

Give names of mover and seconder of all motions and amendments; and if an important discussion arise, the names of speakers, with a brief summary of their arguments *pro* and *con*, the object being to make such a record that at a future time it may be known why a certain course of action was adopted.

When a candidate is to be received for baptism, or upon experience, or by restoration, the relation of experience given to the church, either directly or through a committee, should be noted; and questions put to the candidate, names of questioners, and replies.

See that a motion to receive a candidate "for baptism" or "as a member after baptism," is correctly entered. A motion could not be made to "receive as a member" absolutely, because baptism must precede membership.

The reasons for dropping or excluding a member should be fully entered. When action is taken, the clerk should communicate with the member, giving the reasons therefor; and in case of such member applying for membership in another church, the copy of this letter would be evidence that would clear the church excluding the member, from a charge of negligence.

The clerk should record in the minute-book the death of members as they occur, in addition to entering the date on the roll.

THE ROLL BOOK.

The following plan is simple, yet gives an easy method of ascertaining at any moment not only the numerical standing of the church, but the complete history of each member as such.*

The left-hand page, for recording *additions*, should be ruled off as follows: member's name; member's name; united by letter; united by baptism; united by experience; united by restoration.

The right-hand page should record *dismissions*, by being ruled off as follows: separated by letter; separated by dropping; separated by exclusion; separated by death. The remaining space will be headed "history."

Where dates are noted, the column spaces need only be wide enough to accommodate the figures; thus, for December 25th, 1876, write: "25; 12; 76."

Names are entered in the *order of time*; hence an *alphabetical index* to the roll-book will be convenient for ready reference, and may be also used for entering residences of members. Enter all names in full, correctly spelled, because the name as first entered is the one by which the member shall always be known to the clerk. The titles "Mr." and "Miss" will be superfluous if the full Christian name be given.

When a female member marries, the new name should not be entered in the roll, but the clerk proceeds as follows:—suppose Ellen Jones, whose number is 242, becomes Mrs. Charles Smith. The pastor informs the clerk of the change. The clerk turns to Ellen Jones's name in the alphabetical index and writes under or opposite it, "see Smith, Mrs. Charles;" then turning to the entry "S" in the index, he makes this entry:

"Smith, Mrs. Charles, (see 242)." The original entry in the roll remains untouched. Suppose now that Mrs. Smith ceases, from any cause, to be a member; the clerk finds her name in the index, is directed to No. 242, and on the line of the roll where Ellen Jones's name appears, he makes the necessary entry in the proper column. The entry in the minute-book, of her separation, will of course be as Mrs. Smith.

No entry of the name of a member received by baptism should be made in the roll-book until after the candidate has been baptized, for circumstances might arise to prevent the baptism, and in that case the name would have to be struck off the roll, as the membership dates from the baptism. When the hand of fellowship is given, the only entry in the roll-book will be that under the heading "History," where will be given the page of the minute-book on which that fact is recorded.

The admission of a member by letter is dated in the roll-book on the day on which the motion to receive was made—not on the date of the letter itself, which may not have been deposited for months after its date.

The "History" column is a new feature, and its merits will now be shown. Whenever a member's name is entered in the minute-book (except in cases where reference is not thought necessary), the member's number should be written in the left-hand margin, in colored ink or pencil, as already mentioned. Then, in the History column of the roll-book, write opposite the member's name, the page of the minute-book on which such entry is made. Suppose, now, that James Brown applies for a letter of dismissal, and the clerk finds opposite his name these figures: "24, 50, 120, 154," in the History column. He turns to pages 24, 50, 120, and 154, of the minute-book, and finds, for example, that on the three first are recorded respectively the reception, baptism, and recognition of James Brown, but page 154 records that a committee was appointed a year ago to write to Bro. Brown asking explanations of his immoral conduct. Upon reading to the church the several entries, it is ascertained that James Brown never replied to the committee's letter, and that his present application is made with a view of joining another Baptist church. Would it not be a gross injustice to all concerned to grant him a letter in view of these facts? Yet at the meeting where action is to be taken on the application, if no one is present who happens to know the facts, and if the record has not been searched, the letter is granted. The consequence is that the church granting the letter is scandalized, and the church accepting the member on the strength of the letter is disgraced. If it is said that this case is uncommon, it is replied that such cases may occur; but even though they should not, instances are not so rare in which a knowledge of the facts would have prevented mischief. But apart from this, it is only fair to the member as well as the church, that everything—good and bad—should be known concerning each member as such.

When letters or documents are copied in the letter-book, referring to any member, the page should be noted, in brackets, under the heading of "History." Thus, in the case just cited, suppose the letter from the com-

mittee to James Brown be copied at page 23 of the letter-book, under the heading "History," and after the figures "154," the figures "(23)" will appear.

If a reply be received from James Brown (whose number, say, is 54), fold it and write on the back the figures "54," and put it with other letters or documents connected with No. 54. Thus, by means of figures, the whole history of a member may be readily traced.

THE LETTER BOOK.

No church should be without one. Those which do not require a press are most suitable. Association letters, communications to other churches, invitations to ministers for special services, or as candidates, replies to communications, letters of dismissal, when not in the usual form,—these should all be available, but in order to make them so, in the absence of a letter-book, the clerk must write copies in full in the minute-book.

When a document, which has been copied in the letter-book is referred to in the minutes, write the page of the letter-book in brackets in the left-hand margin of the minute-book.

No index will be needed if the letter-book be pagged, the reference in the roll or minute-book to the page of the letter-book being sufficient.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The clerk should have charge of all correspondence which does not belong to committees whose proceedings are private or who have a clerk of their own. Communications should be written upon paper bearing the correct name of the church (whether "Regular" or otherwise), also the name and address of the pastor and clerk. The mis-carriage of letters will be prevented by using envelopes with the address of the clerk printed on them. The business of the church being of a private nature, so far as outsiders are concerned, postal cards should only be employed where paper and envelopes cannot be had.

When a written application for a letter of dismissal be made through the pastor or any member, it should (unless it contain matter of a purely personal nature) be filed by the clerk, who should after folding letters relating to members, mark the member's number on the back, and keep on a file by themselves.

LETTERS OF DISMISSAL.

Some churches attach to them a blank certificate to be filled by the church receiving it, stating the fact and the date of the deposit. This certificate should be returned at once after being filled, as the church issuing it regards the dismissed member as still under their watchcare and discipline until the certificate is received back. The clerk's inattention to this matter will put the member in the anomalous position of being under the discipline of two churches at the same moment.

Letters of dismissal should be valid for a stated period only; and if a certificate be attached and not returned within the period, diligent enquiries should be made why the letter has not been deposited.

Blank certificates are of value, if properly used; but are a hindrance rather than a help if not promptly filled and returned.

* W. Washburn, of the Baptist Book Room, is the publisher of a Roll Book almost identical with the one here described, lacking however, the "History" column.