

## CHAPTER VII.

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### FALSE PRETENSIONS EXPOSED.

*Pedobaptists, the most rigid of Close Communionists, by their own Statutes, Standards, and Practice.—The Presbyterians are so.—The Methodist's, the Episcopalian's, the Campbellite's Open Communion a sham and a fraud.*

PEDOBAPTISTS and Campbellites make a great boast of their superior Christian liberality, and appeal to their open communion principles and practice in proof of it; and the world, and most Baptists, even, believe their pretensions are really valid, and Baptists alone unscripturally rigid and “close,” and, therefore, illiberal and “bigoted.” Now, the real fact is, that all Pedobaptist denominations are, by their **very principles** and their statutes, their standards and their **practice, more strict** than even those Baptist churches who observe the Supper as a strictly **church** ordinance, as set forth in this book—for they never give an open-communion invitation to Baptists and Campbellites, or to each other, except in open violation of those principles and laws which they have, by solemn oath or pledge before God, bound themselves to observe; and, more than this, in their **practice**, they do, and dare not, commune with half the members of their own societies – their baptized infants and children—while Baptist churches do commune with all of their own members.

**Presbyterians, by their decisions and the practice of the judicatures, are close communionists.**

The most eminent expounders of their ecclesiastical statutes tell us that only those who hold the self-same faith can unite in “Sealing Ordinances,” without doing violence to the teachings of God’s Word and the Presbyterian standards. Since this will be established in examining the discussions of their Assemblies and Synods, to be submitted, I shall devote no space to its proof here.

According to the Pan-Presbyterian Assembly, that met in Edinburgh, in 1877, there are, in the world, forty-nine different sects of Presbyterians.<sup>1</sup>

Now, it is a fact, that only two or three of these will commune with each other. Their divergence from the old Presbyterian faith consistently separates them from each other’s tables, since the Lord’s Supper is, among other things, a symbol of a common faith held by all the participants.

In that Assembly a resolution was offered to unite in an open-communion service, as they all belonged to the same great Presbyterian family. A grave and reverent doctor of divinity is reported to have used these sentiments in opposing it:

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<sup>1</sup>The First General Council convened in Edinburgh, July, 1877, at which twenty-two Presbyterian denominations were represented. Twenty-seven other Presbyterian “branches” expressed a desire to be represented.—*Ex. Proceedings Second Pan Council.*

“*Mr. President:*—Why are we today divided into different and distinct churches? Because we **could** not scripturally or consistently commune together. And why could we not commune together? Because, having embraced diverse **faiths**, separating from a common faith, we were compelled to separate from a common communion table. If we can scripturally or consistently commune together on the morrow, we can always do so; and all come together, and live henceforth in **one** church, and dissolve forty-eight of our organizations as **schisms**.

“*Mr. President:*—What would we proclaim by uniting in a common communion of this body? That we the many are all **one church**, and all hold and teach **one faith**, one doctrine; and would we not act a great untruth before the whole world—for the eyes of the whole world are on us—when we know, and the whole world knows, that we are **forty-nine** distinct churches, holding and teaching **forty-nine different faiths?**”

The resolution was voted down with great emphasis. When the second session of this assembly was held, in New York, in 1880, a similar motion was rejected, and for the same reasons. Thus, by the highest Presbyterian authority in the world, is open communion pronounced unscriptural and **fraudulent**—a solemn acting of a palpable **untruth** before the world!

It is worthy of special note that this last Pan-Presbyterian Council would not admit the Cumberland Presbyterians to a seat, even so unorthodox did it consider them; and how much less could they consistently commune with them!

But this is not all the proof.

In 1845, the two Presbyterian General Assemblies, the Old School and the New School, met, the same week, in Philadelphia. The latter resolved to celebrate the Lord’s Supper on the coming Sunday, and adopted a resolution inviting the Old School to unite with them in a joint celebration. A most courteous and fraternal invitation was drawn up and sent to the Old School Assembly by the hands of venerable ministers. How was that invitation received? A leading member of the Old School Assembly took the floor, and, with flushed cheek, and closed teeth, asked:

“Had we a right to expect this public insult from the body meeting in another part of the city, calling itself a ‘Presbyterian Assembly?’ What is it, Mr. President, but an **insult**, openly cast into our teeth before the eyes of the whole world? What does it ask us to do? To unite with them in celebrating the Lord’s Supper—a Sealing Ordinance—and thereby, in the presence of God and men, proclaim our **fellowship** for them in respect to their **faith and practice**. Have they not manifestly departed from our standard of faith—the Confession? And was it not for this that this body felt in duty bound to excommunicate them for **heresy**? What, then, do they ask us to do by this invitation? They ask us to stultify ourselves, and act a life in the face of Christendom! Why did we separate? Because we hold different faiths, and, therefore, could not commune together. And now they ask us to say to the world, by our act, that we are **one body**, and hold **one** and the **self-same faith**, which we know, and they know, is not true.”

