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Baptists. South Carolina. Charleston Association, 1794.  
Minutes ... at the Upper Fork of Lynch's Creek, the 1st of  
November, 1794.

[ Charleston, 1794. ] 8 pp.

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# MINUTES

OF THE

## CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION,

*Met at the Upper Fork of Lynch's Creek, the 1st of November, 1794.*

1st. **T**HE two first days were employed in the usual exercises of public devotion, which concluded with the administration of the Lord's supper on Sabbath evening.

2d. On Monday, 11 o'clock, A. M. the discourse introductory to business, was delivered by rev. Henry Holcombe, from Psalm XCIII. 5. *Holiness becometh thy House, O Lord! for ever.*

3d. Letters from 18 churches were read, and the delegates enrolled.

4th. Rev. Richard Furman was chosen moderator, and Rev. Henry Holcombe, clerk.

5th. Rev. Davies Collins attended as messenger from the Bethel Association, presented a letter and took his seat accordingly. The substance of their minutes was communicated in a letter from Rev. James Fowler, by which it appears, that love and unity abound among them; and that eleven churches have been added to their number at the last meeting. Minutes from the Kent and Sussex Association were also received, but no letter.

6th. The ministering brethren occasionally present, and not delegates, were invited to a seat.

7th. A church in Georgetown consisting of 36 members, and another on Little Peedee, consisting of 30, applied by letters and delegates, for admission into our union, and, on satisfaction obtained respecting their faith and practice, were received. The former originated from the Charleston church, and was constituted in June last; the latter in the year 1776.

8th. Mr. Furman was requested to write to the Kent and Sussex association, Mr. Staughton to the Warren, Mr. Botsford to the Philadelphia, Mr. Holcombe to the general committee in Virginia, Mr. Thomson to the Bethel, and Mr. Sweat to the Georgia.

9th. Mr. Sweat delivered a letter from seven churches situated to the southward, five of our union, and two others in Georgia, which met last summer in convention at Black Swamp, representing a plan for forming a new association, and expressing their desire to have the approbation and concurrence of this association in the execution of the said plan. This subject being considered and debated at large, it was the general opinion, that it is more desirable, and more likely to promote the glory of God, for the churches to continue united in one body; but that the convenience of the churches in each extreme of the union may be duly attended to, as well as of churches in Georgia or elsewhere, who may be disposed to unite with us: agreed unanimously, that hereafter two meetings be held in the course of the year:

the one at the usual time, as the annual meeting, in the northern division of the churches, the other in the southern, in the spring. The moderator was directed to write a letter on this subject, in answer to the above letter, expressive of the sense of this body.

10th. The Bethel association having proposed for consideration the expediency of forming a general committee of associations in these southern states, similar to that in Virginia, the same was taken under consideration: And finally it was agreed, that should such a plan be generally adopted by the associations in the states southward of Virginia, it might be of use; but unless such a scheme should be very general, and directed to definite and important objects, we think it would be ineligible.

11th. Queries from Anson county church. 1st. Can it be thought regular and proper for a minister to make appointments and preach in the known bounds of another, in union, and on the days of his public ministrations, so as to draw away his hearers? Answered in the negative.

2d. When a member of one church transgresses in the bounds and under the observation of another, and the case being brought before the church of which the transgressor is a member, they refuse to give satisfaction to their offended brethren; what should be done? Answer: as the refusal of a church in such a case, would, where the nature and evidence of the transgression is indisputable, be taking part in the guilt of the transgressor; we advise, that the offended church admonish them in meekness, as becometh the gospel; and if this does not produce the desired effect, the churches in union should be informed. But where a dispute exists respecting the nature of the fact said to be a transgression; or concerning the required manner of giving satisfaction; if a friendly and candid discussion of the subject between themselves will not produce agreement, it would be best to call in the assistance of impartial and judicious persons from other churches. If a church is fully possessed of the circumstances respecting the transgression of one of its members, and receives satisfaction of him as to his repentance; or uses proper means to produce repentance, we think information of this, regularly given to another church concerned, is, in ordinary cases, sufficient to afford them satisfaction.

12th. Appointed rev. Mr. Denman, messenger to the Bethel association.

13th. The circular and ether letters appointed to be written, were read and approved.

