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Minutes ... at Ebenezer, Jeffers's Creek, November  
5th 1803.

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# MINUTES

OF THE

## CHARLESTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

Convened at EBENEZER, Jeffers's Creek, November 5th 1803.

1. **T**HE two first days were employed in public worship. Two sermons being preached on Saturday, and two, attended with the administration of the Lord's Supper, on the Sabbath. A large and serious congregation attended, and it is hoped the word made deep impressions.
2. On Monday at 11 o'clock, A. M. the Association Sermon was delivered by Rev. Lewis Collins, from 2 Peter iii. 11. "Seeing then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and Godliness."
3. Letters from eighteen Churches were read, and the names of their delegates with the state of each Church minuted.
4. Rev. Frame Woods was chosen Moderator, and Rev. John M. Roberts clerk.—The usual invitation was then given to regular visiting brethren in the ministry, to sit with the Association and assist in their deliberations.
5. Received and read letters and minutes from corresponding associations. From the Philadelphia, a letter of the present year, and minutes of the last. Nothing from the Warren.—From the Bethel a letter of this and minutes of the last year, handed by their messengers Rev. Messrs. John Reoker and Samuel Eccles, who were cordially received.—From the Georgia association no account.—From the Hephzibah a letter.—From the Savannah, minutes and a general printed letter.—From the Neuse, minutes and a letter. Mr. Bostwick attended as messenger from the Sandy Creek association, presented a letter and was cordially received.—The letter from the Bethel association mentions that the additions to their Churches by Baptism this year, amount to more than 14 hundred.
6. The Branch of the Congaree Church in the neighbourhood of Winnsborough, having been in the course of this year, dismissed and constituted into a distinct body, under the denomination of the Wateree Creek Church, applied for admission into this association by a letter and delegates, and was admitted with much satisfaction.
7. Rev. Joseph B. Cook having signified, through a member present, that he had not quite finished the Circular Letter, and also expressed an intention to have it in readiness for the press in time to be printed with the minutes, if the association could fix on any satisfactory medium of judging, during their recess, on its fitness to appear as their letter.—Therefore agreed, that Dr. Furman be authorized on behalf of this association, to decide on the merit of said letter, and to assist the author in a revision of it if necessary.
8. Appointed the following brethren to write to associations who correspond with us.—Roberts to the Philadelphia, Furman to the Warren and Savannah, Jones to the Bethel, McCullers to the Neuse, Nixon to the Georgia, Eccles to the Hephzibah, and Woods to the Sandy Creek.
9. God in his Sovereign and holy Providence, having in the course of this year, removed to the World of Spirits, his venerable and highly respected servant Rev. Evan Pugh, A. M.—This Association feel it incum-

lent on them to express the high sense they have of the abilities and worth he possessed, as a man, a christian, a scholar and a divine. In these characters he was eminent. His life, extended beyond the bound of three score years and ten, was useful and his death peaceful; and we doubt not that his final state is happy in the perfect enjoyment of his God.

10. Report being made by the former Moderator, that the renewed petition to the state legislature, signed at our last meeting, had been again presented by hon. general Pinckney to the senate, and by his brother, hon. major Thomas Pinckney, to the House of Representatives.—Therefore resolved, that our obligations to the general are thereby increased, and that our warmest thanks are due to hon. major Pinckney, for the attention he has bestowed on this subject.

11. Mr. John Price produced certain papers in vindication of his character; but as no answer had been received to the letter sent to Messrs. Camp, Clayton and Putman, on this subject.—Agreed, that it would be improper for the Association to do any thing in his case at present.

12. Rev. John Rucker being called on to report on the prospects attending his mission, informed the association, that the nation of Catawba Indians had given him a very favorable reception; were much pleased with the attention the Association had shewn by appointing a missionary to them; had attended very seriously to his preaching, and from the first, expressed an earnest desire that a school might be established among them, for the instruction of their youth.—Also, that there appeared to be the beginning of a work of grace among the white people, who attended on his preaching when ministering to the Indians; and that he was in hopes the Indians would share in the blessing. Whereupon agreed, unanimously, that Mr. Rucker's mission to the Catawba Indians be continued, and that he be authorized, under the direction of the Special Committee for the education fund, to employ a teacher and to open and superintend a school in the nation, for the instruction of the Indian youth in the common branches of learning, and in the principles of Christianity; the expenses of which will be defrayed by the Churches of this Association: And the Churches are requested to make provision accordingly.—Also agreed, that the committee be requested to carry into effect, if practicable, the resolve of the last year, respecting a missionary to preach to dissolute Churches and people in this state.

