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Minutes of ... Held in the Meeting-House of  
the First Baptist Church ... May 28th and  
29th, 1817.

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# MINUTES

OF THE

## NEW-YORK BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD IN

THE MEETING-HOUSE OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

IN THE

CITY OF NEW-YORK,

May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 1817.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 1817.

1. MET at 2 o'clock, P. M. for worship. Brother DAVID JONES delivered the introductory Sermon from Isaiah xxx. 10.—*Speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits.*
2. The business of the Association was opened by prayer by Brother JACOB F. RANDOLPH.
3. Brother DAVID JONES was chosen Moderator, and Brother CORNS. P. WYCKOFF Clerk.
4. Ministering brethren occasionally present, were affectionately invited to a seat; whereupon Brother MERCER, from Georgia, took a seat among us.
5. Letters from the churches were read.

N. B. The names of ordained ministers are in SMALL CAPITALS; licentiate in *Italics*, a — denotes no settled minister; from churches marked thus † we received no intelligence; ministers distinguished by an \* were not present; those churches from whom no intelligence was received, stand as to their total numbers, &c. as they were last year.

| CHURCHES.                  | MESSENGERS.   | Baptized. | Received by Letter. | Restored. | Dismissed by Letter. | Excluded. | Deceased. | Total. | Constituted. |
|----------------------------|---|-----------|---------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|--------------|
| <i>Piscataway.</i>         | { *JAMES M'LAUGHLIN,<br>Hezekiah Smith,<br>John F. Randolph,<br>George Drake.   | 5         | 1                   |           | 27                   |           | 1         | 121    | 1639         |
| <i>Scotch Plains.</i>      | { *THOMAS BROWN,<br>John Osborn,<br>Aaron Ball.   | 1         |                     |           | 5                    |           | 3         | 109    | 1747         |
| <i>Morris Town.</i>        | { <i>John Boozer,</i><br>William Martin,<br>Ezekiel Howell.   |           | 2                   |           |                      |           |           | 32     | 1752         |
| <i>First Ch. New-York.</i> | { WILLIAM PARRINSON,<br>Roswell Graves,<br>John Bedient,<br>James Duffie,<br>Samuel F. Randolph,<br>George Skelhorn,<br>John Tiebout,<br>Matthew Cunningham,<br>Nicholas B. Lyon. | 29        | 15                  |           | 2                    | 6         | 7         | 532    | 1762         |
| <i>Mount Bethel.</i>       | { AUGUSTIN ELLIOT,<br>Oliver Stelle,<br>Moses Compton.  | 3         | 1                   |           |                      |           | 2         | 86     | 1767         |
| <i>Lyons Farms.</i>        | { JAMES WILCOX,<br>Aaron Fatute.  | 10        |                     |           |                      |           |           | 37     | 1769         |
| <i>Bethel, N. York.</i>    | { JOHNSON CHASE,<br><i>Sylvian Bigitot,</i><br>Francis Secor,<br>James Gritman.   | 2         | 1                   |           | 7                    | 1         |           | 108    | 1769         |
| <i>Staten Island.</i>      | { ROBERT F. RANDOLPH,<br>Charles Drake,<br>Garret Fountain,<br>John Fountain.   |           |                     |           |                      |           |           | 40     | 1786         |
| <i>Samptown.</i>           | { JACOB F. RANDOLPH,<br>Daniel F. Randolph,<br>John Manning,<br>Abraham Lane.   | 2         |                     |           | 6                    | 1         | 2         | 86     | 1792         |
| <i>North Field</i>         | { JOHN WATSON,<br>Abner Ball.   | 1         | 3                   |           | 2                    | 1         | 3         | 92     | 1786         |
|                            |   | 53        | 23                  |           | 49                   | 10        | 18        | 1244   |              |





6. The church at *Stamford, Conn.* dismissed from the *Warwick Association*, by their messengers Elder G. S. Webb, and brethren Eliakim Ford, and Wm. Knapp; also the church of *New Brunswick, New Jersey*, lately constituted, by their messenger Brother Asa Runyan, presented each a letter, applying for admission into this body: the letters were read and referred to a committee of brethren Parkinson, Jacob F. Randolph, and M. Cunningham.

7. A letter from our aged and respected Brother Elkanah Holmes, dated *Ontario County, April 22, 1817.* was read with gratitude to God for his abundant mercies to his faithful servant; whereupon resolved, that the committee appointed to answer him last year be continued, and requested to write to him again, provided he does not visit our city in the course of the ensuing summer, of which he intimates an intention.

