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Baptists. Virginia. Middle District Association, 1817.

Minutes ... October, 1817.

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Minutes of Associations

MINUTES

OF THE

BAPTIST

MIDDLE DISTRICT

ASSOCIATION,

HOLDEN AT POWHATAN MEETING-HOUSE,

POWHATAN COUNTY,

THE SECOND SATURDAY IN OCTOBER, 1817.

RICHMOND:

PRINTED BY SHEPHERD AND POLLARD.

1817.

MINUTES

OF THE

BAPTIST MIDDLE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION,

Holden at Powhatan Meeting-House, Powhatan county, the 2d
Saturday in October, 1817.

ABOUT noon, Elder JOHN SKURRY, delivered the introductory Sermon, from the 135d Psalm, 1st v. After divine service, read the letters, to see who composed the Association.

Those names, which have an (*) affixed, were absent.

<i>No. Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers' Names.</i>
1. <i>Muddy Creek.</i>	Samuel Woodfin.
2. <i>Powhatan.</i>	{ John Wooldridge, Peter Porter, William Sublett.
3. <i>Bethel.</i>	{ Daniel Hudson, D. Trabue, B. Walround, A. Johnson.
4. <i>Salem.</i>	{ Daniel Hatcher, J. Megee, A. Hatcher, L. Nunnely.
5. <i>Spring Creek.</i>	{ Enj. Watkins, Peter M. Cary, Matthew Winfree.
6. <i>Tomahawk.</i>	{ *William Flournoy, J. Martin, R. Winfree, *James Powel.
7. <i>Skinquarter.</i>	{ Charles Forsee, Edmund Goode, E. Bass, James Parker.
8. <i>Chesterfield.</i>	{ Eleazer Clay, Archer Traylor, *Thomas Burfoot.
9. <i>Nettoway.</i>	{ James Dupuy, John A. Hatchett, Francis Carter.

1. After reading the letters, chose elder E. Clay, moderator; elder B. Watkins, clerk; and elder J. Martin, assistant.

2. On motion, invited elder John Skurry to take a seat with us.

3. On motion, agreed, that the moderator, clerk and his assistant, arrange the business of the Association, and report on Monday morning.

4. Brethren James Dupuy, Edward Bass, and Anderson Johnson, chosen to receive the churches' bounty, settle with the treasurer, and report on Monday next.

5. Received twenty copies of the third annual report of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions for the United States, which were directed to this Association, for which we return our best thanks.

6. Received from the Appomattox Association by the hands of elder Samuel Woodfin, five copies of their minutes, for which we return our best thanks.

7. Elders John Skurry and Eleazer Clay, are chosen to preach on the morrow, and that divine worship commence at eleven o'clock, A. M.

8. Agreed, that we adjourn till Monday morning 10 o'clock; and then dismissed in order.

LORD'S DAY.

THE ministers chosen to preach, met a large audience agreeably to appointment, and delivered the word of truth to the people, which we hope had a salutary effect on the minds of many.

MONDAY Morning, October 13th, 1817.

Met agreeably to adjournment; and, after divine service, proceeded to business. Ordered, that the messengers' names be called over.

The committee chosen to arrange the business of the Association, made their report as follows: viz.

1. The corresponding messengers who were appointed to visit Meherrin and the Appomattox Associations to report.

2. To appoint messengers to the above Associations.

3. To appoint a committee to write and prepare a circular letter, to be annexed to our minutes.

4. To appoint two Union meetings in the district.

5. Would it not be expedient to consider something about domestic missions, more so than foreign, seeing there are such fields on this continent, and even in our own district, that needs to be supplied by the ministry of the word?

6. The committee chosen to receive the bounty, and settle with the treasurer, to report.

7. A recommendation from Spring Creek Church:— Would it not be right in the sight of God, to observe a day of public thanksgiving to his great and glorious name, for his multiplied favors and mercies towards us in the present year, for the copious productions of the earth?

8. A request from Skinquarter Church: Would it not be right to print our minutes annually?

9. Would it not be advisable to change the time of holding our Association, as it clashes with others?

The report was received, and committee discharged.

The corresponding messengers to the Meherrin Association made report, which was satisfactory. Also, the messengers to the Appomattox Association made their report, which was satisfactory, and were discharged.

Brethren, Benj. Watkins and Matthew Winfree, are chosen to visit the Meherrin Association at their next session.

Brethren, Jordan Martin and Peter Porter, are chosen to visit the Appomattox Association at their next session.

Agreed, that we have two union meetings, the first to be at Nottoway meeting house, in Nottoway county, the first Saturday in June, and the other to be at Bethel meeting-house, the second Saturday in August.

The subject of Domestic Missions was taken up, and after some discussion thereon, the Association do recom-

mend it to the several Churches in our district, to consider of the utility thereof, and signify the same to the next Association, and if approved of, their contributions will be thankfully received.

The committee chosen to receive the bounty, and settle with the Treasurer, reported, that they find in the hands of the Treasurer, after the necessary appropriations, the sum of

Present bounty received,	-	-	\$11 37½
	-	-	10 75

22 12½

The report was received, and committee discharged.

