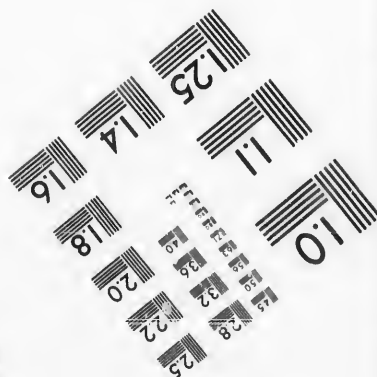
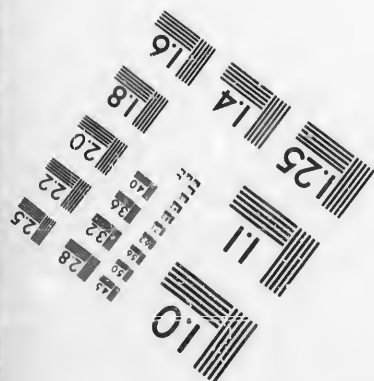
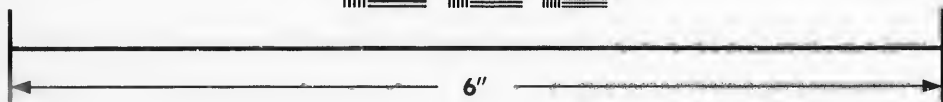
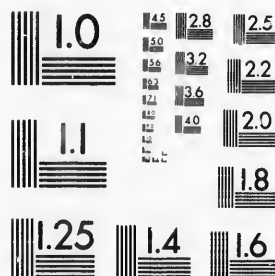


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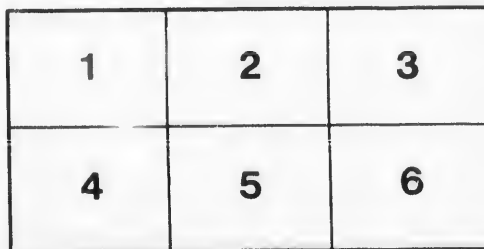
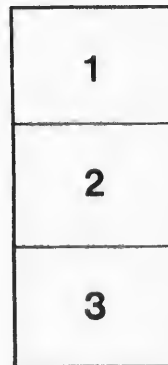
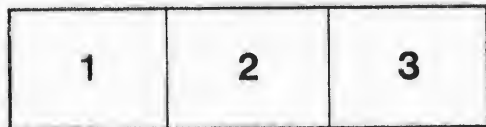
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ARTICLES

OF

FAITH AND PRACTICE

WITH

THE CHURCH COVENANT,

APPROVED BY THE DANVILLE ASSOCIATION, AND
ADOPTED BY THE CHURCHES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

AN ESSAY ON COMMUNION.

BY A FRIEND TO TRUTH.

BROCKVILLE, U. C.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BUELL JR. & Co.

1829.

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ARTICLES &c.

PART FIRST.

DOCTRINE FIRST. OF GOD.

Art. 1. We believe in God, Supreme in his dominion, and infinite in his being and perfections: the Creator, Possessor, Upholder, and Disposer of all things. Deut. 6. 4; 1st Cor. 8. 4; Eph. 1. 2; Job 1. 7, 8; Prov. 16. 4.

Art. 2. The mode of Divine existence is unity in Trinity, (three one,) Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; one in nature; co-equal, consubstantial and co-eternal: equally worthy of divine honours and religious worship. 1st John 5. 7; Mat. 28. 19; John 1. 1: 10 and 30; Gen. 1. 26; Heb. 1. 6, 8, 10.

Doctr. 2. Of the Holy Scriptures. God has given us a Revelation of his mind and will in the Scriptures of the old and new Testament, all of which being given by inspiration of God, are of Divine authority and our only rule of Faith and Practice. 2d Tim. 3. 16; 2d Peter 1. 19; Rev. 22. 18; Isa. 8. 20; Luke 16. 29; Gal. 1. 8.

Doctr. 3. Of man's first state.

Art. 1. God created man at first, holy or upright, in the divine image; being a rational, immortal or living soul; was capable of serving and enjoying God. Gen. 1. 2, 26, 7; Eccl. 7. 29; Mat. 10.

Art. 2. The condition of life, or the perpetuity of holiness and happiness in that paradisaical state, was perfect, personal and unceasing obedience. Gen. 2. 17; Rom. 2. 14, 15, 10, 5; Gal. 3. 10; Genes 2. 10.

Art. 3. This covenant being made with man, he was left to the freedom of his own will, that is, not by any necessity of nature constrained either to good or evil. Deut. 30. 19; Josh. 24. 15; John 19.

Doctr. 4. Of man's fallen state.

Art. 1. The fall of man consisted in his voluntarily transgressing the divine will, by adhering to the temptations of Satan and eating a forbidden fruit. Gen. 3, 6, 13; 2d Cor. 11. 3; Rev. 20. 2.

Art. 2. By sin mankind lost the Divine Image, became defiled and debased in all the powers and passions of the soul, and consequently incapable of serving or enjoying God truly, until he is renewed by grace. Gen. 2. 17; Titus 1. 15; Gen. 6. 5; Jer. 17. 9; Rom. 10, 8, and 7.

