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Baptists. South Carolina. Charleston Association, 1811.

Minutes of the ... at Columbia ... 2d Nov. 1811.

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# MINUTES

OF THE

## CHARLESTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

*Convened at Columbia, S. C. on Saturday, the 2d Nov. 1811.*

1. THE two first days having been employed in exercises of public devotion, in which both Baptism and the Lord's Supper were administered; on Monday, at 11 o'clock A. M. the Association Sermon was delivered by Reverend Dr. Furman, from Matthew v. 13. "*Ye are the Salt of the Earth: But if the Salt have lost his savour wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*"

2. Rev. Dr. Maxcy, President of the South-Carolina College, prayed at the opening of business. Letters from 27 Churches were then read, an account taken of their state, and the names of the Delegates they had sent minuted.

3. Elected Dr. Furman, Moderator, and Rev. Joseph B. Cook, Clerk.

4. Read the Letters received from corresponding Associations, and welcomed the messengers of those who appeared by delegation. From the Philadelphia, a letter and minutes of the last year. From the Warren, no accounts. From the Georgia, a letter and minutes; their messenger, Rev. H. A. Boyd. From the Bethel, a letter and minutes; messengers, Rev. Messrs. John Rooker and Samuel McCreary. From the Hephzibah, letters of the present and past year with minutes; messenger, Rev. Henry Hand. From the Sandy Creek, a letter; messengers, Rev. Messrs. William Dargan and John Muse. No account from the Savannah River. From the Edgefield, a letter and minutes; messengers, Rev. Messrs. Thomas Deoach and Henry King. From the Nouse, two letters and minutes. From the Cape Fear, a letter.

5. Rev. Dr. Maxcy and Rev. William T. Brantly, being present, their company, and assistance in deliberation were requested.

6. Appointed as a committee to revise the Circular Letter, and other letters which should be written in behalf of the Association, Dr. Maxcy, and Messrs. Roberts, Johnson, and Cook: Also, appointed them with the addition of the Moderator, to inspect the minutes of corresponding Associations, with a view of bringing forward any article contained in them, which might claim the particular attention of this body.

Mr. Rooker prayed, and the Association adjourned to Tuesday morning, 9 o'clock.

Met according to adjournment. Mr. McCreary prayed.

7. The committee appointed to visit the Anson Church, reported, that they had visited said church, but were unsuccessful respecting the object of their appointment; the spirit of party still running high among them. This also appeared by letters sent from each party, claiming the right of being considered as the church. Whereon it was moved, and agreed to unanimously—That as this body have been troubled for many years with the dis-

agreeable disputes of the Anson Church; and have been at unusual pains to reconcile and bring them into a state of regular order and peace, without effect; therefore, the said church be left out of the list of churches in this confederation, until they appear to have acquired a different spirit and better manner of acting; when, should this ultimately be the case, they will be again received into union.

8 Resumed the consideration of republishing the confession of faith, system of discipline, and catechism; and appointed Dr. Furman, with Messrs. Henry Inglesby, and James Harper agents to contract for the work, and to have proposals issued without delay.

9. The committee appointed to make enquiries respecting the practicability of establishing a Seminary of learning under the direction of this body, reported, that they consider the attempt ineligible at present. In which report the Association concurred.

10. The committee to whom was committed the business of inspecting the minutes of corresponding Associations, recommended, that this body unite with the Bethel Association in warning the public against a certain Leaford Paine, who is said to be a notorious impostor, assuming the character of a Baptist Minister. Also, that they recommend the Circular Letter of that Association for the present year to the particular attention of the public. The letter being read, it was resolved to concur in both articles of this report.

11. Appointed the following Brethren to write to corresponding Associations, viz.—Furman to the Philadelphia, Maxcy to the Warren, Roberts to the Georgia, Cook to the Savannah River, Johnson to the Bethel, Collins to the Hephzibah, Nixon to the Edgefield, Todd to the Neuse, Boyd to the Sandy Creek, and McKellar to the Cape Fear: Also, appointed the following Brethren messengers to Associations, viz.—Todd to the Georgia, Collins and Cook to the Bethel, Johnson to the Savannah River, Denson to the Hephzibah, Roberts and Nixon to the Edgefield, White to the Cape Fear, M Kellar and Ellis to the Sandy Creek.

Mr. Nixon prayed, and the Association adjourned to Wednesday, 9 o'clock.

Met pursuant to adjournment. Mr. Cook prayed.

12. Read and approved the Circular Letter, prepared by the Moderator, as revised by the committee of revision.

13. Took into consideration the business respecting the Catawba Indians; and agreed to continue the Mission and School.

The Brethren, Johnson and Collins who had been appointed to visit the Nation, and to superintend the school, in conjunction with the Missionary, reported favorably concerning the state of the Nation, and of the progress made by the Indian youth in their learning: They also recommended, that the Teacher be permitted to take some of the neighbouring white children into the school, with a view of bringing the young Indians to a more ready acquaintance with the English language; that, to suit the convenience of the Indians, the school be held alternately on each side of the river, six months at a time; and (as in case of the death of the present Missionary, it would be desirable to have some other person employed in that character, who should be well acquainted with the Indians, and in whom they might have confidence,) that Mr. McCreary, who is not very distant from them, be requested to

visit the Nation occasionally, in company with Mr. Rooker. To which recommendations the Associations agreed.

14. Read and approved the letters addressed to corresponding Associations. Dr. Maxcy having been indisposed, Mr. Brantly had prepared the letter to the Warren Association.

15. Took into consideration the queries from the Churches: 1st From the Church in Charleston, "What are the Scriptural reasons and evidence for the difference of procedure recommended by our System of Discipline in cases of Excommunication, as public, or private?"