14th. Appointed Rev. Mr. Holcombe to prepare a circular letter for our next annual meeting, in answer to the following query: what attention to the civil and political interests of our country, does the law of God require of us as christians?

15th. The languishing state of religion in our churches, and the country at large, continuing to demand our most serious attention; agreed, to hold a monthly meeting for prayer throughout the year, on the plan adopted at our last meeting; and we earnestly exhort all our churches, and members of churches, as they regard the honor of God, the interests of their own souls, and the souls of others, to attend seriously to the solemn undertaking.

16th. Mr. Furman reported that in compliance with the direction of the association last year, 2000 copies of the church discipline had been printed; and that he had also imported 200 confessions of faith, and 700 catechisms.

17th. Agreed to hold our next meeting at the Euhaw, the Saturday before the first Sabbath in May, and the annual meeting at Ebenezer on Jeffers's creek, the Saturday before the first Sabbath in November next. Rev. Alexander Scott to preach the sermon in May; in case of failure, Rev. Mr. Goldwire; Rev. Joshua Lewis in November; in case of failure, Rev. Evan Pugh.

18th. The money was collected for printing the minutes, the superintendance of which was, as usual, committed to Rev. Mr. Furman. The meeting concluded with exhortation and prayer by the moderator.

### MINUTES OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE,

*For the Charleston Baptist Association Fund, met at the upper Fork of Lynch's creek, Nov. 5th, 1794.*

1st. The following gentlemen appeared as delegates from the churches to which they respectively belong: Rev. Messrs. Richard Furman, Edmund Botsford, Henry Holcombe, Solomon Thomson, and James Sweat; Messrs. William Hampton and William Cuttino.

2d. Re-elected Rev. Richard Furman, president; colonel Thomas Screven, treasurer; rev. Henry Holcombe, secretary; and Messrs. Thomas Rivers and John Gourlay, assistants.

3d. Accounts of the following collections were given in: In Charleston, 74l.\* paid into the hands of the treasurer; Welch Neck, 31l. 8s. 3d. for the present and last year, paid in discharge of arrearages for the pupils under care of the committee, while at the Cheraw academy; Euhaw, 12l. 10s. in money; and from the Religious Society in Charleston, 39l. 11s. 6d. paid into the hands of the treasurer, toward the education of John M. Roberts; amounting in the whole to 157l. 9s. 9d. And by comparing the whole with the treasurer's account, it appears that with the money sent on with the young men, who are gone to college (amounting to 58l. 18s. 11d.) the expenditures since the fund has been formed, have amounted to 214l. 11s. 7d. and there is now in the fund, in cash and specialties, 150l. 19. 6½d.

4th. From the representation of the president, that the young men sent to college had been admitted to an advanced standing in that seminary, and the usual charges, demanded in such cases remitted in favor of the particular design of this institution: Therefore agreed unanimously, that this committee have a high sense of the generosity and kindness of the trustees, president and other officers of the Rhode Island College, on this occasion.

5th. Agreed, that the business submitted to the care of the special committee last year, be continued to them this year; and should any religious youth apply for the patronage of the churches during the recess of the general committee, they are empowered to take them under their care, after having examined them respecting their qualifications, in conjunction with the religious society in Charleston. The assistance of that society in such cases is hereby requested.

United in prayer and adjourned.

RICHARD FURMAN, President.

HENRY HOLCOMBE, Secretary.

\* The collection in the Charleston church this year, was made before the constitution of the Church in Georgetown took place; 14l. was collected there.

## STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

The Ministers names are in capitals; Licensed Preachers in Italics; Churches distinguished with an asterisk (\*) we had no account from, their numbers stand as they did last year; Pastors and Messengers, to whose names an obelisk (†) is affixed, were absent; Dash (—) denotes a vacancy.

