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Baptists. Virginia. Middle District.

Minutes ... Held at Liberty Meeting House

... the Second Saturday in October, 1818.

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MINUTES

OF THE

BAPTIST

MIDDLE DISTRICT

ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT LIBERTY MEETING-HOUSE,

AMELIA COUNTY,

THE SECOND SATURDAY IN OCTOBER, 1818.

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RICHMOND:

PRINTED BY JOHN WARROCK,

Street leading to Mayo's Bridge.

1818.

2670

Minutes, &c.

ABOUT noon, Elder JAMES SHELBURN preached the introductory sermon from II. Cor. vi. 1. After divine service, read the letters to see who formed the Association.

Those names which have an * affixed, were absent.

<i>No. Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers' Names.</i>
1. <i>Nottoway.</i>	{ James Dupuy, *W. Greenhill, U. Lipscomb.
2. <i>Tomahawk.</i>	{ *Jordan Martin, Edmund Lockett,
3. <i>Bethel.</i>	{ Daniel Hudson, B. Waldron, J. H. Wilder, A. Johnson.
4. <i>Skinquarter.</i>	{ C. Forsee, E. Goode, Jo: Goode, W. Goode.
5. <i>Muddy Creek.</i>	{ Samuel Woodfin, Jno. H. Steger.
6. <i>Spring Creek.</i>	{ B. Watkins, P. M. Cary, M. Winfree.
7. <i>Chesterfield.</i>	{ E. Clay, T. Burfort, *A. Traylor, P. Clay.
8. <i>Salem.</i>	{ *D. Hatcher, James Megee, Leonard Nunnally.

1. After reading the letters, chose Elder E. Clay, Moderator, Elder B. Watkins, Clerk, and Brother M. Winfree, Assistant.

2. On motion, Elder Silas Shelburn, and Ephraim Thweatt, being present, were invited to seats.

3. Elders James Shelburn and Joel Johns, Corresponding Messengers from the Meherrin District Association, being present, were invited to seats. Also Brother William Leigh, Corresponding Messenger from the Appomattox District Association, being present, invited to a seat.

4. On motion, agreed, that Elders Forsee, Woodfin, the Moderator, Clerk, and his Assistant, be a committee, to arrange the business of the Association, and report on Monday morning.

5. On motion, Brethren James Dupuy, Edmund Lockett, Daniel Hudson, chosen to receive the Churches' bounty, settle with the Treasurer, and make report on Monday next.

6. Elders James Shelbourn, Silas Shelbourn, and Joel Johns, are chosen to preach on the morrow, and that divine service commence between the hours of 10 and 11 o'clock A. M.

7. On motion, agreed, that we adjourn till Monday morning 9 o'clock.

On motion, dismissed in order.



LORD'S DAY.

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



MONDAY MORNING, October 12, 1818.

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 chosen to visit the Meherrin Association, to make report. Also the Corresponding Messengers to visit Appomattox Association to make report.

2. To appoint Messengers to the above Associations.

3. To consider something about changing the time of holding our Association, one of the churches (Skin-quarter) say the last Saturday in August.

4. To say what shall be done with the money sent by the churches for domestic missions, and how it shall be appropriated.

5. To appoint a Missionary or Missionaries, for the purpose of travelling in our own district.

6. The Committee chosen to receive the Churches' bounty, and settle with the Treasurer, to make report.

7. To appoint two Union meetings in the district.

8. The time and place of the next Association.

The above report was received, and Committee discharged.

The Corresponding Messengers to the Meherrin Association, made report, which was satisfactory, and were discharged. Agreed, that Brethren John H. Wilder,

and Anderson Johnson, be our Corresponding Messengers, to attend their next Association.

The Corresponding Messengers appointed to visit Appomattox Association, were Jordan Martin and Peter Porter, who failed to attend the above said meeting, are chosen again to attend their next Association.

With respect to changing the time of holding our Association, the subject was taken up and discussed thereon, and there was a majority in favor of changing the time, to the last Saturday in August.

On motion, agreed, that the Moderator, Clerk, and his Assistant, prepare a circular letter to be annexed to our Minutes.

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,

	\$ 4 1
Present bounty received,	11 25

\$ 15 26

The Committee reported, and was discharged.

On motion, agreed, that Brother Benjamin Watkins be chosen Treasurer, to receive the money sent by the churches for domestic missions, which sum is, \$42 00.

On motion, agreed, that we appoint two ministers, as Missionaries, for the purpose of travelling in our district, to preach the good word of God; who are Benjamin Watkins, and Peter M. Cary.

Agreed, that we appoint two Union meetings, the first to be at Fine Creek meeting-house, in Powhatan County, the Saturday before the first Sunday in May, and the other to be at Bethlehem meeting-house, in Chesterfield County, on the third Saturday in August next.

Agreed, that we have 200 copies of our Minutes printed, and be distributed amongst the churches as usual.

Agreed, that the next Association be held at Tomahawk meeting-house, in Chesterfield County, the last Saturday in August next.

On motion, were dismissed in order.

ELEAZER CLAY, *Moderator.*

BENJAMIN WATKINS, *Clerk.*

CIRCULAR LETTER.

BELOVED BRETHREN IN THE LORD!

