

son that it takes more to exclude a preacher for mis-conduct than it does to exclude a common member. I think it is a mistaken idea. They take this for proof: "Receive not an accusation against an Elder unless it be in the mouth of two or three witnesses." It takes two or three to exclude any member. I claim no pre-eminence over my brethren and sisters. There has been more confusion among the Baptists caused by disorderly preachers than anything that ever came among them. I have been an Old Baptist forty-nine years and have noticed that all the splits and corruptions among them arose out of the pulpit either directly or indirectly.

My dear brethren and sisters, deal with your preachers for misconduct or heresy either in doctrine or practice, and if they will not hear the church exclude them and save the church.—Christ, in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, tells the church, "If thy right hand or foot or even the eye offend you cut them off and cast them from you," and so with your favorite preacher—for just as long as you retain him you will be in what Christ called hell fire, that is, confusion and distress. I will now say, suppose there is a report that such a brother or sister has done some very bad thing, shall an individual go to that brother or sister and say to them, you have tres-pas-sed against me?—I say, No! it is the business of the church to call on that brother or sister to know whether the report is true; and if they deny it and there is no gospel evidence you are done with that; but, if the church believes them guilty they have their eye on them, I fear, for evil. It is a very easy matter to deal with christians, and exclude them if they deserve it—but it is a hard matter to get rid of a hypocrite. They will tell lies to get into the church and they tell lies to stay there in order to keep the church in confusion. We see that the church has had disorderly men to deal with from the apostles' days down to the present time. Paul wrote to the church how to deal with a member that had taken his father's wife. He did not tell them to go to him and try to reclaim him, but they told them to put that wicked person from among them.

We see that none had committed a public offence, but was dealt with and excluded publicly. I will say, that all members who tell lies, steal, get drunk or commit whoredom should be dealt with publicly, and if they fail to give full satisfaction exclude them and save the church from corruption.

My dear brethren and sisters, good discipline is the life of the church.—You may bear with disorderly members until the church becomes a stumbling-block even to the world. Christ has told us plainly how we shall deal with a brother that tres-pas-ses against us, that you shall go to him alone; but, my dear brethren,

this is often neglected—instead of going to the offending brother, you make a blowing-horn of it and make yourselves worse transgressors than your offending brother.

These things my brethren have come under my notice. Such things will always keep the church in confusion. Any brother that will back-bite his brother should be dealt with. We are commanded to bear each others burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Paul said, "If any brother walks disorderly amongst you keep not company with such a one, no not to eat," that is, do not commune with a brother in disorder. He says again, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly amongst you, that is if he fails to give satisfaction withdraw your fellowship from him." My dear brethren and sisters, the church gets into many troubles by letting tenderness outrule faithfulness. The church is called "the salt of the earth," but if she suffers disorderly members through tenderness, to remain in the church, she loses her saltness and will be finally trodden under foot by men. They will say, I am as good as any of them: see what kind of men they have, they do worse than I would do! But, my dear brethren, each and every one of us should take heed to ourselves lest we be overtaken in a fault, and not take hold of an offending brother roughly; but deal with him in love and meekness; try to reclaim him or her, not command them in a rough way—pay me what thou owest.

My dear brethren, if a preacher or any other member is guilty of heresy, it is plainly laid down how the church shall deal with them. After the first and second admonitions, if he will not hear, then reject or exclude him and save the church from partaking of his heresy. St. John tells us, "If any one come unto you (the church) and bring not this doctrine (I understand the doctrine of Christ and the apostles, all doctrines outside of this is heresy,) receive him not into your house or church," and you had better not suffer him to preach in your meeting houses, nor dwell in your houses, even if they should claim the name, Primitive Baptist.—Paul told the church "That men of your own selves shall rise up and speak perverse things to draw away disciples." It is the duty of the church or its deacon to guard the pulpit. If the church will use good discipline there need not be any splits or trouble. Always nip disorder in the bud and never suffer it to go on till it brings evil and distressing fruit.

