

THE DISCIPLES AND THE QUESTION OF COMMUNION.

To the Editor of the Witness of Truth.

DEAR SIR :—Cramped as I am for time, having just returned from a tour in the western part of my circuit, and being just on the eve of departure again toward the east; I snatch a few moments ere I start to converse with you and the readers of the *Witness*. In the February Number of your periodical, which has just come to hand, I perceive a letter from Mr. Rattray, the last paragraph of which has arrested my attention—in connexion with your reply, and led me again, quite unexpectedly, to take up my pen.

It appears that Mr. R. on reading the fifth letter you addressed to me, caught the idea that you there stated *open communion* views, and that after being assured by his Baptist brother that you were as close communion as your “hard-shell” brethren, he resolved to end the doubt by making a direct inquiry on the subject. For my own share I have always understood with my “Baptist brother,” that the Disciples were as close on the subject of communion, aye, and even more so, than their close communion Baptist brethren: nor am I yet convinced to the contrary. I am somewhat surprised that Mr. Rattray should have caught the impression from the letter, in question, that you held *open communion* views: as it was quite plain to me from that same letter; that notwithstanding the cant you there indulged in with reference to the Baptists as a *body*, that you yourself would have quite as much “Roman rigidity” as the Particular Baptists with reference to the same subject; if not a little more. What other idea could I have entertained on reading such expressions as the following: “The Disciples in their weekly gatherings, in imitation of the primitive model, spread the Lord’s table, seat themselves around it, and invite all who number with the saved,—all who acknowledge the “one faith—the one Lord—and the one baptism,” to partake with them.” Now Sir,—I would ask what did you there mean by the “one baptism”? Did you not mean *believers’ immersion*? I am perfectly satisfied you did not mean *infant sprinkling*; as you in common with all Baptists do not regard that as baptism in any sense. Then again, take another phrase as being yet even more precise on the point. “If you ask for a more definite knowledge of our practice and desire to ascertain how we know who are our brethren in the Lord, the answer is also at hand. Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ—who has confessed him as the one Lord, and who has openly obeyed him in having submitted to the baptismal death and resurrection—every professor I say who has thus