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Baptists. Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Association,
1809.

Minutes . . . in Philadelphia, October 3d, 4th, and
5th, 1809.

Burlington, [N. J.], Ustick, [1809]. 12 pp.
MWA ph. copy.

MINUTES

OF THE

Philadelphia Baptist Association,

HELD, BY APPOINTMENT, IN PHILADELPHIA,

October 3d, 4th, and 5th, 1809.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3d, 1809.

1. **AT** 3 o'clock, P. M. Brother **WILLIAM ROGERS** delivered the Introductory Sermon, from Psalm ciii. 1, 2. "*Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.*"

2. After Sermon, business was opened with prayer by Brother **T. B. MONTANYE**, when Brother **WILLIAM ROGERS** was chosen Moderator, and Brother **WILLIAM STAUGHTON**, Clerk.

3. Letters from forty 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.

| <i>Churches.</i> | <i>Ministers and Messengers.</i> | Baptized. | Received by Letter. | Dismissed by Letter. | Excluded. | Deceased. | Total. |
|----------------------|--|-----------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Lower Dublin, | SAMUEL JONES, <i>Samuel Porritt, Charles Bartolett,</i> <i>David Bateman, Theophilus Harris,</i> <i>William Magee, Thomas Holme.</i> | 6 | 6 | 4 | — | 5 | 158 |
| Middletown, | BENJAMIN BENNET, <i>Jacob Conover.</i> | 1 | — | — | 2 | 2 | 134 |
| Cohansey, | HENRY SMALLEY, <i>William Steelling, Isaac Sheppard,</i> <i>Isaac Stethams.</i> | 5 | 4 | 4 | — | 3 | 209 |
| Great Valley, | DAVID JONES, <i>Isaac Abrams,</i> <i>David Phillips. David George.</i> | — | — | 1 | — | — | 63 |
| Cape May, | JENKIN DAVID. | — | — | 2 | — | 1 | 47 |
| Hopewell 1st Church, | JOHN BOGGS <i>Nathan Stout,</i> <i>David Stout, John Warts,</i> <i>Richard Stout, Abraham Stout.</i> | 17 | 2 | 3 | — | — | 169 |
| | <i>Carried over,</i> | 29 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 11 | 780 |

| <i>Churches.</i> | <i>Ministers and Messengers.</i> | Baptized. | Received by Letter. | Dismissed by Letter. | Excluded. | Deceased | Total. |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------|--------|
| | Brought forward, | 29 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 11 | 780 |
| Brandywine, | { _____ William Griffith, Robert M. Coy, Charles Moore. - | 11 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 152 |
| Montgomery, | { SILAS HOUGH, Joseph Lunn, William Johnson, Thomas Davis. | 2 | 2 | — | — | 1 | 86 |
| Kingwood, | { _____ Jonathan Robinson, | — | 5 | — | — | 2 | 125 |
| Hights Town, | { PETER WILSON, Abraham Johnson - [Restored, 2. | 18 | 2 | 13 | — | 5 | 336 |
| Philadelphia, 1st Church, | { WILLIAM STAUGHTON, WILLIAM ROGERS, <i>Thomas Billings, James Patterson,</i> George Ingels, Joseph Keen, Hugh Gourley, George W. Smith, John Bradley, William Britton, Levi Garret, Benjamin Thaw, John M. Leod, sen. - - - - | 56 | 12 | 43 | 4 | 4 | 432 |
| Southampton, | { THOMAS B. MONTANYE, John Shelmire, James Dungan, George Shelmire. - - - - | 6 | — | — | 1 | 1 | 146 |
| † Knowlton, | { _____ - - - - | — | — | — | — | — | 17 |
| New Britain *, | { _____ Edward Matthew, Benjamin Matthew, Joshua Riale. - | 1 | — | 1 | 2 | — | 83 |
| Salem, | { JOSEPH SHEPPARD, Joseph Lloyd, Sylvanus Sheppard, John P. Cooper. - - - - | 4 | 1 | 1 | — | 3 | 129 |
| Dividing Creek, | { _____ | 4 | — | — | — | 1 | 61 |
| New Mills, | { _____ ISAAC CARLILE *, <i>Benjamin Hedger *</i> , Thomas Swain, Lemuel Howell, Abel Watkinson. - | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 118 |
| Upper Freehold, | { _____ James Clayton, - | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 104 |
| Pittsgrove, | { _____ John Coombs, John Delap. - - [Restored, 1. | 6 | 1 | — | — | — | 39 |
| † Manahawkin, | { _____ | — | — | — | — | — | 61 |
| Vincent, | { _____ DANIEL J. SWINNEY. | — | 2 | 1 | — | 1 | 56 |
| Tuckahoe, | { _____ Elias Smith, Enos Veal. | 5 | — | — | — | — | 31 |
| Hill Town, | { JOSEPH MATTHIAS, Philip Miller, Isaac Morris, Abel Matthias. - - - - | 1 | 1 | 3 | — | 2 | 123 |
| Jacobs Town, | { BURGESS ALLISON, William Snowden. - - - - | 3 | 2 | — | — | 1 | 72 |
| Marcus Hook, | { _____ Joseph Walker. | 4 | 2 | — | — | — | 27 |
| | | 160 | 50 | 84 | 17 | 37 | 2978 |

