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Baptists. Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Association, 1800.

Minutes ... at Philadelphia, October ... 1800.

[Mount Holly, N. J., 1800.] 8 pp.

LCP copy.

MINUTES

OF THE

Philadelphia Baptist Association,

HELD

At PHILADELPHIA, October 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1800.

TUESDAY, October 7th, 1800:

1. **AT** 3 o'clock, P. M. Brother **SAMUEL JONES**, agreeably to appointment last year, preached the Introductory Sermon from *Acts xx. 23*. *I kept nothing back that was profitable unto you.*

2. After Sermon business was opened with Prayer by Brother **BURGISS ALLISON**, when Brother **SAMUEL JONES** was chosen Moderator, and Brother **PETER WILSON**, Clerk.

3. Letters from twenty-four Churches were read.

N. B. Ministers names are in **CAPITALS**. Licensed Preachers in *Italics*. Those marked with an * were not present. From Churches marked thus † we received no intelligence. Dashes denote no seated Minister.

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.
Lower Dublin,	SAMUEL JONES, <i>Joseph Wright,</i> <i>John Dungan.</i>
Middletown,	BENJAMIN BENNET.
Cohansey,	HENRY SMALLEY, <i>Jeremiah Brooks,</i> <i>Isaac Wheaton,</i>
Great Valley,	DAVID JONES, JOHN BOGGS, <i>Horatio G. Jones,</i> <i>Daniel Cornog,</i> <i>Isaac Abraham,</i> <i>David George.</i>

Baptized.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excluded.	Returned.	Total.
8	3	1	1	1	14
4	—	—	—	—	4
12	3	1	1	1	18

Carried over,

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers and Messengers.</i>	<i>Baptized.</i>	<i>Received by Letter.</i>	<i>Dismissed by Letter.</i>	<i>Excluded.</i>	<i>Deceased.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
	Brought forward,						
† Cape May,	JOHN STANCLIFF*.	19	3	1	1	8	380
Hopewell,	{ JAMES EWING, William Salyer, Moses Quick.	30	1	7	—	3	200
Brandywine,	{ JOSHUA VAUGHAN, William Simpson, John Garret, jun. William Griffith. [Restored :.	1	—	—	2	1	84
Montgomery,	{ JOSHUA JONES, Charles Humphrey Joseph Lunn, Silas Hough.	30	—	—	—	1	57
Kingwood,	{ GARNER HUNT, Jonathan Robinson, John Heath.	4	—	—	—	1	73
Hights Town,	{ PETER WILSON, Thomas Dye, John Morford.	19	1	6	—	4	332
Philadelphia,	{ THOMAS USTICK, WILLIAM ROGERS, Isaac Carlile, George Ingles, John M'Leod, Joseph Keen, Samuel Oakford, John Peckworth, Hugh Gorley, Benjamin Thaw.	15	12	5	1	2	145
Southampton,	{ Jereniah Dungan, Elias Yerkes, Peter Sowerman.	—	—	—	2	1	84
Knowlton,	—	—	—	—	—	—	17
New Britain,	{ WILLIAM WHITE, Abel Matthew, Isaac Oakford, John Dungan.	40	3	1	—	1	96
Salem,	{ Benjamin Thompson, Henry Mulford.	—	—	—	1	3	75
	Carried over,	158	20	20	6	25	1543

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers and Messengers.</i>	<i>Baptized.</i>	<i>Received by Letter.</i>	<i>Dismissed by Letter.</i>	<i>Excluded.</i>	<i>Deceased.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
	Brought forward,	158	20	20	6	25	1543
Dividing Creek,	{ Jonadab Shepherd. ALEXANDER M'GOWAN, New Mills, Benjamin Hedger, Jesse Cox.	—	2	—	—	3	58
† Conoloway,	JOSEPH POWELL*,	15	—	2	—	3	119
† Coram,	—	—	—	—	—	—	40
† Upperfreehold,	—	—	—	—	—	—	30
† Pittsgrove,	—	—	—	—	—	—	79
Manahawkin,	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
							5
Vincent,	{ Josiah Philips, Æneas Miles.	5	1	2	—	—	34
† Tuckahoe,	—	—	—	—	—	—	26
London Tract,	{ Samuel Carlile. JAMES M'LAUGHLIN, Hill Town, Isaac Morris, Abel Jones, Thomas Matthias.	39	1	6	1	2	151
† Lower Smithfield,	—	—	—	—	—	—	26
Jacobs Town,	{ BURGISS ALLISON, WILLIAM STAUGHTON, James Cox*.	—	—	1	—	—	61
† Pitts Town,	—	—	—	—	—	—	134
Marcus Hook,	{ John Ellis, George Muffin. THOMAS FLEESON, Roxbury, John Levering, Titus Yerkes.	7	1	2	—	—	52
† Penns Manor,	—	—	—	—	—	—	18
† West Creek,	PETER GROOM*.	—	—	—	—	—	43
Shemokin,	JOHN PATTEN.	—	—	—	4	1	96
Amwell,	{ William Merrell, John Runyon.	16	—	—	—	—	45
	Total,	240	24	34	11	34	2626