Adjourned to nine o'clock to-morrow morning. Brother Wilson, from *New-Jersey Association*, closed with prayer.

Sermon this evening by Brother Dodge, of the *Stonington Association*.

#### THURSDAY, MAY 29.

Convened pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Brother Mercer.

8. Received communications from corresponding Associations: *New-Jersey*, letter and minutes. Messengers, brethren Hastings and Wilson.

*Stonington*, letter and minutes. Messenger, Brother Nehemiah Dodge.

*Philadelphia*, do

*Hartford*, do of 1816.

*Warwick*, do Messenger Brother Charlick.

*Warren*, Elders Baker and Bates were appointed Messengers, but mistook the time. No minutes.

*Shaftsbury*.

9. A circular from the Corresponding Secretary of the Convention of the Baptist Board for Foreign Missions was received and read; and, on motion, resolved, that it be attached to our minutes.

10. Brethren Wilcox, Griffiths, and Smith, were appointed a committee to examine the minutes of Corresponding Associations.

11. The circular letter written by Brother Parkinson, and the Corresponding prepared by Brother Wyckoff were read, and brethren Jacob F. Randolph, Wilcox, and Chase, together with the authors, were appointed a committee to examine and report on the same.

12. The following brethren were appointed Messengers to sister Associations: *Philadelphia*, brethren Chase, and Griffiths. *New-Jersey*, the same with brethren Robert F. Randolph, and Jacob Bishop. *Hartford*, brethren Webb, and Dean. *Stonington*, brethren Parkinson, Seger, and Webb.

13. Brother Watson to write the circular, and Brother Webb the corresponding letter, for the ensuing year.

14. Brother Wyckoff to preach the Introductory Sermon, and if he fails, Brother Chase.

Adjourned to three o'clock, P. M. Prayer by Brother Chase.

*Three o'clock, P. M.*

Met pursuant to adjournment. Brother R. F. Randolph prayed.

15. The committee on the case of the churches applying for admission reported favourably; whereupon, the said churches, by an unanimous vote, were admitted.

16. The committee on the circular and corresponding letters, reported, that the circular, in their opinion, is according to the tenor of scripture, and calculated to be useful; but whereas it is much longer than usual, they recommended that it be published in the form of a pamphlet, submitting it, however, previously to the investigation and revisal of a committee, consisting of brethren Dudge, Jones, Chase, and Wyckoff; and that we adopt as *our* circular for this year, that of the Dover Baptist Association, (Virginia,) published in 1814, subject to such verbal alterations as shall be judged necessary by the same committee; and that the corresponding letter be published without amendment.

17. The committee on the corresponding letters from sister associations, reported that, in their opinion, they contain nothing requisite to be noticed on our minutes.

18. The following supplies were appointed for *Newtown*.

|                  |     |                        |
|------------------|-----|------------------------|
| Brother Wyckoff, | 3d  | Lord's day in June,    |
| —— Bigitot,      | 1st | —— July and September; |
| —— D. Wilson,    | 2d  | —— August,             |
| —— Chase,        | 3d  | —— October,            |
| —— Parkinson,    | 3d  | —— November,           |
| —— ———           | 3d  | —— February.           |

19. The committee appointed last year to visit or write to delinquent churches, reported, that they had written to some, but had not visited any, conceiving it to be unnecessary, as they understood they were supplied.

20. *Resolved*, That for non-attendance, the church at *Oyster Bay*, and that at *King-street*, be dropt from our minutes.

21. Dr. Roswell Graves was appointed Treasurer to the Association.

22. Brethren Parkinson and Wyckoff appointed to superintend the printing of the minutes.

23. The next meeting of this Association to be held at the *Scotch Plains*, on the last Wednesday of May, 1818, at 2 o'clock P. M.

With regard to the manuscript rejected as a circular, but approved as a pamphlet, the committee merely recommended to the author to add such qualifying sentences and explanatory notes as he proposed.

N. B. Whereas it is reported, that a certain coloured man, by the name of *John Bird*, sometimes stating that he is a member of the First Baptist church in New-York; and another, passing under the name of *David* alias *Zechariah Smith*, are travelling about the country under the character of Baptist Ministers, the churches and the public are hereby cautioned against them as notorious impostors.

# CIRCULAR LETTER.

*The New-York Baptist Association, convened in New-York,  
May 28, 29, 1817, To the Churches composing the same.*

DEAR BRETHREN,

Judging the Circular Letter prepared by Brother Parkinson to be too long for that purpose, we recommended the publication of it in the form of a Pamphlet, and adopted as our Circular Letter for this year, that of the Dover Baptist Association, (Virginia,) published, Oct. 1814, on the subject of *close communion*.\*

We sincerely regret, that necessity urges the investigation of a subject, in which we, and some of our Christian brethren, entertain different opinions.