A few members expressing a doubt concerning the propriety of public Excommunication, in any case, agreed to leave this subject open for further consideration 'till our next meeting.

2d Query, from the Church at Jeffers' Creek, "When members of our Churches send their children to Dancing Schools, or Balls; or encourage their attendance on them, should their conduct be considered as disorderly?"

Answer, we believe that as Dancing Schools and Balls are generally conducted, they are both in principle and manner inconsistent with the Spirit of the Gospel, and that therefore, it is not consistent with good order to encourage them.

16. Agreed, that this Association are sensibly affected by the death of the Rev. Isaac Tucker, who died in the course of the present year. He was very useful during his short course in the Ministry, was a worthy man, and a respectable member of civil society: and, we are happy to learn, died in the lively exercise of Faith, and in the joyful hope of a happy Immortality.

17. Agreed to recommend to our Churches Dr. Staughton's Abridgment of Dr. Gill's Body of Divinity, which may be obtained in one volume for \$2.75 at first cost. They also inform the churches and the public, that the same author is now publishing a Greek and English Lexicon, which, it is believed on good authority, will be, at least, one of the best helps which have been yet furnished for persons who wish a just acquaintance with the New Testament, in its original language, to attain their object.

18. Agreed, that the subject of the next Circular Letter be, The nature and extent of Christian Liberty: and appointed Rev. John M. Roberts to write it.

19. Agreed, to renew the recommendation of last year to our Churches, of having days appointed, to suit their own convenience, for extraordinary Prayer, for the revival of Religion and progress of the Gospel: and appointed the 2d Wednesday in March next, as a day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, to be observed by all our churches, to deprecate the displeasure of Almighty God, and to implore his mercy and blessing on our land and nation, and upon all the Churches of his Saints.

20. That the Association might express in their minutes their sense of obligation and affectionate regard to the citizens of Columbia—

It was on motion, agreed, that this Association feel greatly obliged to a large part of the respectable inhabitants of Columbia, for their very friendly and hospitable conduct toward the members of their body during the time of its present session: and are greatly pleased with the behaviour of the citizens in general, on account of their serious, regular, and apparently devout attendance on public ordinances through the whole season. These obligations will be

held in grateful remembrance, and the Association's best wishes will ever attend the citizens of Columbia.

21. Agreed, that our next session be held at the High Hills of Santee, on Saturday before the 1st Sabbath in November next. Rev. Joseph B. Cook to preach the Sermon; in case of failure Reverend Wm. B. Johnson.

22. Collected money for printing the Minutes, and directed their printing and distribution to be conducted in the usual manner.

Concluded with Prayer and Exhortation by the Moderator.

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.**

1. The following persons appeared as Delegates: Furman, Roberts, White, Johnson, Cook, Collins, Denson, and Todd.

2. Re-elected, Richard Furman, President; Henry Jones, Treasurer; John M. Roberts, secretary; David Adams and Henry Inglesby, assistants.

3. Rev. William T. Brantly presented a donation of \$37 12 1-2 cents from the Baptist Church in Beaufort; and informed the committee that the said church were desirous of acting in concert with the churches of the Charleston Association in the business of the Education Fund—that they intended laying the subject before the Savannah River Association, with a view of exciting them to a general concurrence in such a measure—and wished to be informed whether the committee approved the measure, thought it practicable, and would agree on a plan of concert.

The committee accepted the donation with gratitude; and in answer to the inquiry stated, as the result of deliberation, that in their opinion, the scheme of concert was practicable, and might be made convenient; and that they were disposed to do every thing reasonable and proper to accomplish such a laudable Intention.

4. Agreed that the special committee, continue to hold the power of transacting all necessary business of the general committee during the time of its recess.

5. Took an account of the contributions, and state of the funds, as exhibited below.

	<i>Education Fund.</i>		<i>Missionary Fund.</i>
Charleston, -	\$225 14	-	\$150
Welsh Neck, -	20	-	12
High Hills Santee,	40	-	53 33
Columbia, -	86 25	-	20
Amelia Township,	10 37½	-	20
Camden, -	6	-	5 6½
Shiloh, - -	11 12¼	25 mile Creek,	8
Beaufort Donation,	37 12½	Beulah, -	8 75
		Waterree Creek,	7
	\$436 1½	Congaree,	4
	£101 14 9	Bethel, -	6
Deduct Charleston collection, } inserted in Treasurer's acc't. }	52 10 0	Ebenezer, -	2 50
	49 4 0	Terrill's Bay,	2
Treasurer's account including } Charleston collection, and } having a credit for an expen- } diture on the Students for } £51 5, to 1st November. }	1248 3 2	Bal. last year,	298 64½ 45 82
			344 46½
		M. S. \$121 43	
		S. M. 250 0	
Expended on the Studs. in Nov.	58 6 8	For Inds. 8 0	379 43
	In Fund. £1239 1 3	Deficient	39 64½
Loaned \$35, to the Missionary Fund.			

# STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

The Ordained Ministers' names are in capitals; Licenced Preachers, in italics; from Churches distinguished by an asterisk [\*] we have had no account, and their numbers are represented as they stood the last year. Pastors and Messengers to whose names an obelisk [†] is affixed, were absent; a dash [—] denotes a vacancy.

