

CHAPTER IV.

The unwarranted and fatal admission made by Baptist authors on Communion—that in all things essential to salvation, in all the fundamental doctrines of grace, Baptists agree with Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists—Our agreement with Presbyterians examined.

I note concessions upon another point which confirms the one noticed in the last chapter, and, if true, justifies the statements so often met with in Baptist authors, and heard from too many Baptist pulpits, and especially common in “union meetings,” that in all the essential doctrines of Christianity Baptists and all the leading denominations agree. Then it is upon the non-essentials of Christianity that Baptists exist, and about which they differ from other denominations. If this be so, the sooner Baptists are exterminated out of the land the better for Christianity and the world.

The form this idea assumes in some of our most popular books on communion is about this:

That in all the fundamental doctrines of grace and things essential to salvation, Baptists substantially agree with Protestant denominations.

It is far from being a pleasure to me to call public attention to their unfortunate concession in favor of denominations so diametrically opposed to us; concessions that strengthen them with the public and weaken Baptists; it is with pain I do it, as it is with painful astonishment I read their admissions, but I do it to correct a false public opinion created largely by the unwarranted admissions of Baptists, and in hopes that these brethren may see fit to modify their statements in future editions of their works; and others who write hereafter may be more careful of their statements.

Dr. Garnder in his popular work on “Church Communion,” says:

“With some of them, as the Congregationalists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, we agree **substantially in what is essential to salvation,**” etc.—p. 22.

Again, on page 53 we find this—

“Hence we see that the Baptists and others agree as to the qualifications for Communion. All agree (1.) That the **new birth** is a scriptural qualification; (2.) That **valid baptism** is a scriptural qualification; and (3.) That regular church-membership is a scriptural qualification.

“Such, then, are the **points of agreement** between Baptists and others; (1.) As to the **nature**; (2.) As to the **design**; and (3.) As to the qualifications for the Lord’s Supper.”

Dr. Gardner must have written this in a moment of forgetfulness, for no statement could be wider of the **facts** in the case, as he himself abundantly proves in the latter part of his book, where few, who read his book to ascertain his position, would be likely to find it, and of little force also, whatever else he might urge after having conceded; I. That in **all** things fundamental

and essential to salvation Baptists agree with Protestants; and 2. Concerning **all** the scriptural qualifications for the Lord's Supper Baptists agree with Methodists and Presbyterians.

Why should the inquirer read further? Or how otherwise conclude but that Baptists are, indeed, unscripturally close and bigoted sectarians if they refuse to commune with those with whom they agree both as to the doctrines of grace and the **qualifications** for, and the **design** or symbolism of, the Supper? Though I propose to devote the next chapter to the refutation of these concessions, I must say here to the reader—who may lay down the book at the close of this, satisfied with the evangelicalness of these denominations, and the correctness of their practice, indorsed so fully and by such high authority, and satisfied also that Baptists are indeed a bigoted sect—that neither Methodists nor Presbyterians, must less Baptists who think, will indorse these statements of Dr. Garnder, and, as we have said, he himself refutes them nearer the close of his book.

Do not both these sects hold and teach that both baptism and the Lord's Supper are **sacraments of salvation**,—God's appointed media through which the blessings of salvation, pardon, regeneration, and the sanctification are offered, communicated, and sealed to the soul of both the unconscious infant and the unregenerate adult? Do not Presbyterians hold and teach that the ordinances are **seals** of the covenant of grace? Do not both agree that "in the ordinary way" one or both are necessary to salvation; so that "out of **the** church there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."—*Presbyterian Confession*, p. 112. Do Baptists agree with these sects touching the way an infant or an adult is to be saved? I trow not.

But do we agree with Methodists as to the qualifications for the Lord's Supper? They hold and teach, and on this faith practice, that all men, baptized or unbaptized, should partake of the Supper as a means of pardon, regeneration, and salvation,—that no qualifications are required except to know and feel one's self fit for hell.

Wesley says:

"Every one who knows he is fit for hell, being just fit to come to Christ in this as well as all other ways of his appointment."

He says all such should come to have their "souls renewed in the image of God;" and he makes it the duty of his ministers to invite and urge all sinners to partake of the supper for this purpose, and they do it all over the land. Do Baptists agree with them in either the qualifications for or design of the Supper?