CHURCHES.	MESSENGERS.	Baptized.	Rec. by Letter.	Dismissed.	Excommun.	Dead.	Number.
Charleston.	RICHARD FURMAN.	19	138			5	242
Euhaw.	HENRY HOLCOMBE.	6				2	130
Welch Neck.	{ EDMUND BOTSFORD, Evander M'Iver, John Killingsworth.		1	2		1	170
Mount Pleasant,*	EVAN PUGH,†						38
Coolfawhatchie,	JAMES SWEAT.	1	2	1	3		64
Pipe Creek,	MOSES HADLEY,† William Causey.†		1	4	1		75
Ebenezer,	—————, Solomon Morgan.			1		1	55
High Hills of Santee,	{ —————, GABRIEL GERRALD,† Stephen Nixon,† William Hampton.		1			2	95
Lynch's Creek,*	—————,						14
Cheraw Hill,	{ JOSHUA LEWIS,† Thomas Cochran, James Bolton.	1	5	1			89
Beauty Spot,*	—————,						66
Bethel, Black River,	SOLOMON THOMSON, Daniel Norton.	4	1			4	87
Black Swamp,	ALEXANDER SCOTT,†				3	1	56
Edisto,*	NATHANIEL WALKER.†						142
Little Saltcatcher,*	—————,						96
Upper F. Lynch's Creek,	{ WILLIAM DENMAN, JOHN CATO, Alexander Walden.	3	19	4	4		82
Swift Creek,	LEWIS COLLINS.						72
Lower F. Lynch's Creek,	{ —————, William Weatherington, James Hudson.	2					32
Rocky River,	SAMUEL BONDS,† Joel Roland.	5			6	2	138
Anson County,	CHARLES COOK, John Sibley.				1		48
Great Saltcatcher,	{ —————, Major Richard Creech,† Dr. Philips.†	2	3			4	41
Deep Creek,	—————, JEREMIAH LEWIS.						49
Little Peedee,*	JEREMIAH RHAME.†						26
Enon,	—————, Joseph Thomas.†	1	1	1			16
Georgetown,	{ —————, William Staughton, William Cuttino.						36
Gapway, Little Peedee,	{ DAVID OWEN,† David Davis, Right Wall.						30
Neither increase, nor decrease.		45	872	18	29	19	87

## THE CIRCULAR LETTER.

*The Charleston Association, met at the Upper Fork of Lynch's Creek the 1<sup>st</sup>, and continued to the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, 1794, to the churches they represent, send christian salutation.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

THE subject of our address to you this year, is an answer to the following important query: "What conduct should be observed by christians in matters of controversy, wherein they differ from each other, in respect either of principle or practice?"

It is much to be lamented, that the religious world is divided into such a multiplicity of discordant principles, and that such a division of interest prevails. To increase and establish a general unanimity, must appear truly desirable to all who possess the amiable spirit which the gospel recommends. To aim at so desirable an end is certainly our duty, and our felicity will rise in proportion to the degree in which the attempt succeeds. Our individual errors are generally best detected and avoided, by tracing them to their origin. The same conduct may prove serviceable when extended to the mistakes of professors at large. The sects that now exist in the christian world are numerous; and, as their various names indicate, have been raised chiefly by individuals; the persuasions distinguished by the names of Calvinists, Lutherans, Armenians, Arians, Socinians, &c. are easily traced to their native rise. But applying ourselves more closely to the subject, we perceive that this diversity may be ascribed to some of the following causes:

1<sup>st</sup>. The vast sublimity of gospel truths. The objects of nature are frequently too sublime to be penetrated by the most enlarged capacity; but the subjects connected with the gospel are far superior. In the stupendous system of redemption, the moral perfections of the Deity are exhibited: herein we survey his holiness, veracity, wisdom, justice and mercy. When subjects into which angels desire to look, are reviewed by men, it cannot be supposed strange that sentiments should vary; great is the mystery of godliness.—Another cause assignable is,

2<sup>d</sup>. The difference of capacity and advantages for obtaining divine information, which the godly possess. Grace does not occasion an equality of intellect, the human powers are the same *after* conversion as *before*. The work of grace consists in inspiring the mind with such divine principles and affections as direct those powers to their proper objects; hence such who, like the apostle Paul, are the most ardent in the cause of *it*, become, when converted, the most zealous in the kingdom of Jesus, and it is the same on the contrary. Since then, there is a great difference of capacity in christians, and every one judges according to his own capacity, diversity of opinion must be expected. Besides, christians have some more and others less opportunity of acquiring truth; some enjoy a pious and judicious ministry, others are deprived of such a favor. Some, like Timothy, trained up under the pious care of religious parents, know the scriptures from their youth; while others, for want of information, like the Corinthian disciples, are children in understanding.