I will now state what took place under my notice. There was what they called, a big favorite preacher, and a sister in the church accused him of attacking her in a carnal way, and of course you know he denied it, but the church took up the case and excluded the woman and retained him. We will just ask the question:

Was that good discipline? I will answer, No! it was the duty of the church to exclude them both. I will say, the deacon of the church was one of the main ones that contended for retaining him, and, in less than two years he took the deacon's daughter and ran away and left his wife. You see what the church made by acting partially. They could then exclude him and say that he was guilty of the first crime. Christ, in speaking on disciplines said to the offender: "Agree with thine adversary quickly whilst thou art in the way or church with him, lest thy adversary deliver thee to the Judge (the church) and the Judge deliver thee in the officer (the Moderator) and thou be cast into prison, (that is cast out of the fellowship of the church) then thou shalt not come out till thou hast paid the utmost farthing." My dear brethren, it is a prison to the true children of God to be excluded from the fellowship of the church, and, when Satan buffets him he will be ready to pay the whole debt. It never did do the christian any harm to exclude him or her for misconduct. We are commanded to treat an excluded member as a brother, and not as an enemy. My dear brethren, the church should not use partiality in dealing with offenders, but deal with all offenders in the same manner. If you do esteem one brother above another be sure not to show it. I have seen too much of this used in the church and it always had a bad effect. Be sure never to exclude a member without gospel evidence. You had better clear the guilty than to exclude the innocent, for he has no way to get back into the church again. I have seen innocent men excluded and guilty ones retained; and this is said to be "one of the abominations in the sight of God," to clear the guilty and banish the innocent.

I would say to brother Canie and others, that I have given my views on Church Discipline in my weak way; I am old and failing both in body and mind; but, if I can be any advantage to my brethren and sisters either in preaching or writing, I feel willing to spend and be spent for their welfare and happiness. Every time I write a communication for publication I think it will be my last.

ABNER HERN.

LAUREL, FRANKLIN Co., N. C.,  
April 20th, 1874.

P. D. Gold, Dear Brother:—

As I am very much afflicted with Sciatic rheumatism and not able to be at work, I have decided to relate to the brethren and sisters the dealings of God with my poor soul. I take this opportunity of doing so through ZION'S LANDMARKS. I have had the pleasure of reading your paper and so many of the brothers' and sisters' experiences, they do comfort me so much while I am in the valley—I am there the most of my time. Sometimes I feel the love of God in my soul, then it is that I can say, "Praise ye the Lord, oh my soul."

Brother Gold, it has been my mind to write to you ever since the 5th of November last. The day you helped

to organize our church I wanted to tell you of my little hope. If I am not deceived, when I was convicted and saw myself a sinner in the sight of God, I was reading the New Testament; I was about eighteen years old. It was about six years before I could claim a little hope. I would hear people talking about getting religion, so, I thought I would try to pray but did not get any better—I would feel worse. I went on in this way six years, waiting at the pool.—Others would step in before me and I would be left; I gave up all hope and thought I was one of the lost ones, and thought there was no salvation for me. I was in this distressing condition some time. I gave myself up in the hands of the Lord for him to do just as he pleased with me. If he did not save me it would be just, if he saved me it would be through mercy. I was so miserable I did not know what to do, my mind was directed to my Testament; I took it up and opened it at the tenth chapter of Romans: I commenced at the first verse and read to the fourth, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The first thing I knew I was praising the Lord, oh, my soul! Brother Gold, if I was ever born by the holy Spirit of God it was then that my heavy burden of sin was removed, but I cannot tell how it came or how it went. The Saviour told Nicodemus "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." So is every one that is born of the Spirit—so it was with me, if I ever was born of the Spirit. I commenced reading and studying the scriptures diligently, they would comfort me where they condemned me before.—Yes, I could claim the promises where I could not before. Then I wanted to join the church. In three months after I hope the Lord pardoned my sins, which was the third Saturday in August, I went to the meeting house and when preaching was over the door was opened to receive members. I went forward and told the church what I hoped the Lord had done for my poor soul. I was received and was baptized on Sunday by Eld. Willoughby Hudrins—after the baptism we went back to the house and commenced singing these words:

Oh when shall I see Jesus and reign with him above,  
And from the flowing fountain drink everlasting love?

I sung the song through and thought I never should see any more trouble in this life; but, it was not more than three or four months before trouble came again. I knew not what to do for I thought that I was nothing but a deceived creature and that I had deceived everybody else. Then these words came to my mind—Let not trials, tribulations and temptations turn you away from your Lord. "He is for you who can be against you?" Brother Gold, that is the way the warfare commenced with me, flesh against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and when I wanted to do good evil would be present with me. I have been engaged in this warfare twenty-seven years and yet I don't claim to be anything but a poor sinner, and if saved it is for nothing good that I have done—"For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," "for ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

ELUCETTA W. AYCOCK.