13. The President of the General Committee reported, that according to the trust reposed in him, he had, after making the proper inquiries, concluded that Mr. Rucker was intitled to a yearly salary of £40 sterling, for his missionary services; the greater part of which had been paid him for the present year. In which conclusion the association unaniously concurred. He also reported that the Special committee had failed in their attempts to procure missionary to preach among dissolute people.

14. The Committee appointed to assist in removing the difficulties which existed between the Churches of Lane's Creek and Anton county; reported, that they found the charges against Mr. James Morgan, the person who had been the cause of these difficulties, so well supported, and of so atrocious nature, that they were of opinion the said Morgan should not be allowed to preach in our connection, nor be held in our communion. After some debate, in which new charges, respecting recent transactions, were brought by persons of respectability, papers on both sides of the question ex-

amined, and Morgan, who was present, attempted to vindicate his character, the report of the committee was agreed to, unanimously.

15. Read and approved the letters to the corresponding associations.

16. Appointed Dr. Furman, with Messrs. Botsford and Roberts, a committee of correspondence, and more especially to correspond with the committee of the Philadelphia association, to forward their design of collecting and publishing interesting, religious intelligence.

17. The Swift Creek Church having requested the advice of the association, respecting a proposal of removing their seat of worship and office to another place, were advised not to do it, for certain reasons; especially, as it might probably give uneasiness to a neighbouring sister church.

18. In consequence of a request from the Congaree Church, the association recommend to ministers who live at a convenient distance, to visit and assist each other at communion seasons.

19. The Churches at Mount-pleasant and Lynch's Creek, having been represented as dissolved, and the members taken into other churches; inquiry was made concerning the facts and the reasons operating in these cases.—Whereupon it was agreed, that the association could not consider these churches as dissolved, and therefore requested Rev. Messrs. Coleman and Moleley, to confer with them on the subject—the first with the former and the second with the latter church.

And as the church at Little Pede was represented to be in a weak and languishing state, Rev. Messrs. Woods and Moleley were requested to visit and afford them assistance.

20. Resolved, That the Query from the Rocky River Church be answered in the following manner, viz. This Association think it inconsistent with Gospel Order and Peace, for one minister to preach and endeavor to establish a new church in the proper bounds of another minister and church in union, without first obtaining the approbation of such minister and church.—And that such conduct, except as here excepted, is justly reprobable.

21. The Church at Jeffers's Creek, having submitted to the consideration of the association, the propriety of Mr. McCuller's ordination, Rev. Messrs. Woods, Moleley and Coleman, were appointed a committee for that purpose. Also, at the request of the Wateree Creek Church, appointed Rev. Messrs. Collins, Roberts and Nixon to assist at an ordination of a minister in that church, if on examination he should be approved.

22. Mr. Weeks submitted to the consideration of the association, the validity of his ordination, which had been called in question. It was concluded that it was not valid.

23. Appointed the following ministering brethren messengers to different associations, Woods to the Bethel, Roberts to the Georgia, McCullers to the Hephzibah, and Furman to the Savannah.

24. Agreed, that the following inquiry, be the subject of the Circular Letter for the next year—"By what means may a christian secure to his own soul the consolations of pure religion, rise to real eminence in the christian character, and become most useful in the cause of God."—Appointed Dr. Furman to write the letter.

25. Agreed, that our next meeting be at the Euhaw Church, on the Saturday before the first Sabbath in November next.—Dr. Furman to preach the sermon, and in case of failure Rev. Mr. Moleley.

26. Agreed, that the quarterly meetings for extraordinary prayer be continued.

27. Collected the money for printing the minutes; the superintendance of which and distribution being directed as usual.

Concluded with exhortation by the moderator, and Prayer by another member.