Art. 3. As this depravity does not consist in a privation or lack of the natural powers and faculties necessary to serve God; but in a total, voluntary and wicked love of sin and aversion to God and holiness; they are still under obligation of perfect obedience, to all the precepts of law and gospel. John 3. 15: 8, 44. Prov. 8. 4.

Art. 4. Adam being the natural head or root of mankind, in consequence of our relation to him, we all came into the world polluted

or defiled with sin. Rom. 3. 9, 18; and 5. 19; Psa. 51. 5; Job 14. and 15. 14; John 3. 6.

Doctr. 5. Of Election.

Art. 1. God in mere mercy has been pleased before time, to devise a way for man's recovery by the gospel. Titus 3. 4, 5; Pro 8. 12, 23; Eph. 1. 4, 11, and 2. 8, 3.

Art. 2. God's eternal purpose of salvation called Election, includeth the subjects of salvation with all the necessary means and qualifications for obtaining it; 1st Pet. 1. 2; Eph. 1. 4, and 2. 10; Thess. 2. 13; 1st Peter 5. 13.

Doctr. 6. Of Christ's atonement:

Art. 1. God the Son, or the second person in the Trinity, in order to open the way for our Salvation, came down from Heaven, to upon him human nature, in which nature he obeyed the law; suffered death, rose from the dead, ascended to glory, and lives to make intercession for his people. Phil. 2. 5, 11; John 3. 16; 1st Cor. 15. 3, 4; Heb. 7, 25.

Art. 2. Although there is an infinite fulness in the atonement merits of Christ sufficient for all mankind; yet none are justified or entitled to any of the spiritual benefits of it, until they are united to Christ by faith. Eph. 2. 3; Mark 16. 16; John 3. 18.

Art. 3. Christ has procured all spiritual blessings for his people which are freely bestowed on the elect for his sake, as a mere act of grace, and not at all on account of any worthiness of their own. Tim. 1. 9; Eph. 2. 4, 10; Rom. 4. 14.

Doctr. 7. Of Regeneration.

Art. 1. Although there is a most full and free declaration of mercy in the Gospel, to mankind, through faith and repentance, yet through the native opposition of the heart, none ever do, will, nor can savingly acquiesce and receive Christ until the heart be renewed. 1st Cor. 2. 14; Rom. 2. 7; John 6. 14, and 3. 3.

Art. 2. Regeneration is usually preceded by deep conviction of sin, and followed by divine comfort and exercise of grace; but the change itself is wrought instantaneously by the powerful operation of the divine spirit upon the heart, by which its enmity is slain, and the creature disposed and enabled to receive Christ; and dependent on him as a whole and complete Saviour. John 16. 8; Acts 2: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. Rom 5. 1. and 6: 22; John 3: 6; Eph. 1. 19, 20, and 2. 10. John 5. 25; 1st Peter 2. 4, 7.

Doctr. 8. Of Adoption.

Art. 1. All believers are adopted; that is, received into the number, entitled to the privileges, and by the Father acknowledged as the sons of God. Gal. 4. 5; John 1. 12; Rom. 8. 17; 2d Cor. 6. 18; 1st John 3. 1.

Art. 2. The grace of adoption is freely given as a token of acceptance in prayer, and pledge of the redemption of the body. Rom. 8. 23; Gal. 4. 6.

Doctr. 9. Of Justification.

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Christ; received by faith without the deeds of the Law, it being an act of God's free grace. Rom. 3. 24, and 4. 5, 28.

Doctr. 10. *Of Sanctification.*

Sanctification, or growth in grace, is a gradual progressive influence of the spirit of truth on the heart, whereby a believer is enabled more and more to bring under and mortify corrupt nature, and increase in grace, spiritual knowledge, &c. but is never perfected in this life. John 17. 17; Rom. 6. 6, 14; 2 Peter 3. 18; Mat. 13. 31, 33; Rom. 7. 23; Phil. 3. 12; John 1. 8; Eccl. 7. 20.

Doctr. 11. *Of Perseverance.*

All true saints being kept by the power of God from final apostacy, will persevere in faith, and finally obtain salvation. Phil. 1. 6; John 10. 28, 29; 1st Peter 1. 5, 9; 1st John 3. 9.

Doctr. 12. *Of the Sabbath Day.*

The Weekly Sabbath is to be observed on the first day of the week under the New Testament, and wholly employed in devotion and worship, except works of necessity and mercy. Ex. 20. 8; Isa. 58. 13; Acts 20. 7; 1st Cor. 16. 1, 2; Rev. 1. 10; Mat. 12. 1, 13.

Doctr. 13. *Of the Resurrection.*

Art. 1. The bodies both of the Righteous and the wicked, will be raised from the dead in the great day, and judged according to their works. Job 19. 26; John 5. 28, 29; Acts 24. 15; 2d Cor. 5. 10.

Art. 2. The happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be endless. Mat. 25. 46; Mark 9. 44; Rev. 19. 3.