Prayer by Brother Wilson.—Adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.
[Sermon this Evening by Brother John Stanford from Acts vi. 4. "But we will give ourselves continually unto Prayer."]

WEDNESDAY, October 8th, 9 o'clock, A. M.

Met according to Adjournment.

Brother David Jones prayed.

4. Brethren Jonathan Jerman, Thomas Jones, and Joseph Flood being present, were invited to take a seat with us.

5. Received a Letter and Minutes from the Warwick Association, by their Messengers John Stanford and Thomas Mantanyea.—Letter and Minutes from the Delaware Association, by their Messenger John Boggs, jun.—Letters and Minutes from the New-York and Charleston Associations. Also Minutes from the Shaftsbury, Middle District, Neuse, Dover, Flat-River, Goshen, Roanoke District, Kehuke, and Culpepper Associations.

6. Brethren Ewing, Staughton and Stanford, are appointed as a Committee to examine the printed Letters from the different Associations, and report thereon.

7. Read the Circular Letter to the Churches, and appointed Brethren David Jones, Allison and M'Laughlin, together with the Author, to examine the same and report thereon.

8. Appointed the following Brethren to write to the different Associations: David Jones, to the Warwick—Horatio G. Jones, to the Delaware—White to New-York—and Staughton, to Charleston.

9. The following Brethren are appointed Messengers to the Associations: M'Laughlin, to Warwick—Vaughan, and Horatio G. Jones, to Delaware; and White and Wilson to New-York.

10. No communications having been lately received from the following Churches, the Brethren whose names are annexed to them, are appointed and do agree to write unto, or visit them.

Samuel Jones, to visit Knowlton.

Ustick, to write to Coram.

M'Laughlin and White, to visit Lower Smithfield, on the third Lords-day in November, and Pitts Town the Monday evening following, enquire of them relative to their faith and practice, and report thereon to the next Association.

David Jones, to write to Conoloway relative to a resolution of the Association to drop off such Churches' names out of our Minutes, who neglect to write for three years in succession.—— Brother M'Laughlin prayed. Adjourned till 3 o'clock, P. M.

3 o'clock, P. M. Met pursuant to Adjournment.

Brother Hunt prayed.

11. Conscious that the interposing Providence of GOD hath preserved the City of Philadelphia during the present season from the Malignant Fever, and caused the Earth to bring forth her fruits more abundantly than for some years past, the Association set apart and recommend, Thursday the 13th of November next, to be observed as a day of Thanksgiving by all the Churches in our connection.

12. The Committee, appointed to examine the printed Letters from the different Associations, reported thereon.

Brother Rogers Prayed.—Adjourned till half after 6 o'clock to-morrow morning.

[Sermon this evening by Brother Mantanyea, from Colossians i. 18. "And he is the head of the body."]

THURSDAY October 9th, half after 6 o'clock, A. M.

Met pursuant to Adjournment.

Brother Ewing Prayed.

13. The Association having received approving resolutions from three of their sister Associations, respecting the General Conference, as recommended by the 21st article of our last year's Minutes, beg leave to call the attention of the other Associations to this important subject, and solicit from them severally their views as to the time when, and place where, the first General Conference ought to assemble.

This Association also recommend, that the different Messengers from those Associations who may meet with us by divine permission, next year, be authorized to confer with a committee, to be appointed by our body, on this subject, in digelling a plan relative to the General Conference, and to do whatever may have a tendency to accelerate this beneficial design.

Brethren William Rogers, Thomas Ustick, Burgess Allison, William Staughton, and Peter Wilson, are appointed a Committee by this Association to receive and answer all communications from the different Associations in the United States appertaining to the business, in order that we may bring the whole to a conclusion.