* Restored, 1.

Carried over,

| <i>Churches.</i> | <i>Ministers and Messengers.</i> | Baptized. | Received by Letter. | Dismissed by Letter. | Excluded. | Deceased. | Total. |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| | Brought forward, | 160 | 50 | 84 | 17 | 37 | 2978 |
| Roxbury, | { THOMAS FLEESON, John Levering, William Dehaven, Charles Levering. - - - - - | 1 | 1 | 2 | — | — | 51 |
| West Creek, | { THOMAS BROOKS, Wm. Price, John Tice, Joseph Pricket, [Rest. 1. | 14 | 1 | 1 | — | — | 72 |
| Shemokin, | { ————— <i>John Woolverton.</i> - | 3 | 1 | 5 | 1 | — | 87 |
| Amwell, | { JAMES M. LAUGHLIN, William Merrill, William Godly, Thomas Stout. - - - - - | 2 | — | — | 2 | — | 85 |
| Burlington, | { ————— George Allen, Thomas Littlewood. | — | — | 2 | — | — | 88 |
| Mount-Holly, | { William Rogers, Edward Thomas. | — | — | 1 | 1 | 1 | 77 |
| † Dover, Y. C. P. | { ————— | — | — | — | — | — | 22 |
| Philadelphia 2d Church, | { WILLIAM WHITE*, <i>John Hewson, Samuel B. Harris,</i> Isaac Johnson, John Collard, William M'Gee, Cornelius Trimmul, Jacob Keen, Thomas Goldsmith. | 31 | 8 | 6 | — | 1 | 265 |
| Hopewell, 2d Church, | { ————— James Hill, Levi Knowles. - - - | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | 57 |
| Blockley, | { ————— Amos Penegar, George Lentner, Wm. Sheldrake, Frederick Helmbold. - - - - - | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | 36 |
| Squan, | { Wm. BISHOP *, Samuel Havens. | — | — | — | 1 | — | 45 |
| Evesham, | { ALEXANDER M'GOWAN, Joseph Evans, George Sparks, Wilson M'Gowan. - - - - - | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 83 |
| Trenton and Lamberton, | { Wm. BOSWELL, <i>Benjamin Coles,</i> Amos Reader, Isaac R. Krewson. - | 5 | 3 | — | — | — | 62 |
| Frankford, | { ————— Thomas Gilbert, Richard Evans, Isaac Read - - - | 2 | — | 2 | 1 | — | 31 |
| Merion, | { HORATIO G. JONES, Peter Gilchrist, Samuel Davis. - | 4 | — | — | — | 1 | 22 |
| Philadelphia, 3d Church | { JOHN P. PECKWORTH, John M'Leod, jun. Richard Vanblunk, Samuel Oakford. - - - - - | — | — | — | — | — | 31 |
| 1st African, Philadelphia. | { ————— John Harris, Edward Simmons, Samuel Johnson. | — | — | — | — | — | 12 |
| Total, | | 227 | 68 | 105 | 27 | 43 | 4110 |

Adjourned till 9 o'clock, to-morrow morning.—Brother S. Jones concluded by prayer.
[Sermon this evening by brother Runyan, from John iv. 42. at the first Church.]

