

10-24-1852

# 1852 Minutes of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association

Kings Mountain Baptist Association

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# M I N U T E S

OF THE

## KING'S MOUNTAIN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

AT THE

### SECOND ANNIVERSARY MEETING,

CONVENED AT

### NEW BETHEL CHURCH, CLEVELAND CO., N. C.,

**Friday, October 24th, 1852, and days following.**

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The Introductory Sermon was delivered agreeably to appointment by Elder Joseph Suttle, from Mark, 7th Chapter, 7th Verse.

*"Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*

After a short intermission, the Delegates convened in the Meeting House, and prayer was offered up by Elder Thomas Dickson.

The churches were then severally called, their letters received and read, and the names of their Delegates enrolled, and the State of the Churches minuted.

1. Elected Elder T. Dickson, *moderator*, and Bro. J. R. Logan, *Clerk*.

2. Opened the door for the reception of churches into our Union, when the church at High Shoal, recently dismissed from the Green River Association, and the Mount Vernon church, dismissed from the Catawba River Association, made application and were admitted as members of this body.

3. Appointed R. T. Hord, F. Lattimore, A. S. Elam, W. Covington and W. H. Green, a committee on preaching during the Session.

4. Appointed Elder J. Suttle, E. Jones, F. S. Ramsour, T. Dickson and J. R. Logan, a committee of arrangement, to whom all the papers and other documents concerning the Association were referred.

5. Called for, and received, corresponding Messengers from Sister Associations, as follows, viz:

From the Broad River, Elder W. Hill. From the Green River, Elders, L. McCurry, Wm. Harrill and Bro. J. C. Lattimore. From the Catawba River, Elder Thomas Carleton. From the Bethel, no messenger or letter.

6. Invited ministering brethren, not delegated, to seats in Council, and received Elder R. P. Logan, and Bro. J. Harrill.

On motion, the Association adjourned until Saturday morning 10 o'clock. Prayer by Elder D. Pannell.

*Saturday*.—The Association met according to adjournment, prayer by the Moderator.

7. On motion, the committee of arrangement reported, and were discharged.

8. Called the roll of delegates and marked absentees.

9. Read the Constitution and Rules of decorum.

10. Appointed W. H. Hardin, Wm. Moore Sr., and W. H. Green, a committee on union meetings.



11. Appointed L. McSwain, A. S. Elam and J. Turner, a committee on finance.

12. Appointed F. S. Ramsour, Major Hull, R. T. Hord and J. Suttle, a committee on correspondence with Sister Associations.

13. Read and adopted the Circular Letter, and ordered that it be printed as usual with the Minutes of the session.

14. Elected T. Carleton, L. McCurry and T. Dickson, to preach on the Sabbath.

15. Elected Elder G. W. Rollins, to preach the Sermon introductory to the next annual meeting of the Association, and Elder T. Dickson, *alternate*.

16. Elected Elder D. Pannel, to write a circular Letter for next year, on the subject of "election."

17. The committee on Union meetings, submitted the following Report, to wit:

First Union meeting to be held with the church at Bethel, commencing on Friday previous to the 1st Lords day in May next. (1853) The second Union meeting to be held with the church at Buffalo, commencing on Friday before the 4th Lords day in June next.

W. H. GREEN, *Chmn.*

Whereupon the Association appointed Elders, J. Suttle, B. E. Rollins, T. Dickson, G. W. Rollins, L. McSwain, R. P. Logan and Brother Robt. Poston, to attend the 1st Union meeting at Bethel. And Elders, D. Pannel, B. E. Rollins, L. McSwain, T. Dickson, J. Suttle, G. W. Rollins and Bro. Robt. Poston, to attend the Union meeting at Buffalo.

18. The committee on Finance made the subjoined Report, which was adopted, viz:

Your committee submit the following as the amount of contributions from the Several Churches for publishing the minutes of the Session to wit:

Buffalo,	\$3,20	Sandy Run,	\$2,00
Zoar,	3,00	Zion,	1,50
Double Spring,	1,81	Bethel	50
Boiling Spring,	1,75	Mount Sinai,	1,00
New Bethel,	2,50	Mount Pleasant,	1,00
Broad River,	52½	Beaver Dam	1,00
Pleasant Hill,	1,50	High Shoal,	50
Mount Vernon,	60		

Aggregate, \$22,38½

Respectfully submitted,

A. S. ELAM, *Chmn.*

The Association then ordered that the Clerk superintend the publication, and distribution of 1000 copies among the churches, and accept of Ten dollars for serving.

19. The Committee on Correspondence, submitted the following Letter, which was signed by the Moderator and Clerk, and ordered to be printed, viz:

#### CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The King's Mountain Baptist Association, To her Sisters, the Broad River Association, The Green River Association, The Catawba River, and Bethel Associations, Greeting:

Dearly Beloved Brethren:

We have been graciously permitted to hold our second annual meeting, which has been characterized by harmony and brotherly love. The business devolving on the body, has been transacted in a quiet and peaceable manner, and we trust with an eye single to the glory of God, and the advancement of the Redeemer's



Kingdom on earth. During the present session, we have received two churches into our Union, and we trust, ere long, to have the consolation of announcing other accessions to our number. Some of our churches appear to have been blessed with revivals during the past Associational year, and have received Several new members; amounting, in the aggregate, to 123 by baptism, whilst others are in a cold and languid state.

