

THE  
MUTUAL RELATION OF BAPTISM  
AND  
THE COMMUNION.

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THE question, "What is the mutual relation of the ordinances?" presupposes an answer to the question, "What are the ordinances?" The relation plainly depends upon the nature, unless it be wholly arbitrary and fixed solely by authority. It will be assumed that the views current among Baptists as to the nature of each ordinance separately are correct, and no proof will be adduced in support of those views, except incidentally, as such proof may help to bring into greater clearness the relation. And yet a word of explanation as to the nature of each ordinance seems to be required at the

start. In each there is a prescribed external act. There is a definite something which is visible and outward. That is the only thing witnessed by a spectator. But that alone is no more the ordinance than the visible body is alone the man. There is also the prescribed design of the act—a design which belongs to the rite as appointed, and which is also to be in the mind of the subject, at least germinally. Beyond this there are prescribed conditions to be realized. Finally, all is to be done by the subject in a spirit of obedience. Now, it is plain that the external factor of either rite might be present and some one or all of the others be wanting, or the external might be wanting and some one or all of the others be present. As an unregenerate man, for a base purpose, may perform the outward act, so a regenerate man, with the true baptismal spirit of obedience, under the true baptismal conditions, and with the true baptismal design, may, through error, perform another than the prescribed external act. In the sphere of the outward this man is all wrong; in the sphere of the spiritual alone he is all right. Baptism as a visible ordinance he has not. To the eye

of man, for which the outward rite was prescribed, he is unbaptized. As he stands before the eye of God, in the realm of spirit, he has obeyed the command to be baptized. The same principles hold in respect to the Communion. We thus see that each ordinance is, in this discussion, to be considered in its integrity, since it is the mutual relation of Baptism and the Communion that is sought—of ordinance to ordinance, not of fragment to fragment. Thus, too, it will be seen that the assumption that only the immersed have been baptized implies neither that all the immersed have been truly baptized, nor that all not immersed are still acting in a spirit of disobedience to the Lord. We pass no such judgment upon them, either in thought or by the implication of our words, and no man should charge us with so doing.

But it is time to leave preliminaries for the work in hand. The topic divides itself into two main branches. We have to answer these two questions:

I. WHAT IS THE RELATION OF THE ORDINANCES TO EACH OTHER?

II. WHAT IS THE TRUE DOCTRINE CON-  
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CERNING THE MAINTENANCE OF THIS RELATION?

The first inquiry leads us more into the field of theory, the second into that of practice; but no correct answer can be given to the second until the first shall have been correctly answered.

I. WHAT IS THE MUTUAL RELATION OF THE TWO ORDINANCES?

1. *They stand to each other as co-ordinates—in the relation of co-ordination.*—They are of the same order, rank, value, dignity. The one is not the subordinate, subject, or inferior of the other, so that the one may rule, modify, or displace the other, or in any way claim or receive a pre-eminence over the other. This position is so obvious as to make its formal treatment seem superfluous, yet so important as to justify any attempt to emphasize it.

Looking to the *origin* of the two ordinances, we find them invested with the same authority. We need raise no question here as to Judaic Baptism or as to Judaic love-feasts. Whatever the historical connections of either ordinance, whatever the occasion giving rise to either, the express appointment and com-

mand of Christ made each ordinance Christian, and gave to each its sole whole authority. "Go ye into all the world, baptizing." "This do in remembrance of me." The same lips uttered the two commands, the same Lord gave the commands equal authority.

Looking to the *perpetuity* of the rites, we find them co-ordinate. That they are to continue to the end of time, invested with all their original authority, is the almost universal conviction of Christendom. We find given their law, with no limitation as to time indicated, with no authority to repeal delegated. But we are not left to inference, obvious and sufficient as it would seem to be. To the commission to preach the gospel and baptize is annexed the specific designation of the extent of time, "Alway, even unto the end of the world," while of the Communion it is said, "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The coming of Christ is at the end of the world, and the end of the world at the coming of Christ. Thus, with a statutory precision of statement, the great Lawgiver fixed at the same point the limit of continuance for the two.

Again, looking to their *design*, we see co-ordination. To avoid repetition, this point will not be expanded. It is enough to say that they both relate to the same inward life, and to that life in the same way or ways. If the one presupposes the life, so does the other; if the one expresses the life, so does the other; if the one symbolizes the life, so does the other; if the one is a means for the development of the life, so also is the other. They stand related to the same Source of life, and in the same way. With equal distinctness and emphasis they set forth Jesus Christ as Saviour, body forth to view the Atonement as the central doctrine of the gospel, the central truth of moral government, the central fact of human history. So, also, in the constitution of the church, the function of the one is as essential as that of the other, and in general is of the same kind. To state these points is to prove them, at least to Christian men. They need no proof. It is not that each rite has not its own distinctive characteristics and serves not its own specific ends. This, too, is no less evident; but in the respect of design, all that goes to determine rank, value, dignity, may be affirmed of both alike.