### MINUTES of the GENERAL COMMITTEE.

1. The following brethren appeared as delegates, Furman, Wood's Thoreley, Dargan, Meredith and Roberts.

2. Read and Dr. Furman president, Col. Screven treasurer, Mr. Robert's secretary, Messrs. William and Henry Inglesby assistants.

3. The president reported from the special committee, that agreeable to the resolve of the last year, they had sent forty-eight pounds to Europe to purchase a library for the use of the students; that though all the books they sent for had not been obtained, yet a very valuable collection had arrived, and would in a short time without an accident be placed at the seat of Mr. Roberts's Academy—which would furnish the students with essential and extensive aid in all the important parts of their studies, both in science and divinity—The purchase having been made to great advantage.

He also reported that Mr. Samuel Eccles had been received as a student, under the care of the committee; and that Mr. Collins had retired, to prosecute the remainder of his studies in private, owing to the situation of his domestic concerns.

4. Mr. Ezra Courtney appeared as a candidate for the Churches Bounty, recommended by the Church of Ebenezer, he underwent an examination and was approved. Agreed to assist him in his education by allowing an hundred dollars for that purpose, if necessary, for the present year.

5. Took account of the monies collected this year both for the education fund, and missionary business—Charleston, 56<sup>l</sup>. 17<sup>s</sup>, for the former and 38<sup>l</sup>. for the latter; Euhaw, 26<sup>l</sup>. 7<sup>s</sup>. 4<sup>d</sup>. E. F.; Welch Neck, 21. 3<sup>s</sup>. 4<sup>d</sup>. E. F.—4<sup>l</sup>. 10<sup>s</sup>. for M. do.; High Hills, 7<sup>l</sup>. 9<sup>s</sup>. 4<sup>d</sup>. E. F.—4<sup>l</sup>. 13<sup>s</sup>. 4<sup>d</sup>. for M. do.; Ebenezer, 11. 8<sup>s</sup>. E. F.—1<sup>l</sup>. 12<sup>s</sup>. M. do.; Lynch's Creek, 5<sup>l</sup>. 7<sup>s</sup>. 4<sup>d</sup>. M. F.; Cheraw Hill, 21. 6<sup>s</sup>. 8<sup>d</sup>. M. F.; Beauty Spot, 21. 6<sup>s</sup>. 8<sup>d</sup>. M. F.; Swift Creek, 3<sup>l</sup>. 12<sup>s</sup>. 4<sup>d</sup>. M. F.; Congaree, 21. 6<sup>s</sup>. 8<sup>d</sup>. M. F.; Waffamfaw, 3<sup>l</sup>. 10<sup>s</sup>. E. F.—3<sup>l</sup>. 02. 8<sup>d</sup>. M. F.; Waterce Creek, 11. 17<sup>s</sup>. 4<sup>d</sup>. E. F.; making in the whole 98<sup>l</sup>. 8<sup>s</sup>. 8<sup>d</sup>. or 408 dol. 2 cents for the education fund; and 70<sup>l</sup>. 4<sup>s</sup>. or 293 dol. 33 cents for the missionary fund: From the latter, deducting 40<sup>l</sup>. the sum paid Mr. Rucker, there remains in fund 30<sup>l</sup>. 4<sup>s</sup>.

By the treasurer's account, there is in fund exclusive of the money collected for missionary services above stated; but including the collection for the education fund in Charleston this year,

Collection this year, exclusive of Charleston,

|       |    |    |
|-------|----|----|
| £675  | 10 | 1  |
| 41    | 15 | 9  |
| <hr/> |    |    |
| 717   | 5  | 10 |

RICHARD FURMAN, President,  
JOHN M. ROBERTS, Secretary.