With unfeigned joy and gladness, we received as corresponding Messengers, Elders, T. Carleton, L. McCurry, W. Harrill, and Wade Hill, by whom we were greatly refreshed and encouraged, and whose labors we trust will prove a blessing to many in days to come.

Our next Association will be held with the church at *Boiling Spring*, about eight miles S. W. of Shelby, Cleveland county, N. C.; commencing on Friday before the 4th Sunday in October next, (1853.) And as we still desire to keep up a friendly correspondence, we therefore invite, and solicit your punctual attendance with us at our next annual meeting.

In the meantime, we crave an interest in your prayers, at the throne of God's grace. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

T. DICKSON, *Moderator*.

J. R. LOGAN, *Clerk*.

20. The Association appointed Elders, T. Dickson, J. Suttle, G. W. Rollins, and Bro. Robt. Poston, Messengers to the Broad River Association. To the Green River, Elders, T. Dickson, D. Pannell, G. W. Rollins, and B. E. Rollins, Messengers. To the Catawba River, Elders, T. Dickson, J. Suttle, L. McSwain, and brothers, J. J. Jones, and Major Hull, Messengers. To the Bethel Association, Elders, D. Pannell, G. W. Rollins, L. McSwain, and Bro. Robt. Poston, Messengers.

Prayer by Elder L. McSwain, and the Association adjourned to meet again on Monday 9 o'clock, A. M.

*Sunday*.—The Stand was occupied by those appointed, and the word of life was faithfully exhibited to a large and attentive congregation, by Elders, T. Dickson, Thos. Carleton, L. McCurry, and L. McSwain, in the order of their names, and we are not without hope, that much good may result from the exercises of this day.

MONDAY, 9 o'clock, A. M.

The Association met according to adjournment, prayer by Brother Poston.

Took up the unfinished business of the Association.

On motion the following Resolution was unanimously adopted, viz:

21. *Resolved*, That the several Churches composing this Association be requested to observe, and set apart the 1st day of January next, as a day of Thanksgiving, fasting and prayer, for the spread of the gospel,—the blessings of peace, and unrivalled piety; and that the several churches in our Union be requested to meet at their respective Meeting Houses, and engage in Divine Service on that day.

22. Voted a Resolution of thanks to the citizens and brethren in the vicinity of New Bethel church, for their kindness and urbanity manifested in the accommodation of the delegates composing this Association.

The Association then adjourned to meet at Boiling Spring church on Friday before the 4th Lord's day in October next, (1853.) Prayer by Elder G. W. Rollins.

T. DICKSON, *Moderator*.

J. R. LOGAN, *Clerk*.



# TABULAR STATEMENT.

No.	CHURCHES.	Post Offices.	CLERKS OF CHURCHES.		MINISTERIAL SUPPLIES	DELEGATES' NAMES										Total.	Conti.	
			Ordnained Ministers, in Small Capitals, Licensed Minist'rs in Italics, Lay members in Roman.															
						Bapt'd	Presb.	Episcop.	Rest'd	Exc'd	Dead							
1	Buffalo	Evinsville,	Wm Hamrick,	T. Dickson,	4	B Rollins,	F S Ramsort,	W Moore,	W Ham,*	3	15	13	0	3	7	255	3	20
2	Sandy Run	Mooreboro',	E P Jones,	J Suttle,	3	C Bridges,	E Jones,	E P Jones,	W McKinney	11	11	12	0	3	3	154	3	00
3	Zion,	Shelby,	J Bailey,	T T Dickson,	1	W Covington,	T J Elam,	J Poston,	J Bailey,	0	2	12	0	2	0	153	3	00
4	Zeet,	Shelby,	J R Logan,	T T Dickson,	2	T Dickson,	W H Green,	J R Logan,	T*rick, J	0	4	18	1	1	2	133	1	50
5	Double Spring;	Camp Call,	M Gold,	J Suttle,	2	J Suttle,	R Poston,	D P Gold,	T Turner, W	0	7	13	0	0	0	114	1	81
6	Bethel,	Webb's Ford,	W H Hardin,	D Pannell,	1	D Pannell,	W H Hardin,	[Moore, jr,		2	2	20	1	1	4	98	50	50
7	Boiling Springs	Sandy Run,	S Hughes,	J Suttle,	1	A Hamrick,	D D Durham,	W H Green, jr,		13	1	7	1	1	4	134	1	75
8	Mount Sinai,	Evinsville,	J Randall	L McSwain,	3	L McSwain,	Thos. McSwain,			7	4	0	1	1	0	50	1	00
9	New Bethel,	Gardin's Ford,	R T Hord,	T Dickson,	3	A S Elam,	M Hull,	F Lattimore,	R T Hord,	13	13	6	0	4	2	172	2	50
10	Mount Pleasant,	Sandy Run,	W B Hanes,	G W Rollins,	2	G W Rollins,	W B Hanes,			0	0	2	0	0	1	41	1	00
11	Broad River,	Cherokee L. W. J. L. Tucker,	BE Rollins,	BE Rollins,	1	D Pealer,	J Mass,			2	0	0	0	0	0	26	524	00
12	Beaver Dam,	Fillmore,	D C Webb,	R P Logan,	4	Wm McSwain,	J J Jones,			13	5	0	0	0	3	57	1	00
13	Pleasant Hill,	Swaugstown,	S Putman,	G W Rollins,	1	M L Ross,	H Roberts,			17	14	3	0	1	0	71	1	50
14	High Shoal,	W Smith,	G W Rollins,	G W Rollins,	4	Wm Smith,	M D Padgett,			21	4	1	0	1	2	56	50	50
15	Mount Vernon,	Seagles Store,	A L Johnson,	A J Canster,	4	A L Johnson,	L Davis,			26	1	0	0	0	2	50	60	60