In their *constitution*, also, we find co-ordination. The constituent which meets the eye is an external physical act, as destitute of moral character and value, taken by itself, as is riding or walking. It is, in both cases, a voluntary act of the individual, yet not of the individual as unrelated. Association with another party appears in each. The unseen spiritual constituent is related to the same life and in the same radical essential manner. It is the same life expressing itself according to the same law of both authority and divine adaptation—in the one case as a beginning, in the other as a continuance. The conjunction of the inner with the outer is of the same nature in the one as in the other.

Thus are we led to the same conclusion, whether we look to the origin, the perpetuity, the design, or the constitution of the ordinances. We find no subordination, no superiority. They stand on a common level and have equal rank. Whatever respect is due to the one is due to the other; whatever despite is done to the one is in principle done to the other. They stand before us clothed in a like beauty and sublimity, claiming equal admi-

ration and honor. View them as we will, in their relation to Christ and to God, or to the believer, or to the church, or to the world, we cannot discriminate. He who makes of one folly pronounces both foolish. He who sees in one wisdom calls both wise. They stand or fall together, for, because of their co-ordination, no reason could be devised for maintaining one which would not demand the maintenance of both. And this is the testimony of all history within and without the church, whether we look to the judgments expressed or to the practices maintained.

2. *They are related to each other as antecedent and consequent—Baptism the antecedent, and the Communion the consequent.*—Perhaps it may seem that, as here stated, this position also is to every Christian self-evident, and hence needs neither proof nor development. There may seem to be wanting another word to make the proposition worthy of discussion. If it were to run thus: *invariably* related as antecedent and consequent; this might bring the position within debatable territory, and justify an effort at defence. But the question of variableness or invariableness has and can

have no place here. If it be a question at all, it is a question as to the maintenance of the relation, whether we should invariably maintain the natural and ordained relation of the two; whether this maintenance is indispensable; or, in current language, whether baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to communion. That question shall have attention in its own time and place. Here the question is on the relation of the two ordinances as antecedent and consequent. And since the ordinances, as ordinances, are just what the Lord ordained them to be, one thing, and not anything different, if they are once in nature antecedent and consequent, they are and must be, as respects nature, ever and everywhere antecedent and consequent. If they were such when and where Christ instituted them, they are and must be such universally and infallibly. They can never cease to be such, for they can never cease to be just what they were. Some other things bearing the same names may bear an opposite relation to each other, but we have here to do with nothing else than the ordinances themselves.

The first evidence for our position lies in

the known nature of the two ordinances. And in the word nature is here included the design, and, indeed, all that goes to constitute them what they are. This is a legitimate, and, in some respects, the most satisfactory, kind of evidence. Sovereignty is not arbitrariness. God's will of command and his will of control ever accord with the divine reason. A bare command satisfies faith, but reason perceived satisfies reason. The ordinances in large measure interpret themselves, and this interpretation is confirmed, clarified, and enlarged by Scripture. We can, therefore, approach this part of the subject with confidence and hope.

They have each three interdependent yet distinct characters and uses. Each is at once an act of faith, an exhibition of truth, and a component of church organization. In the first particular it is a deed, in the second a word, in the third a thing. The first element is purely personal, the second general, the third ecclesiastical; the first transactional, the second declarative, the third constitutive. In the first something is done, in the second something is shown, in the third something is

formed. Let us take up these three characters successively, and see whether in every part, from first to last, they stand as antecedent and consequent.

As a *personal transaction*, Baptism is in Scripture comprehensively denominated "putting on Christ." Gal. iii. 27. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ put on Christ." This is first done as a purely spiritual act in the first spiritual reception of Christ by faith; it is done in word by the spoken confession of this faith; it is done sacramentally, or in the way of ordinance, in Baptism, and only in Baptism. The purely spiritual act embodies itself in the appointed outward act, and therein completes itself. The Communion, on the other hand, is comprehensively denominated the communion of the body and of the blood of Christ. But communion with the Lord, in the sphere of the purely spiritual, is the act of a soul that has put on the Lord. It is the continuous act by which the divine life, already originated in the new birth, is sustained, nourished, and perfected. The Communion is, in the sphere of ordinances, this invisible fellowship—its embodiment and

completion. Such, in general, being the nature of the two acts separately, their relation is manifest. They stand as the inner acts which they embody. Origin precedes development. Creation cannot follow preservation. We come to Christ before we commune with Christ. If regeneration is the antecedent of sanctification, Baptism is the antecedent of the Communion. As the soul comes once, and only once, into union with Christ, as in fact it never does dissolve this union, and, on God's word, could not be renewed again to repentance if it were to dissolve it, in no man's case is there a foundation in experience for Baptism after the Communion.

