

The practice of close communion has always appeared to us to be the least defensible of all the peculiarities of our immersionist brethren,—a fact of which they show themselves not altogether unconscious, by their exceeding sensitiveness regarding it whenever it is called in question. We were not aware until we received his communication that we had made any “charges” against them, but since he looks upon our remarks in that light, and asks for proof, we are bound, we suppose, to satisfy him.

What we mean then is, that any denomination that sets up its judgment against all other churches, refusing fellowship with them, irrespective of moral character or religious experience,—refusing all interchange of letters of dismissal and commendation, denying even the validity of *immersion*, when not administered by a Baptist minister, and requiring clergymen of other denominations, who may join them, to submit to *re-ordination*, and thus to declare all their previous ministerial acts *invalid*,—virtually asserts its infallibility, and says that churches not so constituted, are not churches at all! And how far is that from the claim of “a certain old gentleman at Rome?”

We cordially agree with our brother in the statement that “our principles and practices must be tested by God’s Word;” but “baptism” is a Greek term *Anglicised*, upon the meaning of which the question between us largely hinges. And hence the judgment of “learned men” with regard to it is a matter of very great importance; for if “baptizo” never means anything else but *immerse*, those who have only been *sprinkled*, are not baptized; and then, if “baptism ought always to precede church-fellowship,” as our correspondent affirms, the Baptists are right and we are wrong. Unfortunately for their theory, however, Dr. Carson, one of their ablest writers, while asserting that “baptizo” always signifies to immerse, is compelled to admit that he has “all the lexicographers and commentators against [him] in this opinion.” More unfortunately still, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which water baptism represents, is always described in the New Testament as *descending*, “falling upon,” “coming upon,”—the disciples, (Acts 2, 2: 8, 16: 11, 15.) So that our Baptist brethren have the *usus loquendi* of the Bible against them, as well as of the classics.

And finally, even if they could absolutely overthrow the testimony of every lexicographer and commentator, as to the meaning of the word, St. Paul claims for every man the right to Christian fellowship with those who differ from him, provided he give credible evidence that “God hath received him,” (Rom. 14, 5.)

We shall not object, therefore, to further communications from our Warwick correspondent, if he will keep within reasonable limits, and confine himself to the discussion of the following points:

1. Does the word “baptizo,” as used in the Bible, and the classics, ever mean anything but immerse, or dip?

2. Did the Apostles themselves ever receive Christian baptism? If so, by whom, since “Jesus himself baptized not?” (John 4, 2.)

3. Where is there any positive injunction, such as we are asked to produce in support of infant baptism, requiring baptism “always to precede church fellowship?”