PART SECOND.

OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH, ITS ORDER, DISCIPLINE, &c.

CHAPTER FIRST. OF THE CHURCH.

Art. 1. A Church of Christ is a number of Saints by mutual acquaintance and fellowship, understandingly uniting or embodying together, maintaining the true Gospel Doctrine, Ordinances, Worship and Discipline. Mat. 16. 18, 19; Rev. 1. 4; 1st Cor. 1. 2, and 12. 12, 13; Heb. 10. 25; Acts 2. 42; 1st Thes. 5. 14; 1st Tim. 3. 15.

Art. 2. All such regular and orderly Churches or branches throughout the world, form the visible Church, Spiritual Zion, or kingdom of Christ. Eph. 2. 22, 23, 27; Col. 1. 18.

Art. 3. Christ alone is head of the Church, including all human authority in its discipline, worship, &c. Mat. 28. 18; Eph. 1. 22; Mat. 23. 3, 9; 1st Cor. 3. 21, 23, and 12. 28; Eph. 4. 11, 12.

Art. 4. The Church of Christ has power to choose and call to ordination their own officers, depose such as walk contrary to the gospel, discipline its members, &c.; though in difficult cases, and when the Church is divided, it is proper to call the assistance and concurrence of sister Churches, and one or more ministers of Christ. 1st Cor. 5. 11, 12, 13; 2d John 10th verse; Rev. 2. 2, 20; Mat. 7. 15; Acts 15. 6, 22; 1st Cor. 3. 22, and 12. 23; Mat. 18. 17.

CHAP. 2. *Of Baptism.*

Art. 1. Gospel Baptism is to be administered by ordained ministers, to such only as give evidence of true faith, by immersion in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Mat. 28. 19; John 15. 16; Acts 8. 36, 37, 38; Rom. 6. 4, 5.

Art. 2. By this ordinance believers are admitted into the visible Church,

and entitled to all its privileges. Acts 2. 41, 42; Rom. 6. 3; Gal. 3. 27, 28; Eph. 4. 4, 5.

CHAP. 3. *Of the Eucharist;*

Art. 1. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is to be administered to none out of the visible Church; unbaptised persons, disorderly members, or those censurable for heresy, are not to be admitted. 1st Cor. 11. 20, 23, 29; Tit. 3. 10; Rom. 16. 17; 2d Thes. 3. 6.

Art. 2. In this Sacrament, by receiving Bread and Wine, consecrated by a regular minister of the gospel, we show our union and communion with Christ, and one with another. Mat. 26. 26; 1st Cor. 10. 16, 17, 21, and 11. 23, 24.

CHAP. 4. *Of Church Officers.*

Art. 1. There are two officers in the Church, viz. Bishops or Elders, and Deacons; who are to serve the Church in the functions attached to their office. Mat. 28. 19, 20; Acts 6. 2, 3, 4; 1st Peter 5. 1; 1st Phil. 1. 1.

Art. 2. Ministers and Deacons must be qualified according to scripture, approved by the Church, and ordained by prayer and laying on hands of the Presbytery. 1st Tim. 3. 2, 8; 2d Cor. 3. 1, 2; Acts 6. 6, and 13. 3; 1st Tim. 4. 14.

Art. 3. The Bishops' work is to gather and organise Churches, administer ordinances, and rule and govern in the Church of God as under shepherds, &c. 1st Cor. 3. 5, 6, and 4. 1; Mat. 28. 19; Acts 20. 7, 11; 1st Tim. 5. 17; Acts 20. 17, 18; Heb. 13. 7, 17.

Art. 4. The Deacons' work is to serve tables, or oversee the temporal concerns of the Church, in order to lighten the cares of the minister, and enable him to give himself wholly to the duties of his office. Acts 6. 2, 3, 4.

CHAP. 5. *Of Divine Worship.*

Art. 1. The worship of God should be attended devoutly and conscientiously by all, secretly in the closet, privately in the family, and publicly in the house of God. John 4. 23, 24; Heb. 12. 28; 1st Tim. 2. 8; Mat. 6. 6; Eph. 6. 18; Jer. 10. 25; 2d Sam. 6. 20; 1st Peter 3. 7; Dan. 6. 10; Heb. 10. 25.

Art. 2. In public worship the Minister should lead or govern, and improve his gift as a public teacher. 1st Tim. 3. 2, and 4. 2.

Art. 3. Every gift should be used and improved for the mutual comfort and edification of the body. 1st Peter 4. 10; 1st Cor. 12th and 14th chapters.

CHAP. 6. *Of Discipline.*

Art. 1. Members walking disorderly, or holding doctrine contrary to the gospel, should be dealt with by way of discipline, according to the laws and order of Christ's house. Mat. 18. 15; 1st Tim. 5. 19, 20; Mala. 3. 18. Rom. 16. 17.

Art. 2. Personal injuries and private offenders should be taken up by the individual who receives or knows them, and buried forever on private confession. Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17; Luke 17. 3, 4.