Having been permitted to meet again, through the indulgence of a gracious God, for the express purpose of your well being; we think it our duty, to excite in you a more close attention to the things, which make for the peace and prosperity of the Churches of God. The time has been, when this would have been unnecessary, for you had it fresh in your minds, how you ought to walk and please God. Then, as obedient children, you did not fashion yourselves according to the former lusts, in ignorance; being transformed by the renewing of your minds, you did perfect holiness in the fear of God. But alas! those golden and precious days have passed away, and, therefore, it has become necessary to stir you up by way of remembrance. That you may be able in this gloomy day to possess your vessels in sanctification and honor before him, who has called you into his marvellous light, and to let that light shine before others to his praise; we would therefore awaken you to be active and strictly in the execution of discipline; for without discipline, there can be no real peace, order, or fellowship in the church; no, nor church itself. Discipline is the bond of union, and source of love and harmony. To this important duty and privilege, God opens the ear, and commands it to be sealed among his disciples; see Job xxxvi. 10. The prophet Malachi, and John the Baptist, shew that Christ, in the exercise of this office, would both purge and scourge the wicked from among the righteous, so that a clear distinction should be made between the godly and ungodly, the chaff and the wheat. The Lord Jesus at a certain time, discovered so much zeal and authority for the house of God, that he made a scourge of small cords, and drove the wicked out of his house. Strict attention to the above rule, will lead to peace, and happiness. But the neglect thereof, is invariably chastised with declension and destruction. See Luke xix. 42, Gal. v. 13 to 17; also read 2d and 3d chapters of the Revelation. Dear Brethren, in addressing you on this subject, we shall use plainness of speech, and simple truths. Gospel discipline involves two important and indispensable duties.

The first is, that which each member should discharge towards himself. The second is, that which relates to

the whole body. The former includes, that restraint which a christian has over himself, when right with God, by which he subdues and maintains the victory over the members of his body, by which he sanctifies them for, and employs them in the service of God, to do and suffer his will. A strict discipline of the heart is required as well as watching over the body. Solomon says, *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* Which requires promptness and perseverance. Indeed, it requires three things; first, the detecting and crucifying all sinful passions or desires, contrary to holiness, and incapable of working for the glory of God. Secondly, the guarding and restraining those affections which in themselves are lawful, but are capable of excess; for virtuous, become vicious desires in the extreme. Thirdly, the promoting and pursuing all gracious emotions, as leading the mind to the knowledge and wisdom of God, and a divine conformity thereunto. Let your whole deportment correspond with this consideration, that your bodies are the members of Christ, and temples for the Holy Ghost; and all the members of the body be presented as living sacrifices to God, and his service.

The second part of discipline teaches the rules of procedure in case of private or public offence; which duty should be pursued with great care, without partiality or hypocrisy. And first, in case of private offence, be sure to follow the directions Christ has given. See Matthew xviii. 15, 16, 17. Taking special care that you do not make that public, which is private, and make yourselves guilty in conversing on private subjects with indifferent persons, and so become the sowers of discord, or idle and mischievous talebearers, hateful to God, and destructive to human happiness. Lev. xix. 16, Prov. xi. 13—18. This rule is binding on the offended, commanding him to certain measures for reconciliation, which should not be delayed. But let not the offender think himself secure in idleness, and wait for his aggrieved brother to come and deal with him, but let him attend to the counterpart of this rule, Matt. v. 23, 24, 25, 26, *Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary, quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, &c.*

The third part of discipline is, that which respects public and scandalous sins. The first step to be taken is, to reprove, admonish, and in the spirit of the gospel, to endeavour to reclaim thy brother or sister, from the error of his or her ways, Lev. xix. 17, Gal. vi. 1, 2, Eph. v. 11, II. Thes. iii. 15, I. Tim. v. 20, Heb. xii. 13, 14, 15, James v. 19, 20. This duty, we fear, is sadly neglected, from some cause; no doubt the want of love and zeal to God, or perhaps from a prevailing notion that it would be improper to heal a public offence by private conversation. But, however inconvenient this might appear, we conceive it would be highly necessary to heal a public offence by any means the gospel directs. The design of such a reproof, &c. is not to cure the offence, but the person who gave it; that he may be prepared to remove the offence in that way the gospel requires. But should he fail to be reclaimed by this measure, after the necessary steps are taken, and refuses to appear before the church, when she is sitting in her official character, without a legal excuse, he or she must be excluded from the church of God. But we are aware that discipline may be so managed as to defeat its own design, and instead of unity and peace, produce strife and divisions. A government by majority naturally tending in important matters, to make parties, and breed confusion, should be always avoided. Endeavor to espouse the cause of the weak, and be invariably on the part of the aggrieved; and let unanimity be the bond of your peace, Psalm cxxxiii. 1, I. Cor. i. 10, 11, Eph. iv. 2, 3.

Beloved Brethren, enough has been said on the above subject, without any further detail. We therefore hope you will not only read this our epistle, but the scripture references, and compare them one with another; and other correspondent passages, that you may be instructed in righteousness, edified and built up in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. You profess to be Bible Baptists, be Bible Christians. Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, and let the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit remain with you, which is in the sight of God of great price. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church, by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end."—AMEN.

Sutton Rice

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