### STATE of the CHURCHES.

The Ministers names are in capitals; Licensed Preachers in Italics; Churches distinguished with an asterisk (\*) we had no account from, their members stand as they end the last year; Pastors and Messengers to whole Churches an obit (\*) is annexed, were absent; a dash (—) denotes a vacancy.

| CHURCHES.                  | MINISTERS & MESSENGERS   | 1817 | 1818 | 1819 | 1820 | 1821 | 1822 | 1823 | 1824 | 1825 | 1826 | 1827 |
|----------------------------|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Charleston,                | RICHARD FURMAN,<br>William Inglesby, †   | 15   | 1    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 287  |
| Euhaw,                     | JOSEPH B. COOK, †<br>FRAME WOODS, Evander  | 16   | 1    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 295  |
| Welch Neck,                | Mr. Iver, Sam. Evans, Hardy<br>Brian,  | 8    |      | 3    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 126  |
| Mount Pleasant,*           |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 12   |
| Ebenezer, Jeffers's Creek, | BENJAMIN MOSELEY,<br>Sol. Morgan, † (Congaree),<br>JOHN M. ROBERTS,                        | 24   | 12   |      | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 83   |
| High Hills, Santee,        | AMOS DUBOIS, †   | 3    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 108  |
| Lynch's Creek,*            |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 11   |
| Cheraw Hill,               | IOSHUA LEWIS, † Gen.<br>Frankam Thomas, Josiah<br>David, James Thomas,<br>WILLIAM BENNETT, | 37   | 4    |      | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 129  |
| Beauty Spot,               | Josiah Ammons, Moses Par-<br>ker.  | 31   |      |      | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 123  |
| Bethel, Black River,*      |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 77   |
| Little Saltcreeper,*       |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 50   |
| Upper F. Lynch's Creek,    | JOHN CATO, Ferguson<br>Sale, Charles Ingram,   | 49   | 8    |      | 5    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 219  |
| Swift Creek,               | LEWIS COLLINS, Joseph<br>Kington.  | 18   | 1    | 7    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 42   |
| Lower F. Lynch's Creek,    | William Wethering-<br>ton, David Kelly, †  | 2    | 2    | 6    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 42   |
| Rocky River,               | George White,  | 11   | 1    |      | 1    | 3    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 42   |
| Anson County,              | CHARLES COOK, John<br>McKenney, George Lawrence,   | 16   |      |      | 4    |      |      |      |      |      |      | 87   |
| Great Saltcreeper,*        |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 10   |
| Deep Creek,                | JEREMIAH LEWIS,<br>Richard Graves,   | 25   |      | 3    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 83   |
| Little Paddy,*             |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 10   |
| Ehon,*                     |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 31   |
| Georgetown,*               | Edmund Botsford, †   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Gap Way,                   | DAVID OWEN, William<br>Rohrer, James Dewley,   | 4    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 20   |
| Lane's Creek,*             |  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 25   |
| Congaree,                  | STEPHEN, NIXON,<br>John Morrow, Robert Weeks,  | 17   | 6    | 6    | 3    | 4    | 4    | 4    | 4    | 4    | 4    | 83   |
| Black Creek,               | JAMES COLEMAN,<br>George King.   | 81   | 8    |      | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 111  |
| Three Creeks,              | ROBERT THOMAS, †<br>Wm. Brazly, John Thomas,   | 13   |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 45   |
| Waffamfaw,                 | Robert Thornley<br>Esq., Thomas Blackman,  | 23   | 4    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Waterce Creek,             | THOMAS BOWMAN,<br>RALPH JONES, † Thomas<br>Meredith, James Hart, †                         | 22   | 2    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

Increase this year, 426.  
Total 410  
\* The additions to this Church are reckoned since 1817.



## The CIRCULAR LETTER.

The CHARLESTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, met at Ebenezer Church, the 5th day of November, 1803—To the Churches by request,  
Christian Salutation.

