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"It is the Lord's table." and for that very reason he alone has the right to invite, or to restrict the invitation. If it were "Our Table" then we could extend the invitation as we might desire and ask all Christians to come.

To those who judge Baptists unkindly or who take offense at our position on the Lord's Supper, we can only say that we must answer to God for our stewardship, and that to refrain from duty here would brand us with unfaithfulness. This unfaithfulness would make us unworthy of our own self-respect as well as unworthy the confidence of others. This article, then, is written to defend the truth, and not to offend the truth-seeker; for, in holding to the "restrictions" placed upon communion, we are defending the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." Since we are to "keep the ordinances as delivered" (1 Cor. 11:2), we must do whatsoever God has commanded us, if we would prove ourselves his friends. (John 15:14.) If there be a cross, it must be taken up and borne (Matt. 16:24), and if we permit earthly ties, even those of father, mother, wife, children, brother, or sister, to come between us and our duty, the Savior says we cannot be his disciples. (Lk. 14:26.)

It can be easily shown that all denominations are with us in holding to the fact that God has placed restrictions upon his "Table" and that it is the duty of Christians to recognize them.

Not to obey is to say that the Lord has made a mistake in his commandments. If we must declare to man that repentance and faith are prerequisites to baptism, must we not also declare the pre-requisites to communion? When this declaration has been made we have discharged our duty, and the responsibility is upon those who come.

Baptists do not stand alone here. It is right to enforce restrictions such as God lays down. But the sin spoken of in this article is not in going too far but in stopping short. To come short is a sin as well as to go too far. Have we declared these restrictions? The commandments are ten. Have we kept them?

1. As to believers. It seems unnecessary to mention this, and yet it must be emphasized, for some churches receive into their fellowship those who have not believed. Surely no one but a believer can "do this in remembrance" of him, and it seems strange that any one else should wish so to do. Always, in Scripture, those who partook were believers.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mk. 16:16.) Only believers, or professed believers, were present at the institution of the Supper. (Matt. 26:26; Mk. 14:22; Luke 22:19.) In Acts 20:7 we are told that "the disciples came together to break bread," and in Jesus' great command he says first to make disciples, then to baptize, and after this to teach

them to observe all things (Mt. 28:18-20). If we throw open the doors and fail to declare this, we are doing violence to God's word.

2. As to baptized believers. This, as has already been stated, is held by all Christians in theory, the question being, What is baptism? Here Dr. Cornelius Tyree has made arguments impregnable. ("Close Communion," Salem, Va., 1887.) The word for sprinkle (rantizo) is used sixty-two times in the New Testament; the word for pour (ekkeo), 152 times; the word for wash (louo), 139 times. The word for immerse (baptizo) is used in the same sentence with these and where distinctions are made in these ideas; yet in not a single case has any but baptizo been used where baptism was spoken of. (See the Greek of Acts 16:33 and elsewhere.) In every case where communion is referred to, or where it may possibly have been administered, the believers had been baptized. (Acts 2:42; 4:17; 8:12; 35:38; 10:47; 16:14; 18:8; 20:7; 1 Cor. 1:13, etc.) Baptism comes before communion, just as repentance and faith should precede baptism.

We find in all the other denominations that their requirements are baptism (as they practice it), church membership, conversion, and orderly walk. Dr. Cuyler an eminent Presbyterian minister, says: "I do not suppose there is any difference between the Presbyterians and Baptists in the terms of communion." The "New York Observer," perhaps the leading Presbyterian paper of the world, says: "It is not want of charity which compels the Baptist to restrict his invitation. He has no hesitation in admitting the personal piety of his unimmersed brethren. Presbyterians do not invite the unbaptized, however pious they may be. It is not uncharitable."

This position is largely the position of Lutheran, Congregational, Episcopalian, and Methodist churches. Mr. Wesley says, in his Journal, Vol. 1, page 466, in regard to a case in question: "And yet this very man, when I was in Savannah, did I refuse to admit to the Lord's table, because he was not baptized by a man who had been Episcopally ordained." Again, in the "Oxford Methodists" we read: "Even in Georgia, Mr. Wesley excluded Dissenters from the holy communion, on the ground that they had not been properly baptized, and he himself would baptize only by immersion, unless the child or person was in a weak state of health." Our Methodist friends are even closer than we are, for the ministry does not commune with the laity, and many of their own members (the infants) are excluded.

