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Baptists. Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Association, 1778.

The Elders and Messengers ... met ... at Hopewell ...

October 13th and 14th, 1778.

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are all excellent, and worthy of your highest regard. It is with real concern we perceive that real religion is so much on the decline; and therefore we beg you would take care, that you do not rest in mere notions. Notional religion may carry a person far in a christian profession; but experimental knowledge of Christ can only bring us to heaven. We know it will be in vain to plead "we have eat and drank in thy presence," and altogether as vain it will be to plead, "we have assented to the doctrines of the gospel" unless we feel their sanctifying influence on our hearts.

Professors of religion are too ready to join with the men of the world, in the useless, vain and sinful customs of it; and it is to be feared, that the honours, pleasures, and especially the profits of the world, are too eagerly pursued by many amongst us, who name the name of Christ. Holy Brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, abstain from this fleshly lust, which warreth against the soul. Remember that we are not to love the world, nor the things of the world. We are strangers and pilgrims on earth, and therefore we should set our affections, not on things below, but on things above. The woman cloathed with the sun, had the moon under her feet. Had we a proper estimation of heavenly things, we should not be so fond of earthly enjoyments.

Consider, dear Brethren, whose you are, and whom you ought to serve. You profess to be the people of the Lord; you have declared your attachment to Jesus Christ: Consider then the great High Priest of your profession, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and *separate from sinners*; who went about continually doing good. So tread in his steps, and imitate

tate his example, that you may be able to say to others, "be ye followers of us, as we are also of Christ."

Moreover, Brethren, we exhort you to pay a due regard to the public worship of God, and carefully attend the means of grace. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Forsake not therefore the assembling of yourselves together. Wait on the Lord, and he shall strengthen your hearts. Shall the Lord rain manna round about our tents, and we not go out to gather it? Shall we starve our souls by such cruel negligence?

Remember, dear Brethren, that attendance on the worship of God, in all the branches of it, in the sanctuary, in the family, and in the closet, is necessary to a growth in grace, and a delightful intercourse with God. And whether in the Church, in the family, or in the world, let it be your care to honour the gospel. Many professors give themselves too much liberty, and walk not so circumspect as they ought. By this means the gospel is sometimes reproached, the doctrine of grace, and the good ways of God brought into contempt. If we were to adorn our profession with a holy life, the truths of our holy religion would be had in greater esteem. For nothing makes religion appear so amiable in the eyes of the world, or sets the gospel in so respectable a point of view, as a holy life in those that profess it. A christian should remember that he has always something to do. The duty incumbent on him is very extensive. Be desirous therefore to know the extent of your duty, and when you know be careful to put it in practice. Then shall we not be ashamed, when we have respect to all his commandments, and in keeping of them there is great reward.

We

We would likewise entreat you as Brethren to dwell together in unity. Stifle the first risings of animosity. Be ashamed of being contentious. Let the disciples of the Prince of peace seek after and follow the things that make for peace. And while we exhort you to these necessary duties, we cannot but put you in mind, that all must be done in the name and strength of Christ. Without him we can do nothing. In ourselves we cannot discharge one duty, resist one temptation, or subvert one corruption. Let all therefore be done in the name, and with a dependance on the grace of Christ.

Motives to excite and stir you up to these things are at hand. Let us in this view remind you of the free love of God, by which ye were chosen to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. Remember the love of Christ, who redeemed you by his blood, and the great things the spirit of God has done for your souls, in the application of that precious blood to purge your consciences from dead works. And may you not only think on these things, but by the grace of God feel the power of them on your hearts continually.

And now, dear Brethren, what shall we say more to you. Our hearts are enlarged. We seek not yours but you. Above all things we desire your spiritual welfare. For this we meet together, for this we pray, for this we preach, for this we give our advice, and wish we could do more. Dearly beloved, follow that which is good, forsake that which is evil, be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Amen.

BENJAMIN MILLER, *Moderator.*  
SAMUEL JONES, *Clerk.*

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M I N U T E S  
OF THE  
A S S O C I A T I O N.

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*October 13, 1778.*

1. **T**HE ASSOCIATION being met at 3 o'clock according to appointment, it was opened with a suitable discourse, from Mat. xxii. 4. by brother ABEL MORGAN.

2. After service, proceeded to make choice of a Moderator and Clerk: To the former appointed BENJAMIN MILLER, and to the latter SAMUEL JONES, and then adjourned to nine o'clock next morning.

*October 14th, 9 o'clock.*

3. After prayer proceeded to read the letters from the churches.

4. The Association, deeply impressed with a sense of the calamities of the times, the prevalence of vice and profanity, and the declension of vital piety;

*Resolved,* To recommend to the Churches to observe four days the ensuing year, of humiliation, fasting and prayer, and abstinence from labour and recreations; viz. the 2d Thursday in November, February, May and August; and they entreat  
the

*Minutes of the Association*

the same may be religiously observed in a solemn and devout manner.

5. Mr. GEORGE WESCOTT requesting to be released from being Treasurer to the Association, agreed that SAMUEL JONES render the thanks of the Association to Mr. WESCOTT for his past services, be appointed to that post in his stead, receive the money in said WESCOTT's hands, and put the same in the Continental fund.

6. A motion being made for raising a fund, the interest of which to be appropriated to the particular and express purpose of preaching the gospel in destitute places, among the back settlements, at the discretion of the Association; agreed to recommend the same to the Churches, and that the interest of whatever may be raised for that purpose, shall be strictly appropriated to that use only.

7. Brother JOHN BLACKWELL appointed to write a letter to the Association in Virginia: The messengers, brother THOMAS FLEESON, and brother JOHN PITTMAN.

8. Brother BENJAMIN COLE appointed to write a letter to the Association in Rhode-Island government: The messengers, brother EBENEZER WARD, and brother ELKANAH HOLMES.

9. The circular letter was read, and approved of.

10. Brother SAMUEL JONES appointed to write the circular letter for next year. The subject, *Divine Providence*.

11. The

11. The Association to meet next year at Philadelphia, on Tuesday after the second Lord's day in October, at three o'clock, P. M.

12. Brother BENJAMIN COLE to preach the Association sermon, and in case of failure, brother NICHOLAS COX.

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**P H I L A D E L P H I A :**

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