DEAR BRETHREN,

THE question, on which we are to address you this year, is somewhat novel, yet very interesting, particularly at the present time. Within a few years past, after a long wintry season, God has in a wonderful manner, revived Religion among us, and as we trust, copiously poured out his Holy Spirit upon the inhabitants of our highly favored country. Pentecostal seasons have been experienced. The watchmen in Israel have been harmoniously united, unusually animated and active in their heavenly Master's service; and both saints and sinners remarkably operated upon. Many of the most careless, insensible, and obstinate among mankind, who have attended public meetings of religious worship, have become the professed design of ridiculing every thing sacred, have become happy subjects of renewing grace. Like Saul, of Tarsus, they have fallen to the ground, and have been made to cry out, "Lord what wilt thou have us to do?"—Or like the poor trembling Jailer, "Sirs what must I do to be saved?" Thus, "Fools, who went to laugh, remained to pray. Yet so strangely have both the minds and bodies of many been affected since this revival has commenced, particularly at some extraordinary meetings, that it has been doubted, not only by the irreligious, but also by some very pious persons, whether these effects are produced by the Spirit of God, or merely by enthusiasm.—This state of things, the doubts which have arisen, and the interesting nature of the inquiry at all times, have occasioned the following question to be made the subject of this letter, viz. "How may enthusiasm be distinguished from the influence of the Spirit and Grace of God on the Heart?"

By enthusiasm, we understand a blind zeal, or heated imagination, where by a person is persuaded he has direction from the deity, or intercourse with him in his religious pursuits and exercises, when any deep impression made on his mind; although there be in such cases no rational or sufficient evidence of divine interposition.

According to this definition we shall find enthusiasm prevailing, in greater or less degree, among persons in every state and condition of life. Mankind in a state of nature, unrenewed by the Holy Spirit, are apt to deviate from the plainest truths of the Gospel:—The consequence frequently is, that they immediately erect a standard of their own, and anathematize those who are not disposed to enlist themselves under it.—Here we behold pride and arrogance triumphing over reason, and gaining possession of the heart of man.—Deplorable condition!

There are many who think themselves high in the favor of God, and who would wish to be thought so by others, who like the Pharisees, are awfully mistaken with respect to their true character.

A striking instance, of this nature, we have in the Publican and Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray.—The Pharisee stood and prayed thus, "God I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners,

unjust, &c. whilst the poor Publican, standing at a distance dared not so much as lift up his eyes toward Heaven, but smote upon his breast crying, "O God be merciful to me a sinner."—What is the language of our saviour, respecting these two persons, "I tell thee," saith he, "the one," meaning the Publican, "went down to his house, justified rather than the other." Who was there ever a greater enthusiast than the Apostle Paul, previous to his conversion?—He himself declares that he was mad against the christians, and thought he was doing God service when he was persecuting them, even unto strange cities.

To a blind zeal, and pride of the human heart, as to their true origin, may be attributed the different sects which sprang up, in the christian church, soon after the time of Christ and his Apostles. Enthusiasm, in religion, or as the Apostle Paul terms it, "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge," has been the cause of more confusion and bloodshed than, perhaps, any thing else in the world. From this crater of religious fury, proceeded those truces, or holy wars, in which many thousands of mankind lost their lives. To this principle may be traced many of the absurdities of the Romish Church. Forlaking the word of God and indulging a vain belief in supposed private revelation, they have proceeded to the worship of images and saints, and to the absurd veneration of relics, to Pilgrimages, Penance, and many foolish ceremonies, supposing that thro' the medium of these, they have communications with the deity.

Here we behold a species of enthusiasm the most absurd and extravagant that possibly could possess the human mind. Is what a degraded situation must those countries be, where the rational powers and faculties of men are thus subjected to the control of pride, superstition, and a furious zeal!—But we need not go into distant countries, or within the pale of the Romish Church, to find out enthusiasm. Let us look into our own country, where religion is placed upon as proper a basis, and exists in as pure a state as in any part of the world; even here, we are often called on to witness the baneful effects of this too predominant principle.—From whence proceed those animosities which divide religious societies, and set them at variance with each other?—Not from the gentle influence of the Spirit and grace of God upon the heart, dictating love, peace and harmony with those who are the professed followers of the Lamb of God. No, they proceed generally from an enthusiastic attachment to parties, as well as from pride, and an unyielding and uncharitable disposition, the offspring of the old corrupt nature.—It is to be lamented that many religious sects are so enthusiastically attached to their particular tenets, as not to give those of their opponents a serious and candid investigation. Our Saviour hath commanded us to "search the scriptures;" but, instead of doing as he hath bidden, too many build their faith upon, merely human tradition, and not upon the word of God. Thus, then, we may account for the many errors which have been introduced into the christian church, and have become like a second nature; which renders it so very difficult a matter to overcome them. One says, I am of Paul, another I am of Apollas, and another I am of Cephas, whilst, too often, Christ is forgotten.—May we not say unto such, as the apostle did to the Galatians, "who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?" We are almost ready to conclude that, were they really christians, they would obey the truth.