14. The Letters to the different Associations were read and approved. The Committee appointed to examine the Circular Letter to the Churches, report that they approve of the same.—Brother Hedger Prayed. Adjourned till half after 10 o'clock, A. M.

Met pursuant to Adjournment.

15. The Association recommend to the Churches, that collections be immediately made and forwarded to Brother Ustick, for the instruction and assistance of Thomas Jones, a young man lately from Wales of promising gifts; and that Brother Ustick pay 40 dollars to Thomas Jones, if as much be received; if more, to retain the same to be at the future disposal of the Association.

16. A query having been received from the Church at Philadelphia on the subject, Resolved, that it be particularly urged on our Churches, that as stewards of God and influenced by a strong desire to spread the cause of our blessed Redeemer, they endeavour to raise as early as possible, and to maintain a fund for the assistance of such ministers as may be called to supply destitute Churches, or otherwise publish the Gospel in their connection: and as there are flattering prospects at the Church of Manahawkin, which has been recently visited with much success, they earnestly entreat that some collections may be immediately forwarded to Brother Rogers, for the desirable purpose of affording them ministerial aid.

17. The four following days, viz. The first Tuesdays in January, April, July and October, are recommended as days of Humiliation and Prayer.

18. Whereas the Church of Philadelphia have presented a query, on the propriety of forming a plan for establishing a Missionary Society: This Association, taking the matter into consideration, think it would be most advisable to invite the General Committee of Virginia and different Associations on the continent, to unite with us in laying a plan for forming a Missionary Society, and establishing a fund for its support, and for employing Missionaries among the natives of our continent.

19. The Association conceive, that the regular business of the Association is to take into consideration those matters which are introduced by the Churches; yet, that the Association consider themselves at liberty to take up any matter of consequence introduced by any individual member.

20. It is recommended to our Churches, that a sermon be annually preached among them, and after it a collection be made, whose amount be returned to the Association at their subsequent Meeting, in order to augment the fund for the education of such pious young men as appear promising for usefulness in the ministry of the Gospel.

21. The Committee appointed to prepare a Map of the situation of the Churches in this Association, and to inform themselves of the probable expence attending its engraving, presented a Map; and report, that the expence will be about 100 dollars. It is therefore recommended that each Church send, by its messengers at the next meeting, four dollars, to complete the design.

22. The Association understanding that objections lie against the character of Andrew Harpending, desire the Shaftsbury Association to enquire into the grounds of those reports.

23. Brother Ewing to write the Circular Letter for next year.

24. Brother William Rogers is appointed to preach the Association Sermon next year: in case of failure, Brother John Boggs.

25. Brother Ullick is requested to superintend the printing of the Minutes.

26. The Association is appointed to meet on the first Tuesday in October 1801, at 2 o'clock, P. M. at Philadelphia; but in case of the return of the fever there, to be held at Hopewell.

27. The Moderator concluded by Prayer.

(CIRCULAR LETTER.)

*The MINISTERS and MESSENGERS of the PHILADELPHIA ASSOCIATION,
to the CHURCHES they represent, send Christian salutation.*

Beloved Brethren,

HAVING once more been permitted to meet in Association, to consult the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, not as having dominion over your faith, but as helpers of your joy, we once more affectionately address you.

It affords us the highest pleasure to find from your letters, that peace, like a river, flows among you, that additions have been made to many of our Churches, and that your adherence to the faith of the Gospel remains unshaken. We trust you will continue to abound in the work of the Lord, assured that in your holy profession, you have followed no cunningly devised fable, and that in prospect of the invisible world you know whom you have believed. To assist you in repelling every temptation to abandon your profession, and in surmounting the obstacles which may lie in your path to glory and virtue, in an age when thousands are treating the doctrines we maintain as unintelligible, and the duties we practise as irrational, permit us to bring to your view, some of the proofs of the divine origin of that Gospel, which has been preached unto you, which also ye have received and where ye stand.