Total,

128 83 89 3 13 27 1496 \$22,384



## KING'S MOUNTAIN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION TO THE CHURCHES IN UNION.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN :

In pursuance of a resolution adopted last year by the Association, "*The duty of Church Members towards each other,*" is made the subject of the present Circular Address.

In the elucidation or discussion of this important subject we shall be compelled to use brevity, as the short limits of a Circular Letter will not admit of that amplification or diffusion that the copiousness of the subject will justly afford.

In treating the subject intelligibly, we shall in a brief manner attempt to point out the origin and nature of Church membership, before proceeding to take up the main branch of our subject.

Agreeably to approved Lexicographers, the English word Church, is derived from the Greek word, *Ekklesia*, which being translated means an Assembly of men, called out from among other men. But in the more common acceptation of the term, when used by the sacred writers, it means a company of saints, a religious society or congregation of holy men and women. The christian church in its embodiment as a divine institution can boast of an inspired history of its organization and development, which is amply and fully exhibited in the New Testament. Its origin was in the city of Jerusalem. In that city was collected and located the first assembly or congregation of christians,—THE CHURCH, Acts II, 47, which we may with propriety style the model or mother church. And although we are informed of additions or accessions being made to the church as thus organized; yet the materials will be found on examination, to be those that "gladly received his word and were baptized." "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women." And in no instance do we find any record of *unbelievers* being introduced to membership, nor have we any rational ground, for the inference that among the one hundred and twenty names mentioned Acts I, 15, or of those that "gladly received his word," &c., and were subsequently added to them, were any other than true believers; they were doubtless "children of God chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; hence, we feel bound to conclude that those, and those *only*, who have experienced a renovating change of heart, and have been enabled by divine grace to act true and evangelical faith in the Saviour of the world, have a genuine right to membership in the visible church of Jesus Christ. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me," John xv, 4, and again, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" &c., 2 Cor. vi, 14. Now it is obvious, as the foregoing quotations abundantly prove, that to be a member of Christ's visible church on earth, we should first be made partakers of his divine nature by an application of his atonement through faith; until this blessing is obtained, we have no right, strictly speaking, to claim the privilege of membership in his church, nor can we expect to enjoy that reciprocal fellowship or communion that exists between Christ and his true followers. In short, without this, we have no right to expect to receive the spirit of adoption, whereby we can with confidence cry, "Abba Father." But when this blessing is obtained the Spirit then bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, and if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with



Christ. Such is the nature of church membership, or in other words, of being united to Christ through the faith of the gospel. And here we might enlarge, and attempt to point out some of the inestimable benefits and blessings resulting from, and connected with, the nature of our union or membership with Christ, but our space admonishes us to pursue the more prominent part of our subject, to-wit: "The Duties incumbent on Church Members towards each other."

Among the higher class of christian duties none is more transcendently prominent than *Christian love*; and indeed almost every other lesser duty is summarily comprehended and included in this. By this, the subjects of Christ are distinguished, and made known to the world of mankind, by their mutual and cordial affection towards each other.—*Love*, is put forth by the Saviour of the world as the identifying law of his government. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." John xv, 12. This duty should be the cardinal virtue and distinguishing characteristic of all those that profess to be his followers; and it may with propriety be remarked that His love has not only been made the chief inducement, but the pattern of our love to each other. Let us for a moment consider the character and properties of his love to us, that we may the better be enabled to receive instructions as to what should be the distinguishing features and characteristics of our own. The love of Christ was free and disinterested, exercised voluntarily, without any regard to our deserts. In like manner, therefore, should ours be conferred on one another, voluntarily and independent of any regard to our own interests or advantage; without even the hope or semblance of the fee of reward. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" Mat. v, 46. The love of the Saviour was characterized by tears, agonizing groans, and bloody sweat; so should ours be in every good work of kindness, sympathy and brotherly charity, that may in the least degree tend to the promotion of peace and the welfare of each other. The love of Christ was characterized by forbearance, clemency, tenderness and forgiveness. So ours should reflect the same congenial traits of character. His was nothing but a spiritual flame issuing from the very fountain head of eternal love itself, loving us not as rational creatures merely but as objects of divine affection, and subjects of divine likeness. His was unchangeable, notwithstanding our weakness and unkindnesses. In like manner it is the duty of church members to love one another with an unalterable affection; maugre all little foibles and infirmities of temper and conduct, which we so frequently have to encounter with in our daily intercourse with our fellow christians.