We are unwilling to wound the feelings of an who differ from us, or merely to gratify the prejudice of those whose views correspond with our own. We hope we are influenced by better motives. A supreme regard to our divine Master, the great King of Zion, a love to the established order of his house, and a desire to promote the peace and prosperity of religious society in general, are, we trust, the principal springs of action in the present undertaking. Moreover, as the Corinthians compelled the Apostle Paul to a course of conduct which, otherwise, he would not have adopted, so suffer us to remark, that our Christian Brethren who dissent from us, have, by their severe censures, compelled us to defend our conduct, relative to the subject of Communion. We believe, brethren, in the communion of Saints. We also consider that this term is very probably used, in a comprehensive way, to represent the whole intercourse or divine communion that Christians have with each other, in the fellowship of the Gospel, or in their participation of divine things. But even this communion, free and general as it is, has, in the present state, its limits, or bounds. For we cannot exclude from the number of Christians all who differ from us in their views of what we deem Christian sentiment and practice; and yet, on the other hand, it is impossible we can have communion or fellowship with each other, in those sentiments and practices, wherein we differ from, and even oppose one another.

The dissensions among Christians, have been gratifying to infidels, and painful to the friends of Christianity; and it must be acknowledged, as it respects these things, that there is utterly a fault amongst us. But to whom, brethren, shall this fault be imputed? To what sect or party shall the blame be attached? Let those who are infallible in judgment, who are absolutely perfect in all their religious sentiments and conduct, "*cast the first stone.*" Until such a society can be found it behooves all to exercise mutual forbearance and Christian charity towards each other; even with respect to those things in which we can have no communion:

\* Written by Elder Jacob Grigg.

and as the period is not far distant when we shall be all of one way, let us endeavour previous to that happy season, to be all of one heart.

But you are aware, brethren, the term *Communion*, is sometimes used in a more limited sense. All denominations of Christians who attend to Gospel ordinances, agree in applying it to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Indeed, the Scripture so applies it. Read 1 Cor. x. 16. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" The word thus taken, is expressive of the intercourse, or communion, that experimental Christians have with Christ, and with each other, in this ordinance. It is to this view of the subject your attention is now invited.

The majority of the Churches of our denomination have, ever since the days of the Apostles, held and maintained the sentiment and practice, commonly called *close communion*, or the communion of baptized persons only, in the Lord's Supper.

On this account they have been very liberally reproached by their enemies, and greatly blamed by some of their best friends, among unbaptized persons. Their conduct has been censured as *uncharitable*, *unchristian*, and *cruel*.

*Uncharitable*, in that they would not exercise forbearance and Christian love to those who could not see (as it has been said) with their eyes.

*Unchristian*, in that as Christ received persons unbaptized to spiritual communion with him, no one, without acting contrary to Christ, can refuse them communion at his table.

*Cruel*, in that they would compel persons to be baptized according to their notion of that ordinance, or refuse them the privilege of church-membership, church-ordinances, and even (as some have said) the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Baptists reply, that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is not, in their judgment, a test of Christian love, or internal communion, between Christians of different denominations: so far from it, that we have uniformly expressed the utmost Christian affection for multitudes with whom we could not feel perfectly justifiable in partaking in that ordinance.

We have ever manifested the greatest confidence in the Christian piety of our dissenting brethren, and would not debar them from one Christian privilege, but would freely say, respecting every ordinance and blessing, "come in thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without."

But if no confidence be placed in our most sincere declarations of Christian regard to our unbaptized brethren, we feel a consolation in adopting the language of the Apostle; 2 Cor. i. 12. *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.*

We shall now offer an apology for our non-compliance with open communion, and then our reasons for a close communion will lie before you.

Open or unrestrained communion at the table of the Lord, we deem improper for Christian Society in general; because it is *impolitic*, *injurious*, and *impracticable*.

