

that conscience should have led them to pay their subscriptions, notwithstanding "the stringency of the constitution!" And furthermore, should their conscience prove refractory in the matter, a significant intimation is given by the Sec., that by stringent measures they would be assisted in swallowing "the stringency" which they found so offensively unpalatable in the constitution! But enough—although in all these ways the sentiment of Free Communion has been sought to be crushed and repressed in Canada, it still lives. The sacramental intercommunion of believers has claims upon every renewed heart which neither power nor artifice can eradicate. The fundamental element of this principle will glow and burn in the soul of the devout christian, under the largest accumulation of ashes, beneath which exclusive systems of church polity may attempt to bury it. Conscious that all true christians are one in Christ Jesus, such spirits must continue to ask, why are they divided at his table? and who is responsible for the separation? In answer to these inquiries, then, and at the same time to present a view of their past treatment by both parties, stepping back fifteen years, the reader's attention is solicited to the following correspondence:—

OPEN AND STRICT COMMUNION.

To the Editor of the Canada Bap. Magazine.

Sir—In the *New York Baptist Register* of the 20th September, there is a long letter from the Rev. D. McPhail, of Indian Lands. I am desirous of knowing from you, if the following sentence be correct; it forms the conclusion of this letter: "THE CANADA BAPTISTS ARE MOSTLY OPEN COMMUNIONISTS." An answer will oblige,
October 3. 1839. A STRICT BAPTIST.

[We have not sufficient evidence to disprove the above assertion of Mr. Macphail. But we have no doubt that it is incorrect. In Upper Canada the number of Strict Baptists—or those who contend for the "one baptism" before partaking of the Lord's Supper—is much greater than those whom the late Abraham Booth called—"Inaccurate, loose, latitudinarian, or Open Communion Baptists." In the London District alone there are 2851 of the former to 1258 of the latter; and an intelligent member of the Denomination said to us the other day, that they prevail in nearly every part of the Upper Province. In Lower Canada Open Communionists may be the most numerous. We hope not. Montreal which was once the hot-bed of this heresy, has got pretty much rid of it: we know of two who have lately turned from the "error of their ways;" and, as truth is great, and must prevail, we hope to see the day when the entire Baptist Denomination will be of "the same mind and the same judgment" on this important point. We would bring these remarks to a close by inviting the serious attention of our "open" brethren to the following observations of the late eminent minister whose name we have already introduced.—E. C. B. M.]

"Though I am far from suspecting that our brethren want sincerity, or from thinking that they violate the dictates of conscience, in maintaining their very singular hypothesis; yet their conduct, in regard to Baptism, has such an ambiguous appearance, and looks so much like holding *both sides* of a contradiction, that I should not wonder if one or another of our Pædobaptist opponents, were to apply to them with a little alteration, the spirited remonstrance of Bishop Hall to

Archbishop Laud. The latter being strongly suspected of a predilection for Popery, and the former intending to deal roundly with him upon that subject, addressed him in the following language:—"I would know where to find you—To-day you are in the tents of the Romanists—to-morrow in ours; the next day between both—against both. Our adversaries think you ours—we theirs. This of yours is the worst of all tempers. Heat and cold have their uses; lukewarmness is good for nothing but to trouble the stomach.—How long will you halt in this indifferency? Resolve one way, and know, at last, what you do hold—what you should. Cast off either your wings or your teeth; and, loathing this bat-like form, be either a bird or a beast. If you must begin, why not now? God crieth with Jela. *who is on my side, who?*—Take you *peace*; let me have *truth*, if I cannot have both."—Thus said the acute and good Bishop Hall, to one who halted between two opinions; who was neither an uniform Papist, nor a consistent Protestant.

"And now, before I conclude, our brethren will suffer me also to remonstrate; and the reader may rest assured, that I do it without the least impeachment of their integrity; if infant sprinkling be a human invention, disown it, renounce it, entirely reject it, and no longer let it hold the place of a divine institution in any of your churches. But if it be from Heaven, embrace it, profess it, practise it in the face of the sun, and lay the other absolutely aside, as destitute of a divine warrant. For as there is but *one God* and *one faith*, so there is but *one baptism*. Divine truth is consistent; divine ordinances are consistent, for they are not yea and nay; and all the Christian world are consistent with themselves, relating to baptism; be ye, therefore, consistent in this, as you are in other respects. That is, be either consistent *Baptists* or *Pædobaptists*; for, according to your present practice, all thinking and impartial men must pronounce you a *heterogeneous mixture* of both."

AMES, MONT CO. N. Y. Jan. 10. 1840.

To the Editor of the Canada Bap. Magazine:

Sir,—The November number of your Magazine is now before me. Feeling deeply interested in all that concerns the welfare of Zion in Canada, I regret that this number did not reach me on an earlier day; that I might have had an opportunity of presenting to the readers of the Magazine a more timely review of the quotation it contains from "Booth's Vindication" of close communion, which you esteem so well worthy of our notice as "open brethren."

The sentence in Br. McPhail's letter, which occasioned your remarks, received from me a hearty welcome. From an intimate, personal acquaintance with the writer, I felt satisfied that the statement was not made at random: an ardent desire that it may ever be found true, prompts my present defence of "free communion."

Passing by the Editor's reflections for the present, we proceed to notice those of Mr. Booth as endorsed by him, while "inviting" our attention to them.

In the first sentence of your quotation, we find ourselves charged by Mr. Booth with maintaining a "very singular hypothesis." In which, we conclude, the author has reference to the true question at issue between us; viz: Has Jesus Christ made the observance of baptism *indispensable* to acceptable communion at his table? Or, in other words—must every Christian be baptized, before he can worthily partake of the Lord's supper? As the negative of one or both of these questions constitutes our "very singular hypothesis;" the charge will be turned upon the author if we disprove his arguments in support of the affirmative.—To de-

* Bp. HALL's *Epistles*, Decad, III. Epist. 5.