

they are agreed, and forbearing one another in love in regard to those about which they differ, observing sacredly the divine injunction, "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind." Nothing but sectarian prejudice could urge a reason.

You exhort all men, especially ministers, to lend their aid to secure unity in diversity—the *unity of the spirit of love*." Should one acquainted with the controversy happen to read this, and several other similar passages, without reading the rest of your article, he would necessarily suppose it to be a defence of open communion. As a proof of this, I quote two or three sentences from brother Gilmour's preface to a pamphlet, which he lately republished, advocating the open theory. You say, "A visible union is most desirable, but hardly possible amongst imperfect beings." Br. Gilmour says, "However desirable unanimity of sentiment and practice is, it has hitherto fallen to the lot of very limited groups of even the followers of Christ." Your heading declares, "True Christian unity is practicable in a visible diversity." This does appear to me to clash with the sentence already quoted. But, passing that, I observe, Christian unity in diversity is declared in your maxim to be practicable, and you repeatedly exhort all Christian men to strive to secure it; but you do not tell us whether the Head of the Church has made provision for the securing or preservation of this unity. Brother Gilmour furnishes this all important information. He says, "He that knew the end from the beginning provided for the preservation of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace amidst the diversity which would obtain." And in answer to the question,— "What is that principle, the energetic operation of which will preserve unity of spirit amidst diversity?" he observed, "We hesitate not to say, it is forbearance, Christian forbearance, forbearance in love." And again he says, "The law of Christian forbearance is that which Christ has given for the purpose of preserving harmony of spirit amidst the diversity which prevails." Here then is the principle that will infallibly secure the great desideratum; but, alas! brother, Close Communion leaves no room for its operation. You therefore rightly conclude that "a visible union, though most desirable, is hardly possible;" you might have said *perfectly impossible*. You say "It was lost on the death of the apostles, and without a return of inspiration you do not see how it can possibly be restored." It is then a hopeless case with you, for unless we adopt the Mormon or Irvingite theory, we can hardly expect a renewal of inspiration. Indeed we Baptists in general profess to believe that inspiration is no more needed, holding the inspired code, which we already have, to be all-sufficient for our direction. Unless, then, we attain this desideratum by the operation of Christian forbearance, we may set it down as impossible of attainment; and it is vain for us to call on either Christian men or ministers to lend their aid to secure it. The truth

is, close communion has nothing whatever to do with *unity in diversity*. "Christian unity in visible diversity is practicable," you say; but how and where? Not in the church by the exercise of forbearance. Such unity is ignored by close communion. But though you carefully keep Pedobaptists out of the church, yet you will "love them truly and tenderly," and you will manifest this love by "saluting them in the street;" "by paying kindly visits." And you will even go so far as to invite them to assist you at the formation of churches, and employ them in leading the devotions on such solemn occasions, and in exhorting the members of the newly-formed church to their duties. One would think those who may lawfully go thus far, might lawfully go a step farther, and even have the privilege of sitting down at the table of the Lord with the church whose devotions they have been leading, and whom they have been exhorting to their duties in their new capacity. Is it indeed possible that there are to be found intelligent Christians who are really persuaded that Pedobaptists may be allowed to go just so far, but no farther? Yes, it cannot be denied. I will say, however, it will be impossible to believe this when the age shall have arrived when, as you say, "less prejudice and more light shall prevail." I feel constrained to say, brother, you speak very incoherently about *unity* or *union*; it is difficult to ascertain the precise meaning you attach to these terms, and it would indeed be impossible to comprehend your meaning, were we not assisted by your known practice. Your aphorism speaks of "*Christian unity being practicable in a visible diversity*." If we inquire where, you do not tell us; but we know from your practice it cannot be in the church; for there you contend for *unity without diversity*; it can only be outside the church, then, that your true *Christian unity in diversity is practicable*. Again, you speak of "*a visible union being desirable, but hardly possible*." Are we to understand that this *visible union* is the same as the *Christian unity* in your aphorism? No; by the one you evidently mean a *unity in the church*, and by the other a *unity out of the church*.

*Visible union in the church* is in your view desirable, but hardly possible. Yet it is that for which close communion contends. Open communion is satisfied with a *visible union amidst prevailing diversity*. "Rivers of blood," you say, "have been shed for the *visible unity*." Well, that is precisely what the close theory demands; that is what it will have at whatever cost. To shed blood for it is now out of the question; but the theory has the blood of thousands in its skirts. If does not now say, you must be burned, or imprisoned, or fined, if you dare to think differently from the church; but if you dare to do so, rejection or exclusion must be your portion; you must be *shut out*. Open communion, on the other hand, though it views unanimity of sentiment to be desirable, yet believing it to be hardly possible in