In addition to these disadvantages, we may mention the pernicious influence of false brethren, who (having crept into the church unawares) to advance their popularity, have introduced a variety of unscriptural notions, such as sober, humble christians would never have conceived; yet being maintained with great confidence or art, have met with advocates. These tend to subvert the truth, lead many into error, and augment the diversity of opinions and practice.

3<sup>d</sup>. Particular habits of thinking, which arise from our being accustomed to associate with persons of any peculiar persuasion, may form another of the causes of this difference in principle and practice.

The best reason many are capable of assigning for their adherence to certain opinions is, "They were so brought up." The arguments by which their own system is supported, are ever before them; they conceive all other tenets wrong for the same reasons that others think theirs

theirs so, they have always been to them so represented. Such therefore, who are unused to examine for themselves, and yet have been habituated to certain modes of thought and conduct, are frequently unsuspecting of error, and are astonished or displeased to hear their tenets controverted. Hence, says the excellent Watts in his logic, part 2d. chap. 3. sec. 4. "The several sects and parties in christianity, believe all the strained interpretations of scripture by which they have been taught to support their own tenets: they find nothing difficult in all the absurd glosses and far fetched senses that are sometimes put upon the words of scripture, because they have been always accustomed to them; and therefore they sit so easy upon their understandings, that they know not how to admit the most natural interpretation in opposition to them."

To these and similar causes, this diversity among christians may be attributed. We know that these derive their force from that moral depravity by which the understanding is darkened, and the taste for piety awfully changed. While we continue in this world, the effects of sin will always, in some way or other, be manifested; hence that spirit of contradiction, bigotry, and self-confidence, that tortures the religious world. Hence, too, that obscurity of perception, contraction of mind, and inconstancy of opinion, which so greatly prevent our receiving the truth, and which only sovereign grace can effectually cure.

The difference of sentiment among christians is so great, that a particular detail of the behavior due to individual sects, could not be circumscribed within the bounds of a letter; two ideas, however, may be suggested, which seem capable of universal application, and from which such inferences may be raised, as will, in some good degree, solve the query proposed.

1. The kingdom of Jesus is indivisible. However the christian world may be divided, there is really, and will appear to be ultimately, but one Lord, one faith, and one baptism; Christ is all and in all. When the disciples came to Jesus, informing him that they saw one casting out devils, and that they rebuked him because he followed not them, the Saviour replied, "Forbid him not, for whosoever is not against us, is for us, &c." Whosoever is destroying the empire of Satan, is on the side of Christ. On this general principle Paul rejoiced that the gospel was preached, though through envy and contention. We are too apt to imitate the disciples, our views of the kingdom of Jesus are frequently too contracted; we conceive it commendable that we rebuke others, *because they follow not us*. But supposing some of their principles may, in our view, be erroneous, and that circumstances prevent their learning the way of the Lord more perfectly; in proportion as they endeavor to demolish the throne of Satan and promote the interest of Jesus, we should wish them success. Though they may not appear foremost in the battle, they may bring up the rear of the Lord's host. In our correspondence with those who think differently from us, we do well to keep in memory, that real christians of all denominations are one in Christ; the idea will serve both as a design and rule for our behavior.

2. A christian should never vary his character. In this we should be uniform; whatever that conduct be, which we should observe towards them that differ from us, it is plain that rancour and uncharitableness should never be used; we must lay aside all malice and guile, and hypocrisies, and envyings, and evil speakings. As the elect of God, we must put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long suffering; in this array we are prepared for every engagement, and shall ever, more or less, succeed. But when we forget the temper and views which are the christian's glory, and indulge opposite feelings, we wound our peace, draw a veil over the dignity of our profession, and expose ourselves to the scorn and derision of a depraved world. By keeping this important principle in view, desirous in all our ways to appear as christians, we shall escape the miseries into which thousands have fallen. From these two ideas we may furnish ourselves with an answer to the proposed enquiry; but there are several inferior observations that may prove serviceable, which we will take the liberty to subjoin.