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4th, 9 O'CLOCK, A. M.

Met agreeably to Adjournment.

Brother Fleeson prayed.

4. Application was made by the third Baptist Church of Philadelphia, and also by the first African Baptist Church of the same city, for admission into our body, which was cheerfully granted.

5. Ministering and other brethren present, in good standing with their respective Churches, were invited to a seat with us.

6. Received communications from the following Associations. From the Delaware, a letter and minutes, by their messenger, DANIEL DODGE; from Warwick, a letter and minutes; from Redstone, minutes; from the Neuse Association, N. Carolina, a few copies of their minutes; from New-York, minutes and corresponding letter, by their messengers, REUNE RUNYAN, ARCHIBALD MACLAY, and ROBERT F. RANDOLPH; from Chemung, minutes by their messenger, THOMAS SMILEY; from Charleston, minutes and letter by their messenger, Mr. William Inglesby, mentioning the existence of six Associations in the state of South-Carolina, "in which, taken together are more than 10,000 communicants;" from Baltimore, a copy of their minutes, and a request of future correspondence with us. They were represented by the brethren JOHN HEALY, and JOHN WELSH.

7. The following brethren were appointed to write to the corresponding Associations:— Brother Montayne, to Charleston; Allison, to New-York; H. G. Jones, to Delaware; Hough, to Warren; Dodge, to Stonington; Sheppard, to Redstone; Healy, to Warwick; Matthias, to Baltimore; Billings, to Chemung; Swinney, to Miami; Bennet, to Neuse.

8. Brethren Smalley and M'Laughlin, were appointed to examine the letters and minutes of the several corresponding Associations, and report to this body whatever may require our notice.

9. The Philadelphia Baptist Association, having seen brother Allison's proposals for compiling and publishing the history of their body, for the last hundred years, highly approve of the design as a work promising usefulness to the Churches.

10. The Circular Letter, drawn up by our brother Peckworth, was read, and our brethren Montayne and Allison, in conjunction with the author, appointed a committee for its revision.

11. The continuing of the quarterly Prayer Meeting among the Churches is requested; observing that instead of the first Tuesday in October, the Churches assemble on the Thursday preceding.

12. Encouraging information was given relative to the brethren who are officiating as Missionaries. The Churches are again requested to make collections, or raise subscriptions, in support of the domestic Missions.

13. Messengers were appointed to the several corresponding Associations: To the New-York, brethren Sheppard, D. Jones and Matthias; to the Warren, brethren Rogers and Sheppard; to the Delaware, brethren H. G. Jones, Smalley and Sheppard; to the Baltimore, brother Archibald Maclay.

14. The following supplies were appointed to the destitute Churches : viz.

FOR MARCUS-HOOK.

Brother Fleeson, the 4th Lord's day in October ; brother Allison, 1st Lord's day in January ; brother Porritt, 2d in March, and brother D. Jones, the 3d ; brother S. Jones, 1st Lord's day in May ; brother Rogers, 1st Lord's day in June ; brother Dodge, 2d Lord's day in July ; brother Peckworth, 1st Lord's day in August, and 1st in September.

DIVIDING CREEK.

Brother Porritt, 2d Lord's day in December ; brother Brooks, 2d in June, and 2d in August ; brother Smalley, 4th in September.

MOUNT-HOLLY.

Brother Patterson, 1st Lord's day in November, and brother Boggs, the 2d ; brother Hewson, 1st in January ; brother Wilson, 2d in February ; brother Hewson, 1st in March ; brother Patterson, 1st in April ; brother Hewson, 1st in May, and brother Rogers, the 2d ; brother Hewson, 1st in June ; brother Patterson, 1st in July, brother Porritt, the 3d ; brother White, the 2d in August ; brother Patterson, the 1st in September.

FRANKFORD.

