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MINUTES

OF THE

Philadelphia Baptist Association,

HELD BY APPOINTMENT, IN PHILADELPHIA,

October 6th, 7th, and 8th, 1807.



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6th, 1807.

AT 3 o'clock, P. M. Brother SAMUEL JONES preached the Introductory Sermon, from Isaiah liv. 2, 3. *Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.*

2. After Sermon, business was opened with prayer, when Brother WILLIAM STAUGHTON was chosen Moderator, and Brother WILLIAM WHITE, Clerk.

3. Letters from thirty-four Churches were read.

N. B. Ministers' names are in CAPITALS. Licensed preachers are in *Italics*. Those marked with an *, were not present. From Churches marked thus †, we received no intelligence. A Dash — denotes no settled Minister.

Churches. Ministers and Messengers.

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.	Baptized.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excluded.	Deceased.	Total.
Lower Dublin,	SAMUEL JONES, Thomas Holme, Jesse Dungan, John Thaw, Abednego T. Whitton, John Richardson.	17	—	3	—	—	138
		—	—	—	—	5	135
Middletown,	BENJAMIN BENNETT.	—	—	—	—	5	135
Cohansey,	HENRY SMALLEY*, <i>William Stelling*</i> , David Gilman, Joel Sheppard, Daniel J. Swinney.	11	—	5	1	2	198
		—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Valley,	DAVID JONES. HORATI G JONES, Jonathan Phillips, Isaac Abrams, Phineas Phillips.	2	2	—	—	1	67
		8	—	—	—	—	50
Cape May, Hopewell 1st Church,	JONATHAN JARMAN. JOHN BOGGS David Stout, Richard Stout.	8	4	11	2	1	148
		—	—	—	—	—	—
Carried over,		46	6	19	3	9	750

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers and Messengers.</i>	Baptized.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excluded.	Deceased.	Total.
	<i>Brought forward,</i>	46	6	19	3	9	736
Brandywine,	{ JOSHUA VAUGHAN, Robert M'Coy, Thomas Baldwin, John Smith, William Griffith. - -	18	—	2	—	3	135
Montgomery,	{ SILAS HOUGH, Charles Humphrey, Joseph Lun. -	—	—	—	—	2	83
Kingwood,	{ ———— Thomas Davis, Edward West, Thomas Robertson.	2	—	2	1	2	112
Hights Town,	{ PETER WILSON, Andrew Perrine, John Jones.	11	—	6	3	2	328
Philadelphia, 1st Church,	{ WILLIAM STAUGHTON, WILLIAM ROGERS*, JOHN P. PECKWORTH, <i>Thomas Billings, George Ingels,</i> George Mustin, Joseph Keen, Benjamin Thaw, Jared Sexton, Hugh Gourley, John M'Leod, sen. Tilman Culp, J. M'Leod, jun. [Res. 1.	38	21	7	5	3	307
Southampton,	{ THOMAS B. MONTANYE, William Watts, Abel Marple, John Shelmire, Nathan Banes, James Dungan. - - - - -	2	4	—	—	2	133
† Knowlton,	{ ———— - - - - -	—	—	—	—	—	17
New Britain,	{ ———— Edward Matthew, Joshua Riale. -	4	1	1	—	3	83
Salem,	{ THOMAS BROWN, Joseph Lloyd, Henry Mulford, Benjamin Thompson. - - - -	11	1	6	—	3	113
† Dividing Creek,	{ ———— ———	—	—	—	—	—	58
New Mills,	{ ISAAC CARLILE*, <i>Benjamin Hedger, Lemuel Howell.</i>	3	3	5	1	3	111
† Upper Freehold,	{ ———— - - - - -	—	—	—	—	—	97
† Pittsgrove,	{ ———— - - - - -	—	—	—	—	—	19
Manahawkin,	{ ———— Thomas Edman. -	—	—	4	3	1	61
Vincent,	{ ———— Levi John, Robert Phipps. - -	7	—	—	—	—	53
† Tuckahoe,	{ ————	—	—	—	—	—	26
Hill Town,	{ JOSEPH MATHIAS, Philip Miller, Isaac Morris, Griffith Owen. - - - [Rest. 1.	4	—	1	—	1	126
	<i>Carried over,</i>	146	36	53	16	34	2598

