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Minutes ... at the Welch Neck, November 1st, 1806.
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MINUTES

OF THE

CHARLESTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

Convened at the WELCH NECK, November 1st, 1806.



1. **T**HE two first days were employed in the usual exercises of public devotion.
2. At 11 o'clock A. M., on Monday, the Association Sermon was delivered by the Rev. Benj. Mosely, from Psalm 93, v. 5: "*Holiness becometh thy House, O Lord, for ever.*"
3. Letters from twenty-one Churches were read, and the names of the Delegates, with the state of each Church minuted.
4. Rev. John M. Roberts was chosen moderator, and Rev. J. B. Cook, clerk.
5. Received and read letters from corresponding Associations: From the Warren, their letter and minutes of the present year—From the Philadelphia, their minutes of the last year—From the Bethel, a letter and minutes, by their Messengers Rev. Messrs. John Rooker and Samuel Eccles—From the Neuse, a letter—From the Georgia, a letter and minutes—From the Hephzibah, a letter and minutes, by their Messenger Rev. Lawrence Scarborough—From the Savannah and Sandy-Creek, neither letter nor minutes.
6. The Brethren William T. Brantley, Richard Todd and Robert Murph, licenced preachers, (the latter an Indian of the Pomunkey Tribe, now living with the Catawbas) were invited to a seat in the association.
7. Received petitions from the following churches for admission into this association, viz. From that at Catfish, Terrill's Bay, and Beulah, near the Congaree; satisfactory information being obtained respecting their Faith and Practice, they were received. The first did not furnish a particular account of their constitution. The second were constituted in September last, by brethren Hawthorn and Pitman. The third constituted on the 26th of April last, by the Rev. Dr. Maxcy, President of the South-Carolina College, and Rev. Messrs. Stephen Nixon and Amos Dubose.
8. Read and approved the Circular Letter, prepared by Dr. Furman.
9. Appointed the following Brethren to write to corresponding associations: Furman to the Philadelphia—Johnson to the Warren—Cook to Georgia—Woods to the Bethel—Brantley to the Neuse—Mosely to the Sandy-Creek—Roberts to the Savannah, and Dubose to the Hephzibah.
10. Appointed the following Brethren a committee to inspect the minutes of sister associations, and to report whether they contained any articles which require the particular attention of this association, viz: Furman, Woods, and Johnson. Adjourned to to-morrow, 10 o'clock. Sermon in the evening, by the Indian preacher, to a large, serious, and affected audience. Tuesday, met according to adjournment.
11. Mr. Rooker, as chairman of the committee who were appointed the last year to visit the Anson county church, and to assist them in adjusting some unhappy disputes, reported in favor of the church's transactions. He also, as missionary to the Catawba Indians, reported favourably respecting their apparent disposition to attend the means of Grace, and produced samples of the writing of some of their youth in the missionary school, by which it appears that they have made considerable progress in their learning. He also produced a letter from the Chiefs of the Nation, requesting the continuation of his missionary labors, and of the school.
12. Dr. Furman, as chairman of the committee who were appointed to inspect the minutes of sister associations, reported, that they found nothing which, in their opinion, required particular attention, excepting the warning given the public against a certain James Garnett, a notorious impostor, who had been preaching among their churches.
13. Took up the petition of the Euhaw church, for dismissal from this association to that of Savannah—granted. Also dismissed in like manner, the church at the Great Saltcreeper, agreeably to their request.
14. Query from the Ebenezer church; a woman, who had been married to a man was found immediately after the marriage to be pregnant by another, with whom she had previously formed an unlawful connection; on discovery of which, her husband forsook her, and married another woman. The woman so forsaken, also married again, and has lived so long with this latter husband as to have by him many children; Can the present husband consider her, in a moral view, as his lawful wife, the first husband being understood to be yet living, and no legal divorce having been obtained? Answered in the negative, for two reasons; first, because marriage is a civil as well as religious

government ; which in this case has not granted a divorce ; and, second, because in cases of divorce, it is, at least, doubtful whether the criminal person has a right, by the laws of God, to marry again.