The apostles of Christ strictly enjoined the churches which they planted to a due observance of this important duty, "to love one another and to let brotherly love abound and increase." So important is this grace in the christian economy, that, like holiness, no measure of it is sufficient to meet the requirements of the word of God. The church, where it is lacking, whatever may be the number, or intellectual gifts of its members, to use the language of an eloquent writer, "is nothing better than a heap of stones, which, however polished, want the coherence and similitude of a palace."

In the early and purer ages of the church, we are historically informed that this important virtue of brotherly love, or christian charity, displayed a light of such brilliancy in the character and general conduct of its members, which was reflected in actions so replete with noble, disinterested and heroic affection, as to call forth from surrounding Pagans and infidels, the well known proverb, "See how these christians love one another." A eulogium every way worthy of conduct so appropriate.



and a more valuable tribute was never deposited on the altar of christianity. Alas! that the church should so soon degenerate, and as it grew older become lukewarm, and even corrupt, by which its original or primeval loveliness has not only been tarnished, but in many instances well nigh obliterated.

In the next place it will be proper to designate the *manner* in which brotherly love wherever it exists, will operate.

First. The love of christians is of a nature sacred, and quite peculiar. It is not the love of consanguinity or affinity, nor yet of friendship or general esteem induced by a consideration of acts of kindness and benevolence towards us; but it is purely an affection gratuitously bestowed, and cherished for Christ's sake. We may discover many things in each other that will unavoidably meet the approbation of our judgement, such as an amiable and kind disposition; and we are prone to admire public spirit in matters of religion, and a tender sympathy for the woes and misfortunes of others; yet christian love is not based on considerations or qualities of this sort; they may tend to increase our attachment to those having the possession of qualities of heart so amiable and desirable to all christians, but christian love rests simply and purely on the ground of a common relationship to Christ. On this account, church members are to take pure delight in each other, as being *one in Christ*. Believers in Christ should ever regard the church, as the object of the Redeemer's living and dying love; upon it he looks with an eye of complacency and delight, and out of affection to him church members should ever cultivate a tender feeling for, and an inexpressible delight in, the society of each other; we should cultivate greater familiarity and more frequently converse and privately commune with each other, in reference to the great matter of salvation.

2d. Love to our brethren will influence church members to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Gal. vi. 2. When we see our brethren oppressed and downcast, overwhelmed with an unwieldy load of anxious care and solicitude, instead of manifesting a cold indifference and distant shyness towards them, we should approach them with kindness, evincing a tender solicitude to know the cause of their dejection and be at all times ready to apply, if possible and within our reach, the necessary balm of relief. If christians would cultivate more the principle of kindness, and watch over one another in such cases, and render the assistance that each might, and should do, in mitigating and relieving the cares and anxieties of the oppressed; how much more smooth and agreeable would be made the christian's path? The indifference of some christians to the burthens of their brethren is lamentable, indeed; their conduct towards them betrays an utter carelessness and supineness as to their afflicted condition; they would see them crushed to the very earth with cares and sorrows, and never make one kind effort to extricate them from the dust of humiliation and sorrow. *Love* requires that every church member should take a deep and abiding interest in each other's welfare; and hence it is the duty of all, to cultivate more familiarity and condescension towards each other. It is not only the duty of christians patiently to listen to the tale of distress which may be rehearsed by an afflicted brother, and mingle our tears and sorrows with his, but *love*, the great promoting cause of all good acts, will prompt us to tender to him our best counsels, and suggest to him the consolations of the gospel. In a word, we should convince him of our sympathies by unmistakable acts of tenderness manifested in his case by which he may plainly perceive that not only has our ear, but our heart been reached in his behalf.



3d. Love requires the professors of the christian religion to visit the sick and the afflicted. "I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me,—forasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me." The foregoing quotation is the language of Christ instructing his followers in reference to the duty incumbent upon all church members to visit one another in their afflictions. In looking abroad in the christian world, we regret to say, we find but few duties more neglected than this; it seems a moral apathy or indisposition has seized professing christians, and to a shameful extent prevented their observance of this duty. How often are the sick and the afflicted suffered to occupy their beds of languishing and death, for weeks and even months without receiving a single friendly visit from many of the professed followers of Christ whose situation and circumstances, aside from other important considerations, rendered the observance of this duty inexcusable; while such delinquent christians at the same time are enjoying the blessings of good health, and pursuing, to advantage, the daily avocations of life, amassing to themselves a redundancy of the perishable things of the world? How many church members do we discover within our limited observation who scarcely ever pay a single visit to the bedside of a sick brother? Alas! this important duty is too much, yea, shamefully neglected, by too many who profess the christian name. How can such rationally expect to hear the Saviour say, "*I was sick and ye visited me?*" The adoption of a course of conduct more in accordance with the christian character in reference to visiting the sick and afflicted is urged upon the consideration of every church member within the bounds of the Association and the attention of christians generally.

4th. Prayer, connected with the reading of God's word, is another important duty incumbent on church members. "Pray one for another," James, v, 16. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life," &c. It is not only our duty to pray for, but with one another, and that without ceasing, not only privately, but socially and publicly. Nor is the duty of reading the sacred scriptures to one another and of explaining and enforcing the important truths contained therein, on all suitable occasions less incumbent on christians generally. These duties, we fear, are too much neglected among all of our churches, and it is therefore urged that a greater zeal be awakened, and that a deeper interest be manifested upon this important subject throughout the Association, and among christians generally.