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers and Messengers.</i>	Baptized.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excluded.	Deceased.	Total.
	<i>Brought forward,</i>	146	36	53	16	34	259
Jacobs Town,	{ BURGESS ALLISON, Asher Cox. - - - - -	6	—	—	—	3	63
Marcus Hook,	{ _____ _____	—	3	2	—	—	21
Roxbury,	{ THOMAS FLEESON, John Levering, Cornelius Holgate, James Patterson, Charles Levering, Nathan Levering. - - - - -	1	—	—	—	—	56
West Creek,	{ _____ Joseph Pricket. -	6	2	1	—	1	58
Shemokin,	{ JOHN PATTON, Charles Saxton. - - - - -	5	2	1	1	—	92
Amwell,	{ JAMES M'LAUGHLIN, John Carr, William Merrell. - -	2	—	2	1	—	76
Burlington,	{ _____ William Boswell, Joseph Sheppard, Stephen C. Ustick, Matthew Randall, Joseph Barber, George Allen. - -	12	—	2	1	1	90
Mount-Holly,	{ _____ Jesse Cox*, William Rogers*, Edward Thomas.	—	—	2	—	—	83
Dover, Y. C. P.	{ _____ Moses Davis. - -	2	—	—	1	—	22
Philadelphia 2 Church,	{ WILLIAM WHITE, Samuel Harris*, Isaac Johnson, Thomas Timings, Adam Corfield, James Wiley, Philip Halzel, Jacob Keen. - - -	42	10	32	1	1	181
Hopewell, 2d Church,	{ _____ William Salyer, Joseph Boss. - -	3	—	2	—	—	55
Blockley,	{ _____ Amos Penegar, W. Sheldrake, G. Helmbold. [Rest. 1.	3	—	—	1	—	34
Squan,	{ _____ Samuel Havens.	4	2	—	3	1	45
Evesham,	{ ALEXANDER M'GOWAN, Joseph Evans, George Sparks, Eli Evans. - - - - -	12	4	—	—	—	80
Trenton and Lamberton,	{ _____ Amos Reader, John Coleman. -	7	3	5	—	1	48
Frankford,	{ _____ James Clark, John P. Skelton, John Dainty. -	—	—	—	—	—	30
	<i>Total,</i>	251	62	102	25	42	3632

Adjourned till 9 o'clock, to-morrow morning.

Brother Runyan prayed.

[Sermon this evening by brother LEBEUS LATHROP, from Hebrews xiii. 5.]

[We announce to the churches the afflictive tidings, that our beloved Brother PETER GROOM, has been this year removed by death.—BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD.]

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7th, 9 O'CLOCK, A. M.

Met agreeably to Adjournment.

Brother M'Gowan prayed.

4. Ministering brethren of sister Associations, and of good standing in their respective churches, who were present, were invited to a seat.

5. The newly constituted Church of Frankford, applied for admission into this body, and were accordingly received.

6. Received Corresponding Letters and Minutes from the following Associations, viz.: from Charleston, a Letter and Minutes; Minutes and Corresponding Letter from New-York, by their Messengers, brethren REUNE RUNYAN and JACOB F. RANDOLPH; from Warren, Minutes and Letters for 1806 and 1807; from the Redstone Association, a Letter and Minutes; from the Warwick Association, a Letter and Minutes, presented by their Messenger, LEBEUS LATHROP; from the Delaware, a Letter and Minutes, by the hand of their Messenger, DANIEL DODGE; from the Shaftsbury, a Letter and Minutes; from the Stonington, their Circular and Corresponding Letter and Minutes.

7. The following brethren were appointed to write to the Corresponding Associations: To Charleston, brother Samuel Jones; New-York, Silas Hough; Warren, Burgiss Allison; Redstone, Horatio G. Jones; Miami, David Jones; Delaware, Daniel Sharp; Shaftsbury, John Boggs; Stonington, Thomas B. Montanye; Chemung, Peter Wilson; Warwick, William Staughton.

8. Appointed Messengers to the following Associations: To New-York, Wm. Staughton, John P. Peckworth, and Peter Wilson; to the Warren, Thomas B. Montanye, Burgiss Allison and William White; to the Redstone, John Patton; to the Delaware, Jame M'Laughlin and Joshua Vaughan; to the Chemung, David Jones.

9. Brethren Peckworth, M'Laughlin and Matthias, were appointed to examine the Minutes of the several corresponding Associations, to report to this body, such things therein as particularly have respect to us.