It is *impolitic*. There is certainly such a thing as ecclesiastical, as well as civil policy. Different denominations of Christians have their different laws, ordinances, and rules, for the regulation of their own internal and relative concerns. And there surely must be a manifest impropriety when any one of those societies shall adopt measures, and pursue a course of conduct, tending to subvert

or render abortive their own mode of discipline; and at the same time to sanction other modes of government, contrary to their own view of what is proper for a gospel church. For instance, suppose some denominations of Christians continue in their communion persons who allow themselves in certain amusements, called *innocent*, as cards, dice, backgammon, &c. followed not by way of gambling, but merely as amusements. Suppose others to fellowship those who send their children to a dancing-school, and who, perhaps, occasionally visit the ball-room themselves. Suppose other churches to have drunkards enrolled in their number, and yet their frequent intoxication forms no obstruction to their communion. On the other hand, as is certainly the case, suppose churches or societies whose moral discipline is so strict that they will not suffer those things in their members, but on pain of excommunication. Let it be farther supposed, for it is possible, and, in the present imperfect state, highly probable, that certain members of the churches last alluded to have indulged themselves in the forementioned practices; they have been accused, brought to trial, and expelled by their brethren, in their own respective communions; and yet those very brethren who united in the sentence of the church against them, will go and commune with those, in other societies, who are constantly living in the habitual practice of the same offences. How must these excommunicants feel, when they behold their brethren, who have censured them, countenancing others, more guilty than themselves, and sanctioning vices worse than theirs, because habitually persisted in! Is not this to partake of other men's sins? to justify in our practice, what we condemn in principle—to harden the hearts of habitual offenders, and so to create suspicion in the minds of our excommunicated brethren, of our sincerity in opposing sin, and thus arm them against the censure of the church, under which they are laid?

But free or open communion is improper, because it is *injurious*. It is injurious to the peace of Christian society, and even to the existence of Christian friendship. As men, we feel ourselves citizens of the world, and feel we are bound, by this relation, to love all mankind.

This sentiment glows with equal ardour in the breasts of Europeans, Asiatics, Africans, and Americans, and yet who is there that is not aware of the injurious tendency of mingling these together in the same civil society, each possessing all his national prejudices in favour of his own particular manners, customs, laws, government, &c.? We love the subjects of European governments while they form no part of the community to which we belong; but should they come and form a settlement amongst us, with all their national prejudices, we should immediately feel the injurious tendency of such an association. It would wound our feelings in time of peace to hear sentiments advanced in opposition to our own government; and in a state of warfare we should view such citizens as far more injurious than the invading foe. We are pleased with the British, in Britain, the French, in France, but are persuaded that neither, without a change of sentiment, would ever make good citizens of our country, or agreeable neighbours to us. Thus, as Christians, we love Christians of every name and society; but who does not know that an attempt to force them to an unnatural communion and intercourse with each other, has proved a means of jealousy, contention, and animosity, that has occasioned mutual pain and uneasiness. Envy and strife have ensued, and where these are (saith the Apostle) there is confusion and every evil work. So that while it has the name of communion, the true nature of the thing is destroyed, which leads us

To observe, that free or open communion is improper, because it is *impracticable*. It never yet could be established. Different societies have attempted it;

but how long has it continued? Declarations are made that all are welcome to come. But how many are influenced by them? a vast ado has been made about it, and great reproach has fallen on some Christians, because they will not join in the great design of uniting all societies in one community. But where are the mighty effects of this great stir? Let our brethren give us a sample of this blessed union; we see it not: the fact is, no such union has been established. So that setting aside the Baptist Society altogether, we ask, where is the union or communion of other societies. It exists in conversation, but not in action; in profession, but not in practice. Like human life, *it is a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

But some friendly disposed persons of different congregations have thought there might be established a *select communion*; or a communion of those only in the different churches, whose life and conversation must be acknowledged unexceptionable. This plan, however plausible it may appear, would introduce such invidious distinctions as would inevitably disturb the minds of a number of individuals of every community. Communities being composed of individuals, that which would wound the feelings and reputation of one, would unquestionably have a very unpleasant effect on the minds of all. Churches, consequently, would feel themselves slighted and disrespected, in the slight and disrespect shown to some of their members, supposed to be disorderly at such communion seasons. Mutual discontent would unavoidably arise, that a conduct should be pursued, on these occasions, evidently tending to swell the minds of communicants one against another, and so by this general union, destroy that particular communion which the members of individual churches should ever maintain among themselves, in their own respective societies. Nor is it easy to discover how disagreeable circumstances of this nature can be prevented; unless it be, by throwing open our doors to an universal communion; in which case we shall abolish the distinction between the church and the world, and annihilate both. The church will be lost in the world, and it will be impossible to distinguish the world from the church.