Art. 3. Although such offenders should be laboured with by the individual, and the subject examined, for light or evidence, by the second labourers; yet it should not be brought to the church until they judge the evidence will convince them. Mat. 18. 15, 16; 2d Cor. 3. 1; Heb. 10. 28; John 3. 20, 21.

Art. 4. Public transgressors should be laboured with by suitable brethren, according to gospel rule, and restored only on confession made sufficiently public, to relieve the wound the cause of Christ may have sustained. Gal. 6. 1; James 5. 16, 19, 20; 1st John 1. 9; Prov. 28. 13; John 20. 23; 2d Cor. 2. 6, 8.

Art. 5. Though personal injuries are to be forgiven on suitable retraction ; yet, one indulging habits of scandalous immorality should not be restored without amendment. Prov. 28. 13; Luke 17. 3; 2d Thess. 3. 6; 1st Cor. 5. 11.

Art. 6. Those who openly deny the gospel, or maintain heresy, may be openly admonished, by letter or otherwise, and rejected if due admonition prove ineffectual. Tit. 3. 10; 2d John 10th and 11th verses; 1st Tim. 1. 20, and 5. 20.

Art. 7. A member under labour by the church, should be suspended from communion until his case be decided. Mat. 18. 17.

CHAP. 7. *Of Civil Causes.*

Art. 1. As it is unlawful for brother to go to law with brother, the church shall appoint one or more wise and discerning brethren, with full power to judge and decide all civil causes and controversies among its members. 1st Cor. 6. 1st to the 8th.

Art. 2. A member refusing to submit to the judgement of the church, it becomes a crime, and should be dealt with accordingly. Mat. 18. 17, 18.

THE COVENANT.

We do now, in the presence of the great, all-seeing, and most glorious God, and before angels and men, give up ourselves to the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and avouch him this day to be our God, our Father, our Saviour, and our leader ; and receive him as our portion forever.

We give up ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, and engage to adhere to him as the head of his people, in the covenant of grace, and rely on him, as our Prophet, Priest and King, to bring us to eternal blessedness.

We acknowledge our everlasting and indispensable obligation to glorify God, by living a holy, righteous and godly life in this present world, in all our several places and relations ; and we engage, by the assistance of the Divine Spirit, to improve our time, strength, talents and advantages to his glory and the good of our fellow-men, promising, by divine help, to walk in our houses as becomes those professing godliness, and to maintain the worship of God in our families, and to train up those under our care in the ways of religion and virtue.

We also give up ourselves to one another in covenant, promising to conduct towards each other as brethren in Christ, watching over one another in the love of God, and to watch not only against the most gross evils, but also against all foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient ; vain disputing about words and things, which gender strife ; disregarding promises, and not fulfilling engagements ; tattling and backbiting ; spending time idly at taverns or elsewhere, and vain and unnecessary worldly conversation on the Lord's Day, and whatsoever else is contradictory to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of Christ : promising to hold communion together in the worship of God, and in the ordinances and discipline

of his church, according as we are, or shall be, guided by the spirit of God in his word, expecting that he will yet further and more gloriously open his word and the mysteries of his kingdom; applying to the blood of the everlasting covenant for the pardon of our innumerable errors; and praying the Lord would prepare and strengthen us for every good work, to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. — AMEN.



A DEFENCE

OF THE DISTINGUISHING SENTIMENTS OF THE BAPTISTS ON COMMUNION, IN WHICH IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED.
BY A FRIEND TO TRUTH.

I am sensible there is a great handle made of close communion as it is held and practised by the Baptists. The following statements will give the reason why we, as a denomination, practice what we do. I do not intend to enter into an investigation of the subject and mode of baptism; this will not be necessary. I shall just give a candid statement of the reasons why we cannot, consistently with our views, commune at the Lord's Table with other denominations. We view the ordinance to be a gospel institution, and we have a rule to judge the qualification of subjects to come to that solemn ordinance, only the practice of Christ and the Apostles—and we do not treat the special commands of Christ as non-essentials, that may be accommodated to the feelings and prejudices of every individual, let them be ever so heterodox in their views.

I may now describe the qualifications of subjects to come to the Table of the Lord. It may be proper to notice the conduct of Christ and the Apostles.

Christ administered the ordinance to his disciples: and it is evident to me that they were baptized believers, (excepting Judas, and it is probable he had been baptized) though we have no account of their baptism: it is evident that they were baptized by John, for he came to prepare a people for the Lord. The Bible does not give us the names of many whom John baptized, though he baptized numbers, and I think it must appear without a doubt, that the Apostles were among the number; for it does not look rational to suppose, that Christ would submit to baptism, himself, and call and send forth unbaptised persons as Apostles, and it is evident that John's baptism was gospel baptism. Mark I. 1 and 4. Matt. XI. 13. Luke XVI. 16.

Some have supposed that John's disciples were re-baptised, and they take it from Paul's statements to the twelve disciples at Ephesus. The statement is this—Acts 19.: "and it came to pass, that while Appollos was at Corinth, Paul came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? and they said, We have not so much as heard whether there be any holy ghost. And he said unto them,

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Unto what then were you baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism." Paul then gives them a statement of John's baptism, which is this: "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him that should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

This is Paul's statement of John's baptism. When they were thus taught by John to believe on him that should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus, he baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus. — There is no evidence that they were re-baptized by Paul.