15. Agreed that the moderator write to the church at the Congaree, on a subject which they proposed for consideration.

16. Query from the church on Lucas's Bay ; Did the soul of Christ suffer in Hell, while his body lay in the Sepulchre ? Answer—We think not ; first, because the passage of scripture on which the sentiment concerning his suffering in this manner is founded, is generally agreed by the best critics, to be wrongly translated, the word there rendered Hell, meaning only the state of the dead ; secondly, because Christ promised on the day of his death, to the penitent thief, that he should be that day with him in Paradise.

17. The church on the Wateree Creek representing to the association that a serious difficulty exists among them, and requesting ministerial helps ; therefore, appointed the following brethren to visit and assist them, viz : the Moderator, Eccles and Nixon.

18. By request of the church in Beaufort, the following case was considered : A woman of colour, is said to live with her master as his wife, without being married to him ; he requiring her so to do, professing to consider her as his wife, and she consenting. Can she in this situation be considered as a regular member of a church ? Answer, we think not—first, because we consider his conduct in this case as sinful ; and, secondly, because her agreeing to live with him, in such connection, is countenancing his sin, and taking part with him in it.

19. Read and approved the letters to corresponding associations.

20. Appointed the following brethren Messengers to sister associations, viz : Woods to the Bethel—Roberts and Moseley to the Georgitz—Dubose to the Hephzibah—Cook to the Savannah.

21. The association notice with sorrow, and respect for his memory, the death of a faithful and aged Minister of our connection, Brother Lewis Collins, who had been eminent for his piety, and useful in his day.

22. Agreed to continue the mission to the Catawba Indians, and school, under the discretion of the special committee. The churches are requested to charge their minds with this subject, and to come prepared, at our next meeting, to defray the expences which will be necessarily incurred.

23. Agreed to continue the quarterly meeting for prayer.

24. Appointed the Moderator to write the next Circular Letter on the following question, viz : In what manner does it become professors of religion to preserve and exemplify the temperance and sobriety which christianity requires ?

25. Appointed Rev. Edmund Borsford to preach the association sermon for the next year, in case of failure, Dr. Furman.

26. Agreed that the next meeting of association be held at the High Hills of Santee, the Saturday before the first Lord's day in November next.

27. Collected for printing the minutes, and requested Dr. Furman to superintend their printing and distribution.

28. Closed the meeting of association by exhortation and prayer.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

1. The following Delegates appeared : Furman, Roberts, Johnson, Woods, Gen. Thomas, and Moseley.

2. Re-elected Dr. Furman, President ; Mr. William Inglesby, Treasurer ; Rev. John M. Roberts, Secretary ; and Messrs. David Adams and Henry Inglesby, Assistants.

3. The president reported to the general committee transactions between the executor of the late treasurer, deceased, and the special committee, respecting the monies due to the fund by the estate of the said deceased ; in which a proposal was made by his executor, and accented by the committee, to this effect—that in consequence of the committee's consenting to the sale of landed property belonging to said estate, on a credit of one, two, and three years and to receive payment of the debt due to the fund by such instalments, with interest ; the payment should be secured, on this plan, by good personal security, and a mortgage of landed property of sufficient value. This subject being taken into consideration, the conduct of the special committee in said business was unanimously approved.

4. Mr. Brantley appeared before the committee, underwent an examination respecting his religious sentiments and views to the ministry ; and, being approved, expressed his wish to be entered as a student in the South-Carolina College ; the secretary declaring him to be qualified to enter the junior class—which proposal was agreed to.

5. Mr. Richard Todd, a member of the church at Lane's Creek, was proposed as a person qualified for admission into the number of persons who partake of the benefit of the fund ; and being examined was approved.

6. On representation of the President, agreed that this committee consider the disinterested and generous conduct of their Secretary, in educating the number of young men who have been at his academy, under the care of the committee, free from any charge for their tuition, as entitled to a public and grateful acknowledgment.