10. The Circular Letter, drawn up by our brother Staughton, was read, and our brethren Samuel Jones and Thomas B. Montanye, in conjunction with the writer, were appointed a Committee to revise it.

Adjourned till 3 o'clock, P. M.—Brother Fleeson prayed.

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

Brother David Jones prayed.

11. In answer to the Query from the first Church Philadelphia, "Would it not be advisable to appoint a Committee to examine and see if there be not rules in the new system of discipline which are discordant with the old, and which might be so connected as to render them both harmonious?" Resolved, That it is not expedient.

12. It is recommended that the quarterly Prayer Meetings be continued, excepting the first Tuesday in October, instead of which the Association recommends the Thursday preceding.

13. It is again recommended to the Churches respectively of this body, that collections be made, or subscriptions raised, to support the Domestic Mission.

14. This Association again repeats their recommendation to the Churches that collections be made, and repeated if convenient, to assist the Serampore Mission in the translation of the Scriptures.

15. Appointed the following Supplies :

FOR DOVER.

4th Lord's-day in November, Brother White, | 4th Lord's-day in April, Brother Matthias,
Brethren Vaughan and Horatio G. Jones, at such times as may be convenient.—It is expected the brethren will supply Market-Iron-Works on their way.

FOR FREEHOLD.

1st Lord's-day in Jan. and July, Brother Boggs,		2d Lord's-day in May, Brother Boswell,
1st April, Allison,		1st July, M'Laughlin.
4th April, Dodge,		4th August, Sheppard,

FOR FRANKFORD.

Brother Fleeson, 1st Lord's-day in November; brother Allison, 1st Lord's-day in every other Month, beginning with January; brother Harris, every other first Lord's-day, beginning with February; brother Sheppard, 2d Lord's-day in every Month till June; brother Samuel Jones, 2d Lord's-day in July; Brother Billings, every 2d Lord's-day after July; brother Peckworth, 3d Lord's-day in each Month, and brother Sharp, 4th Lord's-day in every Month.

FOR KINGWOOD.

Brother Allison, 1st Lord's-day in November; brother Samuel Jones, 3d Lord's-day in November, brother Hough, 3d Lord's-day in December; brother Matthias, 1st Lord's-day in January; brother Boggs, 3d Lord's-day in March; brother Brown, 3d Lord's-day in May; brother Boswell, 2d Lord's-day in June; brother Montanye, 3d Lord's-day in June; Brother Sheppard, 1st Lord's-day in September; brother White, 3d Lord's-day in September.

FOR WEST CREEK AND TUCKAHOE.

Brother Jarman, 4th Lord's-day in December and April; brother Horatio G. Jones, 1st Lord's-day in June, and brother Brown, 4th Lord's-day in June.

FOR TRENTON.

Brother Montanye, last Lord's-day evening in every Month; brother Boswell, 1st Lord's-day in December; brother Allison, 2d Lord's-day in December; brother Hough, 3d Lord's-day in January; brother Runyon, 3d Lord's-day in April; brother Sheppard, 3d Lord's-day in August, and 4th in September.

MANAHAWKIN.

Brother Boswell, 3d Lord's-day in October; brother Hough, 4th Lord's-day in May; brother Matthias, 4th Lord's-day in August, and brother Hedger as often as convenient.

16. Query from the first Church Philadelphia: " Would it not correspond with the design of the original donors, relieve the Association of much solicitude, and tend more to the profit of the churches, if the Association Library were to be distributed equitably

among them? and if so, would it not be expedient to advise the churches, or private members, to transmit to the city, at, or before, the next meeting of the Association, whatsoever books they may possess, or can find, by their delegates, that such distribution may be made?" To which the answer was in the affirmative; and the churches and brethren who have them in possession are earnestly requested to forward them accordingly to Brother Staughton, who will, on account of this Association, defray the expence accruing on their removal.

Adjourned 'till 11 o'Clock, to-morrow morning.—Brother Wilson prayed.

[Sermon this evening by brother Reune Runyon, from Mark iii. 3.]

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8th, 11 O'CLOCK, A. M.

Met agreeably to Adjournment.

Brother Allison prayed.

17. The Circular Letter presented by the Committee, was by the Association adopted without amendment.

18. Brother Montanye is appointed to write the Circular Letter for the next year.

19. Brother William White is appointed to preach the Association Sermon of next year, in case of failure-brother Thomas Brown.