Elders, Eleazar Clay and John Wooldridge, were chosen to prepare the circular letter to be annexed to the minutes of our next Association.

Agreed, that we take under consideration the expediency or inexpediency of altering the days of holding our Associations; after some deliberation thereon, agreed, that we send the subject to the Churches for their approbation or disapprobation, and for each Church to certify in their letters to the next Association their intention.

On motion, agreed, that we have 200 copies of our minutes printed, and that they be distributed as formerly, and the clerk and his assistant prepare the circular letter to be annexed to the present minutes.

Agreed, that we set apart the second Saturday in November, as a day of public thanksgiving to God, for his multiplied favors and mercies, and that we assemble together at our respective meeting-houses for the above purpose.

Agreed, that the next Association be held at Liberty meeting house, Amelia county, the second Saturday in October next.

On motion, dismissed in order.

ELEAZER CLAY, *Moderator.*

BENJAMIN WATKINS, *Ck.*

CIRCULAR LETTER.

BELOVED BRETHREN IN THE LORD !

Our minutes, will shew you what we have done, and serve to discover, that, while our formalities abound, we are under the power of a sad declension in religion. From our several letters received, it appears, that but few have been added to our Churches by baptism, since the last, and some valuable characters have been removed from the Church militant, to join the Church triumphant, which leaves our number small, almost without any addition. Surely there must be something the matter; dear brethren, how should we lay these things to heart, in a becoming manner? many efforts have been made, in order that we might experience a revival of religion, but how fruitless and how ineffectual have all proven! This being evidently the case, is it not high time to wake out of sleep, and make diligent search, to see if there be not some accursed evil among us? When Joshua sent up men to go and destroy the men of Ai, *there went up of the people, about three thousand men, and they fled before the men of Ai; and could not stand before their enemies, and were obliged to retreat with the loss of six and thirty men. Joshua, hearing of the same, rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads, in token of humility. And the Lord said unto Joshua, get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, they have taken of the accursed thing, and have stolen, and dissembled also. Neither could the children of Israel stand before their enemies, until the evil was removed. How wonderful was the interference of Heaven made known in that awful event, which transpired! The second lot mentioned in the Holy Scripture was that, which was cast on the account of Achan, who had stolen and dissem-*

bled; to find out which Joshua had recourse to lottery, and in the whole process, how remarkable was the providence of God, which directed to the tribe, the family, the household, and to the guilty person! Then, he and his children, who no doubt concurred in that affair, and his cattle were for the terror of others publicly stoned to death, and the dead bodies, with his household furniture, burnt to ashes in the valley of Gilgal—Joshua VII.

Let the above evil have a due weight upon every mind, and teach us how just God is to punish the wicked for their wickedness, as well as to reward the righteous for their virtues.

Perhaps another evil among us, is the neglecting of the worship of God in our families, which is a duty incumbent on every Christian family. How the above duty is dispensed with, is hard to account for. By prayer, we manifest our obligations to God, and our dependence upon our heavenly father, and the absolute need of his divine favor; by prayer, we keep up our communion with him, and live in his immediate presence. But, when prayer is neglected, does it not argue an indifference and a graceless heart, as though we cared not whether God blessed us or our families? Is it any wonder that when prayer is restrained, the people of God should be afflicted with leanness and barrenness of soul? The Lord has declared in his word, that he will be sought unto. We also give up one strong evidence of the sincerity of our faith and interest in the Lord. To be plain, and speak strictly, there is no prayerless Christian upon earth, neither is it congenial with the Gospel of Christ, to say, Yonder is a saint, and yet prayerless.

IT is an old maxim, that a still born child does not live long; and so as it respects professors of religion; if they do not cry to God, they are short lived. The situation of the Church calls aloud for deep humiliation and prayer to God, and serious concern respecting the state

of our souls, and diligent use of the appointed means. And what blessing can we reasonably expect while the most proper means which he has promised, and to which his word directs, are neglected? Permit us, dear brethren, to suggest our fears, that the duties of the closet and the discipline of the heart are sadly neglected in the present day. Have we not almost forgotten ourselves, as being strangers and pilgrims on the earth? Is not the spirit of pride and covetousness greatly admired by some, and much pursued by others? Who are they that feel anxiously concerned for the things which are Jesus Christ's? Who burn with zeal for the honor of God, and mourn for the abominations of the land; and feel bowels of compassion for perishing and immortal souls? Have not solemn meetings for prayer, been often recommended, and yet sadly and shamefully neglected? May we therefore be aroused from our lethargy, seeing judgments threaten us, and mercies invite us to all that is dear or sacred to the heart of a Christian!

Let us therefore render unto Jehovah his unquestionable and long detained due; and prove him herewith, if he will not, in such a case, according to his good word of grace, *Open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

Finally, brethren, the desire of our hearts are for God's glory, and the good and comfort of your dear souls, and will conclude our letter by expressing the same words the priests of old, when blessing Israel. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."—AMEN.