CHURCHES.	MINISTERS & MESSENGERS.	Baptized	Rec. by Let.	Dismissed	Excommu	Res. ord.	Dead.	Number of Members.
Charleston,	RICHD. FURMAN, Wm. Inglesby, Jas. Harper, †	30	1	4	2		7	450
Welsh Neck,	DANIEL WHITE, Evan- dler M'iver, S. Norwood,	4	2		1		4	97
Ebenezer,	BENJAMIN MOSELEY, † Timothy Dargan,	2						86
High Hills Santee,	JONHN M. ROBERTS, DAVIS COLLINS, James M. Kellar,	25	1	1			4	194
Cheraw Hill,	JOSHUA LEWIS, † JOHN ELLIS,	1	1	1	3	3	1	190
Beauty Spot,*	WILLIAM BENNET, †							90
Upper F. Lynch's Cr'k	J. KENNINGTON, † Jas. Ferguson, Wm. Clibourn,	5	7		4	4	2	279
Swift Creek,	—, Cason Scott, J. Pebles,	8		7	2		2	49
Lower F. Lynch's Cr'k,	—, Hillsmon Hill,			5				16
Rocky River,	GEORGE WHITLEY, †	7	2	1	1	1		48
Deep Creek,*	FRAME WOODS, †							70
Little Peedee,*	SOLOMON REAVES, †							54
Georgetown,	EDMUND BOTSFORD, †	17	1				1	61
Gapway,	—, William Rosier,			17	3	1	1	41
Lane's Creek,	JESSE LEWELLIN, †		10	1	1		3	40
Coagaree,	STEP. NIXON, J. Bostick,	6	6				2	75
Black Creek,	JAMES COLEMAN, † John Coll, Henry King,	14	5	4	3	1	4	283
Three Creeks,	—, John S. Thomas, †						1	25
Wassamsaw,	MATTHEW MCUL- LERS, † L. F. Braker,	1		12			2	60
Wateree Creek,	RALPH JONES, † Thos. Meredith, James Hart,	4		1			1	58
Muddy Creek,*	—							13
Catfish,	—, Henry Berry, †					1		28
Terrel's Bay,	WILLIAM PALMER, † Valentine Rowel,	1	1	12	1		1	55
Beulah,	—, Geo. Scott, Isaac Price,	39		5			1	135
23 Mile Creek,	AARON WOOLTON, Alexander Crompton,	18	4	16	1		1	88
Amelia Township,	JAMES THIGPEN, † RICHARD TODD, Wm. Paulding,	95	8	4	3		3	207
Lynch's Creek,	SAMUEL TIMMONS, † John Timmons,	1		1	1		1	41
Columbia,	Wm. B. JOHNSON, John Gond,	18	4	2			1	66
Camden,	JOSEPH B. COOK, Richd. Stratford, † Wm. Cook,	1	8	4			1	29
Calvary,	BRADLEY RHAME, † John Rhame, Thomas Crompton,	8	4		2			53
Piedmont,	—, Underhill Ellis, Ed- ward Barret,	3	2	1			1	33
Bethel.	WASHINGTON BEL- CHER, †, JAS. DENSON.	2	4					20

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## THE CIRCULAR LETTER.

*The CHARLESTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, assembled at Columbia,  
the 2d of November, 1811.*

To the Churches they represent, send Christian Salutation;

*Beloved Brethren,*

Agreeably to a Resolve, passed at our last session, we now address you on the importance and necessity of a careful, diligent attention to the Means of Grace: and, particularly in the important duty of giving education to children.

By the Means of Grace, we understand whatever God has appointed, or recommended in his word, as means of our drawing near to him: of learning his will, and obtaining his blessing, or for exercising and improving gracious principles or dispositions in our hearts and lives.

These are either *common*, or *special*. By *common*, we mean those which are free for the use of men in general, when they are disposed to seek and serve God; or which are to be used more ordinarily by the godly. By *special means*, we intend such as are peculiarly sacred; or such as should be resorted to on extraordinary occasions.

Hearing the Gospel preached, reading the Scriptures and other godly books, meditation, religious conversation, watchfulness, prayer, self-examination and self-denial may be accounted ordinary means: Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Fasting united to Prayer, come under the description of extraordinary, or special means. But ordinary means, by being used in greater measure; and with more earnest engagedness than on common occasions, may be considered as acquiring an extraordinary character.

By a careful, diligent attention to these means, must be understood, such an attention as includes sincerity, seriousness, and wisdom; and which excludes indifference, and neglect—such a rational, just, conscientious view of them, by the mind, as will enable it to form a right estimate of their nature, use and worth; and such an actual attendance on them, or use of them, as is equal to our ability, and opportunity.

It is easy to shew that such attention to the means of grace is both important and necessary: And first in respect of their object, or end—If grace is of the last importance to man, then must the means of obtaining and improving it be highly important.

Without grace there can be no salvation: by grace are ye saved, through Faith, Eph. ii. 8. Destitute of grace, we lie in our guilt, under the sentence of Divine Wrath, in the Pollution of Sin, amid the ruins of the fall, and are liable to the Damnation of Hell. Without it, we cannot answer the end of our Creation, that sublime end of glorifying God: we cannot render him acceptable service, nor exercise toward him right affections: we shall be unable to promote the best interests of mankind, not only of others, but our own; and must remain strangers to true peace and comfort, both in life and death.

What are the gratifications of appetite and passion, even all the enjoyments of sense; what the possession of worldly honour and power—If at the end of this momentary life, we must lie down in eternal sorrow; be excluded from the regions of light; from the gracious presence of God; from the society of saints and angels; and be delivered over to unutterable horror and despair—To “The worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched”?

