

**"CLOSE COMMUNION:"  
OR, BAPTISM AS  
A PREREQUISITE TO  
THE LORD'S SUPPER**

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"Close communion." or, Baptism as a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper by John T. Christian

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**JOHN T. CHRISTIAN**

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BY

JOHN T. CHRISTIAN, A. M., D. D., LL. D.

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## PREFACE.

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THE position of the Baptists upon the Communion question is one of neutrality. We do not invite others to participate with us; and not inviting others we do not accept invitations. Our position is defensive rather than offensive. This book is written in this spirit. It is intended to explain and defend the practice commonly known as "Close Communion."

We think our practice is Scriptural. The brotherhood of the New Testament were one in fellowship and doctrines. Under those conditions open communion was impossible. This view is confirmed by all history. I have been unable to find an instance of open communion for the first sixteen hundred years after Christ.

I am in no way responsible for the opinions of the authors I quote, only so far as I may endorse them. Many of these writers believe in baptismal salvation, in baptism coming in the room of circumcision, and other errors which we repudiate. I have, however, accurately examined original sources, so that there may be no doubt as to the testimony of these writers.

The author desires that this book may be read in the kind spirit in which it was written. There are many hard facts in the book, but no hard words. I merely recorded facts as I found them without passion or prejudice.

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## CHAPTER I.

ARE IGNORANCE, PREJUDICE, AND BIGOTRY THE  
REASONS WHY BAPTISTS ARE CLOSE COM-  
MUNIONISTS?

THE Baptists have been thoroughly misun-  
derstood on the subject of Close Commu-  
nion; and it has been difficult to get our real  
opinions before the world. That we are more  
illiberal, un-Christian, and sectarian than others  
I do not believe. Perhaps it is frequently more  
convenient and popular to use denunciatory  
words than to meet our arguments. Our position  
has been distorted, and some of those professing  
the broadest liberality have sometimes called us  
the harshest names. I shall notice a few of these  
epithets not for the purpose of stirring up ill  
feeling and strife, for of that there has been too  
much already, but rather that we may have the  
subject fairly before our minds. I believe that  
we can easily show that these names have no  
more application to us than to others.

We have been called "bigoted." Webster says that in its origin the word bigot means "hypocrite," and defines it: "One obstinately and unreasonably wedded to a particular religious creed, opinion, practice or ritual." Hypocrites we are not. It is proverbial that the Baptists are among the boldest and most progressive people on earth; and that they have been swift, in all proper ways, to promulgate their opinions. To the charge of being obstinately and unreasonably wedded to an opinion we plead not guilty. And as to creed or ritual it is not so much as mentioned among us. The fact that our doctrines and practices do not agree with what others believe on those subjects, does not, in the least, go to prove that we are not grounded upon the truth. Our highest appeal is not to the bar of public opinion, but to the Word of God. We stand by the Bible. When God commands a thing, we believe men ought to obey. When men object to this position we make answer: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." (Acts 4:19.) If this is not popular with so-called liberal opinions, as it is not, we can only say: "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29.) We must have a "thus saith the Lord." We should not be criticised because we refuse to obey the commandments of men.

Many wholly mistake latitudinarianism for