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Baptists. South Carolina. Charleston Association.  
Minutes of the Charleston Association.... October 27,  
1788.

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# MINUTES

OF THE

## CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION.

*Charleston, October 27, 1788.*

- I. **A**T eleven o'clock, A. M. a suitable introductory sermon from Heb. 13. 22, was delivered by the Rev. Edmund Botsford.
- II. Letters from eight churches were read, and the names of the delegates enrolled.
- III. Rev. Edmund Botsford was chosen Moderator, and Capt. John Hart, Clerk.
- IV. Letters from the Philadelphia and Georgia Associations were read; likewise a letter from the Kent and Suffex association in England, with their preliminaries and breviate.
- Rev. Richard Furman, Col. Thomas Screven and Capt. John Hart, are appointed a committee to answer the letter from the association in Kent and Suffex; and to take proper measures for opening a correspondence with other associations in England or elsewhere, who wish to correspond with this association.
- V. Rev. Henry Holcom is appointed to write the letters to the Philadelphia and Warren, Rev. Joseph Redding to the Ketrockton, and Rev. Edmund Botsford to the Georgia associations;—the Rev. Richard Furman to write the circular letter.
- VI. The churches being divided in their sentiments respecting the propriety of divorcement, and the legislature having already taken it into consideration, agreed to dismiss this business.
- VII. Rev. Richard Furman, reported, that the committee appointed had not petitioned the legislature for the incorporation of this association, because a sufficient number could not be convened at any proper time.
- Mr. Moderator being dubious of the propriety of incorporating this association, declines serving on the committee.—Rev. Joseph Cook is added.

And

And lest the union of this association might be weakened, the committee are desired to defer petitioning, until the matter is further considered by those who disapprove the measure.

VIII. To the query presented the last association—Is it consistent with good order for a church to dismiss a member with a recommendatory letter to become a member of one with whom they are not in communion?

It is answered—When a person is truly conscientious and desirous of dismissal, in order to answer the call of Providence, and discharge what he apprehends his duty before God;—we think it is not inconsistent with good order to dismiss him in the manner stated: provided the church to which he is dismissed may be considered as a true Christian church; but we think particular care should be taken to know, that the person does not act from the influence of passion or idle fancy—and that he is disposed to receive information and give satisfaction to his brethren with whom he is in connection.

IX. Queries by the Euhaw church—

I. Is it consistent with the word of God and the government of our churches, to return public thanks for the safe delivery of our female members through the perils of child bearing, and dedicate their infant progeny to God in the congregation. —

Answer—We think it consistent with the word of God and the government of the church, to offer up public thanks or prayers to God for any of our members, and their children, as they have received or stand in need of mercies from God; and, that as it is the duty of Christians to devote themselves, so their children and all they possess, should be dedicated to him; but, we also think that any mode made use of in public for this purpose, should not be considered as a Sacrament, or positive institution of the Gospel, as it does not appear to us any such does exist.

Query II. Have not negroes, who are members of churches, as great a right to marry, if agreeable to their owners, as to the ordinances of God's House; and may not their living together in the neglect of marriage when it can be procured, be termed fornication: if so, have they a right to communion?

Answer—Slaves not being entitled to the privileges of freemen by the law of the land; and the ceremony of marriage being circumstantial, we do not think the customary mode with us essential: but if they cohabit without entering into obligations to each other, according to the usual mode among negroes, it is fornication; therefore they are to be admitted or debarred communion accordingly.

X. In consequence of a query from the Welch Neck church, agreed, that the association in future determine at each meeting, the time and place of their next.

OCTOBER 29.

Mr. Moderator being prevented attending by sickness, Rev. Mr. Holcom was appointed in his stead.

XI. Rev. Mr. Atkins requested the patronage of this association; but some difficulties arising respecting his character and conduct—agreed to refer the business to the annual committee.

XII. Query from the High Hills church.

What rule ought we to observe respecting the strange fashions of apparel which come up among us?

Answer—We think in dress, that both extravagance and neglect should be carefully avoided; that due respect be paid to the age, circumstances and stations of persons, and to the customs of the place where we reside; also our income should not be exceeded, as we are under moral obligations to improve our substance for necessary and useful purposes.

XIII. Query from Black Swamp church.

Does Satan know all our thoughts, whether good or bad?

Answer—The knowledge of the heart is the peculiar prerogative of God; see 1st of Kings, 8, 39, consequently the Devil, or any other created Being, cannot know the thoughts or intentions of the mind, but by the actions which flow from them.

XIV. The Queries from the Swift Creek church are fully answered in the summary of church discipline, to which we refer them.

XV. The ministers present (except Mr. Redding) agreed to furnish the High Hills church one month each in the year; and it is recommended to others in the union to afford them assistance.

XVI. The annual committee are, the Rev. Messrs. Richard Furman, Evan Pugh, Edmund Botsford, Joseph Cook, Henry Holcom and Joseph Redding.

XVII. Concluded to hold our next meeting at Rev. Alexander Scot's, Black Swamp, to meet on Saturday preceding the second Monday in December.—The Rev. Joseph Redding to preach the sermon; and in case of failure, Rev. Richard Furman.