Brother Billings, the 1st Lord's day in every month, and brother Patterson, the 4th ; brother Bartolet, the 2d in October, brother Rogers the 3d ; brother Hewson, the 2d in November ; brother Boswell, the 5th in December ; brother Hewson, the 2d in January, brother Montanye the 3d, brother Patterson the 4th ; brother Matthias, the 2d in February ; brother Hewson, the 2d in March, brother Peckworth, the 3d ; brother Hewson, the 2d in April, brother Rogers, the 3d, brother Bartolet, the 5th ; brother M'Laughlin, the 2d in May, brother Montanye, the 3d ; brother Hewson, the 2d in June, brother Rogers, the 3d ; brother Samuel Jones, the 2d in July, brother Rogers, the 3d, brother Hewson, the 5th ; brother Hewson, the 2d in August, brother Peckworth, the 3d ; brother Hewson, the 2d in September, brother Peckworth, the 3d, brother Fleeson, the 5th.

DOVER.

Brother Hough, the 3d Lord's day in November ; brother Bateman, the 4th in November ; brother Sheppard, the 4th in January, brother Welsh, the 5th ; brother H. G. Jones, the 2d in May ; brother Matthias, the 1st in September.

FIRST AFRICAN OF PHILADELPHIA.

Brother Hewson, the 1st Lord's day in November ; brother Sheppard, the 1st in December ; brother Bartolet, the 1st in January ; brother Montanye, the 1st in March.

UPPER-FREEHOLD.

Brother Randolph, the 3d Lord's day in November ; brother D. Jones, the 2d in May ; brother M'Laughlin, the 2d in July.

LOWER PROVIDENCE.

Brother D. Jones, the 5th Lord's day in October; brother H. G. Jones, the 2d in November, brother S. Jones the 4th; brother H. G. Jones, the 2d in April; brother Hewson, 4th in April and June.

GOSHEN.

Brother Allison, the 3d Lord's day in October, brother H. G. Jones, the 5th; brother Swinney, the 2d in April, brother Boswell, the 5th; brother Porritt, the 1st in May, brother Peckworth, the 3d; brother Swinney, the 2d in June, brother Peckworth, the 3d. Brother Healy prayed. Adjourned to 3 o'clock, P. M.

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

Brother Welsh prayed.

15. Brother Matthias is appointed to write the Circular Letter next year.

16. Brother Hough is appointed to preach the Introductory Sermon, and in case of failure, brother David Jones.

17. This Association, is appointed to meet the first Tuesday of October 1810, in the first Baptist meeting house Philadelphia, at 3 o'clock P. M. and in case of any malignant disease in the city, at Trenton and Lambertton.

18. The committee relative to the books of the Association, having reported its progress in the business, are requested still to proceed and make a full report next Association. The churches are again pressed to forward the books in their possession to brother Staughton, who will defray the expence of their conveyance to Philadelphia.

19. Collected money for the printing of the Minutes.

Adjourned to 11 o'clock to-morrow morning. Brother Dodge prayed.

[Sermons this evening by brother Maclay, first Church, Isaiah lv. 10. 11. By brother Boggs, second Church, Ephes. i 6 At the third Church, by brother Healy, Heb. xiii. 7. First African Church, brother Welsh, Heb. ii. 3.]

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5th, 11 O'CL CK, A. M.

Met agreeably to adjournment.

Brother Wilson prayed.

20. Letters to the different Corresponding Associations were read and adopted.

21. Our brethren Hough and Sheppard, having waited on Mr. W. W. Woodward, at the request of the Association, to enquire the progress he had made, and the prospects which appear to open, relative to the publication of *Dr. Gill's Exposition*; report, that he has met with encouragement to proceed in the work, and that he has engaged types for the purpose. The Association recommend the utmost efforts among our churches and brethren towards the support of the work by enlarging the subscription.

Adjourned to 3 o'clock. Brother H. G. Jones prayed.

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

Brother Peckworth prayed.

22. The Association have been informed that our brother Bradley has published a new edition of Rippon's Hymns, with an appendix. The publication is with pleasure recommended to the churches, and may be had at No. 78, Market-street, Philadelphia.