In addition to this, let it be remarked, that the members of churches are admonished to exercise a watch-care and strict discipline among themselves. See Lev. xix. 17. Matth. xviii. 15, 16, 17. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; also the whole of the fifth chapter of the same epistle, and 2 Thess. iii. 6. Turn to these passages, carefully read them, and then say, if the necessary regulations and duties there recommended can, with propriety, be exercised towards any but those who have given themselves members to particular churches for those godly purposes. According to our view of the subject, which we also think corresponds with the scriptures, one church has no more authority over the members of another, than one of our states has a right to hold dominion in, and over the citizens of another. Of course, our wisest and most religious conduct will be, to study the regulations and duties of the particular churches to which we belong, that we may live in peace and love among ourselves, and not attempt that which has hitherto been found impracticable; lest, while keepers of the vineyards of others, we shall have to lament that our own vineyard we have not kept.

Once more. An unrestrained free communion, consisting of a number of persons of different religious sentiments, &c. must be spiritually a breach of the regulations laid down for God's ancient professing people, which, as the Apostle remarks with regard to muzzling the ox, were not written for their sakes alone, but for us also, 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. "For whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning." Thus saith the Lord, Lev. xix. 19, "Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee." Deut. xxii. 10. "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass



together." And what saith the New Testament? "Be ye not unequally yoked together."

Where unions or communions take place among persons of religious sentiments so strangely different as those of many professed Christians, a strange language must be produced, neither distinctly that of Israel nor that of Ashdod, not the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people, as Neh. xiii. 23, 24. This confusion of sentiment has hitherto precluded the possibility of any durable communion even among those Christian congregations that profess to be decidedly in favour of the plan, and who severely censure the Baptists for a non-compliance. But why should we be censured for standing at a distance, and not engaging in the work when we see that the builders of this mighty fabric cannot for any length of time even understand one another. Let us see their professed principle reduced to practice among themselves, that we may be admonished not only by word, but by the more powerful influence of their example.

It is well known that some of the most zealous advocates for free or open communion at the Lord's table, have accused some Christian societies of holding principles horrible to reflect on, which as some have warmly said originated in hell, and would lead further those who embrace and are influenced by them. Such as God's appointing persons to salvation and damnation, from all eternity irrespective of their characters, dispositions, and behaviour; that those for whom Christ died, have nothing to do, because Christ hath, for their salvation, done all for them that was needful. Now, admitting that our opponents believe these charges are founded in truth, how can they be sincere in desiring us to commune with them? If they certainly believe their own statement to be correct, one would suppose it must be highly gratifying to them to have nothing to do with a set of people so frightfully erroneous. But the Baptists hold no such sentiments. They are as far from believing them, as they are from believing that any happy communion at the Lord's table can result from an association of persons maintaining such various, and such opposite opinions, as are found among many religious societies who profess to be friendly to this practice. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Amos iii. 3.

Hitherto we have only endeavoured to show the impropriety of open communion, as it respects Christian societies in general. We shall now exhibit that impropriety with regard to the Baptists in particular. This will appear,

1. By reflecting on the nature and design of the mission of John the Baptist: viz. to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, (Luke i. 17.) or to make ready a people for the kingdom of Christ, or for the Gospel Church. How was this design accomplished? See Matt. iii. 1—7. "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent, ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." This is called the beginning of the Gospel, Mark i. 1, 2, 3, 4. This was the original pattern given for preparing persons for a Gospel Church state; and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, being confessedly a church ordinance, the Baptists, of course, entertaining this view of things, must act extremely improper were they to practice open communion. For, in such a communion persons are received who were never made ready for the Lord, or for a Gospel Church according to the original plan; hence, in their reception there must be a violation of the well-known rule, "See that thou do all things according to the pattern shown thee in the mount;" which precept will apply to the law from Mount Zion, equally as to that of Mount Sinai.

2. The impropriety of Baptists uniting in an open or general communion will

appear by considering how Christ received his disciples. In John iv. 1. it is said, he made them disciples, and then baptized them. See this confirmed by John iii. 22, 23, 25, 26. Hence we infer, if our Saviour received persons to communion with himself by the administration of this ordinance, it cannot be improper for the Baptists to adopt the same mode, and follow the same unerring example in receiving persons to communion in the Church of Christ, in the present day. "For hereunto are ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." 1 Pet. ii. 21. Therefore,

5. It is improper for the Baptists to practice open communion because "in the beginning it was not so." These were the words of our Lord when the Jews inquired, if it were lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Our Saviour replied, Moses, for the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put them away, but "in the beginning it was not so," bringing them back to the first institution of marriage. The question is now asked, Is it lawful for persons baptized and unbaptized to break bread together at the table of the Lord? We reply that a number of pious persons have submitted to it, "But in the beginning it was not so."

1. In the beginning it was not so in the original institution of this ordinance. The best institutions are liable in the course of time to suffer some of the most injurious alterations or changes from their original design.