20. Query from the church of Blockley: Is it consistent for an excommunicated minister to perform the solemnities of marriage between persons? Can such marriages be viewed by us as a people, as strictly legal? This Association are of opinion that, with an excommunicated minister we have no more to do, except as it may relate to the announcing of such excommunication; the law or any society he may join, must become the judge of his conduct: for ourselves, we cannot countenance such marriages.

21. The thanks of this Association are presented by this body to our aged brother, Samuel Jones, for his laborious Association Discourse; they request the favour of a copy for publication.

22. The churches in our connection are cautioned against impostors, several of whom we understand are now going about; and we solicit sister Associations to give us every information in their power relative to persons of such character, and we will do the same, as they may come under our notice.

23. The churches in our connection are notified that John Rutter, late pastor of Blockley church has been excommunicated; they will therefore not countenance him as a preacher.

Adjourned 'till 3 o'Clock, P. M.—Brother Montanye prayed.

Met agreeably to Adjournment.

Brother Jarman prayed.

24. Understanding that Mr. W. W. Woodward of Philadelphia, has issued proposals for the publication of *Dr. Gill's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, this Association resolves to support the publishing of the work to the utmost; they also recommend to each church to subscribe for a copy of this incomparable work for the use of their minister, and urge on all their sister Associations to aid in the accomplishment of the desirable object.

25. This Association recommend a neat, correct, cheap, and original edition of Watts' Psalms and Hymns, just published, with a view to accommodate the Baptist Churches, by Mr. Dobson of this city; they may be had of our brother Bradley, No. 78, Market Street.

They also inform the churches that a third edition of the book of Hymns, done by appointment of the Association, has been published, and may be had of Mr. Woodward, or Mr. Dobson, Philadelphia.

26. The letters appointed to be written to our sister Associations were read, and adopted.

27. This Association affectionately recommend to the churches with whom they stand connected, to make their letters to the Association as short as may be, confining them only to facts; as the reading of many lengthy letters consumes much of their time.

28. This Association is appointed to meet the first Tuesday in October, 1808, in the first Baptist Church, Philadelphia, and in case of any malignant disease in the city, at Trenton and Lamberton meeting-house.

29 Our brother Stephen C. Ustick, is appointed to print the Minutes and Letter; and our brethren William Staughton and William White to superintend their distribution.

Concluded by prayer by brother Hough.

[Sermon this evening by Brother Dodge, from Heb. xii. 2. and by Brother M'Laughlin, from Hebrew xi. 6.]

(CIRCULAR.)

THE MINISTERS AND MESSENGERS OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, TO THE CHURCHES THEY SEVERALLY REPRESENT, SEND CHRISTIAN SALUTATION:

BELOVED BRETHREN,

AT our last annual meeting, the enquiry was proposed, as a subject of the present letter, "What are the qualifications of a gospel minister?" The question is an important one, inasmuch as, on a proper reply, depend not only the ability of a candidate for the office of the ministry to examine himself, and of the church with which he is connected to judge of his talents, but also the discriminating between those who are in truth "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God," and those who are such only in name.

As there are some things which are regarded as qualifications, which in reality are not, and others that are supposed to disqualify, but from which no discouragement ought to be drawn, a few distinctions must be made.

We need not prove to you that mere morality of character, powers of eloquence, or heirships to livings are insufficient: a heathen or an infidel may possess them all. But it may be necessary to state that,

1. A persuasion in the mind of the subject himself is no genuine proof. We acknowledge

that whom the Lord calls he inclines, but desire and talent are different things. Most young christians, brought up from the horrible pit and taught the excellency of Jesus, feel ardent to proclaim his character to thousands. This anxiety for the salvation of sinners is lovely as a fruit of the work of God in the heart. It designates the *saint*, but not the *preacher*.

2. The confident decisions of friends and relatives are not always to be trusted. These, the youth who is impatient to ascend the pulpit, commonly regards as sufficiently confirming the propriety of his own impressions. He is not aware that natural affection usurps the seat of sober judgment. Many a fond parent, like the mother of the sons of Zebedee, has wished a child exalted in the service of Christ, without observing the mixture in the motives which govern the heart. To long earnestly that a son or a friend may glorify God in the work of the ministry is an effect of *grace*, while the sentiment we form of his ability may be nothing but *nature*.