23. The Circular Letter was by the committee produced and adopted.

24. The committee appointed to examine the Letters and Minutes, reported, that there was nothing requiring attention, excepting the following paragraph from the Charleston Association Minutes, which this Association wishes inserted in their Minutes:

“The Association consider it their duty to warn the Churches to beware of a certain William M'Carty, who calls himself a Baptist minister and a physician; but has proved himself to be a very immoral and base man.”

25. It was resolved, that our brother Smalley be requested to write to our brother Runyan of Piscataway, to solicit his enquiring if there are any books belonging to this Association in possession of the Churches which were formerly connected with this body; and if so, to forward them as early as in his power to our brother Staughton, the librarian.

26. This Association has heard with pleasure, that our brother Benedict of Pawtucket, Rhode-Island, purposes performing a tour through the United States, for obtaining, with a view to publish information relative to the general history and numbers of the Baptist denomination through the union; they cannot but wish him great success in the undertaking.

27. Our brother Ustick is appointed to print the Minutes and Letter, and our brethren Staughton, Rogers and Peckworth, to superintend the distribution of them among the Churches.

[Sermons this evening, at the first Church, by our brother Williams from Savannah; at the second Church, by our brother M'Laughlin; the third Church, by our brother Dodge; and at the first African Church, by our brother Wilson.]

Brother Rogers concluded by an affectionate address and prayer.

(CIRCULAR LETTER.)

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

BELOVED BRETHREN,

WITH gratitude we review the goodness of the LORD in continuing our metropolis the subject of such good health; and in favouring us with another comfortable interview in an associated capacity.

Custom will lead you to expect an address from us as a body. It is with pleasure we comply with your expectation. Our meeting at this time has been very large, solemn and interesting.

Our desire is, to address you on some subject that may be profitable.

The names and titles ascribed to our divine Redeemer in the sacred pages, are strong and numerous. Among them there is none more significant than the term HEAD, in which he stands related to the church as his body. The church, which is the body of Christ, was the subject of our last annual epistle. It may not be amiss to address you in this on the church's HEAD, as the body is not complete without a Head, our adorable Jesus being thus stiled in Coloss. i. 18. “He is the HEAD of the body the church:” and as the term more emphatically applies to him in every sense it can be contemplated.

First. Christ may be considered the *Head* of the church, as he possesses supreme dignity, honour, and glory. Who, among the sons of men, can be compared to the Redeemer? The dignity and glory of popes, priests, kings and emperors, as heads of societies or kingdoms, vanish in obscurity, like a dim candle before the meridian splendour of the sun, when compared with the glory of our divine Immanuel. Although it is true, that for the salvation of his people he condescended to a state of ignominy and sufferings, in which his great love for his sinking church was particularly manifest; and in which state of sufferings he became actually the conqueror of their greatest foes; yet, contemplate the native possessions, and original glory of the Son of God, "all riches are his native right:" they are called in Romans ix. 23. "The riches of his glory;" he possessed them before he entered into a tabernacle of clay, as in 2 Cor. viii. 9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor; that ye through his poverty might be rich." Our blessed Lord did not, by this amazing condescension in entering our world for the deliverance of his people, forfeit his claim to the mansions of glory; for he prays in John xvii. 24. "Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." He calls *it* his glory; and in the 5th verse he says, "With the glory which I had with thee before the world was;" and in Romans ix. 5, he is said to be, "Over all, God blessed forever." The prophets, inspired by the Holy Spirit, all referred to him, John i. 45. The father honoured and acknowledged him; saying in Matt. xvii. 5 "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." He was worshipped by angels at his birth, Luke ii. 13. Angels attended him at particular times, Luke xxii. 43. The godhead shone glorious through his life; by his resurrection his disciples had evidence of his supreme power; and on account of the infinite, undivided and independent glories of his person, and because of his infinitely important mediatorial character and work, he deserves the pre-eminence in our esteem and in our praises; and from the redeemed family, and from angels, he will receive the highest ascriptions of praise in the boundless ages of eternity, Rev. v. 9.