If these statements are correct, as I conclude no person can reasonably doubt, those who are to be admitted to the communion are baptized believers, and members of a regular baptized church.

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For a further illustration of the subject, we will describe a gospel church. "A gospel church is composed of lively stones—it is God's building—God's husbandry. A spiritual house—an holy priesthood—to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ—a chosen generation—an holy nation—a peculiar people, to shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." 1 Peter, ii. 1 Cor. iii. 9.

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All those who have these moral qualifications, whether they are regular members of a gospel church or not, are subjects of Christ's spiritual kingdom. I conceive there is a difference between the spiritual kingdom and the visible kingdom of Christ; though the same moral qualifications that are necessary for one are for the other. The spiritual kingdom contains all his spiritual subjects, whether in heaven or on earth. The visible kingdom contains only those who have been introduced into it, according to the order of the gospel.

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Therefore I do not view all who are members of the spiritual kingdom, to be members of the visible kingdom. Hence there is a difference between church fellowship; we may extend our fellowship to all christians, as such of all ranks or orders, whether they are members of a visible church or not, and walk with them as far as they walk according to the order of the gospel. But we cannot extend church fellowship to any but to those who are regular members of a regular church in gospel order. By a regular church in gospel order, I understand to be a number of baptized believers, who have covenanted together to maintain the visible cause of Christ in the world—to submit to the discipline of Christ and the apostles, and to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of God blameless.

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These questions are often asked with a degree of emphasis.

Why do not the Baptists commune with other denominations?

Does not Christ fellowship and commune with them?

Are we not bound to one heaven? Will there be any bars or separation in heaven?

If we all expect to commune together in heaven, why can we not on earth?

These are important questions, and contain a great degree of their g
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Before I proceed to an investigation of these questions, permit me to state, that many hard censures have been brought against the Baptists for their distinguished sentiments. They have been charged with bigotry—of holding a stiff arm, and saying to others, stand by, for we are more holy than thou—and of being destitute of charity. But the truth of these charges we will leave for the candid to judge when they shall have perused the statements that follow.

I will now proceed to answer the questions proposed.

First—Why do not the Baptists commune with other denominations?

Answer.—Because they view baptism such a term of communion, that they cannot commune with unbaptized persons, and they consider all who have not been immersed in water, in the name of the Trinity, by a regular administrator unbaptized.

Whether the Baptists are consistent in their views of baptism or not, the simple statement as made above is sufficient to convince every candid person, that if we, as a denomination, are honest and conscientious in our views, we cannot come to the Lord's Table with those who are to us unbaptized.

But I am not insensible that this will not satisfy the minds of those who are disposed to bring forward close communion as the last weapon they can use against us. They will plead conscience, sincerity and charity as sufficient grounds to fellowship them on. Their statements are, baptism is only the answer of a good conscience, and we are sincere and are satisfied with our baptism, and we can fellowship yours, for we do not think that baptism consists in any particular mode—It is immaterial how we are baptized—and if any think it not their duty not to submit to water baptism any way, only let them answer their conscience, and it will be acceptable; and if you had as much charity as we have, you would fellowship us, seeing we are sincere; and these separations would all come down. Let me take the liberty to observe, that we have a conscience too; and we profess to be sincere; and we cannot in sincerity fellowship that for baptism, which we view not according to the command of Christ, or the practice of the Apostles. To us it is no baptism. And finally, (we are sorry to say it) it does look to us like treating the ordinance of the gospel with contempt, and is saying, it is any thing, and every thing, and nothing, just as our fancies would have it.

We sincerely believe, that baptism is a prerequisite to the communion and that it is not to be any thing of, every thing and nothing; but it is necessary to be administered according to the order of the gospel. We do not make sincerity a rule; we view it our duty to be sincere, and sincerely right; but the gospel we wish to submit to as the rule of action, and we think that ten thousand sincere errors will not make one truth.

Now ought not our conscience to be gratified as well as others? Our brethren who differ from us in points of sentiment, bring forward

great degree of their good conscience as being sufficient to introduce them to our fellowship; and because we do not unite with them in the ordinance of the supper, they give us many hard names. I conclude that they never thought we have a conscience too, and that it would be directly contrary to our conscience, to manifest fellowship to that which we have no fellowship in.

As to the charge of being uncharitable, we do not feel guilty of that. It is true we do not extend church fellowship to those we view unbaptized. When they extend that fellowship to us, or pretend to, and can do it with propriety, because they view us baptized. Our thus withholding fellowship from them, is not the want of charity; it is the want of evidence that they are baptized, or that we are authorized to receive into visible fellowship, or to the communion, unbaptized persons.

We are taught by the Apostle, that "Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." That *charity* which will fellowship a brother in an essential error, is not that *charity* which rejoiceth only in the truth. The best we can make of it is, human exercises or feelings which ought not to be gratified: for to gratify them we must leap over the special command of Christ, and treat it as a mere cypher, when we ought to love the command of Christ better than any christian brother on earth.