5th. *Forbearance*, is a great christian virtue, and a very essential duty of church members. "Forbearing one with another in love," Eph. iv, 2. The christian church is composed of a membership embracing every variety of temper and gradation of intellect; consequently, much forbearance is necessary to harmonize the conflicting views and passions incident to a society so diversified, and maintain unimpaired, "the unity of the Spirit, in the bonds of peace." The strong must bear with the infirmities of the weak. Christians of large acquirements in knowledge, should not treat with contempt and contumely, the more humble and sometimes feeble conceptions of the weak. The virtue of christian love and a proper respect for the christian cause, will influence such to correct, with mildness and meekness, the errors that proceed from the ignorant. Again, there are persons who no doubt are genuine and devoted christians, whose manners appear abtrusive, not to say disgusting; some may be inclined to talk too free, or too much; while others appear disposed to find fault with almost everything that may be introduced. Without forbearance, circumstances like these may tend greatly to prevent that communion and fellowship so essentially necessary to the



preservation of peace and harmony in the church. In all such cases it becomes church members to exercise that charity "which covereth all things."

6th. Church members, actuated by christian love, should watch over one another. Churches are organized and brought into fellowship for the express purpose of watching over one another in love; in no instance can christians be justifiable in adopting the language of Cain, (who had just murdered his brother) and ask, "am I my brother's keeper?" Love requires church members to watch over each other with vigilance and care, and from time to time, seriously admonish and reprove one another, with meekness, as circumstances may require. Is a brother, through the influence of evil examples and severe temptation, about to be led astray from the path of duty to a participation in some of the fashionable vices and frivolities of the times? Then christian love requires your interposition to prevent his ruin. How can we love a brother and at the same time see him pursuing a course that must inevitably injure him without entreating him to desist? "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one to the spirit of meekness." Gal. vi, 1. The duty of watching over, and reproving one another is too much neglected by church members. This is no doubt the result of a craven fear of offending our brethren; but if rightly considered, by keeping silence under such circumstances, we, to a certain extent, connive at their misdeeds, and are so far partakers with them in their evil deeds. What shame, anguish and disgrace would the offender himself been spared, and what dishonor and scandal would have been averted from the church by this one act of faithful love. Is a brother tempted to approach the room of *civil mirth*, the gaming table, or the retail shop? then let your savory influence be interposed to prevent his disgrace and ruin; for we are not to suffer our brethren to transgress either in word or deed if we can prevent it; nor are we to suffer duty to be omitted by a brother without a faithful admonition. Church members have no right to the secret things of each other, nor should they be busy bodies in other men's matters for that is prohibited by God. 1 Thes. iii, 2. 1 Pet. iv, 15. Neither have they any right to assume a dictatorial authority over one another, and act the part of tyrannical inquisitors; for such a course is extremely offensive and not to be tolerated. Our duty however to "exhort one another daily lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," remains imperative upon each and every christian.

Let us then beware of that spirit which is too prevalent in all our churches and which influences too many christians to act as if their fellow members were no more to them than the stranger at the ends of the earth. The admonition "to warn the unruly," 1 Thes. v, 14, was intended as well for private christians as those acting as ministers or preachers.

The duty of warning and reproving may be considered difficult and self denying, (as it really is) and is often very unpleasant, but that will not justify church members in neglecting it. Christian love will enable and prompt us to its performance; and moreover, we dare not shrink from the performance of a duty, the neglect of which violates a sacred injunction of the Saviour.

Church members should always strive to cultivate peace and harmony one with another. "Be of one mind, live in peace," 2 Cor. iii, 11. "Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," Rom. xv, 9. Peace is very truly said to be "the good man's end," and no society can long exist without it. We might here, if our space admitted, expiate on the great importance and value of peace to the church collectively, but deem



it unnecessary, as its importance will appear obvious to the most superficial observers. It will be advisable, however, to point out some of the means proper to be employed by church members for the attainment of so desirable a blessing.

Church members should be submissive one to another in love and humility. "Likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder.—Yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility. 1 Peter v. 5. The foregoing quotation requires a kind of mutual subjection among all the members of the church of Jesus Christ; it is, however, not pretended to mean that some church members are to be found in opposition to their favorite views or dogmas, so far as they have reference to matters of religion or church polity, and be entirely governed by them. It is not so much the subjection of an inferior to a superior, but of equals to each other; not that which is unjustly forced by authority, but voluntarily conceded by the affection of christian love; not yielded as a matter of right, but for the sake of peace freely given; in short, it is the mutual subjection of love and humility.

Young persons of little experience and foresight, ought frequently to be subject to the more aged and sagacious; it is certainly very indiscreet, not to say imprudent, for a young undiscerning stripling to stand up at a church conference meeting, and with much self-confidence and assumption, oppose his views to those of an aged member. Young persons should at all times and under all circumstances, characterize their course by modesty, and a spirit of deference, and the utmost respect for the opinions of the aged and intelligent; and a failure on their part so to conduct themselves, greatly tarnishes the loveliness and simplicity of youth; nor does the obligation cease here, it may be extended so as to embrace members who are equal in age and rank; such are also to be subject to each other in love, and at all times give due heed and respect to the opinions of the other. A good spirit will restrain members from all attempts at over-ruling, and arbitrarily controlling the opinions of others; no member should be determined at all events to have his own way, right or wrong; but should make fair and reasonable concessions to the opinions of others, as much as principle will permit him to do; and to that extent be willing to sacrifice his own views. Members, instead of contending for rule, should rather contend for subjection. Instead of exclaiming with haughtiness, "I have as much right to my way as any one else," we should rather say, "I have an opinion and will mildly and respectfully state it; yet I will not force it upon the church, but will give way to the superior wisdom of others if I am opposed." Church members should always be in possession of humility enough to admit of the supposition, at least, that other members may be in possession of as much light, and may see as clearly into matters of controversy, and probably more so, than themselves.