Secondly. Christ may be considered as the *Head* of the church, as possessing supreme power and authority. No man or body of men have a right to ordain any thing that relates to the government of the church; neither have they any right to alter any of the ordinances or commands

of Christ. So doing is impeaching his wisdom, and attempting to lessen his authority; and all who undertake so to accommodate the ordinances of Christ as to suit the views of carnal men, are *USURPERS*. While such who profess faith in the Redeemer, submit their better judgments to any thing which is called a command, that cannot be supported by the divine word, they do in fact acknowledge some other head. And it is much to be lamented that so many professors of religion, as well as people of the world, wish to slant the cross, by giving way to carnal reason, and the pride of their own hearts. It ought to be the christian's glory unreservedly to bow in subjection to Christ alone, and take his word as the man of their counsel, and the rule of their conduct. That will teach us in Matt. xxiii. 10. "we are to call no man master," but Christ: He it is who possesses the right of government in the church; to regulate all its concerns by an authority which "Gave him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body," Ephesians i. 22. 23. and it is he who can promote her security and welfare.

Thirdly. Christ stands in relation to his Church, as the head literally stands connected with the body and its members. This is fully set forth in Ephes. iv. 15. 16. where the apostle says, we "Grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love:" and in 1 Cor. xii. 12. 13. &c. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ," &c. This intimate union that subsists between Christ and his people, leads us to consider that covenant engagement which Christ entered into on their behalf from eternity. Then there was a covenant union between them, like that which subsists between the surety and the person for whom he stands bound: Christ stood bound for his people by a voluntary act, and what he did and suffered was accepted in their behalf, that they might enjoy the benefits thereof. Under this idea, we hear, in the cxxth Psalm 3d. verse, the people for whom Christ had become a substitute, before he had actually fulfilled the engagements of the covenant, called *his* people, while as yet they were an unwilling people: and in Matt. i. 21. the end of his coming was to "save his people from their sins." They were his people, though in their sins. But pursuing this idea, we remark, that a vital union takes place between them in

due time; as between the head and members of a living body. Christ himself effects this union, by the communications of his Spirit. Hereby he vitally unites himself to his people; and the Spirit communicated, quickens those who before "were dead in trespasses and sins," Ephes. ii. 1. and produces faith and love in their souls, whereby they are made willing in the day of his power; not that violence is offered to any of their wills, but they are brought to a discovery of their own helplessness—the need they stand in of a Saviour—the beauties there are in holiness—the glory of character there is in our divine Redeemer—to see what he has done for them, and that without him they must perish everlastingly. They cleave unto him, and believe on him, and thus the union becomes mutual. They are emphatically stiled his body in Ephes. i. 23. and are properly one with Christ. This union can never be dissolved, neither by earth nor hell; for our glorious Head declares in John xi. 26. "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die:" again in John x. 28. "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish:" so that the life by which they are quickened can never be destroyed, for it is eternal in its nature, and must issue in everlasting glory.

Fourthly. Under this figure, we may contemplate Christ as the source of influence: he has infinite stores of grace to supply the wants of all the members of his body, and as the branch united to the vine draws all its sap and nourishment thence, so every christian derives all his strength, comfort, and support from him of whom it is said in Coloss. i. 19. "It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." This being an infinite fulness, is adequate to the wants of all his needy members: however constant, various, and extensive their necessities may be, this source can never be exhausted nor diminished: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the god-head bodily," Coloss. ii. 9. What great consolation and encouragement does this idea afford under a view of our own emptiness, and insufficiency. Well might Peter say, in which he appeared to speak the language of all the apostles, and indeed of every christian since their time, "To whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life," John vi. 68. As our adorable Redeemer possesses this infinite fulness, he communicates or imparts from it to every individual member of his mystical body, as expressed in John i. 16. "Of his fulness have all we received and grace for grace."