Presbyterians do not require regeneration as a qualification for the Lord's Supper, so they be church members and not absolutely scandalous in life, and are not infidels or scoffers. This all intelligent Presbyterian ministers and elders know full well, and Baptists should know it. In the late Pan-Presbyterian Assembly that met in New York last September, Dr. Bannerman, of Scotland, a celebrated scholar and theologian, read a paper on "sealing ordinances," which was unanimously approved. I copy one sentence here:

"Applicants for the sacraments, therefore, do not profess to be Christians except in an outward way. They simply declare that they are not infidels or scoffers, and that they wish church privileges for themselves and their children."—p. 525 of Report, etc.

From this we learn two things; 1. That all except infidels or scoffers are qualified to receive Presbyterian baptism; 2. And on baptism and membership their unregenerate wives and all their ungodly children are baptized and taken into church relations, and entitled to the Lord's Supper. Do Baptists agree with Presbyterians either as to the qualifications for baptism and the

Supper, or the design of those ordinances? Do we believe that by them pardon, and regeneration, and salvation are secured – that they are effectual unto salvation, with or without faith? Let no Baptist say, then, that the faith of Baptists and Protestants is the same, or that we indorse their teachings on the above points. See next chapter.

Prof. Curtis in his work on Communion makes the same statement slightly modified:

“But it is true that baptism is the chief thing that prevents us from affiliating with those Pedobaptist churches which are of similar faith and of congregational government.”—p. 118.

Here is the **threefold** admission; 1. That Pedobaptist societies are **churches**; 2. That there are Pedobaptist churches of **like faith** with Baptists; and 3. That baptism is the chief thing that prevents our intercommunion with them! It really pains one to admit here that Dr. Howard Osgood, of Rochester University, New York, a brother whom I so highly respect as an authority, in his little work “Protestant Pedobaptism,” etc., make the misleading admission, that, touching the **doctrines of grace**, Baptists and Protestant Pedobaptists are generally agreed, and thanks God for it!

He says:

“The central point of controversy between Baptists and Protestant Pedobaptists **is not the doctrines of grace—for thanks be to God, we generally agree there**—but it is the constitution of a church.”—p. 8

“Baptists are thought to be great schismatics, because **agreeing with evangelical Protestants on the great doctrines of the gospel**, antecedent to the doctrines of a church,” etc.—pp. 8, 9.

Now, this was not written to mislead, but it does mislead—nor to deceive, but it does deceive, and greatly contributes to the much already written calculated to confuse and bewilder the people, and to confirm Pedobaptists in their doctrinal errors. What other impressions are these statements calculated to make? What other can they make upon the masses who read them, or hear them quoted, than this, that in all things essential to the salvation of men, Baptists and Pedobaptists substantially agree, and the things about which they differ are mere **non-essentials**? I do not intend to say, or imply, that these good brethren think this, but I do say, this is the impression their unfortunate admissions are calculated to make, and do and **must** make. How often is it spoken and written by Baptist ministers and writers, that the points of agreement between Baptist and Protestants far outnumber those about which we disagree, and the impression sought to be made by those who make this declaration is, that we should not permit these few and non-essential differences to separate us in Christian **work** or **Church** Communion. Now, if this was the truth, no one would glory in it more than the writer of these pages; but alas! It is not the truth, and it ought not to be spoken, or written, to deceive the world. The stern, sad fact is touching the fundamental doctrines of grace; and all that is essential to the plan of salvation, Baptists differ from Protestant Pedobaptists, *toto cælo*, just as far as salvation by the “sovereign grace of God alone,” and salvation by the deeds of law—any law, moral, ceremonial, or ecclesiastical. As far as the East is from the West are these two grounds of salvation asunder,—**the whole revealed word of God lies between them**. Protestant Pedobaptists have made the whole plan of salvation and grace of God of none effect by their **traditions**. Instead of teaching salvation by grace, they teach that union with Christ and salvation, is by and through the ordinances which they have in common with the Romish Church, converted into **sacraments**, thus teaching that **through the church**, can and must the

sinner, “in the ordinary way,” come to **Christ**; and **through the water** of baptism gain access to **the blood** that alone cleanseth from all sin; and through the ministration of an ordained minister can one alone be savingly introduced into the everlasting covenant, and sealed an heir of grace! This doctrine, as the thoughtful reader can see, converts the simple minister of the gospel, and **servant** of the church, into a **priest**, practically possessed of the keys of heaven and hell, at his own will opening so that no one can shut, and shutting so that no one can open! Not only in the sinner’s regeneration thus made by them dependent on the will of men (John I), but “their churches, so called are all formed in direct contravention of God’s way of salvation.”