It is therefore necessary frequently to recur to their first establishment, in order to preserve their purity according to their original intention. This is remarkably true in the present case:—At the first institution of the Lord's Supper, it is presumable that there were none present but Baptists or baptized persons. However, as it has been made a question with some people whether the disciples of our Saviour were baptized, we offer our reasons for believing that they were.

1. If they were not baptized, they were not prepared for the Lord according to the ministry of his forerunner or messenger, John the Baptist. See the remark above.

2. If they were not baptized, they did not follow the footsteps of their divine master.—See Matt. iii. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

3. If they were not baptized, the ministry of John and Christ had not the same effect on them that it had on others. See Luke vii. 29. "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John."

Query. Were not the disciples among those obedient ones that heard him? And if so, were they not baptized at this, or at some other period of his ministry?

4. If they were not baptized, how are we to understand the paragraph in John iii. "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and he baptized. And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came, and were baptized; for John was not yet cast into prison."

5. If the disciples were not baptized, then the Apostle Peter did not give a correct account of their case and conduct, in Acts i. 21, 22. Wherefore of these men which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained, to be a witness with us of his resurrection. From this address it is demonstrably clear that the immediate disciples of Christ, Peter and the rest, began with our Saviour at the baptism of John; and among those baptized persons was the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in the beginning instituted. Therefore, to conform in our present practice to the ancient institution, the communicants should be all baptized persons. Then why should the Baptists be blamed for making this requisition?



2. In the beginning it was not so; in the gospel commission, **Matt. xxviii. 19, 20,** "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—These words to answer the purpose of open communionists should read, Go teach all nations communing or breaking bread with them; but they read otherwise. Go teach all nations baptizing them, and **THEN**, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you; one of which things was, "do this in remembrance of me," speaking of the ordinance of the supper. With this commission of their risen Saviour, the Baptists are solicitous their conduct may correspond; and why should blame be attached to them on this account?—Are we therefore become the enemies of our brethren because we walk in the truth? In the beginning it was not so.

3. It was not so in the beginning, because it was not so in the first Gospel Church. It appears none thought of entering or were received without baptism. See **Acts ii. 41, 42.** Then they that gladly received the word were baptized: and the same day there were added three thousand souls.—And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. It is not said, they that gladly received the word broke bread, but that they were baptized and then broke bread, the very order of things which the Baptists at the present time wish to preserve. And who shall harm you brethren if ye become followers of that which is good.

Finally. In the beginning it was not so as to admit unbaptized persons to communion, according to the custom of the Apostles and the primitive churches. The Apostle Paul, speaking on a certain subject, observes, "we have no such custom, nor the churches of God," plainly implying, that, what was a custom with them, might be safely followed, but on the contrary, that which was not a custom with them, and the primitive churches of God, ought not to be regarded as an example worthy of imitation. The custom of the Apostles with respect to communion, we have already had occasion to mention, in giving an account of the church at Jerusalem; as in the second of Acts. The customs of the ancient churches of God may be gathered by consulting the book of Acts, and the Epistles addressed to these churches. From these it appears that the Lord's Supper was celebrated as a church ordinance, and that their church members who partook were baptized persons. See **Rom. vi. 1. Cor. 1. Col. ii.**

Thus have we in simplicity given our reasons for a non-compliance with free or open communion; and by reflecting on those plain and unadorned remarks, you may gather our reasons for the opposite practice. We can discover no sound substantial argument in favour of the former; but on behalf of the latter, we have the ministry of John the Baptist, the ministry of our Saviour, the original institution of the supper, the Gospel commission, the order of the first Gospel Church, the customs of the Apostles and the first churches of God.

Notwithstanding we thus give our reasons with Christian candour and affection, still the demand is kept up for open communion. Some of our Christian brethren will not commune with such as they deem unbaptized, and yet they complain that we are cruel in not communing with them. On which side the cruelty lies, let the impartial judge. Our brethren know that we esteem nothing Christian baptism, that falls short of burying a believer in water, in the name of the Sacred Trinity. And yet they demand of us to do that which they themselves will not, viz. that we should break bread in communion with unbaptized persons.