Similar to the communication of influence from the natural head to all the members vitally united with it, it is by virtue of this communication that believers grow and are active in the divine

life, Ephes. iv. 15. 16. All the children of God are sensible that the influence which has melted their hearts into godly sorrow, by which they have had contrition of soul on account of sin, and have been brought to hate sin and love holiness, has come from Christ. Indeed all that divine influence christians experience, by which the growth and exercise of faith are enjoyed, by which they are strengthened for duty, and supported under trials, by which their love, hope, joy, and every christian grace within them are kept alive, &c. from the first communication of spiritual life to its completion in glory, all flow from Christ their Head. Hence, we ought to feel the necessity of living dependently on him alone, and this every moment, for fresh supplies of his gracious influence, and giving him the praise of all we receive.

Fifthly. This figure expresses the similarity of nature, that subsists between Christ and his people. If the Head and body were of two different natures, the union would constitute a strange being, out of the common order of things: Therefore, that Christ might become a suitable Head to his people, he condescended to assume our nature and to become incarnate: "He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16. But there was something more to be done, in order to constitute a union; for man had so deeply revolted from God, in becoming the subject of sin and servant of satan, that had God's love only been displayed in the gift of his Son, and in the condescension of Jesus to enter our world and to die for sinners, in order that a door might be opened (as some are pleased to say) for all mankind to be saved if they would but do their parts, we may with boldness affirm, none of Adams race would then have ever been saved, and a dissimilarity of nature must have existed forever. God would have continued to be as he always will, holiness underived, unmingled and without variation; while man would have continued a variable, unholy, and sinful creature forever, without supernatural aid; for since the fall, there has not one been produced who possessed innate principles tending to holiness: "For the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Romans viii. 7. But in order that his people might become suitable members of his body, he is pleased to renew their natures, and bring them into conformity to his own image, as was divinely determined, and expressed in Romans viii. 29. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Hence, Jesus stamps his own celestial seal on them,

Ephes. i. 13, and "Wisdom is justified of all her children," Luke vii. 35. Our glorious Head has hereby proved himself to be stronger than the strong man armed by dispossessing him, despoiling him of his armour, and in taking possession of their hearts," Luke xi. 22. The stony heart is taken away, and an heart of flesh is given, which is susceptible of divine impressions; those who bore the image of the earthly, now bear the image of the heavenly: "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise," says our divine Immanuel, Isa. xliii. 21. Though the saints of God are not delivered from all sin below, and are not made perfect here, yet they have holy desires, and heavenly inclinations given them by their great Lord: "He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit," 2 Cor. v. 5. Hence the work is carried on, and shall be perfected above. "The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," Psalm lxxxiv. 11. From which we infer, that upright walking is the consequence of grace in the heart; this is what we understand by conformity to the image of the Redeemer; and no person has any reason to conclude that he is a member of Christ's body, except he be conformed in a degree to him. The marks, whereby we may draw the conclusion that we are of the body of Christ, are plainly laid down in the divine word, and "the way-faring men though fools shall not err therein," Isaiah xxxv. 8.

Sixthly. If Christ be the Head of the church, and believers the members, if a vital union has taken place between them and the members of his body have been made partakers of the divine nature, agreeably to 2 Peter, i. 4. there must exist a mutual concern for each other, as in Ephes. v. 29, 32. "For no man ever yet hated his own body, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" and says the apostle, verse 32: "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." From which we learn there is a mutual sympathy between Christ and his church, similar to that which is between the head and members of the natural body. It is a mark of a child of God, to have an affectionate concern for the interest of the Redeemer; believers cannot endure that his cause should be hurt, either by themselves, or others. If in this imperfect state, through the power of temptation, the allurements of the world, or any other cause, any of the children of God should be drawn aside from duty, and be influenced to act contrary to

