

Circular Letter.

TO THE CHURCHES COMPOSING THE WESTERN BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION.

Dear Brethren,

The apostle Paul, exhorts us to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. How needful this exhortation! At the commencement of the Christian church, we are told, "the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and one soul; neither said any one that ought which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." How different from this has been the state of the Christian church, for the most part ever since! At the present moment, the church of Christ is divided into sections, between which there is *often* the most bitter hostility.

But to confine our attention at present to those congregations which have their government in their own hands, it is a well known fact that among them there is great want of the unity of the Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. In such congregations are often witnessed, a spirit of pride, jealousy, envy, resentment, malice, and contention. The Holy Spirit knew how much of human depravity would exist among the followers of Jesus, and, therefore gave the important precept, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The apostle states both the means and the motives which should lead to unity of the Spirit. He says "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." Here is the road to union among Christians.