The invitation was unanimously and indignantly rejected as an **insult**.

Is not this practical **close communion**? If two Presbyterian churches, constructively adopting the same Confession of Faith, can not consistently commune together, how can Presbyterians commune with Methodists and Campbellites! If it is accounted **an insult** for one sister Presbyterian church to commune, how much more an insult must it be considered for Baptists to invite Presbyterians to commune with them? That grave doctor was right, though his language sounds severe. What insult more stinging could be offered a man, than to ask him to forswear himself for your benefit? And this very thing Presbyterians and Methodists do when they ask Baptists to say to the world, by the most solemn acts, that they cordially indorse the

**faith** and the practice of Presbyterians or Methodists, and that they are all one and the **self-same Church of Christ**—“one body!” And this “**great untruth**” the various denominations, when they intercommune, do constantly act before the world and before God; and thereby eat and drink unworthily, profaning the sacred ordinance, and making themselves guilty of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus.

I will further prove my statement from the **Synodical Enactments** of a Synod in a neighboring State:

“The Committee on Bills and Overtures, to whom was referred the question: ‘Is it proper that there should be intercommunion between Presbyterians and those denominations (Methodists and Campbellites) who hold **Arminian sentiments?**’ presented the following report, **which was adopted**:

“‘That, after giving it all the attention which the importance of the subject demands, they are of opinion, that, for Presbyterians to hold communion, in **Sealing Ordinances**, with those who deny the doctrines of Grace through the blood of Christ, etc., is highly prejudicial to the truth as it is in Jesus. Nor can such intercommunion answer any valuable purpose to those who practice it, as **two can not walk together except they be agreed.**’”<sup>2</sup>

Now, not to incur the odium of “close communion,” “bigotry,” etc., this committee insert the provision, that, if any should greatly desire to commune with them, “after having conversed with them, and received **satisfaction** as to their **soundness in the faith**”—Presbyterian, of course, on the points of doctrine, etc.—“on which their church and ours differ,” with **evidence** of their **piety**, as an act of charity, such can be admitted to **OCCASIONAL** communion!! This means that a Methodist or Campbellite, or Cumberland Presbyterian, can **occasionally**—and then only as an **act of charity**—come to the table of the Presbyterians, **provided** they will submit to an **examination** as to their **personal piety**, and will satisfy the session that they **fully indorse the doctrine of eternal personal election and reprobation**; and that Baptists, even, may **occasionally** come, if, in **addition** to the above doctrines, they avow their cordial delight with the doctrine of **federal holiness** of the seed of believers, **sacramental grace, infant baptism, and affusion**. Can Methodists and Campbellites, and much less, Baptists, do this even **once**? If once, can they not one thousand times? Can they not unite, and be Presbyterians forever?

I quote one more Enactment from the same source:

“The committee on a former resolution of synod on the subject of Intercommunion, reported. The report **was adopted**, viz.:

“The committee are of opinion that for Presbyterians to hold Communion in sealing ordinances with those who belong to churches holding doctrines contrary to our **standards** [thus sweep out every other denomination under the whole heavens, together with forty-eight of the forty-nine Presbyterian ‘churches’ that hold contrary to the Old School Presbyterians!] is incompatible with the purity and peace of the church [*i.e.*, the Old School Presbyterian], and highly prejudicial to the truth as it is in Jesus. Nor can such Communion answer any valuable purpose [unless to prejudice the world against the Baptists], etc. In accordance with these views, your committee are of opinion that the practice of inviting to the Communion all who are in good standing in their own churches, **is calculated to do much evil and should not be continued!** while every church session is, however, left at liberty to admit to **occasional** Communion members of other

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<sup>2</sup>Quoted by Dr. Howell from Records. See *Com.*, ch. 16.

denominations, **after having conversed with them, and received satisfaction of their soundness in the faith and Christian practice.**<sup>3</sup> ()

I make no comments. The Synod is a superior court, and it instructs the sessions not to admit without examination, etc. Do not the Presbyterian sessions all around us openly and recklessly violate the express law of their “church,” when they constantly invite the members of all the religious sects in the land to commune with them without examination? Do not the elders, whose duty it is to know the law, uphold their pastors in violating their own law by being false and deceitful, under the plea of Christian liberality, to prejudice the world against Baptists? How can these elders and pastors blame Baptists should they adopt the principle, and carry out the practice enacted by Presbyterian Assemblies and Synods?