Enthusiasm is not confined to particular sects and parties, but indifferently

in all connexions, are often influenced by it. Thus, many who have been only partially awakened, who have had conviction for sin, without experiencing converting grace, are often very zealously engaged in performing the outward duties of religion, and indulge a fond delusive hope that they are highly interested in the divine favor.

This appears to have been the case with the five foolish virgins, in the parable; they had lamps of profession, as well as the wife, but were destitute of the oil of grace.—They are represented as having gone forth, with the wife, to meet the bridegroom.—No doubt they progressed in the outward forms of religion; and, perhaps in these they might have outwent the wife, in many respects. But they were, ultimately denied admission into the kingdom of heaven, being found wanting. This will be the awful doom of many in the great day of final retribution.

In addition to what has been stated respecting the influence of enthusiasm on persons who profess false religion, and on hypocritical, formal professors of the true; it becomes us in justice to our subject to observe, that enthusiasm may exist also, to a certain degree in minds actually pious: and through the weakness of the understanding, warmth of the affections, or melancholy habits of the mind, gain such an ascendancy over the temper and conduct of a person as to produce errors in sentiment and extravagance in conduct, highly injurious to men and displeasing to God. Weakness of the understanding not only makes a person liable to many mistakes of his own, but subjects him frequently to the influence and errors of other enthusiasts. Under the influence of this affection the ardent mind fondly hopes that it is directed to all the objects of its religious pursuits by a divine impulse; and that its joys, pleasures, and even extravagances, are the effects of a supernatural influence; while on the other hand, one of a melancholy habit, interprets all its gloomy apprehensions to be the manifestations of divine displeasure against itself or others.

Of its common effects, even on persons of piety, we may observe, that, it often reduces the state of the mind to a childish disposition of attending to trifles with great earnestness, to the neglect of the most important truths and duties; and that it produces a pusillanimous subjection to the opinions of those in whom it confides as its spiritual guides. At one time an irrational obstinacy, in opinions and resolutions once formed is the effect; at another, fickleness of temper, and an accountable change in sentiment and pursuit; and, frequently, violent dislikes and opposition, toward those who do not accord with the enthusiast in his extravagant ideas and conduct. Its joys are often rapturous, and its depressions peculiarly gloomy, so as to produce bodily, as well as mental affections; and these frequently arise from mechanical, or accidental causes: such as loud and earnest speaking, extravagant gestures, the particular tone of voice used by a public speaker; a dream, an unexpected occurrence of a scriptural text, an appearance in the heavens, or some event of Providence arbitrarily interpreted. It frequently prompts men to enter on stations, and attempt performances for which they are utterly unqualified; to neglect the means, while they seek to attain their desired end; and, too often, to transgress all the rules of decency and order, not only as established by right reason, but even by the Word of God.

We shall now attend to the influence which the spirit and grace of God bear upon the heart.

By the influence of the spirit and grace of God, we are not, on this occasion, understand those extraordinary operations which come under the character of inspiration: including prophesy, infalible direction, and the power of working miracles. These have ceased. But we are to consider that influence which is more common, and essential to the salvation of a soul, according to the economy of grace. By the spirit, we understand the heavenly agent:—The third person of the sacred Trinity: And by grace, the divine principle, or life, implanted, or infused by him into the soul of man.

