

regulated every thing respecting its outward discipline; the final decision of religious controversies was subjected to the discretion of judges appointed by him; and no general council could be called except by his authority. Though he permitted the Church to remain a body politic distinct from that of the State, yet he assumed to himself the supreme power over this sacred body, and the right of meddling and of governing it in such a manner as should be most conducive to the public good. *Thus he exercised at once a supremacy over the heathen and the Christian priesthoods.* He was at the same time the chief pontiff of heathenism and the chief bishop of the Christian Church. And this State episcopate (superintendency) he exercised many years before he was baptised; and *long before he was a member of the Church he was its summus episcopus (chief bishop;)* and only a few days before his death received from Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, the ceremony of baptism.

### WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

THE BAPTISTS AND DISCIPLES—THE POSITION WE OCCUPY.

#### LETTER FIFTH.

ELDER DAVIDSON—Esteemed Sir:—Upon the subject of open and close communion much has been said, much written, and much disputed. Like all other subjects, the question of communion has its extreme advocates. Some argue stoutly for the duty of putting a mark so broad and deep upon the sheep of their pasture, and keeping the gate of their sheep-fold so well guarded, that all sheep not having that certain mark must be strictly and unceremoniously excluded. They are ready to acknowledge that there are other sheep, over whom the Great Shepherd watches, in whom he takes delight, and who will finally number with those who shall be gathered together in the everlasting fold. These rigid logicians, and double safety-valve communionists, are justly styled strict Baptists, or as they call them in one of the Carolinas, “hard-shell Baptists.” Excellent spirits! They expect to sit with some in the kingdom of God in glory, with whom they now refuse to sit at the Lord’s table in his present kingdom of grace!

Then, on the other extreme, we have the loose or open communion advocates. They are a pliant race of professors, more zig-zag in their reasoning, as well as in their practice, than the wanderings of the Israelites in their wilderness journey towards Canaan. Some of these unscrupulous fold-keepers throw open their gates wide enough for both sheep and goats, and calves and horned cattle, never thinking it among the “essentials” to calculate where the church ends and the world begins; or rather perhaps taking for granted, as a part of their creed, that