The importance and necessity of attending to the means of grace will appear further, from the Divine Constitution, or, in other words, the appointment of God. He has commanded men to use them; he has invited them so to do; he has promised his blessing to such as use them with sincerity; and he has threatened those who neglect them, with his righteous displeasure. To which may be added, that as in his infinite wisdom, sovereignty and goodness he has connected the end with the means, giving ample encouragement to those who use the means to expect the blessing; so it becomes highly presumptuous in us to hope for the blessing, without the use of those means.

The scriptures furnish abundant evidence in confirmation of what we have stated on this subject. God there commandeth all men, every where to repent: And “To do works meet for Repentance,” Acts xvii. 30. xvi. 30. They assure us, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judg-



ment, than for those who reject the Redeemer's messengers, and will not hear their words. Matt. x. 11. While they inform us that this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, 1 John iii. 23, they charge us not to "Refuse him that speaketh; but to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," Heb. xii. 25. ii. 1: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," Matt. xi. 15, is a solemn, general injunction. "Hear and your soul shall live," Isaiah lv. 3, is both a command and promise. "Search the Scriptures," said our Divine Lord, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me, John v. 39: This the Berean's did, and were unspeakable gainers by the employment, Acts xvii. 2.

Reading and meditation are strictly enjoined on Timothy, though a Minister of Christ, and of an extraordinary character, 1 Timothy iv. 3, 13; and Joshua when appointed to succeed Moses, as the leader of Israel, was charged, by the Lord, to meditate in the Book of the Law, day and night, Joshua i. 8.

Because Israel did not consider, they are represented by the Prophet Isaiah, as having become more ignorant and brutish than the dull Ox, and the stupid Ass, Isaiah i. 3: and by the Prophet Haggai, the whole nation are called upon, repeatedly, in the name of the Lord, to "consider their ways" Haggai i. 5, 7.

Prayer, the direct act by which a dependent, needy creature, applies to its God for help, and by which a sinful, guilty soul implores mercy, is every where enjoined, recommended, and encouraged. "Ask," says our gracious Redeemer, "and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you, Matthew vi. 7:—"He spake a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not faint; Luke xviii. 1: and as this was our Lord's gracious design in speaking the parable, so the argument it contains is most encouraging and powerful: For, if an unrighteous judge, would avenge a needy widow, lest by her continual coming she should weary him—"How much more," as our Lord urges, "will God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him." It is declared in favor of those who are sincerely engaged to pray, "That whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, Acts ii. 11: And the Lord Jesus has promised to his Disciples, that "whatsoever they shall ask in his name, he will do it for them: that the Father may be glorified in the Son, John xiv. 13, 15. The beloved Disciple explains the promise as applying to things which are asked according to the will of God; and consequently, to those which are most necessary, and best for us. 1 John v. 14, 15.

As the importance and necessity of Prayer are justly argued from the appointment, command, and promise of God (who has declared that even when he bestows the essential blessings of the New Covenant, in which are the beginnings of Spiritual Life, the new heart, and the right spirit, "He will yet be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them, Ezekiel xxxvi. 37;) so the argument receives much additional force from the consideration, that a disregard to prayer, or the neglect of it, is placed, by the scriptures, among the strongest features of a mind under the power of sin, and exposed to wrath: "They call not upon God." Psalm xiv. 4. "Pur out thy wrath upon the Heathen, and upon the families that call not on thy name" Jer. x. 25.

Religious conversation was enjoined on the Israelites in the strictest manner: They were directed to speak of the things contained in the law of God when they sat in their houses, when they walked by the way, when they lay down, and when they rose up. Deuteronomy vi. 7. Those of them also who, in the fear of the Lord, spake often one to another, in a time of abounding iniquity, are noticed with peculiar approbation by their God, Malachi iii. 16. In the New Testament, Christians are directed to have their "Speech always with grace, seasoned with salt;" and to "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of their mouth," but, on the contrary "that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers," Colossians iv. 6, Ephesians iv. 29: And that "Exhorting each other daily," to which we are directed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, seems to intend principally, the admonitions, counsels, and encouragements which are to be given in private conversation among friends, Hebrews iii. 13. It was in private conversation, on the all-important subjects of religion, that the disciples going to Emmaus were employed, when the blessed Redeemer, after his resurrection, joined them, explained to them the scriptures, and made their hearts to burn within them under the influence of his love. Luke xxiv.

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Watchfulness is another important means of grace, which the scripture enjoins. It is sometimes mentioned alone, "What I say unto you I say unto all, watch. Mark xiii. 27. But most generally it is connected with prayer, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:" "Watch unto prayer." Matthew xxvi. 41. 1 Peter iv. 7. Colossians iv. 2. Without it prayer will be performed in a lifeless ineffectual manner, and without prayer, watchfulness cannot be well supported. It includes strict attention to the heart; which we are commanded to "Keep with all diligence, because out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs iv. 23. Neither of these duties can be rightly performed without self-denial, which our Lord enjoins on all his followers, and declares to be so essential to their character, that without it no man can be his disciple. The life of grace begins in this exercise, and can make no respectable advances without a strict regard to it.

The special, or extraordinary means of grace must also be used with care and diligence, by all who are qualified to make a right use of them, or are called to that use by the word and providence of God. Baptism, which is connected with a profession of the Christian religion, is not only an important duty, enjoined on believers, by him who has all power in Heaven and in Earth, but is a precious means of grace, which, while it symbolically represents Christ's Death, Burial and Resurrection, for our Redemption; and the soul's dying to sin, rising to newness of life, and purification, by regenerating grace; is also, a solemn act of covenanting with God; and becomes to the party baptized, a pledge of pardoning mercy, of acceptance with God, and of eternal life. Penitents and believers are directed by the word of God to embrace it, and submit to it immediately; and a delay in the performance is represented as highly inconsistent with our duty and happiness. Acts ii. 38. xxii. 16.