3. Success is no satisfactory proof that a preacher is qualified of God. Many whose after-

conduct has proved them like Simon the sorcerer to have been in the gall of bitterness, have been useful in a high degree. They have urged their success as a test of their call. But it should be remembered the blessing respects the doctrine, not the preacher. God has said my *word* that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void! This glorious word, therefore, may be quick and powerful though its preacher be held in the bonds of iniquity.

There are besides these some things which are often supposed to disqualify but do not.

1. A deep persuasion of our entire unworthiness. When we reflect on the high honor done by the Lord to his faithful ministers, and connect in our meditation, with it our own guilt and impurity, we may well recede and exclaim, Lord, what am I, or what my fathers' house! To appear an ambassador of Christ and to stand in His stead in the midst of the great congregation; to be employed in the hands of his Spirit in training up the children of God for mansions in their Father's house, are exercises in which the mightiest angel in heaven might glory. But if only the *worthy* are to serve in the sanctuary, where shall they be found? Paul, who came not behind the chief of the Apostles, with relation to his preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, terms himself, "less than the least of all his saints." His services in the cause of his Lord were attended "with all humility of mind and with many tears and temptations." Self-abasement will aid rather than hinder in the work of God. It will trample under foot the serpent Pride, and cast the crown at the feet of Jesus.

2. Great fear and trembling of spirit in prospect of the service, should not lead to the conclusion that requisite qualifications are not possessed. When we reflect on the solemnity of the work, and on the awful responsibility of the minister of God, we may wonder the dread of soul is no greater. Son of Man, said the Lord to Ezekiel, I have made thee a watchman,—hear the word of my mouth. When I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die and thou givest him not warning—the wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his *blood will I require at thy hand.*" One of the Fathers terms the sentence thunderbolts and not words. The sincere minister of Christ perhaps cannot be found, who has not trembled at the address. But impressions such as these have been common to the most eminent of God's servants. It was in the dread of his spirit that Moses said, "O my Lord, send I pray thee by the hand of him whom thou wilt send."

Jehovah encouraged Jeremiah when he cried, "Oh Lord God, I cannot speak: for I am a child," by saying, "Be not afraid." "I was with you," said Paul to the Corinthians, "in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling." Holy fear is useful and not injurious, when it leads to greater faithfulness in the ministry, and to a more entire reliance on the Lord for his assistance.

3. The neglect, or even the contempt of many who profess the name of Christ, does not prove that we ought not to gird up the loins for the labours of a steward. Different measures of talent are given to different elders, all designed for the perfecting of the saints. One star differeth from another star in glory. But he who contemns a christian minister possessing two talents, because he equals not another possessing ten, should fear lest he see it and be angry, who hath said, "whoso despiseth you despiseth me." The heart of man is easily vanquished by prejudice, and still easier by pride. Not all the eloquence and zeal, and purity and usefulness, of an Apostle were sufficient to restrain his adversaries from saying, "his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible."

4. The discovery of no immediate or great success, should not lead any of God's servants to conclude, he has never been called to his Master's work. Self-examination may be proper, whether truth has been exhibited in all its parts, or whether the heart may not be too vain "to bear" the glory of much usefulness. But we know that though Isaiah found occasion to exclaim, "Who hath believed our report," he continued still to prophecy. Few, in comparison of the multitude of his hearers, appear to have been converted under the teachings of our Lord, yet he still remained the minister of the circumcision. If we have as yet toiled and rowed and caught nothing, who can tell, but that the next endeavour may bring the greatest success? Whatever be the result, like the disciples we should say, "*At thy word we will let down the net.*" A minister is no adequate judge of the degree of his usefulness. Seed may have been sown and harvests be rising where he suspected all was barrenness. We have sometimes discovered more of the usefulness of a minister after his decease than before. The lamp has burned when the pitcher was broken.

The qualifications requisite for a gospel minister may be divided into two classes, the *essential*, without which he cannot properly bear the name, and the *contributory*, or those which tend to assist, adorn and complete the holy character.

The essential qualifications appear to be these four, *godliness, knowledge, readiness of communication, and a divine call.*

1. *Godliness* is requisite. Under the term we include holiness of heart, and purity of life.