It may not be prudent for us to stretch the *democratic* principle in our system too far; the idea of equal rights is soon converted into the means of turmoil and faction. Liberty, fraternity, and equal rights, in both Church and State, have often become the signals in the mouths of some for the lawless invasion of the rights of others. It seems to have been forgotten that no man, in social life, has a right to please only himself; his will should be the good of the whole. And that individual violates at once the social compact, whether in ecclesiastical or civil society, who pertinaciously exclaims, "I will have my own way." Such a declaration at once constitutes him a rebel against the community; yet unfortunately for the church, too much of this rebellious spirit is to be found in her membership; and in many instances great havoc and destruction have been the deplorable results. This spirit is frequently dis-



Let us then deliberately determine that by God's grace we will not be disposed so readily to take offence. If a resolution of the kind was properly respected, offences would be greatly relieved of the many trivial and frivolous disputes that eventually grow out of a misconception, and which not unfrequently involves us in shame and ridicule. It sometimes happens that injuries are inflicted of a nature and character, too serious to pass over unnoticed. These require explanation, in order that our future intercourse and fellowship be not interrupted. In such cases our duty is made so plain, and pointed out with so much unerring wisdom and clearness, that we cannot fail to place our-

Church members should not only be cautious in reference to giving offence to each other, but they should always be very slow and backward in receiving offences. Persons are sometimes seriously offended by the language of others, when indeed no offence was intended. Experience has often proved that many things supposed to have been said or done maliciously and through design, were nothing more than the mere offspring of misapprehension; and if persons having a pedulant and inassable temper, would endeavor to place upon it the proper and salutary restraints which lie in their power, exercising a little more patience and christian charity, which "thinketh no evil," and which teaches us that it is our duty to attribute a good motive to the conduct of another, except a bad one is proved beyond the possibility of a doubt; then might we reasonably expect more harmony among the churches, and less of that distrust and suspicious shyness that is too often manifested among members, which like an evil spirit stalking about in our midst never fails to interrupt and mar our peace.

In order that church members may be enabled properly "to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace," it is important that great care be taken in the treatment of offences; indeed, it is a *right* treatment of offences, that is essentially necessary to the preservation of peace among the churches. As there is to be found among church members every variety of temper and gradation of intellect, from the affable, courteous, learned and more intellectual, down to the rude, indiscreet and ignorant, it therefore behooves church members to exercise a great deal of care and caution in their intercourse with each other so as to avoid giving offence; the propriety of adapting our remarks to the capacity and temper of our brethren, and of consulting the feeling and views of each other in a mild and forbearing spirit, will appear obvious to all. Our fixed determination should ever be, to avoid giving each other a moment's pain or uneasiness; the import or tendency of our words to each other should therefore be duly weighed and considered before uttered. In a word, we should "let our moderation be known unto all men."

Persons who figure most in this category, are always finding fault with the present state of things, and are continually suggesting improvements, which, if adopted, would oftentimes tend very much to obliterate the ancient landmarks of our system. Persons of this description would enter fully into these sentiments, and resolve to "keep in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves," of scripture. "Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory; but in lovelet us keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace," the prosperity of the churches would be greatly increased, and the cause of Christ more extensively promoted.



selves in the right path, if so disposed. But it is submitted to the candor of the churches to decide, whether or not, this important duty is not more neglected than many others of far less magnitude.

When an injury of this nature is inflicted, instead of going directly and at once, to the offender, according to the sacred injunction of the Saviour, Mat. xviii, 15, how prone are church members to vindicate this precept, either by brooding over the matter in silence, at the same time cherishing an evil disposition of hatred and variance towards the offender; or by making disclosures of the matter to those, whom a sound discretion would make the very last person to have the possession of a matter so delicate. With such, however, complaints are often lodged, to the no small annoyance of our churches. The report of the injury gets abroad over the country, tortured and exaggerated, and as it changes hands, continually receives large additions to the original account, until in process of time it comes to the ears of the offender himself, in its enlarged and distorted form, who soon discovers that he has been misrepresented and much calumniated; and being possessed of the common passions and frailties peculiar to imperfect human nature, he retorts by rendering "railing for railing," and hence is originated a case of the most complicated difficulty that might have been suppressed in a single interview of faithful friendship and fair dealing. We ought to go at once to the offending individual, before uttering a single syllable of the matter to others; if church members would thus be faithful, and by so doing, cultivate a greater familiarity with each other, instead of practicing that shy and distant policy so peculiar to some christians, offences growing out of the causes above stated, would be very rare. And it would be advisable for church members wishing to preserve peace, to close their ears against, and frown down all attempts at making disclosures on others, unless they shall first wait upon the offender and labor for reconciliation and fellowship.