The ordinance of Baptism is to be administered to the believer but once. It is not so with the Lord's Supper: This is to be attended on through the course of the christian's life, with such frequency as becomes its sacred nature; as a means of renewing his covenant engagements with God; of keeping up a lively, thankful sense, or remembrance of the Redeemer's love, and of shewing forth his death till his second coming. This sacred transaction, when rightly performed, is attended with unspeakable advantage to the christian; but by its profanation, great guilt is incurred. The latter consideration deters many from an approach to the Lord's Table. But it ought to be remembered, that this is only an argument, (as the Apostle uses it) for our approaching the ordinance with becoming sanctity and devotion; not for our abstaining from it. Those who are careful to come in God's appointed way, are assured that they shall find acceptance: And it should not be forgotten, that our Lord has enjoined it positively, from the consideration of his love and mercy—"This do, in remembrance of me;" And, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Fasting, in union with prayer, is commanded in the Old Testament; is described by Christ our Lord, as a special means for obtaining mercies, and as an acceptable service which we may render to God: while the example of both Old and New Testament saints recommends it to our use and practice. On solemn, important transactions of the church; in times of public, or private calamity: or when, from the prevalence of sin, and from threatening dispensations of providence, judgments are to be apprehended, fasting and extraordinary prayer, should be resorted to with the greatest seriousness, and without delay. Cases of individuals require it, as a private service, and means of grace: And as the disciples of Christ could not dispossess the dumb and deaf spirit, (though they were endowed with the power of working miracles in ordinary cases,) without extraordinary prayer and fasting—so, when strong obstinate temptations assail an individual; when the soul becomes languid in religion; when burdens of guilt lie heavy and long on the conscience; and when particular trials and difficulties arise, it should seem that the call of duty to the use of these united means is strong and urgent.

The importance and necessity of attending diligently to the means of grace, will farther appear, by the examples, which scripture and observation furnish, of the respectability, holiness, peace and comfort of those, in every age, who have faithfully used these means: And of the inconsistency, ignorance, impiety, and misery, which have marked the characters, lives and deaths of those who have neglected, or abused them. While the soul of the former, have been like a watered garden, or a field which the Lord hath blessed; those of the

litter, have been as a barren heath, or like the field and vineyard of the sluggard, "Over-grown with thorns and nettles."

We close our observations on the general nature of this subject with one serious remark, which is this, that a solemn choice of the "One thing needful," and a fixed determination to be the Lord's, are essential to a right use of the means of grace.

In the second place, we are to consider the subject as it applies to the religious education of children. In this the best interests of individuals, families, society at large, and the church of God in particular, are greatly concerned. It is also a subject sacred to the divine honour: Yet we fear, it is greatly overlooked; we had almost said, shamefully, and impiously neglected, by many professors of religion: even by some of those who make the highest claim to spirituality and zeal. This neglect, in some, we have no doubt, originates in certain wrong, or mistaken principles; which we shall endeavour to remove, or correct, while we enforce the duty under consideration.

The duty of educating children religiously, is taught with great clearness and authority in the Old Testament: It is also recognised, and enforced in the New.

David informs us, in the lxxviii<sup>th</sup> Psalm, verses 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, "That God established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded their fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them: even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." This law we find in the v<sup>th</sup> chapter of Deuteronomy, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> verses: and in the vi. chapter and 7<sup>th</sup> verse, in which we have this memorable expression—"Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children."

Jehovah expresses his high approbation of Abraham in this particular, Genesis xvii, 19. "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Many of the instructions contained in the book of Proverbs are to be understood as addressed by a father to his children: and in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, Solomon bears an honorable testimony to the faithfulness of his father David, in respect of the pious instructions he had given to himself.

In the New Testament, parents are directed to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: and not to provoke them to wrath." Ephesian: vi 4<sup>th</sup>, Colossians iii. 21<sup>st</sup>. Religious instructions are given to children by the apostle Paul in his epistles, furnishing thereby an example for gospel ministers in succeeding ages. And our Divine Lord says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God:" Luke xviii. 16. He also declares, that the children in the temple, crying Hosanna, rendered an acceptable service to God. Matthew xxii 16. We are authorized therefore to say, that when the spirit of the gospel reigns in the hearts of men, that prophecy of gospel times, delivered by Malachi, has its accomplishment—"The hearts of the fathers are turned to their children, and of the children to their fathers," in tender affection, and in pious, mutual concern for each others salvation—for the honour of God, and the interests of his kingdom.

Prudent, pious parents will, as they have opportunity and ability, bestow such an education on their children as may best fit them for business, and for an useful, respectable standing in society: and this is no doubt their duty. But the grand concern, is to give them a truly religious education.

This appears to be not only the just concern of parents, but of churches also; in which the parents are members. It is the concern of churches that parents perform their duty toward their children; and that the public and private instructions of the church be directed in a manner best suited to answer this end—the religious improvement of children. But with the duty of parents, we are now particularly concerned.

The passage quoted above, from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, is directly to the point, and includes a negative and positive duty. First, parents *must not* provoke their children to wrath: secondly, they *must* bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The first forbids a harsh, rigorous spirit and conduct. The second, consists of two parts, nurture and admonition; and implies a tender concern for the children's spiritual interests; and a becoming zeal for the divine honour.

The word nurture, in its general meaning includes supplies for the body, food, raiment, &c; but here, it appears to intend principally, religious instruction, encouragement and comfort; together with all the affectionate, pious attentions which may be suited to the state of children as objects of religious care.

"Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children," was the command given by Moses: and it is plain from the nature of the duty, as well as from what the gospel enjoins, that this was not one of those statutes which were to be abolished; it is not ceremonial, but moral and religious. Thou shalt teach them diligently. Diligence improves time and opportunity; selects the best means; and makes due application of them, for the accomplishment of its purposes. The parent must begin early, "and teach the young Idea how to shoot." He must endeavour, with the first dawn of reason, to insill into the mind those principles of truth and duty, of piety, justice, and benevolence, which have the most benign influence, in forming the temper and directing the life. The being, perfections and law of God; the characters, grace, and salvation of our Redeemer; the offices and work of the Holy Spirit, the evil of sin and its dire consequences: man's fallen, guilty state; the nature, and necessity of conversion, the commands and ordinances of Christ, the importance of death, judgment and eternity, are subjects on which the pious parent will naturally insist, in giving instruction. In this undertaking, four grand intentions are to be pursued—these are, enlightening the understanding, gaining the consent, influencing the affections, and affecting the conscience. But if an inspired apostle was careful not to make the work of instruction, by giving strong meat to young converts: and therefore fed them with what he terms milk—truths, which they could understand, & well suited to their circumstances; so it becomes the christian parent, to suit his instructions to the age, capacity, and other circumstances of the child: and, uniting this prudence with diligence, to proceed in his work of love 'till the object of his care shall have arrived at maturity.

Admonition, we conceive, includes warning, expostulation, reproof and correction: all of which may be, at some time or other, necessary for every child; and must then be exercised with that authority which God has given to parents for their children's edification, and not for their destruction. Not to make them the slaves of men, but the servants of God. Restraining them, when their inclinations lead them to the practices, and places of sin, requiring them to attend the worship of God, both in the family and church, and that with order and decency; and administering reproof and correction for sin, are proper exercises of this authority. But neither is instruction, nor admonition rightly administered, unless it be in the nurture or admonition of the Lord—in the fear of God, with a regard to his glory, and according to the tenor of his word. His name also, should be owned, and honoured, in the transaction: the expressions of his will set before the child in giving instruction; and the evil of sin strongly represented, as an offence against him, in reproof and correction. In such use of these means, we may hope for the blessing of God both to our children and ourselves: then they become properly, means of grace; especially when united with earnest prayer to God for our children; and that his blessing may make the means effectual.

In a general scheme of christian education, family religion, or the worship of God, must hold a distinguished place in family transactions. On this the children should attend; hear the word of God seriously read, and learn to adore the eternal King; to ask his mercy, and speak forth his praises. They should also be taught early to read the word of God, that they may consult it for themselves; and this duty, together with secret prayer, and others of a similar nature, ought to be seriously and affectionately enjoined.

While the mind is in its young, and consequently weak state, forms of prayer, affording a directory, we think, are proper; and catechising appears to us to be of excellent use, not only to the youngest, but also to the more advanced. We are aware that the last mentioned articles are objected to by some; but we think without just reason. To confine devotion to forms, especially, in the case of those whose minds have received religious improvement, and have arrived at maturity, is no doubt very wrong and unscriptural. But as forms afford direction and assistance to the weak and inexperienced, we think they may be used to the glory of God: If it were not so, would our Lord have taught his disciples a form? Or, would so many prayers have been recorded in the scrip-

tures as we find there, adapted to the state of inquirers, penitents and believers? But children should be taught not to rest in forms; that prayer is the utterance of the heart; and that the language which is best suited to express the feelings of the heart, in pious affections toward God, is most proper.

Catechising by a form of words has been objected to, on two grounds. 1st, because forms drawn up by imperfect men may contain errors, and thus mislead the mind. 2dly, because it may be the means of filling the head with knowledge, while the heart is left unaffected; and thus become an occasion of deceiving persons into a persuasion, that they possess religion, when they can speak readily and intelligently on the subject; while yet, they remain destitute of an experimental acquaintance with it. It is granted, that these evils in effect, as consequences of teaching catechisms, are possible; and, we doubt not, do too often really exist. But the same objections will lie, (unless the form used in catechising is represented as an infallible standard, which it should not,) against preaching, religious conversation, and reading books on religious subjects. These, all, have their imperfections; are in some degree mixed with error; and may, in one form or other, mislead the mind. They are likewise, all of them, means for communicating knowledge, and persons by attending to them also, in a certain way, may get their heads enlightened, while their hearts remain unsanctified. Would the objector therefore, have all these means suppressed, in order to promote the interests of vital religion?

The truth appears to be this, that though imperfection attends all we do, or attempt, and the best means we can use will fail to have their proper effect or some; and though in religion we are dependent on divine grace for success in every undertaking; yet, it is our indispensable duty to make use of the proper means which God has placed within our power. In the right use of them, his blessing will be obtained; by their neglect, or abuse, guilt will be incurred. Catechising is certainly a reasonable service, and appears to come directly within the meaning of those divine commands which we have quoted above, both from the Old and New Testament: And when a catechism is carefully formed from the scriptures, which it should be, it becomes a very proper and useful foundation for religious instruction. The arrangement of subjects in a clear, regular order, assists the understanding and memory. But as not the catechism, or confession of faith, forms the rule by which the christian's faith and practice are to be regulated, but the word of God, so should the understanding and conscience of the pupils be constantly referred to that sacred word, for decision, on every subject considered; and for forming their own judgment on its meaning. The christian parent, therefore, must not content himself with teaching the child to rehearse a catechism. His endeavours should extend much further—even to have the truths it contains understood, felt, and regarded as the truths of God. For this purpose, it will be found necessary to ask many questions, subordinate to those contained in the catechism; and to give much explanation and exhortation.