The evidences which address the understandings of all men, are the performance of miracles and the accomplishment of prophecy; but there is an evidence, too little regarded, which particularly addresses itself to the consciences of believers, equally convincing with any of the rest, and perhaps, in point of perspicuity and usefulness, superior to them all. It consists in that consciousness, which every Christian in his measure possesses, that he is born of incorruptible seed, and is well expressed by the beloved disciple, where he says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." We know not any occasion on which this evidence can be more seasonably illustrated and enforced, than when writing to such as have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

We wish not, Brethren, to direct your thoughts to any fancied internal light, any capricious impulses, which may be supposed to supercede the necessity of scriptural instructions: we refer to those operations of sovereign grace, which include the regeneration and sanctifying of the heart, strong consolation in trouble, and lively hopes in death.

As he who formed the mind is the author and finisher of our faith, we are not surprised that there

is a visible harmony between the natural faculties and relative circumstances of the one, and the divine excellencies of the other. An understanding deeply penetrating is the privilege of few, and still fewer are blest with the external means which swell its capacity and assist its researches. Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. If the proofs of the truth of the Gospel were to be derived only from the investigation of ancient histories, the collating of original manuscripts, the acquisition of several languages, or, the pursuit of deep metaphysical reasonings, by far the greater part of mankind must remain invincibly ignorant of its heavenly nature. But God, of his infinite wisdom and goodness, has made provision for the poor—He has let fall into the bosom of the christian, who has both to pray and to toil for the daily bread of himself and family, a key which can open every door of the doubting castle. The evidence we are contemplating is so plain that the wayfar- ing man though a fool need not err; so rational, that the attempts of the enemy to gainsay or resist are impertinent and abortive; and so universal, that babes, young men and fathers in *Christ* may alike enjoy its power.

We possess naturally that intimacy with ourselves which renders the perception of the exercise of our senses, affections and understandings, obvious to us all. Should a philosopher tell you that the morning sun can shed no lustre on the hills—that there is no noise in the thunders of summer—that there are no such passions as joy and grief—that an human being is not able to reason, or if he be, that he cannot distinguish the operations of his mind; you would reject his assertions, convinced that if you know not these things, you know nothing; convinced, that these are to be classed among those self-evident facts which do not properly admit of proof, because nothing in their support can be adduced plainer than themselves. In like manner, should an infidel assert, that there is no glory in the person of Jesus, no terrors in the law of God to the transgressor, no joy in the Holy Ghost, no brokenness of heart for sin, that there exists no such power of discernment as that which Paul ascribes to him that is spiritual; the believer, having an internal sense of moral truth, perceives clearly that such declarations are false.

Permit us, Brethren, to illustrate the nature of this evidence more fully. Does the infidel declare that the Bible is an imposition on the credulity of mankind? Your experience can answer "Unless the law of God had been our delight, we had perished in our affections." Have you heard him assert that *Christ* was an impostor? You know he

is mistaken; for *Christ* is formed in you the hope of glory. More blind than the Jewish ruler, does he ridicule the doctrine of the regeneration of the heart? You know what it means, and from its influence argue its origin. Once you loved the world; now you place it beneath your feet. Once you saw no loveliness in religion; but now her ways are pleasantness. Pious persons you once hated; now they are your beloved associates, and for the very reason which formerly commanded your aversion, because they bear the image of the heavenly. Effects like these are irresistible proofs that you have passed from death unto life. It is in vain that an infidel contend, that it is absurd to suppose that God would pardon sin by so strange a means as the death of his Son; the Christian has felt the efficacy of the blood of *Christ* on his conscience. It is of no avail, his deriding the idea of an infernal agent; you know you have such an enemy, and are not ignorant of his devices. Let the foes of piety, if they please, term our religion wild and visionary; we have felt its soothing power, when our bodies have been tortured with pain, when our friends have been removed from our embraces, when the waters of complicated affliction have overwhelmed us.

This inward conviction assisted the primitive Christians to hold fast the faithful word. While the unbelieving Jews and Greeks were requiring a sign and seeking after wisdom, the disciples beheld, in a crucified Saviour, the power and the wisdom of God. No opposition could induce them to be ashamed of a system, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

In the days of our Lord, when Philip could not immediately answer Nathaniel's objection to the Messiahship of Jesus, satisfied that he had found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, he requested Nathaniel to come and see. We may give the same invitation, both to the friends and enemies of Christianity. Come and see, how swearers become praying persons—how the unclean become chaste—how sabbath breakers become devout—how him that stole steals no more, but rather labours, working with his hands the thing which is good. Come and see how the churlish become liberal and the inebriated sober; see right hands cut off and right eyes plucked out, rather than the whole body should be cast into hell. Come and "see how a Christian can die," and whether you behold him surrounded with weeping friends on his couch in the chamber, or with exulting enemies at the stake amid the flames, you may hear him singing with surprise and joy, *O death where is thy sting? Come Lord Jesus come quickly!*