7. Took an account of contributions, and the state of the funds, as exhibited below :

Charleston, for the Education fund, Dols.	214 00	For the Missionary fund, Dols.	127 00
Euhaw, - - - - -	40 00	- - - - -	25 00
Welch Neck, - - - - -	12 00	- - - - -	15 71
Ebenezer, - - - - -	6 00	- - - - -	6 00
High Hills Santee, - - - - -	14 00	- - - - -	14 00
Cheraw Hill, - - - - -	6 50	- - - - -	6 00
Beauty Spot, - - - - -	-	- - - - -	8 00
Swift Creek, - - - - -	-	- - - - -	\$ 12½
Congaree, - - - - -	-	- - - - -	15 00
Wassamsaw, - - - - -	-	- - - - -	14 62½
Wateree Creek, - - - - -	-	- - - - -	20 00
An Individual, - - - - -	-	- - - - -	1 00

<u>292 50 or</u>	<u>255 46</u>
	Balance of last year, <u>122 12½</u>

In hands of the President,	£ 68 6 0	377 57½
In funds as by exhibit of Treasurer last year,	788 5 7	Expenditure, <u>371 43</u>
interest since arising,	99 14 9	In Fund, <u>6 14½</u>
	<u>916 18 5</u>	
Expenditure,	35 0 0	
	<u>£ 881 18 5</u>	

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

STATE of the CHURCHES.

The Minister's names are in capitals; Licenced Preachers' in italics; Churches distinguished with an asterisk (*) we had no accounts from; Pastors and Messengers to whose names an asterisk (†) is affixed, were absent; a dash (—) denotes a vacancy.

CHURCHES.	MINISTERS & MESSENGERS.	Baptized.	Rev. d by L.	Dismissed.	Excommunicated.	Restored.	Deaths.	Number of Members.
Charleston,	RICHARD FURMAN.	22	2	3	1	0	9	241
Edgew,	WILLIAM JOHNSON, <i>Benjamin Screven.</i>	12	3	2	5	0	2	100
Welch Neck,	FRANK WOODS, <i>Evander M'Iver,</i> <i>William Lang.</i>	0	0	3	3	0	2	126
Ebenezer,	BENJAMIN MOSELEY, <i>Solomon Morgan.</i>	2	0	1	2	0	4	74
High Hills Santee,	JOHN M. ROBERTS, <i>William Brazingtou.†</i>	12	2	3	0	1	3	117
Lynch's Creek,*	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	11
Chesaw Hill,	JOSHUA LEWIS, <i>Gen. Tristram Thomas,</i> <i>James Thomas.</i>	5	1	1	2	1	1	150
Beauty Spot,	WILLIAM BENNETT, <i>Moses Parker.</i>	0	0	6	2	0	0	95
Bethel Black River,	<i>Jesse Nettles, Esq.</i> — reduced by various means to	—	—	—	—	—	—	20
Upper Fork Lynch's Creek,	JOHN CATO,† <i>John Hennington,</i> <i>William Wright.</i>	25	5	20	9	2	4	263
Swift Creek,	JOSEPH KNIGHTEN, <i>Nathan Hanks,</i>	16	3	2	1	0	1	77
Lower Fork Lynch's Creek,*	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	42
Rockey River,*	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	46
Anson County,*	CHARLES COOK,†	—	—	—	—	—	—	79
Great Salt Catcher,	— reduced by various means to	—	—	—	—	—	—	19
Deep Creek,	JEREMIAH LEWIS, <i>Fool Gull, &c.</i>	2	3	1	2	0	1	81
Little Pedee,	SOLOMON REAVES, <i>David Harry.</i>	7	0	0	0	0	1	30
Enon,*	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	31
Georgetown,*	EDMUND BOTSFORD,†	—	—	—	—	—	—	32
Gapway,	WILLIAM ALLEN, <i>Robert Hodges.</i>	29	5	22	0	2	1	57
Lane's Creek,	JESSE LEWELLIN, <i>Isaac Shepherd.</i>	2	3	0	1	0	0	41
Congaree,	STEPHEN NIXON,† JAMES THIGPEN, JAMES COLEMAN,	11	6	39	0	0	1	97
Black Creek,	<i>Thomas Corn,</i> <i>Elias Norman.</i>	19	3	6	1	0	0	225
Three Creeks,	ROBERT THOMAS, <i>Burril Huggins,</i> <i>Eli Thomas.</i>	3	1	5	3	0	0	40
Wassamsaw,	MATTHEW M'CALLERS,† <i>Thomas Budge,</i>	4	0	2	3	0	2	67
Wateree Creek,	RALPH JONES,† <i>Roling Williamson.</i>	7	13	5	3	0	1	126
Mnddy Creek,	<i>James M'Gee,</i> Richard Carlisle,	7	0	1	1	0	0	20
Catfish,	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	41
Ferrel's Bay,	WILLIAM PALMER.	—	—	—	—	—	—	20
Beulah Congaree,	AMOS DUBOSE, <i>Isaac Tucker, Esq.†</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	40