1st. An open avowal of our conscientious sentiments respecting the doctrines we believe, and the practice we observe, is a duty we owe to God; and to do so in those points which have become subjects of controversy, is so far from being a just cause of offence to such christians as differ from us, that a regard to their interests as well as our own requires it: by this they learn our true character, and upon what terms any connection or correspondence between us and them may be supported, that if in these things we are right, they may be furnished with information for their conviction; or, if wrong, they may be informed of our error, and have an opportunity to afford us assistance in a similar manner. To disguise and conceal real sentiments, with specious appearances to the contrary, is, at best, a conduct unworthy the christian, and argues base and selfish designs in the authors. To shun conversation on subjects of controversy, among christians of different sentiments, altogether, according to maxims which seem now generally to prevail among those who are considered the polite part of mankind, argues, either that right sentiments of religion are of no importance, that the knowledge of truth is not attainable; or, that there is not charity or prudence enough in the religion of christians, to engage and direct them in rational enquiries after truth. Though a cold and distant kind of friendship may be kept up by a conduct founded on those maxims, it seems pretty certain, that while it prevails, the tender, lively, warm religion of the heart, by which christians are brought into a holy fellowship, can never flourish.

2dly. When the honor of God and the cause of truth, require our engaging in controversy, a candid and conscientious enquiry concerning the importance of the subject in dispute, will be of great utility: It will secure from that toil and disappointment which must be finally consequent on the laborious pursuit of trifles. By this means we shall determine in what proportion it deserves our zeal and perseverance. The word of the Lord is true and righteous altogether, but as some of its doctrines are more comprehensive and important than others, they ought to be examined and determined with greater precision and care. Should the precise age of Christ, when he was led to the cross, be required, it is evident the enquiry appears unimportant, when contrasted with this: Is the blood of Jesus sufficiently efficacious to atone for sin? The former may be rejected as trifling, but the latter demands our serious and diligent researches.

3dly. To shew our wit or parts, is at best, a very trifling end, which will finally prove a snare to the soul, especially if in the judgment of others, we triumph; and if it be to gratify our anger, resentment or ambition, in promoting the interests of a party, we must remember this is not serving the real interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, but in a direct violation of his laws, and giving cause of offence to the little ones of his flock. "He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory."

4thly. We should labor after an acquaintance with the real difference between ourselves and those who differ from us; this will rid us of much perplexity. Perhaps, on minute investigation, the chief difference may consist in the acceptation of a few words, or a variation of opinion on a few points, which, when compared with the ideas in which both are agreed, are scarcely worth naming. This error may be detected with a little reflection, and by avoiding it, our friendly converse will be more clear and convincing, and our unity more likely to be secured. If we find uniformity of opinion unattainable, still we are bound to exercise charity, tenderness and forbearance. The time is not yet arrived when the watchmen shall see eye to eye. The thought that those with whom we now cannot fully accord, will ere long, be with us in heaven in perfect love and harmony, that it is our truest honor to promote the glory of God, rather than our own selfish interests, and that reproach is cast on the cause of Christ, and obstacles laid in the way to prevent the faith of unbelievers by angry disputes among christians; must have a happy influence on our minds when concerned in matters of controversy, and lead us to pray earnestly to the God of wisdom, peace and love, to pour out his gracious spirit on our souls, to dispose and enable us to act right, and to extend the divine influence to *all* his dear people. These



These observations, dear brethren, we earnestly recommend to your attention, being sincerely desirous that as men of God, ye may be thoroughly furnished to every good work. But from conviction that without habitual purity of mind, divine truth cannot be clearly perceived, and consequently cannot with success be maintained, we exhort you to walk worthy of God, to all well pleasing; let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ; have respect to all the divine commandments, for if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. Were professors more holy, their sentiments would be more uniform. To the absence of this we may ascribe that languor and insensibility of which our churches so generally complain.

Let us be frequent in prayer for the coming of the great Redeemer's kingdom in the world; and, assured of the vanity of all on earth, be looking for a city that hath foundations, where we shall all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God unto a perfect man, unto the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ, when an address, like the present, will no longer be requisite.

Yours, in the bonds of the gospel,

RICHARD FURMAN, *Moderator.*  
HENRY HOLCOMBE, *Clerk.*