D. Monfort, D. D., a distinguished Presbyterian, in his letters to Dr. Rice on Intercommunion, after suggesting that the members of one denomination, if thrown into a community in which there was no church of their preference, should unite with one there, and so in an **orderly** manner come to the Communion, says:

“And it does seem to me that this would be a much **purser** and vastly more **consistent** charity in all denominations, than that of throwing open the **doors** (to the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper) to some **half dozen** different **sects hostile to each other’s peculiarities, and irresponsible to each other**; some making a profession of piety and baptism a condition, and others not; some enforcing infant baptism by discipline, as other Christian duties, others not; or really denying the duty [as do the Baptists]. Against this, I do **protest** with heart and voice, and uplifted hands. I deny it to be Christian fellowship at all. It is handling in the sight of God, angels, and men, the sacraments as **emblems of what does not exist**. It was never contemplated by the Westminster divines, and it has nothing, in my opinion, to support it but the **false charity** of the age...On a question so plain, I can not suppress my astonishment that there should be a difference of opinion and practice in any denomination.”

We take the hand of Dr. Monfort in both of ours in heartiest endorsement of these plain truths. This absurd and hypocritical practice is not only opposed to the plainest teachings of God’s word, and subversive of the very design of the ordinance, but in flagrant violation of the fundamental principles and standard authorities of the very denominations that practice it!

Another distinguished Pedobaptist writer (in *Prot. and Herald*) thus expresses himself:

“For the last twenty years or more, I do not recollect having entertained a doubt that the opening of the doors of our Communion to all, of what are denominated ‘evangelical’ churches is **erroneous**, that it will either **be changed**, or lead to errors of a still more serious nature, containing in itself essentially an **indifference to sound religious principle and practice**, though slow in its development.”

The reader can see from the above facts and statements of representative Presbyterian doctors—

I. That the Presbyterians, so far from being able to offer their fellowship through the Lord’s Supper to members of other denominations, can not even offer it to the different branches of **their own family** or “church,” without a flagrant violation of their Confession, and the decisions of their Pan and General Assemblies and Synods.

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<sup>3</sup>Synodical Records, 1832, vol. iii, p. 240—*Howell*.

2. That when they do practice open Communion with other denominations in token of fellowship and unity, the profession is a **heartless sham**, for the fellowship and the unity do not exist.

3. That Presbyterians can not, except in violation of their confession, which they are solemnly pledged to hold, commune with those whose doctrines they consider unscriptural, or with the unbaptized; and yet they commune with Methodists whose **Arminianism** they regard as subversive of the whole plan of salvation, and who invite all unbaptized and unregenerate sinners, as such, to their tables as a means of pardon and regeneration!

4. The reader also notices that their most distinguished writers commend the closer Communion of the Baptists to the absurd practice of the day that passes under the name of “open Communion.”

5. The reader can also see that according to the ruling of the General Presbyterian Assembly itself, it is a most **bitter insult** for Presbyterians to invite Baptists to commune with them; for it is asking us to fellowship their doctrines and practice, including **federal holiness, infant baptism**, and sacramental grace; which no honest Baptists can do without the renunciation of his own faith and principles. This is so. **A grosser insult could not be offered to a man than to ask him to act a flagrant untruth**, and this open communionists do.

#### **THE EPISCOPALIANS CONSISTENTLY CLOSE.**

Here is the decision of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Williams, Bishop of Connecticut, which must satisfy all:

“No member of any religious society outside of the church can receive her holy communion without a violation of a fundamental law of the liturgy; and **no clergyman can administer it to such a person without a violation of his ordination vows**. The Rubric **commands** that no person shall be admitted to the holy Communion until they have been, or are ready to be, confirmed.”

What is true of Episcopal ministers is equally true of Presbyterian and Methodist preachers.

The Methodists are Close Communionists. Any one the least familiar with the Methodist Discipline and Bishop Hedding’s work on the administration of it, knows that by the laws laid down there for the observance of the Supper, no Methodist preacher, elder, or bishop, can invite Baptists, Presbyterians, or Campbellites to the Methodist Communion table without openly violating the laws of his society, which, in his ordination, he vowed before God and man to strictly observe. I will give the teachings of the Discipline and the rulings of the Methodist bishop in the same connection, that no one can cavil.

Bishop Hedding, Methodist, in his work on the administration of the Discipline, asks:

“Is it proper for a preacher to give out a general invitation in the congregation to members in good standing in other churches to come to the Lord’s Supper?”

“**No**; for the most unworthy persons are apt to think themselves in good standing, etc.”