An unconverted man is a wicked man; but unto the wicked God saith, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth; seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words *behind thee.*" (Psalm l. 15, 16.) In the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, where the qualifications of a bishop are distinctly stated, it is required that he be "holy," and a "lover of *good men.*" He must hold the "mystery of the faith in a *pure conscience.*" The Apostles gave themselves unto *prayer.* Timothy is addressed as "a man of God," and Barnabas described as being "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." David in his 34th Psalm, first relates his gracious experience, and then adds, "come, ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Describing the state of his disciples, our divine Prophet said, "ye are clean," and it was after Peter's avowal of his love to Jesus, that he received the injunctions, "feed my sheep, feed my lambs." What indeed can be expected from an unconverted ministry? How shall an ungodly preacher illustrate the excellency of the divine character which his heart abhors, or the glories of a law he loves to violate? How shall he describe the distress of an awakened sinner which he never felt, or the extacy of one who has received pardon through the blood of Christ, while he lies himself under sentence of condemnation? If he refer to the temptations and conflicts, the fears and consolations of the true believer, he proceeds with such awkward irregularity as compels the afflicted good man to cry out, "the legs of the lame are not equal, so is a parable in the mouth of fools." The lip must be touched with a coal from the altar and iniquity purged before the prophet receives the commission, "Go tell this people, hear ye," It pleased God, says the apostle Paul, to call me by his grace and to reveal his Son in me, *that I might preach him,* Gal. i. 15, 16.

But "the root of the matter" is not all, the verdure and fruit of a holy conversation are required also. The bishop must be visible in domestic life. He must be "the husband of one wife," polygamy being as contrary to the course of nature as to the laws of God. He must be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how

shall he take care of the Church of GOD? Paul collects the virtues that should adorn the personal character of an ambassador of God into one bright constellation. He must be vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality and not to wine: not ready to strike or attached to filthy lucre, but moderate; not given to contention, not a lover of money, not self-willed, but sober, just, holy and temperate, blameless in all things as the steward of God. He must take heed to himself, to his flock, and to his doctrine. Hence,

2. *Knowledge* is requisite. The new man is renewed in knowledge; but spiritual understanding is progressive, and in this it is required that a minister of the word abound. "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth." "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." As if God had said, should the Bible be not at hand, the mouth of the priest will supply its absence. An ignorant person can no more feed the church of God with knowledge and understanding, than can a shepherd his flock by leading them through a desert which has only here and there a shrub. John must first eat the book and then prophecy.

To ascertain the precise degree of spiritual information that is necessary in a candidate for the ministry, is scarcely practicable. It seems however requisite that he should possess general views of the plan of salvation, of the doctrines of grace, and of the "law of the house of the Lord." It appears also proper that a church solemnly exhort a young licentiate brother, to give attendance to reading, to exhortation and doctrine: to meditate on these things that his profiting may appear to all.

When we are taught that a bishop must not be "a novice," we are not from the term to infer that he cannot sustain the character while young. Timothy's youth, Paul instructed no man to despise. The term "novice" has allusion to a plant newly set. Dr. Doddridge renders the word "one newly converted." Of the time requisite for the plant to take root and flourish, for the young convert to acquire a competent acquaintance with evangelical doctrines and duties, proficiency in the divine life is so different in different individuals, you, brethren, observing the characters, will be best able to judge. The conversations of aged saints contribute much to the information of the young. Apollos was an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, but Priscilla and Aquila taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly.

3. An *aptness to teach* is requisite. It consists in a readiness to communicate 'the good treasures of the heart' to others. "The well spring of wisdom is a flowing brook." Many of the servants of the Lord are "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;" but they cannot bring to light the intelligence they enjoy. They are shut up as with a wall, and cannot come forth. Now the qualification we speak of is like a passage through the wall; it is called "a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ." "We were willing," says the Apostle, "to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but our own souls also, because ye were dear unto us." It includes an ardent love for the souls of men, holy diligence, a fulness of ideas, a vigorous memory, and a flowing elocution.

4. There must be a *divine call*. No man must take to himself the honour, unless called of God as was Aaron. How can they preach except they be sent? Christ displays his sovereignty in calling to office whomsoever he pleases. His call is delivered not by visiting angels: it is not heard from the flame of a bush, or from the lightning and clouds of a trembling mountain; nor is it an audible address from our Lord Jesus Christ. To be so called in this last sense was one of the signs of an Apostle, but is not to be applied to the vocation of ministers now. It is the still voice of God in the soul, saying, "Occupy till I come." The subject feels a necessity laid upon him;—a dispensation of the gospel committed unto him. The souls of men appear of greater value than he had before conceived,—already he begins to travel in birth. He thirsts to be engaged in the work, as a hart for the water-brook. He would rather be a preacher of Christ than master of all the mines in the world. This secret fire begins in the end to break forth. In his countenance, in his converse, in his prayer, in his exhortations, his exercises discover themselves. At length they engage the attention of the Church of GOD.