Total. 187 50 124 39 6 33 2520

Decrease this year, by dismissing two churches containing 125 Members, 41.

THE CIRCULAR LETTER.

The CHARLESTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, met at the Welsh Neck, Peder, the fifth day of November, 1806, to the Churches they represent, and christian salvation.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

THE communion of Saints" being the subject chosen for our consideration at this time, we shall first attempt an explanation of it, according to the scriptures, and then its practical improvement. In the language of Revelation, Communion and Fellowship appear to be of the same import, "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness," and what communion hath light with darkness? 2 Cor. 6. 14. It applies to common interest in Christ, and the things of God, to agreement in Divine Truth and Christian experience, and to spiritual sympathy, or the social affections of the Divine life in the soul. It likewise applies with peculiar force to that sacred ordinance which is called "the communion of the body and blood of Christ;" and to christian converse, or the rational communication of thought and sentiment, between the faithful servants of God.

Every part of this subject is important, but the first is transcendently excellent and sublime. It includes fellowship with the adorable Trinity, as the beloved disciple of Jesus has represented: "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ." This fellowship is produced by the agency of the Holy Ghost; hence we read of the fellowship of the spirit; and hence the apostolic wish of benediction, "the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, amen." By his regenerating and satisfying grace, the souls of true believers are conformed to God, and to each other, in righteousness. By his Divine influence or operation, they have converse with God in their attendance on his word and ordinances, particularly in prayer and divine meditation, and in the exercise of those graces which are formed by him in their hearts. Thus are they instructed in the sacred truths concerning Christ and his salvation; concerning their interest in him, their relation to him, and to each other as the children of God, and heirs of eternal life: Thus are they formed into the mind of Christ, and taught to cry Abba Father. Hence their agreement in sentiment, experience and sympathy. Some variety in all these may be found among real christians; but in the essential parts or qualities, they are the same. In conversion, all are brought to feel the humbling conviction that they are sinners, guilty and depraved; that they are under the curse of God's violated law; and unable to work out their own deliverance, to discover their need of a mighty Saviour, and that Christ Jesus, the son of God, as revealed in the gospel, is that Saviour, and to feel their need of regenerating grace, as well as pardoning mercy. They are made willing to submit unto God on his own terms, to acknowledge themselves dependent on free unmerited mercy, for the least hope of salvation; and on the blood, righteousness and intercession of the Divine Redeemer for pardon, justification and acceptance with God. They all experience godly sorrow for sin; are brought to hate that great evil, to resist temptation, and deny themselves; to choose the way of righteousness and delight in holiness. They know by experience, what it is to conflict with temptation, and the corruptions of their fallen nature; to live by faith, and to rejoice in God when they obtain a sense of his pardoning mercy; to have their hearts inflamed toward him with love of his perfections, with gratitude for his benefits, and with zeal for his glory. They mutually feel their hearts expanded with a generous love toward each other, and with good will toward all mankind, especially to the souls of men; and are disposed to forgive and pray for their enemies. In these things they sympathise with each other; also in the experience of those changes in frames and feelings of soul to which the christian in this imperfect state of things is subjected. If at one time they are elevated in hope, joy, and love; walking in the light of God's countenance; they know what it is at another to sink into depression, and suffer doubts and fears; and at happy seasons, to rise again from deep distress or discouragement, to a state of comfort, joy and peace, by God's gracious assistance and blessing which they obtain. This sympathy is exercised to an eminent degree in the solemn acts of devotion in which they engage, whether public or private, when the understanding will and affections are acted upon by the sacred truths revealed in the Gospel, accompanied by divine influence; when the desires of the soul are drawn out to God in prayer, and when gratitude, love and admiration are employed in the work of praise and holy obedience to divine commands. Therefore they take sweet counsel together in the things of God, and esteem a day in his courts as better than a thousand other days. This part of our subject, therefore, claims particular regard; but we must not pass over the remaining parts as indifferent.

