

286.769

B22

(Envelope)

MINUTES, &c.

THE BAPTIZED CHURCHES OF JESUS CHRIST, FRIENDS TO HUMANITY,
AND THE RIGHTS OF MAN, — MET IN ANNUAL MEETING, ON THE
FRIDAY BEFORE THE LAST LORD'S DAY, IN SEPTEMBER, 1813, NEAR
STROUD'S STATION, CLARKE COUNTY, KENTUCKY, AND CONTINUED
THE TWO FOLLOWING DAYS.

1st. The meeting was opened by a Sermon delivered by brother David Barrow, from Phil. iii. 13, 14.—Several exhortations followed, and preaching in the evening by brother Elrod.—2d Saturday, after various exhortations and prayers, and a Sermon preached by brother Hampton Pangburn, the brethren took their seats, (brother Charles Crabb being called upon to act as clerk,) and letters were read from the following Churches, to wit:—Bracken, Mount Sterling, New-Hope, Lawrence's Creek and Gilgal—from the other Churches in our connexion we received no letters.—3d, The Circular Letter read and approved as to substance; and agreed that brother Barrow revise and have the same printed at the close of these Minutes.—4th, Agreed to send a friendly letter to the White Water Association, Indiana Territory, and that brother Crabb prepare the same; and that himself and brethren Lewis and James Martin, with such other brethren who may go from Shelby, bear the same.—5th, Agreed that brother Crabb prepare a Circular Letter for the next yearly meeting; and that the said letter be handed at Bracken Meeting-house in Bracken County, on the Friday before the second Lord's day in September, 1814.—6th, Lord's day morning, assembled at 10 o'clock—Preaching by brethren Tarrant, Barrow and Elrod, to a large and well composed congregation—we hope to good effect.—7th, The meeting closed with the administration of the Lord's Supper to the brethren present.

CHARLES CRABB, CLK.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

We shall address you as Christians—as the humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. And first of all, it is necessary, that a Christian should be possessed with the spirit of Christ. It is positively asserted, Rom. viii. 9, "Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Dear brethren, this is an evil time, a sifting, trying time! We should, therefore, with care examine ourselves, and try ourselves by the power of truth, whether we be the real followers of Christ, or only nominal professors of christianity. If we have the spirit of Christ, we shall love one another, we shall love our dear, long-suffering, great

liness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." Gal. v. 22, &c. It is by our fruits we are to be known; therefore we should walk circumspectly, always maintaining good works, letting our light shine before men, ever looking to Jesus, and watching for the coming of our blessed Word. But, very dear brethren, there are duties which we owe to each other, both as men and as christians, which are seldom named in the pulpit;---we shall therefore point out a few of them, in order to "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."

And first, we shall address ourselves to the Elders or Ministers of Christ and the Churches:---Dear brethren, in a time like the present, you are liable to strong temptations, to dishonesty, to walk in craftiness, and to handle the word of God deceitfully: the fear of man and a desire to please men, strongly work upon **your** corrupt natures, to daub with untempered mortar, &c. But, dear brethren, with sincere love and due respect, we exhort you to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Learn to rejoice, and be exceeding glad in persecution for the cause of truth. Remember that "no man who wareth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." He who wars, wrestles, or runs, should lay aside every unnecessary weight, and make the best preparation in his power, to accomplish the end he has in view. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." "For the time is come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Tim. iv. 2-4. "Give no man's person in admiration, because of advantage;" but as good shepherds oversee the flock of Christ. "Study to shew yourselves approved unto God as workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. ii. 15. Never fear man; because "the fear of man bringeth a snare." Prov. ix. 24. But fear God, and "show his people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sin." Be faithful, and never "shun to declare the whole counsel of God."

And you, dear brethren, who walk the vale of penury, you should esteem your ministers very highly in love, for their works' sake.--- Give to hold up and strengthen their hands; encourage them in the labours of their calling; administer comfort to them in their distresses; be ready to communicate to their necessities, never let them want any necessaries of this life, which you generally possess in abundance. "The labourer is worthy of his hire, and the ox that treadeth out the corn is not to be muzzled." We fear if this precept has not been as carefully attended to as it ought to have been. We hope in future you will lay it to heart, and be more liberal in your contributions.--- And remember always to look to the Lord, to bless the labours of his servants, and pray him to strengthen and uphold them in all their trials and difficulties, and that he would send forth more labourers into his vineyard; "the harvest truly is great, but faithful labourers are few; in truth, very few! And O, remember Zion, both ministers and members, and never cease to pray for her prosperity. O let us not forget her in this

her divided and languishing state. Brethren, love one another—"Love is the fulfilling of the law." "Bear ye one anothers' burthens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." In the exercise of discipline, always strive in a christian temper to reclaim, and not to cut off your brother. Here is often a great fault among professors: then let every member of the body of Christ study discipline and its use more carefully, and learn to use it to edification, and not to destruction.