I presume our charity for our brethren of other denominations, is as great for them as theirs is for us; but we cannot, while we possess our present views of the order of Christ's visible kingdom, commune with them at the Lord's Table, without doing violence to our views of truth, and our conscience.

To come on the ground of open communion, one of two things must be done. We must give up our idea of baptism being a term of communion or receive that for baptism, which we renounce by our practice as no baptism. The former we cannot—the latter we dare not: for, from the command of Christ to his disciples to go and teach all nations, baptizing them—and from the practice of the Apostles, who did not delay baptism, but "commanded the candidates to be baptized, and administered the ordinance the same day they believed, or the same hour of the night," it appears evident that baptism was the first gospel ordinance the apostles administered to the converts of the christian religion in their day. And they were added to the visible church the same day they were baptized: and then they were in a situation to attend to the communion according to the order of the gospel. "For they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread and prayers." Acts ii. Here the Apostles have left us a rule to act by. The subject must first receive the word gladly, then be baptized, and be added to the church, then continue stedfast in doctrine and fellowship; in breaking of bread, and prayers. I now ask the candid question: how can we, consistent with our views, come to the Lord's Table, with those who are only baptized in infancy? For by doing it we should manifest that we fellowship them as baptized persons: and

when they become dissatisfied with their baptism, (as is often the case) and should manifest a desire to be baptized, we should baptize them. What a perfect inconsistency! It would be "building the things we destroy, and we should make ourselves transgressors." Build up an infant sprinkling with one hand and pull it down with the other. The Lord deliver me from such a paradox.

How men and women of sense can renounce their infant sprinkling, and submit to believers' baptism, as many do, and fellowship that in others, which they renounce in themselves, and manifest a desire to hold visible fellowship with them, and walk with them, in the communion; is a matter of no little surprise to me.

I am willing to state boldly that when I can commune with infant sprinkling, I will never baptize another person who has been sprinkled in infancy—And more than this, I will sprinkle infants when they are presented to me to be sprinkled; for to refuse would be inconsistent, when I could fellowship it to the communion.

Open communion, in an unlimited sense, comprehends a variety of things, which must participate at the Lord's Table, in those who would come to that solemn feast. The term as it is generally used, and meant to be understood, implies communion with all christians. I conclude we generally acknowledge there are pious believers among all denominations. But if the difficulty of baptism was decided, so I could get along in that respect, there are other things, more to me than baptism, because I view them as fundamental errors.

There are many who place salvation wholly at the disposal of the creature—that it is in his power to obtain it, to retain it, to arrive to a state of sinless perfection, and to fall from a state of saving grace, and be damned.

There are others who do not hold that a change of heart is necessary to become members of the church: relating christian experience before the church, to gain fellowship is wholly abandoned by them. Any moral person who has been baptized, may join the church, and be admitted to communion. Presumptuous sins are disapproved by them—but civil recreation, as it is called, is harmless and admissible. Many deny the proper deity of the Lord Jesus, and thereby destroy the whole foundation of the christian religion; for if he is not God, he is not the Saviour; for Jehovah declares there is no Saviour beside himself.

There are others, who come forward with a new-fangled system. They deny the proper divinity of Christ—hold that the sinner has no immortal soul, and that regeneration immortalizes it—that salvation is left to the free will of the creature—and that the wicked will be raised in the morning of the resurrection, and finally be burnt up, and that will be the end of them—together with many other things as absurd. All these profess to be christians, and it is very probable there are many sincere, good-hearted christians among them.

Now, christian brother, we have got the foundation laid in part—open your door and extend your friendly arms, and clasp them all upon the principle of sincerity; and you cannot stop here, for sin-

erity is as good ground for to stand on as another. What more must I clasp? Why there is the Universalist, the Restorationer, the Mahomedan, the Pagan, the Catholic, and I know not how many more, will pretend as great sincerity as any others can, and if sincerity is the rule rather than the Bible, there is no bounds to your liberal fellowship: for your arguments are, "As a man thinketh, so he." They are sincere, and their systems are right to them, though I do not see just as they do; it is probable I have errors too; therefore I ought to exercise so much charity as to cover their imperfections, and all unite together. Well, my brother, if we have got the foundation laid, we will come to the communion. And what shall we see? We shall see the Calvinist, the Arminian, the Antinomian, the Moralist, the Arian, the Socinian, the Universalist, the Restorationer, the Mahomedan the Pagan, the Catholic, the baptized, the unbaptized, those who were sprinkled in infancy, fall in the belief it is gospel baptism; those who have renounced it and been immersed—all partaking of the sacred symbols, which is the greatest visible token of fellowship. Can any rational being suppose that the God of order can approbate such a fellowship as this?