The churches of old were accustomed to watch the openings of the ministerial character, and as if desirous of encouraging the candidate and of inviting their own attention to the utmost, the *saying* appears to have prevailed among them, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good thing." It was by a public act of the church at Jerusalem that Matthias was chosen to the ministry from which Judas by transgression fell, and from the best testimony that we can obtain from Ecclesiastical History, such appears to have been the way in which the election

of ministers took place in the churches, until aspiring prelates arrogated to themselves a privilege which belonged to the faithful at large.

The process a church, in the fear of GOD, observes in the call of a member to the ministry being stated so fully in the discipline of our churches, it is unnecessary to enlarge on it in the present letter.

Besides these leading and essential qualifications, there are several that are *contributory* to the improvement of the minister of GOD. These may be referred to two objects, the furniture of the mind and the affections of the heart. We acknowledge with gratitude and joy that every able minister of the New Testament is made such of God and not of men. We acknowledge that it has been common for God in all ages, to execute his purposes by instruments which should secure honour to his great Name. He raised up Gideon from the thrashing-floor, and David from the sheepfold. The wealthy and the learned were not called to be the Apostles of our Lord, but fishermen, publicans, and tent-makers. Many among the most useful of the ministers of Christ in the present day, have received instruction only at the Master's feet. The celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson, notwithstanding his ardour for classic learning, confesses, that "compared with the conversion of sinners, eloquence and erudition are less than nothing." The ablest preacher is but an earthen vessel, and the feeblest bears heavenly treasure. We are sensible that an ostentation of learning may be food for a weak or aspiring mind; nevertheless, as knowledge of almost every kind may be useful to a gospel minister, as in the Bible we have only a translation behind the veil of which many a beauty is concealed, as we have no reason to expect that extraordinary assistance which the Apostles enjoyed, and as education places a minister of the gospel on equal ground with a learned adversary, to seek an acquaintance with language, history, and other similar studies, where it can be accomplished, is praise-worthy.

An increase in all the gracious affections of the heart well becomes a minister of Christ. To none with more propriety than to him may it be said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

How beautiful do the feet of that minister appear who approaches his flock clothed with humility! If he must be greatest, he will acquire the elevation by becoming the servant of all! How charming the voice that returns not evil for evil nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing! Being defamed, said Paul, we intreat,

being reviled, we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it. How surpassing the heroes of the world is that man of GOD seen, who, brandishing the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, prefers bonds and imprisonments, and derision and death, rather than the work of his GOD should be done deceitfully! How valuable that prudence which never forgets, that "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the sun!" Of the Messiah, the Father said, "My Servant shall deal prudently, and shall be extolled very high." How amiable that sympathy, which, forgetful of its subject, enters the circles of friendship or the chambers of sickness, and looking round, rejoices with them that rejoice, and weeps with them that weep! and O, how lovely that evangelical piety, which, when all is done, falls at the feet of Jesus, and prompts the cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

The original Bunyan has in a few touches admirably drawn the picture of a faithful preacher. The Interpreter introduces his Christian into a room, where he saw the picture of a very grave person hang up against the wall, and this was the fashion of it:

"It had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written

"upon its lips, the world was behind his back, it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over its head."

Contemplating the qualifications of a minister of the gospel, you must perceive that their nature is important and solemn. Dear brethren, pray for your ministers, O when it is well with you pray, pray for them. Did you perceive half the toils, or half the afflictions which fill the hands and press down the hearts of your ministers, you would, and we hope you do, remember them always in your prayers. Let your prayers also ascend that more labourers may be thrust into the great harvest field.

Our intercourse with each other in association has been pleasant, and the tidings from the churches generally encouraging. Permit us to exhort you to abound more and more in the work of the LORD, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the LORD.

We remain, beloved Brethren, your servants for CHRIST'S sake.

Signed in behalf and by order of the whole,

WILLIAM STAUGHTON, Moderator.
WILLIAM WHITE, Clerk.

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