If the complex personal acts of baptism and communion were each analyzed, the same relation of their constituents would be seen to exist. Baptism is a separation, a first separation, from a previous life of sin, from a godless world, from a state of condemnation; it is a washing away of sins once and forever, an act unto pardon. Communion, on the other hand, is the act of one who has been separated, who is separate, to whom separation is an accomplished fact, a permanent condition, an

acknowledged characteristic, of one who has been pardoned. Thus the act of death to sin, of renunciation of the world, the whole active voluntary separation from the evil, which has its prominent place in baptism, is presupposed in the Communion. Baptism, again, fronting toward Christ, is a consecration to him, an accepting of him, an identification with him, with his people, with his cause; it is taking for the first time, and once for all, the Christ side instead of the world side, the Christ life instead of the world life. But what is Communion? It is from first to last, in all its elements, the act of a friend with a friend. It presupposes the completion of the union, the stability of the union, and within this union it wholly moves. This is why, in Baptism, we have none of the festive element, while the Communion is predominantly festive. There is all the difference that exists between a birth and a feast.

We see, therefore, that the two ordinances, as personal acts, stand as antecedent and consequent, whether we look at them in the general or in the particular.

Take them next as *exhibitions of truth.*



Here they are memorials, declarations, symbols, and prophecies. First as *memorials*. Each brings to view facts of history. The baptismal water immediately reminds of Jordan, and the baptism itself of the scene at Jordan, when Jesus went down into the waters and was there buried and again rose. This was the formal, solemn, ordained separation and consecration of himself to his work of Saviour, his identification of himself with his people. There in ordinance he took upon himself our sins, as in ordinance we, by baptism, take upon ourselves his righteousness.

The Communion, on the other hand, reminds us of a fact later in Christian history, of the evening of the betrayal. In the elements we see, too, the body and the blood. We see Jesus after his sacrifice has been completed, after his death.

The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are indeed set forth in Baptism, and the death of Christ is shown forth in the Communion, and thus we seem to lose the relation claimed. But it is not lost, for the one shows the death as in process of accomplishment, by which Christ *became* the soul's life; the other shows it as an already accomplished fact by which

he *has forever become* the soul's life—its meat and drink. And here we find the explanation at once of his baptism and of the most significant expression; "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." In ordinance he there bore the sins of the world and became to the believer "the end of the law for righteousness." And if from the realities the mind is carried back to the foreshadowings, we find the circumcision preceding the paschal feast, both in the time of its origination and in the order of its observance. One became an Israelite before he acted as an Israelite.

Next as *declarations*. We have already viewed the ordinances as the acts of a believer with reference to himself. As declarations they show to others what is the actor's condition. Baptism declares him to have come into Christ. Communion declares him to be abiding in Christ. They declare the subject to be in these two successive states. The Saviour designed them for signs, and for true signs in respect to the one receiving them. The declarations, true or false, stand related as the acts, and these we have seen are as first and second.

Again, as *symbols* they have the same relation. A symbol proper is a visible natural object or fact which represents or images an invisible spiritual reality. It is alike impossible and needless here to go minutely into the symbolism of the ordinances. Enough that we know, that Baptism symbolizes, with singular clearness and fulness, the central spiritual realities pertaining to the origination of a holy life. It sets forth the nature of the two states, sin and holiness. It shows on what principles provision has been made for a transition from the former to the latter state. It reveals also the nature of the activities and instrumentalities involved in the transition. And standing up, solitary and alone, it proclaims also the nature of that electing love and preserving care which keep forever the child that has once become a child. Baptism speaks of origination, only of origination. The Communion, on the other hand, symbolizes, with a like clearness and fulness, the central verities pertaining to the perpetuation of the Christian life. Though itself not a sacrifice, it shows life to be forever rooted in sacrifice. It appears as a ceaseless communi-

cation of divine love through Jesus Christ to the heart of man, received and appropriated by a living faith. It strikingly presents the oneness of the believer with the Lord, which is yet a oneness of absolute and ceaseless dependence. But it has nothing to say of origination. It tells us not how we come to be in Christ. It supposes that to have been already told. It takes up the story where Baptism lays it down. Thus as a symbol it follows Baptism.

Finally, they are *prophecies*. We seize upon the central prophecy of each. In Baptism it is the believer's glorious resurrection. This is to be at the Lord's second coming, in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels, for the punishment of the wicked, for the world's renovation, for the completion of the mediatorial work in the introduction of the whole family of the redeemed into their state of completed, final, eternal glory, when death itself shall have been destroyed, and "God shall be all in all." The Communion is a prophecy of the glorious fellowship into which that advent of Christ and the redemption of our bodies are to introduce us. And

thus we find the ordinances as prophecies holding still the relation belonging to them as memorials.

Hence, as exhibitions of truth, the ordinances give their evidence of relationship. As memorials, as declarations, as symbols, and as prophecies, they speak one and the same language. They can be tortured to speak no other.