XVIII. Rev. Richard Furman and Capt. John Hart, are requested to superintend the printing of the minutes.

PRESENT

## Present state of the Churches.

Note. The Ministers names are in capitals. Churches marked with an asterisk \* we had no account from: their numbers stand as last year. Ministers, &c. marked with an obelisk † were absent. A dash — denotes a vacancy.

CHURCHES.	M E S S E N G E R S.	Baptised.	Added by L. &c.	Dismissed.	Ex-communicated	Dead.	Total.
Charleston.	RICHARD FURMAN, Thomas Rivers, Patrick Hinds, Colonel Thomas Screven, Capt. J. Hart, Jeremiah Brown, John Hamilton.	25	1	0	0	0	178
Euhaw.	JOSEPH COOK, † John Screven, David Adams.	19	2	4	1	2	63
Welch Neck.	EDMUND BOTSFORD, Josiah Evans,	6					145
Cashaway.*	EVAN PUGH †						42
Catfish.*	JEREMIAH REAM. †						32
Coosawhatchie.	JAMES SMART, † Thomas Knight, Esq; James Smart, jun.	2	3	2			66
Sav. Riv. Georgia,*	—						146
Pipe Creek.	HENRY HOLCOM, James Sweeth,	8	7	3	5	0	103
Jeffers Creek.*	BENJAMIN MOSELY. †						40
High Hills Santee.	William Hampton, Peter Millet, †	2			1	2	91
Lynch's Creek.*	—						41
Cheraw Hill.*	JOSHUA LEWIS. †						63
Beauty Spot.*	HENRY EASTERLING. †	4	4	0	0	1	52
Bethel, Black River.	SOLOMON THOMSON. † ALEXANDER SCOTT,*						59
Black Swamp.	Joseph Lawton, William Cheney.	35	10	0	0	1	54
Turkey Creek, Sa- luda.	JOSEPH REDDING, John Nash.	4	12	1	0	1	75
Edisto.*	NATHANIEL WALKER. †						124
Little altcatcher.*	—						18
Fork Lynch's creek.*	CHARLES COOK. †	4	12	2	0	2	104
Swift Creek.	LEWIS COLLINS. †						67
Increase this Year, 88.		109	51	12	7	9	1563

## C I R C U L A R   L E T T E R .

*The Charleston Association, met at Charleston, the 27th, and continued to the 30th of October, in the year of our Lord 1788; to the Churches they represent, send Christian salutation:*

BELOVED BRETHREN,

**T**HROUGH the kindness of Divine Providence, a few of us have been permitted to meet and converse together, in friendship, peace and love. Being led of course to address you by a general letter, we hope it may not only prove a mark of our respect, but be the means of real benefit.—The information contained in the letters received from you, and from other churches in various parts of the world, give great reason to conclude that the influences of the Divine Spirit are diffused among his saints, and the interests of religion advancing. We cannot but renew our exhortations on this important subject, while we consider how essentially necessary it is, that the professed disciples of Christ Jesus should be distinguished by their undissimbled piety and zeal for the Divine honor. “What do ye more than others?” is an interesting and important question proposed by our Divine Lord; and it is most certain, that the obligations, motives and means of the Christian require, that he should excel in holiness and every laudable pursuit. Happy will the state of the church be, when a holy emulation for such attainments possesses the breast of every individual Christian, and influences the conduct of each particular congregation of the righteous. This is more especially to be expected of the Baptist churches, from their professed attachment to the primitive modes of worship, and apparent care to preserve a true communion and gospel fellowship.—Let not the reality of our conduct then be contradictory to our profession, and bring reproach on the sacred cause we have espoused.—“The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light.”——As a general backwardness respecting our associational meetings continues, notwithstanding the many admonitions already given on that head—we think it incumbent on us to observe, that as these meetings are the great means of union and common inter-  
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ests; so, that union will be weakened and those interests suffer, in proportion as neglect prevails. Unity in sentiment and energy in operation, may be expected from an attendance on the general council of the churches; while on the other hand, matters of importance are frequently delayed, or even opposed, for want of a proper acquaintance with the reasons from which they originate. — An attendance by the ministers is more especially to be expected; they are the most active and leading persons in the church; and by the peculiar duties of their station, are called forward to consult and advance the interests of religion. To this we must add, that the absence and apparent indifference of the majority,\* has a powerful tendency to check the ardor and damp the fortitude of those who are disposed to be active: more especially when it is found, that other engagements are entered into by some at the very time of our meetings, and the obstacles complained of by others, surmounted readily in a pursuit of those things which are purely temporal. — Some, however, we are sensible, have been prevented through afflictions or otherwise, by the decided voice of Providence — with these we sympathize.

Finally dear brethren, we entreat you to press forward to the goal of your spiritual race, to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold of eternal life. — This is the time for action; enemies surround us; the cause of God suffers; our souls are in danger; the way of duty is revealed; the glorious prospect of eternal blessedness is opening to our view; the robes of victory, the crown of righteousness, the kingdom of glory almost appear. — To this we add, we act in concert with the whole system of nature; with the course of Providence and the scheme of grace. — The Saints of God are for us; the Angels of the Lord, and the Lord of Angels are on our part.

*Wishing you all happiness, we remain,*

*Beloved Brethren,*

*Yours in Gospel Bonds,*

HENRY HOLCOM, *Moderator.*

JOHN HART. *Clerk.*

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\* Of seventeen ordained Ministers belonging to the Association, four only were present at this meeting.