And again:

“There are some communities, called churches, which, from heretical doctrines or immoral practices, have no claim to the privileges of Christians, and ought not to be admitted to the Communion of any Christian people.”—pp. 72, 73.

He instructs the preachers to do what the Discipline enjoins, and it enjoins thus:

“But no person shall be admitted to the Lord’s Supper among us who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our church.”

“**Inveighing against our doctrines or discipline**” are the capital charges mentioned in section 5; and what Presbyterian, or Baptist, or Campbellite does not oppose both the doctrine and discipline of Methodism as unscriptural and evil? Therefore, how can a Methodist preacher in palpable violation of his Discipline, the explicit instructions of his bishop, his vows to his God and his church, invite Baptists, Presbyterians, or Campbellites to his table? It is, on his part, a **most daring act**, and, on those members of these bodies who accept, the acting of a great untruth, as well as a **profanation of the ordinance**.

Then there is another fact that should make Baptists stand aghast when invited to a Methodist Communion table. It is by them made and administered as one of the sacraments of salvation; and the vilest sinners on the earth—without baptism, of course—are deemed qualified to come to it and partake for the purpose of securing the pardon of their sins and the regeneration of their hearts, and the overwhelming majority of their own members are exhorted to eat the Supper in order to obtain pardon and regeneration! I quote the language of Wesley himself:

“To come to the Supper of the Lord, no fitness is required at the time of communicating, but a sense of our state of utter sinfulness and helplessness. **Every one who know he is fit for hell** being just fit to come to Christ in this as well as all other ways of his appointment...In latter times many [*i.e.*, Baptists] have affirmed that the Lord’s Supper is not a **converting ordinance**...The falsehood of this objection appears both from Scripture precept and example.”—*Wesleyanna*, pp. 283, 284.

Adam Clark, in his notes on 1 Cor. xi: says:

“Every minister of Christ **is bound** to administer it to **every man who is seeking the salvation of his soul**, as well as to believers.”

Who can doubt that all those who eat with this intent, “**eat and drink unworthily**,” failing to discern the Lord’s body, mistaking altogether as they do the true **design** of the ordinance? But what is truly amazing is the fact that most Campbellite ministers, though holding and teaching that no one can be a Christian unless immersed for the remission of sins, and that none can be church members or scripturally entitled to partake of the Lord’s Supper unless immersed, do constantly invite Pedobaptists as well as Baptists, whom they declare unbaptized and unsaved, to come to their tables, and commune with them in token of church and Christian fellowship!

This was Mr. A. Campbell’s opinion of their course—the man who originated the religious system justly called Campbellism—and we think it should be respected, unless they are willing to be regarded as supremely **hypocritical**, believing and teaching one thing and practicing the opposite!

“But I object to making it a rule in **any** case, to receive unimmersed persons to church ordinances; 1. Because it is nowhere commanded; 2. Because it is nowhere preceded in the New Testament; 3. Because it necessarily **corrupts** the simplicity and uniformity of **the whole genius of the New Testament**; 4. Because it not only deranges the order of the kingdom, but **makes void** one of the most important institutions given to man. It necessarily makes immersion of **non-effect**; 5. Because in making a canon to dispense with a divine institution of momentary import, they, who

do so assume the very same dispensing power which issued in that tremendous apostasy which we, and all Christians, are laboring to destroy.”—*Ch. Bapt.*, vol. vi.

I have not space to continue this exposure of the unscripturalness and **supreme absurdity** of open Communion. If Baptists, and all friends of truth and consistency, will but take these facts and arguments, and **boldly** and **vigorously** impress them upon the people, the days of open Communion would speedily be numbered. The most effective arms, the most powerful and destructive cannon, can effect nothing without brave and skilled men to use them, and this is what the Baptist cause now so greatly needs—**more brave and faithful men to use the weapons drawn from the divine armory upon bold, arrogant error, that is rampant all around us, and only a few daring to strike a blow!**

The humblest member, even a sister whom love of Christ and his truth makes bold, could reply when reproached, because her church does not invite all denominations to its table.

We believe, in common with your own denomination, that the Lord’s Supper is a **church** ordinance, and, therefore, none but its own members have a right to partake together, as they alone have the right to vote in the same church.

But were this **not** the case, **we Baptists do not wish to insult you** by inviting you to **our** table, thus asking you to indorse, before God and man, our faith and order as scriptural, and thereby repudiating your own.

Nor can I understand, if your feelings are as kind towards us as you profess, why **you** should wish **to insult us** by inviting us to **your** tables **to renounce our own doctrine and principles** as false, and openly **proclaim our endorsement of yours.**

I have too much respect for you to make you such an insulting proposition, and too much sincerity and **respect** for truth to act the hypocrite to gain your favor.

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