Further, before another communion season we will attend the meetings of the different communicants, and what shall we hear? We shall hear from the pulpit of the Arian, Socinian, Jesus Christ represented as being far inferior to the Father, and very hard charges brought against the Trinitarians, as being inconsistent in worshipping three equal Gods. From the pulpit of the Trinitarian we shall hear Arianism and Socinianism represented as being but a little better than infidelity, and that it destroys the foundation of the christian religion. From the pulpit of the Arminian we shall hear salvation represented as being wholly at the disposal of the creature—that it is in his power to obtain it to-day, and to-morrow dispose of it, and die and be damned. The doctrine of Election represented as being from the bottomless pit, and ought to return there again, and that it has been the means of the damnation of thousands of souls. From the pulpit of the Calvinist we shall hear salvation represented as being wholly the work of grace, begun by God, and performed by man to the complete salvation of all who are included in the covenant existing between the Father and Son, and that God will not be frustrated in the purposes of his grace. The Arminian system we shall hear represented as being dangerous in fostering people up in their pride, and in encouraging them in self-righteousness.

From the pulpit of the Baptist we hear pedo-baptism represented as being wholly without bible-foundation, and nothing more than a tradition of man. From the pulpit of the pedo-baptist, we shall hear infant baptism indicated with all the air of pulpit solemnity, and that those who neglect to get their children baptized are guilty of a great error, and may be damned at all at sword's points, bearing each others system down—yet all subjects of one communion in professed fellowship? Who contends for such a kind of fellowship? Is it a baptist? he hardly deserves the name; for it is directly opposite to the baptist sentiment, the Bible, and every rational principle. I wish Mr. Hall had thought of these things before he had published his liberal sentiments to the world.

But says a brother, who contends for open communion, this is not what I mean by open communion. I would not extend it in a general, unlimited

sense; I would only commune occasionally with some other denomination of christians. Who shall be the judge what part of the christian world you shall commune with, yourself? You will soon be charged with bigotry and the want of charity, for another can go further than you can, and commune with more of the christian world than you can, and if you had great charity as he has, and could cover as many great imperfections as he does, you would extend your fellowship as far. If the communion must be limited among professed christians in any respects, why have we so many hard charges brought against us for close communion, as though it was a crime? We only limit it in our view to the order of the gospel.

Well, says the brother, who contends for open communion, I only wish to commune occasionally with christians of other denominations, whose view sound in the doctrine of the gospel, only deficient in the subject made of baptism. We will see what insurmountable difficulties we shall be involved in on this ground. Myself and brethren unite with a pedo-baptist church in communion. We travel together in the ordinance alternately, at length a number of pedo-baptist brethren become dissatisfied with their baptism; they see their pastor and myself together, they manifest their feelings to us, and wish to be baptized; they propose to the pastor to baptize them—he refuses, and observes you are now baptized, and cannot re-baptize you. But their conviction is such, that they are unbaptized, they cannot be satisfied without submitting to the ordinance, according to the order of the gospel: they turn to me—Can you baptize us? To which I reply, O yes, I can do it with pleasure, for I have always viewed you unbaptized. Yet their pastor and I, and their brethren and my brethren are all in profound harmony. Their pastor sprinkles infants, and when they become believers, and renounce their infant sprinkling, I baptize them upon a profession of their faith. Can all this be done, and none of our feelings injured so but that we can travel together in the harmony? I think not. We should be involved in the greatest inconsistencies.

Again—if we can travel together in communion, we should be under the necessity of receiving members from one church to the other. A pedo-baptist would move into a society of Baptists, and as he travels with them in fellowship, it would be more convenient for him to become a member than to remain in a church at a distance. The baptists would be under the necessity of stating to him that they had no faith in infant sprinkling, and that he could not expect to have any of his children sprinkled in the fellowship of their church, or by their pastor. This would manifest that they consider him an unbaptized person; therefore they would be inconsistent to receive him. If they viewed him baptized because he thought so, they ought to baptize his children upon his thought so.

Once more—A Baptist might move into a society of pedo-baptists, and would wish to become a member of the church, but upon presenting himself, he would observe he had no faith in infant sprinkling, and that he could not offer up his children in sprinkling. To refuse to receive him would be inconsistent with open communion; and to receive him they must leap over an essential article of their faith, that it is the duty for believing parents to offer up their children to the Lord in baptism.

But instances can be produced, where this accommodating spirit has been exercised. I know of one instance where a man became a believer, who had not been sprinkled in infancy, and he manifested that he had no faith in infant sprinkling for himself, yet he could be satisfied with being sprinkled upon his own faith, and offered himself to a pedo-baptist church, and wished to become a member upon the condition they could receive him without offering up his children in baptism. They to accommodate and obtain a member, slipped over that essential article which obligates believing

r denomination to offer up their children in baptism, as though it had never been, christian world had received him into fellowship. I dare not form essential articles, I and with bigotry view according to the gospel, and slip over them in this manner.

Another curious circumstance has taken place within the circle of my acquaintance. A man who was a member of a church, dissented from the church in some things, and went out of their fellowship and went to a pedo-baptist church, and joined them in communion, and travelled with them years successively, while not a member of any visible church.

Now, while these inconsistencies and difficulties remain, I cannot commune visibly with my pedo-baptist brethren.—As I before said, I have a conscience, (while these insurmountable difficulties remain) it forbids my doing it.