The ordinance of the Lord's supper is not only designed to raise the most sublime affections in the soul, both devout and social; but is justly considered as a band of strict christian union, and a test of uprightness. On this subject, however, there is a

variety of sentiment among enlightened and pious men. Not so much indeed on the general design and nature of the ordinance, as on particular circumstances relative to union. Some are of opinion, that every person who is a subject of grace and produces rational evidences of it, should be admitted to the Lord's table; and that his approach must depend wholly on his own judgment; while others think, that though a man appear to be influenced by grace, he may be justly debarred by the church on account of error in sentiment or practice, or on account of some defect in his obedience respecting a command, or institution clearly revealed in the word of God—of the latter judgment are the churches in our connexion, though with some exceptions. Error in essential doctrines, and gross immorality, most christians agree, are sufficient reasons for denying communion to those who continue in such sentiments and practices; and most also agree that some disagreements in sentiment, and some defects in life, are not sufficient objections, as such discordances are necessarily included in human imperfection, from which none on earth are exempt. But how far allowances are to be made for human imperfection, is a delicate question; in which the honor of Christ, the purity and peace of the church, and the comfort of individual christians are much concerned. In general it may be concluded on scriptural authority, that to a right communicating with each other at the Lord's table, it is necessary that there be mutually a sincere desire, and candid endeavour, to promote the most cordial agreement in sentiment; to attain the strictest conformity to the will of God in life; and to discover and abandon all errors, whether of sentiment or practice.

The most common question which has arisen on this general subject, and has also exercised much serious concern, is that which respects the communion with each other of persons holding respectively believer's baptism, and infant baptism. The most rational arguments in favour of it are founded on this principle, that the ordinance is designed for Saints, as such, without regard to smaller matters; and that admitting one of the parties is wrong in sentiment, yet while he thinks himself right and does not mean to neglect or abuse the ordinance of baptism, he ought to be admitted to the table;—and that for a church to deny communion to such, is to make themselves judges of the consciences of others; which is invading the province of Christ, or acting presumptuously and without charity. That there is much force in these arguments, we will not pretend to deny, and would not wish to decide peremptorily upon them; but at the same time we must say, there are other reasons which operate on our minds, and prevent our thinking these conclusive. One of them is, the obligation the church is under to keep the ordinances as Christ has delivered them to his people; which requires, that the church should have satisfaction, that these ordinances are administered according to the divine command and pattern to those who are admitted to their communion, as well as the individual who applies for membership, or special connexion, that they are so administered to him. That the church has no right to add to divine ordinances, or to diminish from them; but on the contrary, is strictly enjoined to guard against doing so, is certain; and on a general principle, this is admitted by all consistent Protestants. While, therefore, our churches think that the divine institution in baptism requires that the subjects should be rational believers, and the mode of administration immersion; and that in the order established for administration, baptism should be submitted to before the Lord's supper is received; they in admitting a person to communion who adheres to infant baptism, as generally practised, must, according to their own sentiments, admit a person unbaptised; and break through the order and restraints Christ has established. But if it is argued that the sentiment of the person admitted is otherwise, it is answered, not the sentiment of man, but the law of Christ is our rule of duty. Most, if not all, Pedobaptist churches will also agree to this rule in certain cases, and will not admit to the Lord's table those whom they consider as unbaptised. A question is here submitted for the consideration of those who plead for communion between Baptists and Pedobaptists: Should a Quaker who holds christian baptism to be confined to baptism of the Spirit, think communicating at the Lord's table to be a duty, or wish to observe it, and apply to a Pedobaptist church for admission; would such church consider itself justifiable in admitting him on his own faith, of being already baptized, without his submitting to baptism as an ordinance? It is believed they would not, and with good reason. From hence it appears, that however it is true on a general principle, that Saints, or subjects of grace, have a right to commune at the Lord's table, there may be just reasons for objecting to it in certain existing circumstances.