On this subject we shall treat with all the brevity it will admit. According to the scriptures the office of the Holy Spirit is to renew and sanctify the Redeemed of Christ, that they may be fitted for the service of God on earth, and for the perfect enjoyment of him in heaven. In performing this great and gracious Work, "he convinces of sin," by enlightening the understanding, by awakening the conscience, and by bringing the sinner to a just sense of the majesty, wisdom, holiness and justice of God; and of his own vileness, guilt and unworthiness; so as to produce in him deep humiliation, self-loathing, and sorrow for sin, attended with an unfeigned reformation. Another important work of the spirit is to bring the penitent, by faith, to Christ, as the only Saviour; to accept of his free unmerited Grace, with gratitude and joy; to rely on his all-sufficient merit and intercession, for pardon, justification and acceptance with God, renouncing every other hope and trust; and to surrender himself to the government and service of the Redeemer, by a voluntary and joyful consecration of all his powers to him.

In renovating the soul, he subdues the will, sanctifies the affections, and enlightens the understanding with divine knowledge; disposing the mind to make the best use of its rational faculties, in acquiring the knowledge, and in doing the will of God. As a heavenly teacher he instructs in "the wisdom that is from above, which is peaceable, pure, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Faith in God the Redeemer, love to him, charity to men, humility, joy in the Lord, zeal for his honor, patience and resignation under trials and sufferings, with fortitude and constancy in the face of danger, and a delight in holiness, are his fruits.

The divine spirit is spoken of as a teacher and comforter to the saints; in the execution of these condescending and gracious offices, he uses his own revealed truth, and the rational means he has established in the economy of Providence and Grace; applying them with divine power to the soul: Taking the things which are Christ's and shewing them unto us, and witnessing to our spirits, as a holy filial temper is produced in us, that we are the children of God. As the spirits of grace and supplication also, he makes the children of God sensible of their wants; enlarges their hearts with holy desires toward God, and thus disposes and enables them as humble supplicants to approach the Throne of Grace. In a similar manner does he quicken and direct those who are called to act in the public office of Gospel ministers, while faithfully engaged to discharge the duty incumbent on them: and both the public minister, and private christian, are directed, under his influence, to perform all things decently and in order: "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace."

Hence therefore we conclude, that the influence of the spirit and grace

of God is to be distinguished from enthusiasm, by its operating according to the word of God revealed unto us, and by its disposing the mind to according to that golden rule; by its disposing it also to act in a rational, orderly and dignified manner, in its religious pursuits and exercises; by producing an abiding principle of holiness in the heart, which manifests itself in a regular exercise of all the christian graces and virtues; by disposing a person to have a holy jealousy over himself, to guard carefully against delusion, to use the means of grace with diligence, and to keep the glory of God in view as his grand object in every pursuit.

Whatever means an Almighty Sovereign may be pleased to use for carrying on his great work of grace, whether ordinary, or extraordinary, whether by impressions made only on the mind, or by bodily afflictions joined with them; if the effects here described are ultimately produced, we must consider the change so wrought, and the life so directed as produced and governed by his gracious influence.

But whatever impressions may be made on the mind, or body; whatever persuasion, and confidence, a person may have or being divinely directed; whatever distress and terror he may feel on the one hand, or whatever joy and even rapture on the other—if these do not accord with the word of God, in its sublime doctrines and precepts, are not attended with a sanctifying, abiding influence on the heart and life, and do not direct us into a wise, prudent, and orderly manner of acting for the glory of God, we have reason to believe the whole is the effect of enthusiasm or delusion.

Thus, dear brethren, we have endeavored in as few words as the nature of the subject would well admit, to set this important difference between the influence of the divine spirit and grace, and that of enthusiasm before you, in such a manner as to assist your judgment in forming a right conclusion, and to guard your minds against those delusions which have often been attended with effects highly unfavourable to the cause of God and the peace of his children.

We trust that your souls will be abundantly enriched with the grace of the Holy Spirit: That he will guide you by his unerring counsels into the knowledge of all important truths which respect the glory of our redeemer, and the salvation of your own souls, and that he will bring you at last to his heavenly kingdom and glory.

The blessings of grace conferred on us, during the present year, which are manifested in the increase of our churches, and the present happy state of many of them, call for returns of the most lively gratitude and love. Our meeting has been attended with peace, harmony, and the pleasing interchange of brotherly affection. We request your prayers, and remain,

Dear Brethren,

yours, affectionately,

in Gospel Bounds,

FRAME WOODS, Moderator,

JOHN M. ROBERTS, Clerg.