In gathering the testimony borne by the nature of the ordinances, we have still to consider them as pertaining to *church organization*. Among both Protestants and Papists there is a general agreement that one of the prime signs of a true church is the proper administration of these two ordinances. It is hardly too much to say that they are the organization of the church. We do not, indeed, forget the place which the gospel, as the word of God, is to have; but the gospel spoken is the interpretation of the gospel embodied in ordinances. Gospel and ordinances are the same thing in two forms, in the form of words and in the form of deeds. And since the church is a body visible, that which visibly embodies its life in its origin and perpetuation,

in its relations God-ward, world-ward, and self-ward, may most fitly be deemed the very constitution of the church. Great stress has sometimes been laid upon the voluntariness of confederation, upon the form of government, upon the number and nature of the offices, upon the mode of expressing the will of the body—a stress so great as to make it appear that the essentials of church life and church organization are the same as the essentials of a debating club or of an insurance company. In this view the ordinances are simply the property entrusted to the church, not the very organism by which the church exists. Their nature and the indications of Scripture seem to frown upon such a view.

The favorite representation of the whole church is “the body of Christ.” And as each local church is to realize, in its measure, the ideal of the one church, every church is the body of Christ. 1 Cor. iii. 16. And how does Baptism stand with reference to this body? Is it not its very origination? This question is settled by Paul when he writes to the Corinthians: “For in one Spirit we all were baptized into one body.” 1 Cor. xii. 13. It makes

not the least difference whether baptism here is the inward, spiritual, invisible baptism, or the outward, ritual, visible baptism. If it is spiritual, then it is into the spiritual body; if ritual, then it is into the visible body, the outward church. In the latter case, the passage directly answers our question by declaring that we are baptized into the church—*i. e.*, to become members of the church. It is the act of origination, of creation. In the former case the language carries the same conclusion, for the ordinances correspond in their sphere to the spiritual facts in their sphere. If visible baptism were not baptism into the visible body, the apostle could not have spoken of a spiritual baptism into the invisible body. With this we take the expression, “baptized into Christ,” and find in it the same doctrine. We are baptized into him so as to become his members, and members in just the sphere that the baptism *can* constitute us such, in his visible body. This idea that entrance into Christ’s church is by virtue of a vote of the church, and that Baptism is a detached fact, in no vital, necessary, constitutive relation to the body, merely a preliminary qualification, is as

untrue to the harmonies of Christian truth as to the direct word of revelation. The vote, or, rather, the consent, of the church, is *contained in the baptism*. The ordinance is not to be administered without the consent. The consent or vote is merely the decision of a body whether a given person may become, by and in baptism, a member. But it is the baptism that makes the membership. Acceptance of members from other churches is not strictly the creation of membership: it is more of the nature of a recognition. The command to be baptized is addressed to the believers, but this contemplates the co-operation of another party, and that party is the church. The church baptizes, and the vote is merely the decision, which is carried to completion in the act, and thus the union is consummated. That old-fashioned phrase, “Baptism the door into the church,” does very well. “Baptized into the church,” and “received by Baptism,” or “added by Baptism,” are still better phrases. The gospel knows no visible church lying in part outside of visible churches. It is not intended that the decision of a local church is not necessary to give one the rights of membership.

As to the Communion, its place in the church is fixed by fixing that of Baptism, as also by its own nature. Paul, too, makes the one loaf to represent the one body—a body, therefore, not coming to be, but already existing. Hence the Christians came together to partake of the Communion. It was not merely a remembrance of Christ, it was a remembrance in communion both with him and with one another. We have, therefore, in the ecclesiastical character of the ordinances, the same relation of antecedent and consequent that we had already discovered in them as acts of faith and exhibitions of truth. This completes the evidence from their nature.

Further evidence is drawn from the *incidental testimony of Scripture concerning the relation.*

The order of their institution first claims attention. God teaches the order of nature by the order of time which he follows. Let us take two examples from many. The giving of the law at Mount Sinai stands over against the proclamation of the gospel by Christ and the apostles. This order in time is based upon an inner order of nature. Gos-

pel presupposes law. The order is not gospel and law, but law and gospel. Reverse this and we have nonsense; we have deliverance with no previous bondage, pardon with no existing guilt, cleansing with no antecedent pollution. No; the order of nature must be law and gospel, bondage and deliverance, guilt and pardon, pollution and cleansing, death and resurrection. It is certain that those two sublime facts of history, that on Sinai and that on Calvary, were timed as they were because the relation of law to gospel is what it is. Take a second example within the gospel dispensation. The work of Christ accomplished in the flesh, especially his work of sin-bearing or atonement, is the ground of the Spirit's work in the soul of man. Christ's work and the Spirit's work in redemption stand as first and second. To reverse the order is impossible. There must be a Christ before there can be faith in Christ; there must be a blood of cleansing before the cleansing blood can be applied. The things of Christ cannot be shown before they exist. The fixedness of this inner relation, this order of nature, is to Christian experience self-evident. And to

nothing is there more and clearer witness borne both by Holy Scripture and by the literature of the church. Now mark the correspondence of the historical development. We recognize, indeed, a work of the Spirit dating from man's fall. The death of Christ and the action of the Spirit in a certain sense preceded the coming of Christ and the coming of the Spirit. We can, however, leave that out of our present account, as it has its own easy explanation. We find Jesus affirming, while on earth, that his departure to the Father must precede, in time, the descent of the Spirit. If I go not, he comes not—such is the statement. And so it was. He passed into death, he came from the grave, he ascended into heaven, before the promise of the Spirit was realized. Nay, to emphasize the order of sequence, the disciples had to tarry in Jerusalem for a time after the ascent, awaiting the promised advent.