Some will reply, But we have been baptized as well as you. We ask when were you baptized? They reply, in our infancy. We answer this is the point in debate, and which must be settled before ever we can commune together. You affirm, we deny; only prove from the New Testament the existence of any

baptism, before a profession of faith and repentance, and the debate is at an end. This has never yet been done, and we are confident never can. The ancient reformers in the Protestant Episcopal church, having proposed the following question: "What is required of persons to be baptized?" and having replied according to the scripture "Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they stedfastly believe," immediately felt their difficulty; "Why then said they, are infants baptized when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?" That is, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform *faith and repentance*. The only reply that appeared to them in any way consistent with the scripture was, "Because they promise them both by their sureties," clearly proving that in their view repentance and faith were indispensable in this ordinance. In this we perfectly agree with that church, and the New Testament supports us both. The only difficulty between us is, whether the pre-requisites of repentance and faith must not be personally exercised; or whether they can be admitted by proxy.

The church having explained the ordinance of baptism, immediately enters on the Lord's Supper, fully proving what we contend for, that, according to the order of the gospel, baptism is first to be submitted to, and then the communion to be received.

It has long been lamented by some of the most pious prelates of the church of England, that the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper has been prostituted into a civil oath. It is also to be lamented, that many dissenters from us, and from that church, have overlooked the true intention of baptism according to the New Testament, and have changed it into a kind of an oath or vow made by parents to bring up their children, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. A duty towards our offspring, that we sincerely wish both they and ourselves may perform with greater strictness than ever we have yet done.

But why must the sacred ordinance of baptism be thus changed and prostituted, to lay parents under an obligation that they are equally under, without such an oath or vow? They speak of the advantages and blessings attending the baptism of infants, but where is the blessedness they speak of? Are not all parents equally bound by the laws of Christ, thus to bring up their children? Can an oath or vow, not required, add any thing to the obligation? Our law requires honesty, and condemns theft. Would any person add to the obligation he is under to keep this law, by voluntarily going to a magistrate, and making oath that he will not steal, but that he will conduct himself honestly towards his neighbours, and the community to which he belongs? Would not this unrequired service betray a suspicion in himself of his own honesty, in that he would invent new methods of obligation, not found in the law. "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility." Col. ii. 13. "Who hath required this at your hand?" Isaiah i. 12."

We now repeat, once more, where is the cruelty between us? Is it in us, who candidly say, that though we love our Christian brethren of every name, and can exercise forbearance with them, yet cannot commune with them, by breaking bread, until they follow the order of the gospel; or is it in those who would compel us to acknowledge, that their prostitution of baptism is Christian baptism itself, and who censure us, because we will not sacrifice our principle and conscience to gratify them?

But some of our dissenting Christian brethren remark, it is the Lord's table, and therefore you have no right to refuse. We reply, it is for this very reason we do refuse. Were it our table all would be welcome, but as it is the Lord's table, we must abide by the laws of his house, and have respect to those pre-requisites in the guests that are included in the invitation. Remember, brethren,

one is represented present, not having on the wedding garment. He is not called an enemy or traitor, and yet the master of the house, says, "Friend, how comest thou in hither, not having on the wedding garment?" There is a preparation necessary for the church below, as well as for that above, and we must learn how to behave ourselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Some of our brethren have said, we will not differ with you about baptism, only let us commune together, and you may perform baptism as you please. This is surely very accommodating. But it reminds us of a certain Lady of this accommodating turn, 1 Kings iii. 16.—27. "and she was willing to have the child *divided*." But it must not be forgotten that the true legitimate parent would agree to no such accommodations. She regarded the life of the child.

Some will still repeat, are we not Christians as well as you? Why, then, will you not eat and drink with us, at the table of the Lord? We repeat also, because we do not find in the Scripture any communion previous to baptism. The language of that prophet was very plausible and very kind. "Come," said he, (or to this amount) "I am a prophet of the Lord as well as you, and the Lord hath shown me, that you may eat and drink with me." 1 Kings xiii. But the other had received his orders from a higher source, and ought not to have departed from them.

Finally; we wish you brethren to keep the ordinances of the Lord's house, as they are delivered to us. Reflect, therefore, frequently on the nature and design of those ordinances; baptism points out our spiritual death, burial, and resurrection, with Christ our Lord, and keeps in memory the relations of deity to the human family, as a Father to bless, a Redeemer to save, and a Spirit to sanctify poor enslaved and polluted sinners, and the ordinance of the supper keeps in memory the whole character of Jesus, with all he undertook and executed for guilty man, "This do (said he) in remembrance of me," "For," saith an Apostle, "as oft as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

DAVID JONES, *Moderator*.

CORNELIUS P. WYCKOFF, *Clerk*.

## CORRESPONDING LETTER.

*The New-York Baptist Association, convened in the City of New-York, on the 28th and 29th days of May, 1817,*

TO CORRESPONDING ASSOCIATIONS, SEND CHRISTIAN SALUTATION.