Belief and baptism mark the first steps in the Christian life, and the Bible never in a single instance gives the Supper before baptism. We are first born again, and then, going down into the water in outward profession of this inward possession, we come up to walk in newness of life, and in this new life is found the Supper. Their very order is significant, and is surely not an accident. (Rom. 6:5; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:26.)

3. Baptized believers in church capacity. Here again some leave us; but let us not leave God's Word. "When ye come together in the church," (1 Cor. 11:18) does not mean the church building, for they had none and ekklesia is never so used. That it was a church ordinance was already implied in their baptism, for that itself is a church ordinance. Then, again, the Supper is never spoken of in connection with individuals; for example, we read nothing of it in connection with Cornelius, the eunuch, Lydia, or Paul. But when referred to it is only by baptized believers in church capacity. Acts 2:42ff; 5:11; 8:1; 11:22; 15:4; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:18, 20, 33, and 1:2. "The church of God which is at Corinth." The individual administration of the ordinance has no Bible warrant, and is only a relic of Romanism. The Lord's Supper is

a church ordinance, and anything which goes beyond or comes short of this falls for want of Scripture.

The Pan-Presbyterian Council of 1880, at Philadelphia, refused to take the Lord's Supper together, because they believed it to be a church ordinance, and that only those should partake who are subject to discipline. Our brethren of this denomination require also that the administrator of the Lord's Supper be a Presbyterian minister.

4. Church with the "apostles doctrine." Here again we find another restriction laid down by the Word of God. Those who partook "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." (Acts 2:2.)

"Latitudinarianism must find its justification, if it can, elsewhere than in the teachings of the New Testament. The broad church must bring the stones of its foundation from other quarries than those of primitive Christianity." How clear and solemn is the injunction: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they have received of us." (2 Thes. 3:6 R. V.) Then to commune together is to have the same doctrine. (1 John 1:3; Col. 2:5; 1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thes. 2:15; 2 John 10:11; Rev. 2:14ff; 1 Cor. 10:17.) "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and turn away from them." (Rom. 16:17 R. V.; cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; Amos 3:3.)

If men walk not after the tradition which the Word gives us (2 Thes. 3:6) then we have not the same doctrine, and are commanded to withdraw ourselves. "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23.)

It is pitiable for us to declare that our beliefs are one at the "Table," and then continue our separate church existence in order to maintain the differences in our faith.

5. "Apostles' doctrine and in fellowship." (Acts 2:41f.)

God's commands are not to be neglected by us from mere sentiment. We may be charged with lack of courtesy and brotherly love; yet those who chide would lose respect for us, if we chose our own feelings or the feelings of others rather than the command of God. He who loves anything more than his Lord is not worthy of him. The New Testament is our all-sufficient guide. We must not permit ourselves to be guided by feelings, or opinion, or sentiment. These will not stand as excuses for disobedience. "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God," is our only reply. The fact that brethren see differently and are conscientious is no reason why I should do violence to my conscience; for on this same ground I should invite the Buddhist, the Brahman, the Taoist, the Mohammedan, the Romanist, and perhaps the atheist. Every man must answer for himself, and we must do what we believe to be right.

Discipline and the withdrawal of fellowship at once deprive of communion. What does this mean, if not that those who partake are in fellowship, church fellowship. Without unity communion is impossible. In 1 Cor. 11:17-20 we are told that if we come to the table with divisions existing among us that "it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper." (Amer. Rev.) So that a local church with factions among the members may observe what they call the Supper, but God does not recognize nor approve, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." 1 Cor. 10:16, 17.

Here we have the one loaf the one body, the church, and the many members united. If an unrestricted com-

munion is practiced, the excluded member has only to unite with some other denomination and then come to be welcomed.

6. As to divisions. The Bible is explicit in condemning divisions around the table. (1 Cor. 11:18ff.) We are commanded, as seen above (Rom. 16:17), to turn away from those who cause such since, if there be occasion for this reproof, we are not really observing the Lord's Supper. (1 Cor. 11:20.) External professions of union amount to nothing, if the facts be to the contrary. To come to the table professing that there are no differences, and still maintain our separate organization, is to proclaim one thing and live another. If there be no divisions, then let us be one. But if our views be different, there is no use proclaiming otherwise. If the faction in the church is displeasing to God, surely even it has grown to be large enough to become a separate denomination, it is no more in accordance with his desires.

"Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body (the church body), and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."—Eph. 4:3-6.

"For as the body (human body) is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now there are many members, but one body. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof."—1 Cor. 12:12, 13, 19, 20, 27.