Turn now to the two ordinances, and note the times of their institution. That puerile inquiry, raised in defence of Rantism, whether John's Baptism was Christian Baptism, we may assume, can have only one answer, and that affirmative. It was certainly from heaven.

Jesus himself submitted to it, as did some of his disciples, while, in the person of his disciples, the Lord, throughout his ministry, continued to baptize. The commission, "Go ye, baptizing," gives no indication that the ordinance was thereby instituted. It regards the ordinance to be administered, as it does the gospel to be preached, as already known, a thing in existence. John's Baptism and Christian Baptism are in essentials identical. The time of the institution of Baptism is thus fixed at the beginning of John's ministry. The Communion, we know, was instituted at the close of the Lord's ministry. As in the other examples, so also here, the order of time teaches, and was designed to teach, the order of nature.

We find further evidence for our position in the commands enforcing the observance of the ordinances. It will be found uniformly that the requirement of Baptism links it with the commencement of Christian life. The great commission links its administration with the making of disciples, while instruction in all other Christian duties is made to follow. So, when sinners under conviction would know

what they must do to be saved, the command to be baptized is coupled with the command to repent, or, rather, a single command is given, including as its two objects the inner and the outer act, baptism in the Spirit, baptism in water. Thus, too, was Paul bidden to arise and be baptized before he performed any other outward Christian act. Indeed, so strongly is the connection affirmed, that many find in the language the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.

Quite otherwise is it with the command to observe the Communion. It was given at first to the twelve as a body of acknowledged believers, placed not at the commencement of their devotion to Jesus, but after that had been long recognized and proved. In the commission it was doubtless in thought prominent among the "all things" whose observance was to be taught, but which are mentioned after Baptism. And when Paul gives, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, directions concerning the observance of the Communion, he addresses himself to those who are recognized as Christians, who are within the Church; and not only that, but he directly

teaches, that it is in this capacity that they are stately and continually to observe this ordinance. It is needless to tarry on the bearing of the commands, for they fix the order unmistakably as being that of antecedent and consequent.

One further evidence under this head remains, that which comes from practice in apostolic times. This is too familiar to need more than a passing notice. There is sufficient reason to suppose that the twelve had been baptized before the evening of the betrayal. Where baptism is said to have been administered, it was immediately upon credible evidence of faith in close conjunction with repentance. "They that [gladly] received the word were baptized" as soon as they manifested this true reception, and thenceforth they continued steadfast in the breaking of bread. The epistles assume that saints are the baptized, that churches which observe the Communion are composed of such.

A third class of evidence comes from the *faith and practice of the whole body of professed Christians since the apostles*. The ordinances have both been mangled, torn from

their places, abused, but it has been reserved for a few men of this age to conceive and advocate the delusion that they stand to each other in no relation of consecution; that neither is first and neither is second; that either may be first and either second. The doctrine and the practice of all nominally Christian bodies not rejecting the ordinances have borne uniform testimony to the correctness of our position. Baptism has been torn from its right relation to the Communion; not, however, to put it after, but to carry it too far forward. Even those who clamor against the maintenance of the established order admit its existence.

Thus we complete the argument proving the relation of the two ordinances to be that of antecedent and consequent. Evidence has come from their nature, from other testimony of Scripture to the relation, and from the whole of the nominally Christian church. We had previously established their co-ordination.

We advance now to a last position.

3. Together *they constitute one organic whole*. They are inseparable one from the

other. They do not stand as two duties each complete in itself. They each require the other for a complement.

Little need be said in support of this view. All the evidence which supports our last position is equally good for this. The maintenance of that relation was because of an inner principle. We ask here just what the principle is. The ordinances, as already observed, are visible embodiments of invisible realities. As the realities are related, so are, *so must be*, the ordinances. Now, the realities, as we have seen, are comprehensively the origination of spiritual life and the continuance of that life. How stand these to each other? Regeneration and Sanctification, are they independent? Each in itself a whole? Life coming to be, life continuing to be, one life. Where were the continuance without the becoming? Where were the becoming if there were strictly no continuance? When we can dissolve the connection between becoming and being, in anything save the self-existent, we may affirm that Baptism does not require the Communion and the Communion Baptism to constitute a whole.



Or, if we look out of the soul of the believer to the source of his life, it is to reach the same conclusions. What were a Saviour who once took upon himself our sin, once died, was buried, and rose, if he were not a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek in the holy of holies, forever presenting the sacrifice which forever avails? Is there any completeness in either act as by itself? Where were the heavenly mediation without the earthly sacrifice? What were the earthly sacrifice without the heavenly mediation? Here are not two things, but one thing in its two inseparable, indivisible parts.