BELOVED BRETHREN—

WHAT Prophets foretold, Kings and Princes longed to see, and our Fathers earnestly prayed for, has at length, in a good degree, been fulfilled. "The mountain of the Lord's House is established on the tops of the mountains, and many nations, heretofore estranged, are flowing unto it:" The Saviour's empire is advancing; his reign extending; and the untutored tribes of men bending to his sceptre. We do not, indeed, see the full accomplishment of the promises respecting the universal extent of Messiah's Kingdom; but we have seen and heard enough to encourage our hearts, and

to stimulate us to acts of redoubled vigilance, in our respective spheres. The present is an auspicious period. We hail it as the epoch of wonders, and as the harbinger of Zion's future glory and renown. What, brethren, though we see not the whole Israel of God perfectly harmonized in doctrine and practice, we nevertheless have lived to witness a most glorious change in her general aspects. The spirit of bigotry has fled before the liberality of the Gospel; party distinctions are allayed, brotherly love, among different and discordant sects, promoted; infidelity hushed, and an unusual concern for the salvation of perishing men excited; all which has eventuated in plans the most benign and beneficial to the everlasting welfare of mankind. Hence the generous attempts to evangelize distant nations, to disseminate the Scriptures, without note or comment; and hence, too, the establishment of Sunday Schools, for the instruction of Indigent Youth. This, though apparently the least item in the Catalogue of Christian benevolence, is, notwithstanding, pregnant with incalculable advantages to the rising generation. Were it considered only as a preventive of vice and immorality on the Lord's day, it might justly be esteemed a blessing to Society; but when it is remembered, that positive beneficial effects flow to a part of the human family, which, but for this institution, would grow up without learning, and remain in a state of ignorance concerning the necessity and importance of the Christian religion. Let the different Reports, already published, tell what great things have been done in a short time; and let the animating view prompt the prayer that Sunday Schools may universally obtain, not only in our Country, but, also, in all Lands. Among our own denomination, we have learnt by communications from the different churches composing this body, that the Lord has not left himself without a witness. We have also heard from some of you that the work of God progresses, and we hope to receive refreshing tidings from all; and now, dear brethren, what remains, but that all occupy their respective posts in Zion with fidelity, and anticipate the approaching day, when all the redeemed of the Lord shall flow to our blessed Shiloh.

DAVID JONES, *Moderator.*

CORNELIUS P. WYCKOFF, *Clerk.*

*Letter from the Corresponding Secretary of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions.*

RESPECTED BRETHREN,

Philadelphia, 23 May, 1817.

At the meeting of the Convention of the Baptist Board for Foreign Missions, the following resolution was unanimously passed:

*“That the thanks of this Convention be presented to the Associations, Societies, and Churches that have contributed to the funds of the Institution, with a view of aiding in the diffusion of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. The Corresponding Secretary is requested to communicate to them this resolve, accompanied with the hope and persuasion that they will continue to abound in the service.”*

With the liveliest satisfaction this Resolution is offered for your affectionate acceptance. The Report of the Convention and Board, now in the press, will be forwarded as early as practicable. Your zeal and piety will provide the earliest and most efficient channels for its circulation.

Among the articles which the Report will more particularly exhibit, you will be gratified to learn, that the meeting of the Convention has been distinguished by an uninterrupted and exalted harmony, by the spirit of fervent prayer, and jealousy for the Lord of Hosts.

Our sister White, who accompanied brother Hough and family to India, is married to Rev. Mr. Rowe of the Serampore mission, and is settled at Digah, nearly 400 miles up the river Ganges, where she superintends a growing and important female seminary. Brother Hough and family have arrived at Rangoon, to the joy of brother and sister Judson. Two additional young missionaries from New-England, have been appointed to go out and join them. Brother Ranaldson has been chosen a missionary to officiate in New Orleans and its vicinity, and brethren Peck and Welch to commence a Western mission, to be extended as Providence shall direct, to the Indian tribes. Its commencement will be at or near St. Louis, on the western banks of Mississippi. Brother Rice has requested the sentiment of the Convention as to the propriety of his sailing immediately for India. The opinion was unanimous and decided, that, owing to the high importance of his services, he ought to remain longer in the United States. Should he visit you, you will, I am convinced, receive him as a brother beloved for the Saviour's sake.

Relying on “the God of our salvation” for ultimate success, who is “the confidence of all the ends of the earth and of them that are afar off *beyond the sea,*”

I am, your brother and servant,

WM. STAUGHTON,  
*Corresponding Secretary of the Board.*

To the New-York Baptist Association. }