We shall now proceed to name to you some of the duties attached to family connexions. And first---"Husbands are directed to love their wives, and be not bitter against them." To "dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel," &c. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself." The husband, therefore, should rule his wife and hold with wisdom and mercy, in the fear of God.--- Wives are directed to obey, reverence, and be subject to their own husbands in every thing. This is the substance of the directions laid down in the holy Scriptures to husbands and wives; and in following these directions they will enjoy more happiness than in the possession of houses full with strife. Obedience and reverence from the wife to the husband, is the first step towards the obedience of children to parents, of servants to masters, &c. and consequently of an orderly and happy family. We wish the happiness of our brethren and sisters, and really think that every person of reflection must know, that the obedient wife is more happy in her own mind, and spread more happiness through her whole family, than she who is refractory and usurps authority. It is a certain fact, that out of the prudence, good management and obedience of the wife, grows the happiness of families and neighbourhoods; and the good of society and nations measurably depend upon it. Pray read with attention, Prov. xxxi. 10, to the end of the chapter. If this be the case, (which we believe it is) we may well be excused for being so explicit on the subject.

"Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. vi. 1, 2, 3, 4. These relative duties from children to parents, and parents to children, have been much neglected among professors of religion---and parents, generally, have been first, and in fact, most in fault. They should, therefore, lay it to heart and be more careful in bringing up their children. And to this end we earnestly exhort you, strictly to attend in the early period of their lives, to their morals and tuition---watch their behaviour---suffer them not to keep bad company---use profane language, nor gad about on the Lord's day, which is set apart for his worship, and we believe, should be spent in that manner by all who have taken the name of christians, with their families---not only on Sermon days, but every Lord's day; but to the shame of many professors, it is frequently spent in needless visits, feasting, foolish talking, jesting, &c. &c. Beloved, these things ought not so to be. Upon the whole, dear brethren, we request you, we pray you, to read the Scriptures more! Let each character carefully read and search to find what his or her duty is, for it is there certainly and

plainly to be found;—and O, let us in future, strive more diligently to follow the directions, which will be for our own comfort and the glory of the cause we profess.

We exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things—not stealing or injuring their master's property, nor neglecting their business, but to use all good fidelity—considering that they shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for in doing their duty faithfully, they serve the Lord Christ. And we intreat masters to give unto their servants (whether they be convict servants, apprentice servants, or hired servants) that which is just and equal, considering that they also, have a Master in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

We beseech you, brethren, to consider your various stations and relations, whether as neighbours, members of the civil community, or citizens of the world at large, and endeavour to fill them up with propriety.

As to those who are in a state of absolute, perpetual, hereditary slavery, we are at some loss to address—because the Scriptures seem to favour no such station; but the best advice we can give them is, to be patient, prayerful, humble and honest in the service of their oppressors, and peaceable in the country where they live, until it shall be pleasing to God to deliver them. And we exhort their owners to consider what they are about, and to remember that the justice of God will not always sleep—they hold even their own Christian brethren in slavery. The Jews and Mahometans free the proselytes to their religion! O strange, that those who profess the benign religion of Jesus Christ, should possess less generosity than a Jew or a Mahometan!

Dear brethren, take heed and beware of covetousness, which is idolatry—Let us therefore lay it aside, with all pride and hypocrisy, and let us guard against conforming to the world, and its foolish fashions and fopperies. We see the awful judgments of God on our land. O, dear brethren, remember in all our fasts and prayers, the fast which the Lord has chosen. See Isa. lviii. 6. “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?” We have no ground to hope the calamity will be removed, without repentance and reformation take place in church and state. Consider these hints—and the Lord give you understanding in all things. Finally brethren, farewell. Be perfect—be of good comfort, be of one mind—live in peace—and the God of love and peace shall be with you.