If it is certain that Baptism should precede the Communion, it is certain that this precedence is not that of one independent fact to another. It is that of two inseparable, correlated parts which together make an organic whole.

We thus complete our answer to the question, "What is the mutual relation of the ordinances?" We have found them to be, (1) Co-ordinates; (2) Antecedent and consequent; (3) Together a unit, one indivisible whole.

We pass now to the second general division of our subject.

## II. THE MAINTENANCE OF THE RELATION.

1. *This relation ought to be maintained.*  
This is a truism. To argue for it is almost to insult reason.

Without the maintenance of the relation the ordinances themselves are not maintained. Plainly this is true, because the relation is a part of the rites. Baptism after the Communion is not Baptism, and the Communion before Baptism is not the Communion. Our last position establishes this. A continuance of that which has no beginning is not a continuance, and a beginning which is not a first is not a beginning. You may as well say that 13 is 31, because you have the same separate characters, as to say that Baptism and the Communion are the Communion and Baptism. If you can keep your number only by keeping the order of your figures, so you can keep your ordinances only by keeping the order of the ordinances.

The relation should be maintained because it is divinely ordained. The reason why the ordinances themselves are to be maintained is that they are ordinances, *i. e.*, that they have been ordained of God. Is it not clear that the

relationship which is lodged in the inmost nature of the two is itself an ordination if the two are ordained? While, therefore, the two remain this relationship remains, and while they remain ordinances this relationship remains an ordination. And can any man conjecture how there can be a reason for preserving an ordinance arising from the fact that it has been ordained, but no reason for preserving an ordination which is lodged in the ordinance by the divine Author? He who can, has a power of conjecture and imagination which disqualifies him for the sober work of a theologian, or of a reasoner, and should remand him to the region of pure fiction.

Again, the ordinances cease to be acts of faith unless they keep their proper relation. Christian faith is inseparable from Christian truth. The believer is of the truth. Truth is in his inward parts, characterizes him, is at the springs of action. A believer, acting as a believer, cannot act a lie. But if one with full knowledge of the import of the rites begin with the Communion, he does act a lie. He says in act, in a most solemn, formal act, "I have a spiritual life which did not begin." If

he be baptized after he has communed, he lies, for he solemnly, sacramentally affirms, I now first begin a life, which yet he has long declared to be his. He comes into Christ for the first time, though he has been already abiding in him. In declaring such acts to be lies, it is *only* on the supposition that the acts are performed intelligently, with an understanding of their true nature. Our argument requires the consideration of no other cases.

Further, if the organic relationship be not kept, the ordinances become an exhibition of falsehood rather than of truth; they set forth, not the gospel of life, but a perversion and subversion of the gospel. As memorials they cease to conform to New Testament history. They stand in contradiction to it as well as to common sense. They show our Lord first as having passed through death and then as entering death. Thus at the start they brand themselves with absurdity.

As declarations of the believer's state, they, in their inversion, work still more aggravated mischief. He who commences with the Communion affirms, by silent implication, that no such change as regeneration has passed upon

him, or had need to pass upon him before he could fitly commune with God. It is the destructive heresy of a goodness inherent in his nature, the denial of his need of the death of sin and of the new birth. And what is proclaimed when baptism at length is received? Is it not that now at length there is a change like that of the new birth? The gulf is thus made, where our higher-life friends place it, not between unbelief and belief, but between two stages of Christian experience. But it has not even this significance, for it is not proposed to fix it at any such crisis of life or to connect it with any such crisis. What, then, shall it mean? Confusion, delusion, mockery. Contempt must gather around the ordinances and those who submit to them if, as declarations of states, they are made to utter this Babel confusion of folly.

Is it better when they are taken as symbols? Nay, worse, for here we pass at once from the particular to the general. They speak now not of facts of history, nor of the condition of particular persons, but of the great doctrines of grace, of the central verities of our faith. They are here a summary of the gospel.

Standing as our Lord gave them, co-ordinate, a first and a second, a beginning and a continuation, one sublime, self-consistent, correlate whole, they body to view with a matchless impressiveness, with a power all their own, unknown to the written word, the very gospel of God's salvation. Change now this relation, and what have you? No longer the grand harmony of heaven sung to the eye; no longer the one mighty truth of revelation self-consistently bodied to the view. Nay, that is gone forever, lost from the world, and in its place is left a lying, self-contradicting confusion. You see, now, Regeneration at the centre of Sanctification, and Sanctification half or quite complete before Regeneration. You see men suddenly passing from death to life who have for years been in life, and yet after the passage they have the same life as before. Christ's heavenly intercession on the basis of atonement made once for all is suddenly arrested, in order to make the atonement. And thus it is to the end of the chapter. Can a man seriously propose to project into this world of ours, which so needs the one clear voice of God's truth, this monstrous falsehood

to take the place of that truth? Alas, that blindness or malice should ever have proposed it.

