

proposition, as a principle of interpretation, is absolutely untenable. We must say, that, in our estimation, the idea falls but a little short of a libel on common sense. What would be thought of the jurist, who should interpret his books of law according to this principle? Or of the minister, who should refuse to baptize until he had preached a sermon, because in the charge given him, on the day of his ordination, preaching the word was mentioned before baptism? And what must be our opinion of that man's judgment, who should refuse to observe the dying command of Christ, to remember him in his sufferings and death, until he had been received into the fellowship of some church, because in a certain scripture fellowship is named before the breaking of bread?—while at the same time he knows that there is nothing in church fellowship, or in any other external circumstance, that can secure to him a discernment of the body of Christ in the elements, on which the whole ability to eat and drink worthily is predicated by inspiration. Knowing, also, that Christ commanded in the most solemn manner that *all* should partake, which cannot be applied to all, of any class, except that of true believers. But this principle of interpretation, which we are combating, has prevented obedience to this requirement, in millions of cases when nothing else stood in the way. May it not therefore be said to its abettors, "Full well ye frustrate the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition?" Let every Christian observe God's rule of order, viz: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," ever remembering that his providence must dictate the order of thine obedience, and not the caprice of thine own fancy. There is not a single command of God, that admits of one moment's delay, after it is in the power of thine hand to render obedience. Our Master will not receive past disobedience, as an excuse for present neglect—and in our estimation, the time is not far distant when the whole Christian world will render the same decision; even now, if a Christian should refuse to pray, on the ground that he had never partaken of the Lord's supper, assigning as a reason for his refusal, that God had placed the breaking of bread before prayers in Acts 2:42, would not every man at once suspect his sanity? But we challenge the world, to show that his argument drawn from the order of these words, is less rational and coherent, than that which the Onondaga Association has based on the same passage. Against our position it is argued,

(Objection 1.) That the salvation of the soul is mentioned in connection with baptism, and therefore none should commune while unbaptized.

To this we answer, that there is not a single duty that is not mentioned in connection with the salvation of the soul, and therefore the truth or validity of the objection, is the abrogation of the communion, inasmuch as none could commune till every duty was performed. But the objection is not valid, for communion itself is mentioned in connection with salvation, inasmuch as it is a command of Christ, who has declared that the observance of his commandments, constitutes the evidence of discipleship.

(Objection 2.) Baptism in its design and character is initiatory, and communion is an act of fellowship, in which none but the initiated should participate, and therefore none should commune while unbaptized.

In the articles of a self-styled "Bible Baptist," which recently appeared in the New York Baptist Register, it was asserted that men are baptized into the kingdom of Christ; baptized under the jurisdiction of the King; baptized into obedience; with a great variety of similar expressions, all of which seemed to be fully endorsed by the editor and the patrons of the paper. It seems that these Baptists are rapidly nearing the vortex of baptismal regeneration. And indeed, to us, the prospect of their escaping the downward plunge, must ever appear distant, while they continue to endorse the daring assertions of the "Bible" Bapt-

tist. When a man has arrived at the point where he can assert, that all who are not immersed are *without* the kingdom of Christ; and that there is no way whereby a man can enter into that kingdom unless he is immersed; the circumvolutions that intervene between that man, and the yawning throat of the vortex to which we have alluded, appear to us to be very few, and not far between.

(Objection 3.) Baptism is a "declarative ordinance," the heaven-appointed means whereby the individual is publicly declared a Christian; and therefore the church should not acknowledge any one to be a Christian until they have declared themselves such in the ordinance of baptism.

We were recently informed by an esteemed brother in Christ, a close Baptist Minister, that he did not agree with the majority of his brethren in the belief that baptism was initiatory—in his estimation it was entirely declarative in its signification—that in baptism a man openly avowed himself to be a Christian—in the eyes of the church he then became a Christian, and not before. We then inquired how he could justify himself in calling the unbaptized convert brother? He answered, that it was the prevailing custom, *yet incorrect*. We replied, then you must believe that Ananias spoke *incorrectly* when he said "brother Saul" to a blind man that he knew was unbaptized!

But the question arises, has the Bible any where said, that baptism is thus declarative in its signification? Did Christ say, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye are baptized? Or if ye love baptism? Has he not plainly told us that this important question must be decided by our loving one another, and keeping his commandments? Not commandment; but *commandments*; and hence we conclude that he who keeps the most, presents to the world the best declarative of his discipleship. Let us look forward to the judgment day; when Christ shall say, "Come ye blessed of my Father," &c., will He add, *for ye were baptized*? Will it not rather be, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: naked and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me?" If baptism was only permitted to occupy the place assigned it by inspiration, we believe it would soon be observed as promptly as it was in primitive times; but alas sectarianism has raised this command above the level of its fellow commandments, striped it of its *representative garb*, and arrayed it in a tricolored robe, styled dedicatory, initiatory, and declarative, placed it at the entrance of their domicile, and conquealed it to assume the official importance of the Son of God, as the door of his church, and to exclaim, *like Christ*, "I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and go in and out and find pasture." No marvel, if the convert, having obtained a free passport from Jesus to refresh himself in any part of his dominion, finds it difficult to understand the claims of this sectarian dignity. No wonder, we say, if the convert stares six or twelve months at the tricolored robe, before he can reconcile its three-fold mysteries, with the beautiful simplicity of gospel baptism.

(Objection 4.) Baptism is mentioned in scripture as though it were prerequisite to the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

We answer that it is never mentioned *alone* as a prerequisite to either, or to the salvation of the soul, but always in connection with something else that is essential to the attainment of the object specified. For example, we read, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." And, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In these two passages repentance and faith are the duties named in connection with baptism, to the exercise of which is annexed the promise of salvation, and the remission of sins, with the gift of the Ho-