Though information may be abused; yet, surely, ignorance is not more favourable to religion than knowledge. By the prophet Hosea, Jehovah declares, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Hosea, iv. 6: And when he promises faithful ministers to his church, he says, "I will give you Pastors according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge." A great reason why knowledge has been abused, we apprehend, is this; instructors in communicating it have only employed the memory, or, at most, addressed the understanding. But we have seen, that an important part of their concern lies with the affections and conscience. The faithful instructor, also, will show how knowledge may be abused.

While considering objections, it may be proper to notice some sentiments which if not advanced as objections against the use of the means of grace, yet operate, in many cases, to produce neglect, or abuse of them. Such are the sentiments which some found on the divine decrees; on human inability to perform good actions; on the safe state of the converted man, and his constant fitness for all duties and privileges in consequence of his admission into a state of grace. To which may be added, the scheme which some have adopted of reducing all ordinances and duties to a common standard. Our limits will not admit a full discussion of these; we shall therefore but just touch on them.

That all events of time, fall out agreeably to what the blessed God, has decreed to do, or permit, we hold to be a sacred truth; but, at the same time, we consider it our duty to maintain, that his decrees do not clash with his

commands and promises. God's decrees, with reverence be it spoken, may be considered as *his* rule; the commands and promises form *ours*. The man therefore who forbears, or neglects to use the means of grace for the benefit of others, or himself, from the consideration that if God has not decreed to bestow blessings, they will not be granted; and if he has, they will be bestowed in some way or other,—this man does an injury to his own soul, and sins against God, both in his sentiment and conduct. For, "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." It is requisite that we perform our duty, and it is enough for us to know, in such cases, that God has connected the means with the end as we have before stated. We also should consider, that it is not for us to know, "The times and seasons which the Father has put in his own power;" for "Secret things belong to God."

Though it becomes the church, and every individual to acknowledge with the deepest humiliation, that man in his fallen guilty condition has lost the power to do that which is truly and spiritually good, even to speak a good word, or think a good thought of himself; yet we think it very inconsistent with the design and spirit of the gospel, to represent, as some have done, that a man in an unconverted state may as well perform any other action, as attempt those of a religious nature, for bettering his condition. This sentiment, admitted, in an unqualified manner, into the mind of a person under conviction, leads to desperation: and while it tends to drive such self-condemned souls, who view themselves unconverted, from the means of grace, it furnishes the careless and impenitent, with an excuse for their neglect and impiety. A belief that the humbling truth, of man's depravity, is set before us in the word of God to awaken our apprehensions of divine wrath, as the consequence of wilful continuance in a state of sin; to make us feel our need of the Redeemer's merit and renewing grace; and to engage us to seek that grace earnestly—is certainly much more consistent with the genius of the gospel; especially when connected with the encouraging persuasion, that every honest effort we make in reliance on grace, to come out of our natural state of sin into a state of holiness, is acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. The scriptures surely direct us into such a course of thought and action; and while they enjoin conversion, repentance, and faith; they also teach us to consider every influence of rational argument, founded on God's truth, by which the mind is disposed to form its choice and make its efforts in favour of true religion, as coming from God; and as accompanied with a gracious power for enabling the willing soul to perform an acceptable service.

As carnal security, in religion, is inconsistent with the love of God, so its natural tendency is to produce a neglect of the means of grace; or a formal, heartless, and even hypocritical attendance on them. Every sentiment therefore, which in its operation occasions neglect of these means: though, professedly founded on honorable thoughts of God's unchanging love, and the soul's security in Christ, must be considered as allied to Antinomian profaneness, or hypocritical pretention; and ought to be rejected by the christian. We have no doubt, but that, through the power and grace of their omnipotent Redeemer, real saints will persevere to eternal life: But their perseverance is effected, in the way of watching, praying, and striving against the powers of hell and sin; in a word, in a faithful, regular use of all the means of grace.

Nearly akin to such presumptuous neglects as we have been considering, are those sentiments which lead a person to conclude, that being in a state of grace, necessarily secures fitness to men for approaching God in all ordinances of his worship, however sacred, by virtue of their personal acceptance in Christ; so as not only to render concern about particular preparation, and endeavours to obtain it, unnecessary: but to make them appear as savouring of self-righteousness, a legal spirit, and a carnal mind, unworthy of the christian. This we apprehend is not only a real, but a great and pernicious mistake; and becomes the more dangerous as its professed principle seems to intend doing honour to the righteousness of Christ, to justification and acceptance through him; and to the reality and prevalence of grace, in their souls who are the subjects of it. But at the same time it confounds the difference between justification and sanctification, between Christ's merit and the Spirit's operation; between privilege and duty; between being in a state of grace, and the lively exercise of grace in the soul; and between common duties, or ordinances, and those which are more spiritual and sacred. Differences which are strongly marked in the scriptures, and represented as important. These contrasted subjects harmoniously agree in the divine plan, but this principle tends to disjoin or perplex them; prevents our giving to each part its due regard; and by producing a confusion in our minds, leads us out of the plain path of truth and duty. We would never lose sight of that important, evangelical truth, that we are justified and accepted as righteous before God through the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, alone; and by faith in him, as the means: By faith, in his merit, and free mercy; as opposed to any supposed merit of our works. But at the same time, we would not forget, that as without being born of the spirit we cannot enter into God's kingdom; nor without holiness see the Lord—so, in coming to the enjoyment of sacred institutions, or the performance of holy duties, abstraction from the world, particular devotedness to God, and the exercise of sanctified affections are necessary, and should be earnestly sought. We are invited to the gospel feast—this is our privilege; but it is our great concern in point of duty, to come cloathed in the wedding garment: and to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. When bringing our gift to the altar, we are to remember that reconciliation with the brother whom we have offended, is first to be attempted: And the man who supplicates the throne of grace for mercy, must first forgive the offence which has been committed against himself: that he may ask of God with acceptance, the blessing so essential to his peace. Our being in a state of grace, does not necessarily imply, that we are in a right mind, or manner of acting, in particular: however the general disposition of our hearts may be according to the will of God. The real christian may be in a state of backsliding or habitual languor in religion: Or, in respect of special ordinances, he may be in a state of disqualifying, culpable ignorance, prejudice or passion; and even when there is no known departure in action from the way of truth and duty, he may have his thoughts and affections in too low and groveling a state for the sublime holy exercises which those ordinances call for, and for converse with God in them. Though a servant of Christ; yet, in these circumstances, he has not his "loins girded, and his lights