And not a whit better is it when the ordinances, after inversion, undertake to prophesy. The jumble continues. We find ourselves at the heavenly feast in the completed glory with our spiritual bodies, when suddenly is heard the blast of the trumpet which heralds the second coming of Christ, and the general resurrection, and the final judgment, and the consummation of all things. The feast is broken up. The past and present appear as illusions. Nothing is consistent. Everything is disjointed. And then, when this confusing interruption subsides, we find ourselves just as before, nothing changed, nothing effected. What a burning shame even the very thought of such an outrage on these gracious prophecies, which, as they now stand, carry the soul onward to the harmonies of hastening glory! Oh, brethren, what say you to this outrage, and to this series of outrages, grievous beyond expression, which interference with the order of the ordinances, with their inmost nature as correlates, proposes to inflict upon them? Is

all this a light thing, a trifle only, a non-essential matter?

Again, the maintenance of the relation of the ordinances directly involves the maintenance of the integrity of Christ's church, because, as we have seen, the church has in these its coherence and symmetry, is framed into them and consists in them. If we rend asunder the bond of organization, we rend the body organized. While the church stands in these ordinances as they form one whole, it will have the beauty of a true body of Christ, a body separate from the world, complete in itself, and a fit exhibition of the Lord in his saints. The moment a ruthless hand is laid upon them all is changed. See the havoc wrought by the changes already made in them! Are we ready to go further, and not only introduce still another change, but one more unnatural and monstrous, if possible, than any yet ventured upon? God forbid!

The relation ought to be maintained because its maintenance has been commanded. But says one and another, Where is the command? Wherever the command exists to observe the ordinances, or either one of them. The ordi-

nances are the ordinances, and not something else. If they are observed, *they* must be observed, not something else; and, as we have seen, they are not simply a one and another, but a first and a second, and that, too, as constituents of a whole. If the *ordinances*, Christ's ordinances and not ours, are kept, they must be kept, not as a one and another, but as a first and a second, two inseparable constituents of one indivisible whole. What means this perpetual demand for the precise command for the maintenance of the order? It means that he who asks it fails to see what is the very nature of the gospel ordinances.

The command is reinforced by apostolic example. The relation was maintained while the apostles lived. What they would have done if they were alive to-day may be conjectured; what they did we know. A conjecture born of a personal preference shows little modesty when it asks for a higher place in the settlement of a question than it will give to such a fact as that before us. We might still add, as further reason, the judgment of the church universal, but pass to the second inquiry under the general head of the maintenance of the relation.

2. *By whom is the relation to be maintained?*  
We have seen the absolute necessity of its maintenance, but the question of duty is not settled until it is known upon whom this necessity is laid. The following positions will doubtless be acknowledged as true, if not self-evident.

The maintenance of the relation must be by some agency. The ordinances have no power of self-preservation and self-perpetuation, no power to guard themselves from abuse and disfigurement. They are incapable of receiving command. Their first appearance was by agency, and they at once cease to be when agency is withheld. Plainly, their purity has never been entrusted to themselves, as a man's obligations are to himself.

The agency required must be other than the Lord's own. There seems to be a practical disbelief of this axiom. We are gravely told that the ordinances are the Lord's ordinances, and hence we must have nothing to do with them. The philosophy is as profound as that of the deacon who refused to put upon the church edifice a lightning-rod because if the Lord chose to burn his own property man

should not interfere to prevent. He ought to have taken higher ground, and said, if the Lord wanted a meeting-house he must build it, that man ought not to pretend to know God's wants better than God does. It is impossible to treat with seriousness the conceit that the law of the ordinances is not to be maintained by men because, forsooth, the ordinances are the Lord's. Are they his? Yes, in one view, as instituted and prescribed by him. Are they his? In another view, no; not his, but man's—man's as appointed for man, to be observed by man.

Hence, we hold that the men for whom they have been instituted and prescribed are to maintain the order of correlation given in them. Those who have no right to them are not to maintain it. It is given for maintenance exclusively into the hands of those to whom the ordinances are given—to believers in Jesus Christ, to those who have passed from death to life, and who are to body to view this inward change and the blessed state that follows. To argue this point is to waste time, breath, and patience. Let us, then, pass to the last question under this head.

3. *How shall believers maintain this relation?*  
The answer is easily given.