The admonition of Christ, Mat. xviii, 15-17, is truly said to be worth "all the volumes that Philosophy ever wrote, and ought to be inscribed in letters of gold." It cannot be too often repeated, nor can too much stress be laid upon an injunction so sacred and appropriate. Let this rule of the Saviour but be neglected, and church members continue to pursue the folly of making disclosures to third persons, whose ears are itching and open to catch evil reports, and the peace of the church is at an end.

In the practice of this rule of the Saviour, great caution and circumspection is to be observed by christians, as to the spirit in which we go to the offender. A great deal depends on the frame of mind, or manner of the individual seeking redress. His whole course should be characterized by meekness and humility; and no attempt should be made to coerce the offender to make restitution; nor will it be proper to accuse him in a peremptory and insulting manner of the injury done, as the report may possibly be a fabrication and false; but he sho'd mildly and with great modesty enquire of him concerning the matter, and whether the representation as regards him be correct or not. If this interview prove successful, and the individual gains his brother so far as to produce some acknowledgements, these beginnings of repentance should be fostered and encouraged by the kindest expressions, and all haughty airs of conscious superiority and all insulting and degrading methods of dispensing pardon, should be studiously avoided, nor should any unnecessary concession be required. In all such cases church members should in a mild and kindly tone say to the offender, "My object is by no means to degrade you, but to satisfy you that you were mistaken, and to convince you of your error; and as you appear now convinced,



and have acknowledged your fault, I am fully satisfied, and shall from this good hour forgive and endeavor to forget the whole matter."

If the private interview prove ineffectual, and the offender persists in a refusal to acknowledge his error, it then becomes the duty of the aggrieved, (according to the rule) to take "one or two" witnesses, and in their presence rehearse the whole matter in controversy, and labor for reconciliation and fellowship, as in the first instance; and in the discharge of this duty, very especial care should be taken to make a selection of persons eminent for piety, calmness, good common sense and a sound discretion; persons who have sufficient nerve to discard partizan bias, and who will act more in the character of mediators, who will spare no effort to heal instead of inflame the wound.

Notwithstanding, great care is to be taken in regard to the acknowledgements of offenders, so as to avoid seeming degradation, yet it is absolutely necessary in order to offences being removed, that the offender, upon his being convicted of an injury, should make all suitable concession; and it will in most instances be found, that in long continued and complicated strifes, this obligation becomes mutual. It matters not who the original aggressor may be, a feud seldom continues a great while ere both parties are much to blame; and therefore even the aggrieved will have some concession to make; and in order that the offender may be induced to acknowledge his greater offence, it will be proper for the aggrieved to confess his lesser one. Better evidence of a noble and magnanimous mind never can be produced, than a willingness to make confession of past errors and solicit forgiveness. "Confess your faults one to another" is an injunction of inspiration. In our intercourse with church members we, however, unfortunately find some so far forgetful of their duty and obligations to Christ, and their brethren, as to refuse to make concession or give an explanation of any kind. Such a course of conduct is generally the result of a proud and ambitious spirit, that disdains to gratify his offended brother by affording the very least satisfaction which he might in the way of throwing light upon a supposed offence. Conduct of this kind is not only reprehensible, but should justly subject the perpetrator to a citation to appear before the bar of the church to answer for the violation of the authority of Christ, which is the last step in reclaiming an offender. "If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Every effort that ingenuity can invent, affection prompt, or patience can conduct, should be made and fairly exhausted, before the matter be brought before the assembled church, to be investigated by the brethren at large. If every trivial disagreement was to be layed before the church for adjudication, it would soon be converted into a court of common pleas, and have its time consumed in adjusting matters of which it has no proper cognizance and of which it ought never to have heard. An offence ought never to be considered as removed properly, until love or fellowship is restored.

We should never rest until such an explanation is given, and received as will enable us to return to harmony and confidence; a mere cessation of hostilities may do for the world, but not for the fellowship of the Saints. In such a community it is expected that not only will the discord and sounds of enmity, be hushed, but the sweet harmonies of love be heard; not only should the conflict of rage be terminated fully, but be succeeded by the activity of genuine affection.

Whenever an offence has been healed, in order to its proper remo-



val, it should never be adverted to in the future. Its very remembrance if possible, should be entirely eradicated from the memory. Other causes of disagreement may exist, and fresh feuds arise, but the old one should sleep the sleep of death, and its angry ghost no more be evoked, to add fury to the passion of its successor. Nor should we, when in our turn we are convicted of an error, shelter ourselves from reproof, by reminding our reprover, that he was once guilty of a similar offence. Such a course is not only mean and dishonorable, but unchristian and mischievous in its character and tendency.

Every christian should bear reproof with meekness. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be as excellent oil, which shall not break my head." Few indeed are capable of giving reproof, and still fewer know how to appreciate it when given. How small is the number comparatively speaking, who can sincerely adopt the language of inspiration as quoted above from the Psalmist of Israel? Alas! we fear the number is very few indeed. What wounded pride, what resentment and mortification are exhibited by many church members, when their faults are made known to them, even with tenderness. A sense of our guilt, and sinful practices, should so far humble us, as to receive the reproofs from our brethren with meekness, and should their rebuke seem severe, our feelings are not, therefore to be irritated to resentment. A moment's reflection will convince us that the rebuke and admonitions of our brethren proceed from the love and regard they cherish towards us, and are intended for our benefit. "He that despiseth reproof sinneth," Prov. x, 17. "He that hateth reproof is brutish," Prov. xii, 1. "He that is often reproofed, and yet hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy."