We are sensible, brethren, that infidels may reject this evidence as unfounded; but, while we

ask them to assign some other adequate cause, if they can for the important changes we have named, we beg of you to remember, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

This change of heart and conduct, this inward witness you need not be told is not of your own producing. God, who is rich in mercy, hath quickened us together with *Christ*. Neither moral reason nor Gentile philosophy, could have accomplished it. It could have been effected neither by the providences of God nor by the ministry of the Gospel itself separate from the power of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, the opposition made to it by our depravity, the world and the tempter, prove it a work essentially different from their nature and influence.

Paul when standing on the stairs in Jerusalem, when speaking for himself before Agrippa, and when writing to the Galatian Churches, demonstrates the truth of the Gospel, and his commission to proclaim it, from the history of his conversion. We wish you Brethren, ever to exercise that wisdom which dwells with prudence: but, we would recommend to you on proper occasions, even in the presence of infidels, to relate the story of your conversion to God. Some, like the Jews, may deride you; many, like Agrippa, may be almost persuaded to become Christians; while others, by the blessing of God, may, like the Galatians, be made not almost, but altogether disciples of *Jesus Christ*.

It is frequently observed respecting prophecy, that it is a growing evidence; the same is true as to the witness within. The more you grow in grace and in the knowledge of *Christ*, the stronger will be your faith: purity and stability are the companions of each other.

Suffer us then, dear Brethren, to exhort you to every good word and work. Enable your ministers, while they behold your faith, your patience and charity, to say, "Ye are our epistles written in our hearts, known and read of all men." Dwell much in your meditations on the redemption of the Son of God, *Christ*, increasing love to him who first loved you and to your Brethren in the Lord. Let grace and truth govern all your actions. Pray for and pursue the prosperity and peace of Jerusalem. Mortify the deeds of the body. Mind not the world nor the things of the world. Let your conversation be in Heaven. In short, labour to attain to such a progress in knowledge and purity, as shall compel a wicked world to exclaim with the damsel of Philippi, "These men are the servants of the most high God."

Though the evidence we have been explaining brightens with our advance in the divine life, yet we hope none of you will write bitter things against yourselves, because the knowledge or joys of your brethren may be greater than yours. While we expect you to give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, we wish you to remember, that the evidence lies in the fact itself. Fire is as truly in the smoking flax as in the great volcano; the small dust of the balance is as really a part of the creation as the mountain of Libanus.

A careful investigation of the work of grace on the heart, will enable each of you to say before Jehovah, with a great divine of the last century, "I see no doctrine so pure and heavenly, as bearing the image and superscription of God; nor any so fully confirmed and delivered by the attestation of thy own omnipotency; nor any which so purely pleads thy cause, calls the soul from self and vanity, condemns its sin, purifies it and leads it directly unto thee. Thou hast mercifully given me the witness in myself! not an unreasonable persuasion in my mind, but that renewed nature, those holy and heavenly desires and delights, which sure can come from none but thee. And O! how much more have I perceived it in many of thy servants than in myself. Thou hast cast my lot among the souls that Christ hath healed; I have daily conversed with such whom he hath raised from the dead. I have seen the power of thy Gospel upon sinners. All the love that ever I perceived kindled towards thee, and all the true obedience I ever saw performed to thee, hath been effected by the word of *Jesus Christ*. And if confidence in *Christ* be yet deceit, must I not say that thou hast deceived me, who I know canst neither be deceived, or by any falshood or seduction deceive?"

You will perceive with the pious Watts, that this is a powerful witness and ever ready to baffle the most learned sophisms and the boldest temptations: it lies so near, that it is a present shield against every arrow from the camp of infidelity. It is an argument drawn from sense and vital experience, and effectually answers all the subtle cavils of false reasonings. The quibbles of logic against the experience of the Christian, are but as darts of stubble against the scales of a leviathan.

That you may enjoy this earnest of the Spirit, this unction from the holy One, more and more, is the hearty prayer of, Beloved Brethren, Your Servants for *Christ's* sake.

Signed in behalf of the whole,

SAMUEL JONES, Moderator.
PETER WILSON, Clerk.

Mr. Richard