First, each one must himself observe the ordinances as given. This personal compliance is at the root of purity; and if all Christians were to fulfil this condition, there could never be any inversion or confusion. But if one complies and another does not, then come discord and disturbance. And as neither ordinance is merely a subjective state, or the subjective state *plus* an external act other than that prescribed, the discord and disturbance arise just as truly where non-compliance is the result of ignorance and misconception as where it comes from wilful and wicked perversity. The disturbance is in the sphere of the ordinances, which is the sphere of the visible. And it is just here that our previous argument has shown the imperative necessity of the established harmony. The plea of sincerity has no place nor application here. That avails in its measure upon the question of personal guilt or innocence, of personal standing before the Judge. But with such questions we have here nothing to do. We ask concerning the maintenance not of the integrity of individual

character, but of the integrity of God's ordinances. Let us never be befooled into an identification of these totally distinct issues. As long as any believer, for any reason whatever, fails in his own person to observe the ordinances as God has given them, which is to observe them both, and in the order which belongs to them, and instead thrusts either from its place or totally casts either away, so long is there failure of a universal maintenance of the order among God's children. This leads us to state,

Secondly, that those who personally observe them as given must unite in this observance, and thereby separate from those who do not. There is, there can be, no option. Two can walk together in those things in which they are agreed, in nothing else. We can fellowship the spirit with which a Pedobaptist consecrates to God his child in his so-called ordinance of Baptism, if he be sincere and believe himself to be acting in obedience to God's command. We can fellowship the mental act of this child when, in future years, converted through God's grace, he accepts that infant sprinkling as truly Scriptural Baptism. We

can fellowship most truly and completely the spirit of a Pedobaptist church of sincere and devoted Christian members as they come together to the Lord's Table and partake of the elements. Every Baptist Christian must needs have the most profound sympathy and fellowship with this act in its spiritual aspects, and can pray most fervently for God's blessing upon that body of Christians in this act. But the spiritual states of the parent consecrating his child, of the grown-up child accepting for Baptism his infant sprinkling, of the Pedobaptist church partaking of the elements, are each and all in the sphere of the invisible, and not at all in that of the visible, which is peculiarly the sphere of the ordinances. We fellowship the acts in their purely subjective elements. We must disfellowship them in their external elements. And since we cannot go with these parties into outward acts which violate our clear conviction of divine truth and requirement, we must prove our fellowship with their spirit in another way than that of participation in their outward deeds. Were it possible to divide the act into its two elements, the inward and the outward, and so

separate them one from the other that we could be seen to perform the one and refrain from the other, then we might show our participation as we cannot so long as the act is indivisible. And if here it be asked whether it be not as well to pervert so long as the same blessing comes, the answer is at hand. First, only the ignorant and sincere have this blessing. Again, we do not determine our duty in the presence of God's plain command by a further question of utility, but the command settles it for us and cuts off all utilitarian queries. And yet again, though for a time a perversion may not work havoc with the religious life of the perverters, it ever tends to that. Finally, the question of utility must look to the universal bearings of the perversion, and not simply to its effect upon the ignorant perverters. Hence we say that those who know what God's ordinances are, and who observe them, must separate themselves from those who cannot be made to know what they are and to observe them, and unite together, keeping as the Lord gave them those two glorious embodiments of the gospel, of Christian life, of salvation itself. And if any

man here asks whether this separation and confederation must be complete and invariable, this is to ask whether, when God says, "Thou shalt not steal," it is really meant that one is not to steal occasionally and in small amounts. Away with this senseless query as to invariableness! We have to do with a question of principles, and principles are not variable. Nor is there any conflict between the true love of God and the principles of God's truth. Distrust the blind promptings of sentiment where there is the light of doctrine, otherwise you drift into Universalism and perdition while fondly dreaming that you yield to the attractive love of heaven, and are drawing with you the unwashed, unsanctified all.

A last method of maintaining the mutual relation of the ordinances is by sound speech, by open, manly, brave, kind testimony, by clear argument. Silence is often golden, but it is sometimes worse than silver, copper or lead: it is rottenness and cowardice. We need not play on a harp of one string only, but we should not refuse its place in the harp to any string. Especially should we not be ashamed to defend the integrity of ordinances upon



which our Lord has placed a dignity like that with which he has distinguished Baptism and the Communion.

And now, in closing this discussion, one query must needs press itself upon the thoughtful mind: Why the combined, vehement, and persistent attack of other denominations upon Baptists for adhering to a principle which, while so manifestly and manifoldly important, is not only clearly scriptural, but also accepted and acted upon as such by the assailants themselves? When their own churches not only are, but from the start have been, framed and conducted upon this very principle, why do they demand of us the surrender of the principle? Ostensibly it is for union. They ask us to break with them on the principle of action that we may join them in the form of it. But do they thus stultify themselves? No; assuredly not. When they come with the demand that we admit them to the table of the Lord, their demand is not for admission as unbaptized believers, but as baptized. They will not come as unbaptized. They will not be so received. The demand is nothing else than for a recognition of the validity of their

baptism. This, this is the real point of the controversy. The assault upon our "Close Communion" is but a covert assault upon our hated doctrine of Baptism. Are Baptists ready to surrender that doctrine and pronounce it unscriptural? Probably not; and if not, they are not ready to surrender their doctrine of the Communion. Union in truth is the only union that we either want or will have. If our doctrine of Baptism is untrue, may we be soon enlightened! if true, may we never be driven to surrender it!

5

THE END.