I conclude, under our present views and practice, there is no better way to get along than to walk together as far as we can, and wherein we disagree, part in friendship.

There are many of my pedo-baptist brethren I view sound in the essential doctrine of the gospel. There is no essential difference between them and me in sentiment, only in baptism. We do not differ in our views of the prerequisites to come to the communion. They will not commune with unbaptized persons, though they may be ever so pious. And I have known them to refuse to act in the ordination of Arians, and Socinians, and Armenians, and to exchange pulpits with them; and I conclude they cannot, consistently with their conduct, commune with them at the Lord's table. Who can they commune with then? With regular Calvinistic Baptists. Why can they commune with them? Because they view them as baptized. I wish we could say so of them—the difficulty between us would cease to exist at once. But we cannot view them baptized, they ought to be willing we should take the liberty they take to debar from the communion unbaptized persons, and have no hard thoughts of us.

I am sorry to learn that some of my pedo-baptist brethren are about to adopt the sentiment of Mr. Hall, that is, that baptism is not a term of communion. They made any thing of baptism before. Now they are going to make nothing of it. The last error is not much worse than those they had before practiced; only it is putting more of them together, and making any thing, every thing, and nothing of baptism.

I view it my duty to cultivate christian fellowship and union with my pedo-baptist brethren, as far as I can consistently with my distinguishing sentiments. I have concluded, and do yet, that I may unite with them in worship, and exchange pulpits with them; for I view many of them ministers of Christ, though in an error in church building: and if I am not permitted to build the house with them, I conclude there can be no inconsistency in uniting with them as instruments in preparing the materials for the building. Though I cannot unite with them in a church capacity, I conclude I can unite with them in worship in the outer court.

I have made the proposal to some to exchange pulpits, who have refused. Now let the candid judge who is on the ground of close communion. I am willing to walk with them as far as we are agreed: but some of them will not do that. I am willing to state that I bid them welcome to my house—to my pulpit any time when it is not occupied. I should not be willing to admit to my pulpit those I view guilty of essential errors in the fundamental doctrine of the gospel.

But I must come to the second question, which is,—Does not Christ fellowship and commune with all denominations of Christians?

What is meant by Christ's communing with denominations of Christians? I conclude it cannot be that he actually communes with them on bread and wine. Then I conclude spiritual communion is intended. This communion the Baptists hold with all real christians. If we could be convinced

that Christ or his Apostles ever visibly communed with unbaptized persons or those who were sprinkled in infancy, it would be our duty and privilege to do the same; but as long as we have no evidence that that was the case we dare not.

Third—Are we not bound to one heaven? Will there be any bars or separations in heaven?—Answer—All Christians are bound to the same heaven, and there will be no bars or separations there.

Fourth—If we all expect to commune together in heaven, why can we not on earth?—The answer is obvious. On earth we are not agreed therefore we cannot walk together in some of the externals of religion. conceive it as necessary we commune together in one ordinance, as the other; and as we cannot commune in baptism, we cannot commune with any propriety at the Lord's Table. But when we arrive at Heaven, that holy place, where no unclean thing can enter, our wood, hay and stubble will all be consumed, and we shall be united in one complete harmony of praise around the throne of the Lamb.

Some have stated that it is necessary there should be as many denominations as there are, and that it is all for the best. That God suffers it to be so is evident; but to say it is necessary, and for the best, is to say that error is necessary: for there cannot be so many different sects and they all be right; for the Bible requires us all to "be of one mind, and one judgment and all speak the same things—and to be rooted and grounded in the truth—And contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."

If it is necessary there should be as many denominations as there are, it is necessary there should be as many Bibles, and as many Gods.

I view the causes of our thus differing to be the blindness and prejudice of our minds, and that error is a crime in any, and would be sufficient to condemn us forever, were it not for our Advocate with the Father.

Some have argued that as we are all imperfect and subject to error, we ought to unite together and get along with each other's errors. I view this to be a compromise that God cannot be pleased with. For me to offend my unknown errors against those I discover in others, would be a crime in me. If I retain an error and it is made known to me, it is my duty to renounce it.

This I conclude will be the way Christians will come together by the diffusion of divine light, which will convince them of their errors, and dispose them to renounce them, and come together in the order of the gospel.—Therefore it is not best to try to hurry the providence of God, but wait the event of heaven to bring about that happy period, and "try as much as in us is, to live peaceably with all men," and cultivate Christian union and friendship as far as in our power.

Some have supposed that it will not be more than three or four years, before the Christian world will come together, on Mr. Hall's theory. If they do, the union will be rottenness, and the foundation will be dust. I conclude they will be disappointed. For God, who has in the darkest ages of the world reserved to himself a chosen few who have not bowed the knee to Baal, or the superstitions of men, and has handed down the ordinances of the gospel from the days of the Apostles unswerving, will reserve a people who will not desert the standard of Truth. And when Christians come together, it will be by renouncing their errors, and rallying around this standard.

A FRIEND TO TRUTH.