Another reason is taken from the importance of baptism, and the precision with which it is revealed in the scriptures: Faith, repentance, or something equivalent being always required as a necessary qualification; and immersion being not only the example which the scriptures furnish in the administration; but also the enacting term of the divine law, on the authority of which the ordinance is supported. Baptism, or *Baptisma*, the Greek word, strictly signifying this, as the most impartial and learned critics have stated; many of whom have even condemned their own conduct in doing so, as they themselves have practised otherwise. But the proper force and meaning of the term,

and of the verb *Baptize* or *Baptizo*, connected with it, will appear even to the careful English reader, when it is discovered that in the various representations made of baptism in the sacred oracles, immersion, or to immerse, agrees with them all; but other terms, such as washing, pouring, and sprinkling, though apparently admissible in some cases, are far from being so in others.

The last reason we shall now mention, is taken from the necessary regard we should have to consistency and reformation; it is an Apostolic maxim, "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgression." To which we may justly add, if infant baptism is an innovation, by the operation of which the regular christian ordinance is set aside; and if the honor of Christ and the purity of his church require reformation in that particular, it would seem that the support of strict communion becomes necessary. It is true, it is to be lamented that a bar to this intimate union which the Lord's supper promotes should exist between those who appear to be really pious; and it is equally true that in support of the principle we often incur censure, even from good men; that it is a principle not favourable to interest or policy, as far as worldly prosperity is concerned; and that it has an appearance of rigidity. But if the reasons which have been urged in favor of strict communion, are founded in truth and justice; these objections should yield to them, as their importance is much the greatest. And however the greatest number of our Pedobaptist brethren may censure us on this head, yet many of the most enlightened have admitted that we could not consistently practice what is called mixed communion, without admitting the validity of infant baptism.

But if an obstacle which we cannot surmount, lies in our way to prevent communion at the Lord's table, with those whom we esteem the subjects of grace, and with some who appear to rank among the most precious servants of Christ, we should endeavour to hold communion with them in all things in which we can agree, by exercising toward them the christian spirit, even that charity which is the bond of perfectness.

Another article comprehended in our general subject, is christian converse; in which the sentiments and feelings of the heart are communicated by one christian to another, in those things which respect the cause of God and each others spiritual interests. This was a distinguishing characteristic of faithful souls in the days of the Prophet Malachi, at a time when impiety generally abounded among a people professing religion: "Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." On this subject also we have an apostolic direction: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying; that it may minister grace to the hearers." Similar to this are those in which foolish talking and jesting are forbidden, as well as railing, mischievous whispering, and backbiting, and that by which speaking the truth in love is enjoined.

From the genius of the holy religion we profess, as well as from the particular rules of duty enjoined by its precepts, it is clear, that christians in their social capacity should improve all suitable opportunities for a free and godly conversation: and thus cultivate mutual affection, the fine feelings of the heart which spring from love and friendship, and in particular a tender concern for each others true interest. By doing so, our love to Christ and regard to his sacred cause, are both manifested and promoted. Sincerity, candour, unaffected humility, kindness, seriousness, prudence, and faithfulness are essentially necessary to a right performance of this duty. It may also be said of it, as of many other duties, that we are better prepared to its performance, and derive greater delight and satisfaction from it, in proportion as it is considered to be a privilege rather than a necessary requirement. The obligation is indeed certain and indispensable; but the advantage and blessedness of performing it are not less certain. It is a means of uniting christians more closely in the bond of peace and love, of strengthening their hands, of encouraging their hearts, of animating them with becoming zeal to perform their holy course of action. Even the admonitions and reproofs, administered by a christian friend, will not wound, but prove as a precious ointment to the head, and a salutary medicine to the heart. But the expression of unaffected kindness, and words of information respecting God's gracious dealings with the soul, are communications which operate as the most reviving cordial.

Upon the whole, we learn hence that to enjoy the communion of saints we must become saints ourselves; must come under the influence of the holy ghost, imbibe the genuine principles of the gospel, and drink deep into its spirit; or have the mind of Christ formed in our hearts. That it can only exist in truth, purity, peace and love: and is promoted by a faithful attendance on all the means of grace God has placed within our power; and by a faithful performance of the various duties of piety toward God and charity toward men.