burning." The united force of these observations goes to show, that as real christians may greatly err from the right way, and fail in the right performance of duty; and as sacred ordinances require of us a temper and manner of acting suited to their important nature and design; so, the most conscientious concern and vigorous exertions should be employed in the use of preparatory means, to acquire these qualifications for a right attendance on such ordinances: And that however self-righteous legalists do err, in employing such means on their principles, while thinking to merit the favor of God by them; yet it is the christian's happiness as well as duty, to employ them on evangelical principles. Such was the conduct of the Psalmist, "I will wash my hands in innocency; so will I compass thy altar, O, Lord!" So an apostle directs concerning the Lord's supper, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

That there is a real difference between things which are common, and those which are sacred, as well as between what is lawful, and sinful, is apparent from scripture and reason. Spiritual discernment, and a just regard to the glory of God, will mark the difference in one case as well as in the other. To improve time is the continual duty of the christian; and to use it ordinarily in the lawful business of life, with a view to the divine glory, is right and acceptable to God: but this is a common action: To consecrate our time on the Sabbath to the sublime purposes of devotion, is a sacred action; and requires more elevation of thought, sanctity of affection, and devotedness to God. Among duties and ordinances which are sacred, some are more eminently so. Reading the scriptures, and hearing the gospel, when performed according to the divine appointment, are sacred actions; to embrace Baptism, or approach the Lord's table in a right manner, is to perform one more eminently sacred; and calls for a greater measure of seriousness, attention, and devout regard. Overlooking this difference is unfavorable to a regular, diligent attention to the means of grace: For if we consider sacred duties and ordinances, as no more than common duties, or all sacred duties as alike in this respect; there is great reason to apprehend that our views, feelings and efforts, when we attend on the most sacred, will soon be all regulated by the standard of the most common duties. Take the following illustration by comparison of what we have stated on this head:

The servant of a Prince, employed in tending his flocks, or herds, may conduct himself with affection and fidelity to his lord, while acting in his usual homely stile of conduct among his fellow servants; but certainly, his feelings and behaviour ought to be very different, if he were admitted to appear before the king, in his presence chamber, or honoured to sit with him, at his table.

Having enlarged considerably in the discussion of this subject, we shall now conclude with a very few additional remarks.

1st. If it be so important and necessary to make a regular diligent use of the means of grace; then let it be our serious concern, to perform the duty. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

2d. Let us be careful with respect to our motive and end, that we may use the means aright; not self-righteously, to make a merit of them, to feed our pride; nor depending on them, as if they were sufficient of themselves; not hypocritically, to gain honour



from men, but with godly sincerity, to honour God in our use of them, and to obtain his gracious presence and blessing; not partially, and formally; but with attention to the whole, with godly seriousness, and holy fervour.

We have seen that the religious education of children is an important christian duty. Let parents, ministers, and churches lay it to heart. Let it be carefully attended to by them, as a general mean of grace itself; and let them unite in it, a serious use of all the other means of grace proper for so important and useful an undertaking. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to our sense of the scripture and view of the order and worship of the New Testament church, do not belong to children; till they, as other converts, are instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and are willing to follow him. But it is our great concern to bring them to this acquaintance with the Redeemer and his grace, and then to these holy ordinances, in God's appointed way. Our hearts should be set on this work: And all our endeavours to instruct and improve our children should be united with earnest prayer to God for them—that the Holy Spirit may make our endeavours successful; by enabling us to use the means aright, by inclining the children's hearts to receive godly instructions, and by giving those instructions their proper effect.

Brethren, the trust reposed in you, as parents, is an awful one! Rightly executed it may be the happy means of preventing an inundation of vice and corruption in society; of promoting personal virtue and true honour; of training up disciples for Christ, who may do honour to his truth and cause in his church; and of preparing immortal souls for glory in the Heavens.

A neglect of this trust will bring certain guilt and shame on yourselves; and, you have reason to fear, will be followed with eternal ruin on the souls of your children.

We trust our present meeting has tended to the furtherance of the gospel; by an increase of brotherly affection among ourselves, and by a conviction carried to the hearts of a numerous, respectable congregation, which attended on the occasion, of the reality, excellence and importance of our holy religion.

The accounts received from many of you have afforded us comfort and encouragement. We trust our gracious Redeemer has been near to us in his condescension and mercy; and that he will cause you to walk in the light of his countenance.

You will discover by the Minutes, that the contribution for Missionary purposes has not been equal to the necessary expenses. We hope the deficiency will be made up at our next meeting: And wishing you the best of blessings, we remain,

Beloved Brethren,

Your's affectionately,

In Gospel Bonds.

RICHARD FURMAN, Moderator.

JOSEPH B. COOK, Clerk.