. Vapid congratulated his "Brother Clearthought" on his straightforward putting of the case. He insisted that thus "to put the matter in its proper light is due to truth and would drive infant baptism out of the field."

"I admit," interposed Mr. Atkins, that I am

bound to find Bible authority for our practice, to give it up, or to abandon Protestant ground. The Congregationalists, with whom I minister, often make too little of the ordinance. I believe it authorized by the Bible and therefore defend it. I look upon it as a serious omission when parents treat it with neglect, and I would not receive to fellowship an unbaptized person."

"Very good," replied Mr. Bell. "Our friend Atkins can serve us by putting that authority forward at once. It may, however, save time if we bear in mind that Bible authority can only exist in the form of

- 1, COMMAND,
- 2, APPROVED EXAMPLE, or
- 3, NECESSARY INFERENCE.

Let me then ask whether any of you can produce a command to baptize infants, given by Jesus or his Apostles?"

After some little conversation all admitted that infant baptism is not directly commanded in the Bible.

"Is there one instance of infant baptism recorded in the New Testament?" asked Mr. Vapid. After a few words, *pro* and *con*, all admitted that the Book does not contain any clear and unmistakable affirmation of the baptism of an infant.

"Then," added Mr. Bell, "You are shut up to inference. Having neither command nor example, your practice has only an inferential foundation."

"You Baptists," retorted Mr. Atkins, "are too much in the habit of decrying inferential proof when this question is in hand, though you take to it readily enough on other matters, and have no other by which to support much that you believe. You observe Sunday as a Sabbath and admit women to the Lord's Table merely upon inference. There is no command to change the Sabbath and it is nowhere said that females partook of the sacrament. Why, then, as inference is a good foundation in these matters do you decry it when infant baptism is in view?"

"You quite mistake," resumed Mr. Bell. "I do not decry inference. Did I not name *necessary inference* as one of the three methods by which Bible authority can be established? I merely said that having admitted that the Bible contains neither command nor example you have now reduced the enquiry to the region of inference. I am prepared to accept any legitimate, that is *necessary*, inference, and if even one text can be found, which leaves no other inference possible, I will at once take to baptizing babies. But you also mistake in regard to the Sabbath and female communion. I do not observe Sunday as the Sabbath, without a command, for I do not observe it as a Sabbath at all. I observe it as the Lord's day—as the First of the week, set apart for commemorating the Lord's death, and for this there is clear and apostolic example. I do not observe the Jewish Sabbath, because it was only enforced upon Jews, and Paul declares 'WE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW.' I therefore pay no regard for the