While an attendance on the Lord's supper calls for the most devout affections toward our God and Saviour, and the transaction is justly considered as a renewal or strengthening of our covenant engagements with God; while it is performed in remembrance of Christ, and especially of his dying love, which faith beholds displayed in

his mangled body and flowing blood, as figuratively presented to our view in that ordinance, we discover also, that it is designed to promote the most cordial love and union among the saints; but so that a strict and sacred regard be preserved to the authority and honor of Christ; to the truths he has revealed, the commands he has delivered, and the ordinances he has instituted. The ordinances as well as doctrines must be kept as Christ has delivered them to us: and even good men when erring therein, though without design, must not be countenanced in what is evidently a departure from the rule of Christ. But at the same time it becomes us to retain a humbling sense of our own imperfections and liability to err, while we form our judgment on the sentiments and practice of other christians. While therefore some weighty reason prevents our communicating at the Lord's table with persons we have reason to believe are the true servants of Christ, it becomes us to take serious care that our love be not withheld from them; that this separation be not kept up from bigotted and selfish motives; but only from a due regard to the truth and purity of the gospel, as the glory of Christ is concerned; and should a mistake exist in our judgement respecting our brethren, that we may be open to conviction, in the exercise of christian candour, and ready to remove this bar to communion as soon as we receive right information.

In conversation with each other, we repeat, a strict regard to truth is requisite. Some truths indeed being of a secret nature, are not to be divulged; but when we make a subject the matter of our conversation, it is not only a duty, but of great advantage to the life of grace and christian union, to open the heart with simplicity and candour. For this we must exercise a confidence in each others friendship and faithfulness; where we have no just cause to suspect a professor of deceit or rashness. Our first concern should be to have our own minds rightly directed, and suitably impressed with divine principles; then we may hope our conversation will be useful to others, and excite them to seek to our advantage in return.

Seriousness, good-will, tenderness, prudence and humility, are as necessary for edification and comfort in christian conversation as candour. Levity dissipates the mind and unites it for religion; ill nature and indifference give disgust; harshness wounds; imprudence neglects or mars what is most useful; and pride, self-conceit, and an over-bearing manner of imposing our opinion, or engrossing the conversation to ourselves, must offend every person of sense and delicacy. The opposites to these which have been recommended above, have a sweet attractive influence, and tend to promote that union of heart which we have seen is an essential part of christian communion.

Through the providence of God we have enjoyed a pleasing interview, in which, we trust, has been realized in a good degree, that communion with our God and with each other which we have been recommending to your attention. The representation of the church has been more full this year than for several years preceding; the accounts from some of them are encouraging; and the increase of numbers such as to excite gratitude to the author of all grace and benignity.

We think it incumbent on us to remind you, dear brethren, that such have been the dispensations of providence towards us during the present year, that we have reason to conclude, there are causes of divine displeasure in our Land; and that the eternal God has controversy with us. At one time drought, at another deluges of rain have visited us, as the messengers of judgment, blasting the hopes and labors of the husbandman; while hurricanes in their turn have swept the land with destructive fury, and, by their violence on the ocean, have inundated our coasts and overwhelmed in the devouring deep, the property and persons of many who ranked among our most worthy citizens.—Let not these alarms be given in vain! The voice of God is in them: They call to repentance! Look into your hearts; look into your lives; look into your families, to discover what may be amiss in them, and what is wanting, with an honest intention, that the one may be removed, the other supplied. Let us particularly urge attention to the state of your families, a duty which we fear is greatly neglected. The instruction of your children, and especially their religious instruction, is of the utmost importance to them and to yourselves; nor should your servants be forgotten; religious instruction should be given them with care, to bring them to an acquaintance with the holy scriptures, and the things which concern their eternal peace. That you may abound in every good word and work, and be enriched with all the blessings of grace and salvation, is the prayer of

Your affectionate Brethren in the Gospel,

JOHN M. ROBERTS, *Moderator.*
JOSEPH B. COCK, *Clerk.*