I have said, and I must continue to repeat it, that I would as soon have a **sacrament** from the hands of a Romish priest, as from a Protestant minister (whose creed makes him a priest), and sooner, as a mercy to the perishing, would I approve of **seven** sacraments than by two, as multiplying the “means of grace.” I can not refrain from allowing Dr. Osgood, whom we heard just now thank God for the agreement of Baptists with Protestant Pedobaptists on the great doctrines of grace, and the gospel of our salvation, an opportunity here to refute his own hasty declaration:

“And this point of difference, i.e. [concerning church constitution], involves not merely that which is outward and subordinate, but draws in its train immediate consequences which **affect the doctrines of God’s grace to sinners.**”—page 10.

That is the stern fact. Their views of church constitution subvert what Baptists regard as the fundamental doctrine of salvation, and therefore our disagreement from all Pedobaptists is nothing less than *toto cælo*.

Hear him again:

“Their churches are, to our view, formed in direct contravention of God’s way of salvation: their constitution is **AT WAR WITH THE DOCTRINES OF GOD’S GRACE.**”—p. 11.

“But this we say, that while we may so highly regard them [not as churches, but personally], we are compelled to bear our testimony—unequivocal and earnest—against what we esteem to be **grievous errors against the doctrines of God.**”—p. 12.

Is not the good doctor manifestly inconsistent, here with himself, when, in one breath, he thanks God that Baptists generally agree with Pedobaptists on the doctrines of grace, and, in the next breath, bear his testimony, unequivocal and earnest, against “their grievous errors against the doctrines of God?” But Jupiter sometimes nods.

On page 13, Dr. Osgood charges upon all Pedobaptists that they put **the Church in the place of the Word**; and, on page 20, that they put **the Church in the place of faith**; and, on page 24, he draws this very just conclusion:

“When the Church is put in the place of faith in the order of salvation—when one is said to be united to Christ, a member of Christ, before he exercises faith—they reverse the whole gospel scheme of salvation. By that act, it is practically declared **that salvation is of works, not of faith.**”

Even these charges are not all, or the severest. On pages 30 and 31, he says:

“To put the Church before faith, to put it before the work of the Spirit, to put it before the Word, is to attempt to put it in the place of God’s sovereignty and secret will; and there it breaks upon the bosses of Jehovah’s buckler. The constitution of that Church can not be scriptural which thus

wages incessant war, not only with distinct and separate truths of God's word, but [in Dr. Hodge's words] with the relation in which the several parts of the divine plan stand to each other."

On page 32, he says:

"Put the ordinances of a church entirely out of view for the moment, and **beyond them how wide is the difference between us!** What **puny superficiality**, then, to assert, that the form of one ordinance is all that makes a Baptist Church to differ from others, or that Baptists exist merely to uphold that form! If there are any Baptists so blind as to acquiesce in a statement so far short of the truth, I pity them.

What noble testimony this would be if Dr. Osgood did not nullify the whole force of it by the declaration and thanksgiving (which Pedobaptists alone will use), that "touching the doctrines of grace, and on all the great doctrines of the gospel antecedent to the doctrine of a Church, Baptists and Protestants, thank God, are agreed." How wide the difference between this statement and his statement last quoted! Who can reconcile them? Pedobaptists will not quote what the doctor says **against**, but **for**, them.

A Baptist Historical Resource
Published by the Center for Theological Research
at www.BaptistTheology.org

©2006 Transcription by Jennifer Faulk and Madison Grace

Permissions: The purpose of this material is to serve the churches. Please feel free to distribute as widely as possible. We ask that you maintain the integrity of the document and the author's wording by not making any alterations and by properly citing any secondary use of this transcription.

The Center for Theological Research
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Fort Worth, Texas
Malcolm B. Yarnell, III, Director