If the peace of the church be preserved, the members must discourage a tattling disposition.

Church members should make it a rule to avoid speaking of the circumstances, and especially the faults of others. Let every individual resolve within himself thus: "I will be slow to speak of others. I will neither originate a report by saying what I think, nor help to circulate a report by repeating what I hear."

Were every church member so prudent as to adopt a regulation so wise, the peace of society would at once defy the attacks of the world. We should ever act so cautious as to say nothing whatsoever that would admit of that perversion, which an ingenious slanderer or gossip may fabricate into the basis of a tool, calculated to injure another. It is wrong to originate slander, and still more criminal to circulate it, to the prejudice of another. When, therefore, slanderous reports reach the ears of church members, it is not their duty to appear pleased with the offspring of newsmongers and backbiters, but they should indignantly frown upon every attempt at slander and crimination, by refusing even a patient hearing of the tale; for as has justly been observed, "If there were no listeners, there would be no reporters."

In the case of tattling we generally find three parties culpable, first the gossip, then the person who may be weak enough to listen to and report the tales, and lastly the individual who is the subject of the report, who suffers his mind to be excited and irritated, instead of going in the spirit of forbearance and meekness, to require an explanation from the original reporter.

There are few circumstances which contribute more to interrupt the peace and harmony of society, than a proneness in some of the members, to a gossiping, tattling disposition. There are always some persons in the church, who, like the Athenians, are ever anxious to hear



and tell of some new thing. With an insatiable appetite, they devour all the news they can collect and are never easy until it is all disgorged again, to the unspeakable annoyance and disgust of those around them. Such persons seem to take a peculiar interest in discoursing upon the business matters of others, and they seldom omit to point out their respective failings and short comings. Their good qualities or excellencies are seldom spoken of or commended; while their failings or alledged evil practices, are sure to be attended to; and it sometimes happens that such persons display a great deal of cunning policy in such cases by affecting to lament over the faults of their brethren. "What a pity it is," they exclaim, that he or she, (as the case may be) acted so imprudently. Their conduct greatly dishonors the cause of religion, and is therefore much to be regretted." And then another replies, "How exceedingly sorry I am, to hear this scandalous report; how the world will talk, and the cause of religion suffer by such shameful conduct in a church member. It cannot be expected to remain long a secret, or I would not presume to mention a matter so painful." "Oh," says another, I have already heard intimations of this same thing long ago, I have been looking for this, and have mentioned my expectations and suspicions more than a month ago to several. I was fearful that he was not what he professed to be when he joined the church. I am truly sorry that the cause of Christ should so suffer from his misconduct. My suspicions are now all confirmed, and I shall tell the friends to whom I communicate my fears, that everything has turned out just as I expected." Under this guise the tattler indulges his ruling passion, and receives the countenance of some good people, who do not for a moment suspect the imposition.

Others again, indulge this tattling disposition by going from house to house, under the cloak of visitors, enquiring into the truth of certain reports, which they gravely alledge are in circulation, to the prejudice of a brother. With quite a knowing look, they inquire, "Have you heard anything of Brother —, lately?" "No," replies the person addressed. "Then I suppose the report is untrue." "Why, have you heard anything about him?" "Not much; hope it will not operate materially against his religious character; I hope it will all prove false at last." But the *busy body* cannot let the opportunity slip, and immediately publishes the secret; and as such creatures generally take a deep interest in monopolizing to themselves the false honor of first disclosures, they immediately set off to make similar enquiries, and disclosures to other persons. Thus they go on making mischief and disturbing the peace, not only of churches, but of neighborhoods, and but little enjoyment or satisfaction is to be realized by church members, while one of so pestiferous a character and disposition is permitted to remain among them. It is the duty of churches, therefore, to discourage the hollow-hearted and deceitful practice of tattling. It is the very bane of Society, and if encouraged or continued must inevitably prove destructive to the peace and welfare of all our churches. Let all church-members therefore, "*Be slow to speak.*" Silent people can never do a great deal of harm, while talkers are always considered dangerous.

Thus, dear brethren, we have endeavored in as plain a manner as possible to point out some of the correlative duties of church members incumbent on each other. How far we may have succeeded in our task is not for us to say; but we are free to admit that a great deal more might with much propriety be written and submitted to your consideration. The volume of inspiration, however, abounds with an abundance of instruction and sound maxims to which your attention is prayerfully invited; in that blessed book may be found not only such precepts as are



calculated to prove "a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path," while in this vale of sorrow, but an all-sufficiency to "make us wise unto salvation," and render us happy not only in time, but also in eternity.— Finally, dear brethren, let us therefore adhere steadfastly to the doctrines and ordinances of Christ as he hath delivered them to us; and continue to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith Christ hath called us, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. And may we all endeavor to lay aside all bitterness and clamor, and evil-speaking, with all malice, and be kind one to another and tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

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