7. As to elements. On this Protestants are practically agreed. (1 Cor. 11:23ff.; Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19.) Would it not be just as proper to use milk instead of wine, as to change any other part of the ordinance? The discussion as to "juice of the grape" or "fermented wine" is an attempt to be exact in the observance of the Supper, and we should be just as eager to do the right thing in all the commands concerning it.

8. As to motive. But here there are again very diverse views, and strong reasons for the stand taken by Baptists. Again we are set for the defense of the truth and enter our solemn protest against "transubstantiation" as held by Romanists, leading as it does to gross superstition and downright idolatry; against "consubstantiation," or "real presence," as held by Lutherans, teaching that the communicant receives "in a corporal sense the actual body and blood of Christ in, under, and with the elements" (Harvey); against the "mystical presence," as held by Presbyterians, teaching as one stated it, that "our souls are fed by the flesh and blood of Christ, just as our bodily life is nourished by bread and wine," "we are truly made partakers of the proper substance of the body and blood of Jesus;" against the doctrine that the Supper is of itself a "means of grace," as held by Episcopalians, Methodists, and others. Were Luther and Calvin and Zwingli right in withdrawing from the "transubstantiation" idea and protesting against it? Then, are we wrong when, standing upon the Word, we say it is not even to be a social meal (1 Cor. 11:22), but is to show forth the Lord's death (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19), and is to be done "in remembrance of" him? (1 Cor. 11:25.)

9. As to moral life. "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner with such an one no one to eat." (1 Cor. 5:11; cf.

Matt. 18:15ff.; Gal. 1:7; Tit. 3:10.) The danger is that we will be more particular about heresy than about immorality. But, though we may overlook this, the communicants do not, and that is why so many of them leave when the table is spread.

10. As to self-examination. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." (1 Cor. 11:28.) The Bible urges this in addition to all the other restrictions. God has given us but two ordinances, and these set forth the two great facts of the Gospel—an "illustrated creed." Just as loving children gather about some little token, the reminder of a departed mother, so we do this in remembrance of him, examining our hearts to know if in it we see his work of love for us. Being conscientious does not make the brother right. Says Dr. Alexander: "We are responsible for our ignorance of the truth." "He who is under fundamental error is in a sad dilemma. Do what he will, he sins. If he disobey conscience, he knowingly sins, doing what he believes to be wrong; and a man never can be justified for doing what he believes to be wrong, even though it should turn out to be right. And if he obey conscience, performing an act which is in itself wrong, he sins; because he complies not with the law under which he is placed." However, this to us is not inconsistent with respect and love for others. That I love my own mother is no reason why I should hate and speak evil of yours. On the contrary, if I failed to do what God has commanded me, I should be in sin. We warn men to repent and believe before baptism; so should we declare inviting people indiscriminately to the restrictions here, and not sin by table.

After all, to practice unrestricted communion not only fails to bring good, but actually results in evil, as may be easily shown from the practice in England. It surrenders our protest against an unregenerated church membership by recognizing as a Christian him who in infancy is "received into Christ's holy church and made a lively member of the same." (Discipline, page 258, 1891, M. E. Church South.) This turning the world into the church produces lax discipline. Much of her power and purity is lost, and loose discipline means loose doctrine. Then, from loose discipline and loose doctrine is but a step to loose morals.

If we were all one, if we saw eye to eye, and ceased our scramble for numbers, this selling of the truth for popularity would end. Union with all who name the name of Christ is a thing to be desired, prayed for, and worked for. But if it must come at the expense of truth, it is not desirable, and would not be helpful or acceptable. When charged with causing divisions, we plead "not guilty," for those who have left the Word and accepted the decisions of "councils" have caused the divisions, and we cannot forsake the truth in order to bring about a union which would be only temporary. We will rather cling to the standard, and hope and pray that the day may soon come when the churches shall say, "The Bible, and the Bible only." The rivers of truth and error, at first separate, have become sadly mixed, until it all looks dim and turbid. But the impurities are settling, and when the waters shall have found their way to the sea of eternity, error will have been purified, sin left behind, and truth be as it was when it came out from the throne of God.

Louisville, Ky.

Those belonging to church who think that when they have delayed the payment of a just debt till it is old that it ought to be compromised—or not paid at all.

Pastor W. H. Rich, of the Atlantic, attended the meeting of the State Board of Missions at Raleigh, N. C., December 31st.