their profession, they feel bitterness of soul in the pursuit of vanity; and, as is always the case when christians forsake the Lord, darkness will cover their minds, and they lose the relish of spiritual things. Prayer, praise, reading the scriptures, attending on the means of grace, with every christian duty, which were once delightful employments, become a task; and, as is sometimes the case, there is a seeking for happiness among transitory enjoyments; but there is no substantial happiness to be realized; there the believer finds he has committed these two evils, recorded in Jeremiah ii. 15. The first is forsaking the Lord, the fountain of living waters; and the second, a hewing out cisterns of their own, which are broken, and will not hold one drop of the waters of true consolation. Under these exercises, they are ready to cry out with Job, xxix. 2. "Oh that I were as in months past," &c. It is impossible, in these departures from the Lord, to enjoy peace of mind. A renewed soul cannot take that pleasure in sin he once did, because there is a principle of grace implanted within, which leads him to hate it. These backslidings are sources of the greatest grief, to such as are awakened to a sense of their aberration from God. To think they have offended that gracious Lord who has done so much for them, and that they have by their conduct wounded his blessed cause, makes them abhor themselves. Believers will ever feel a sense of such departures resting on their minds. But when the ungodly speak light of Jesus and attempt to injure his cause; it is then that the affectionate concern of believers is manifest; they boldly submit to reproach or persecution, to support the interest of their blessed Master; no suffering they can endure, can possibly alienate their affections from him; the language of their hearts and lips is, "Whom have we in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth we desire besides thee," Psalm lxxiii. 25.

Christ has an infinitely greater affectionate concern for his members, than they can possibly have for him. He has manifested it in numberless instances. He has "loved us with an everlasting love," Jeremiah xxxi. 3. He has volunteered in our behalf; he left the heavenly glory, and came down to our world, that we might be raised from earth to heaven. "He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. He has made himself known to us; he has drawn us to himself by cords of love; his people are justified by his righteousness, pardoned by his blood, sanctified by his spirit; and in John xvii. 24, he has declared it his will, that they

shall reign with him in glory, and his will can never be frustrated neither by men nor devils; for our Lord has declared in Matt. xxviii. 18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Then we may say with the apostle in Romans viii. 31. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Indeed, that affectionate concern which exists between Christ and his people, is such that they long to be together in heaven, as in John xiv. 2. 3. where our Lord says, he has gone to prepare a place for them, and has promised to come again and take them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also; and in Phil. i. 23, the apostle expresseth a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. Then, and not till then, will their happiness be complete when they enter into the joy of their Lord.

Seventhly. Again, Christ is the Head of the church, as it respects the centre of union. Believers have all drunk into the same spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 13. and the "unity of the spirit" which the apostle in his epistle to the Ephes. iv. 3. exhorts to be maintained, consisteth in a sameness of exercises, which are not amongst the least of the evidences of our holy religion. We are hereby taught to hate sin, to forsake sin, to rise and bear the image of our blessed master. And that principle of spiritual life which is breathed into the soul by the holy ghost in regeneration, makes us know that we are heirs of the same blessed inheritance, spoken of in 1 Peter i. 4. children of the same family, possessing the same desires, subject to the same fears, feeling the same infirmities, soldiers of the same glorious cross, fighting under the same conquering Captain, and against the same spiritual enemies. Our prayers centre at the same throne of grace, we make use of the same plea for acceptance before God, even the BLOOD and RIGHTEOUSNESS of a precious REDEEMER. We draw from the same fulness the same rich consolations, and are all

tending to the same blessed kingdom, where our exalted HEAD has gone before to take possession in behalf of his body the church; and, adopting the language of the poet we may say,

With him we rise,
With him we reign,
And empires gain
Beyond the skies.

Lastly. This relative character supposes the certainty there is of all the members of Christ's body being brought into union with himself, as our blessed Lord has said in John vi. 37. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," and as good Mr. BUNYAN has said, "When *shall come* takes them in hand, they shall come." As the Head is not complete without the body, so if but one of the members is missing at last, the body will not be complete. On this account the church is called in Ephes. i. 22 23. the fulness of Christ. This effectually secures the conversion of all for whom Christ died, who are not yet converted; and also, the certain preservation and glorification of all those who are converted. Christ has been gradually bringing his people into a state of vital union with himself ever since the fall, still carrying on his blessed work. Every annual Association gives information, that the Redeemer's kingdom is advancing; that new trophies of victorious grace as members of the body, are brought to its increase: but never will the body of Christ be complete till the last elect soul becomes united to him. Then will the church appear complete, "As a bride adorned for her husband," Rev. xxi. 2. And in his adorable righteousness shine forever and ever. AMEN.

Signed in behalf of the Association,

WILLIAM ROGERS, Moderator.

WILLIAM STAUGHTON, Clerk.

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