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Baptists. Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Association, 1786.

Minutes ... in Philadelphia, October, 1786.

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# OF THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD IN PHILADELPHIA, OCTOBER, 1786.

TUESDAY, Three o'Clock P. M. OCTOBER 12<sup>d</sup>, 1786.

1. ACCORDING to appointment, Brother JOHN GANE opened the Association with a very suitable discourse from 1 Tim. iv. 1. "Now, the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

2. Brother SAMUEL JONES was chosen Moderator, and Brother THOMAS USTRICK, Clerk. Letters from thirty-five churches were read.

N. B. Ministers names in *Italics*. Those marked thus †, were not present. From the churches marked thus †, we received no intelligence. Dashes denote no settled Minister.

Churches.	Ministers and Me'mbers.	Resolved.	By-Notes.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Recommended.	Deceased.	Numbers.
Panespeak,	Samuel Jones,	0	3	1	1	0	1	60
	John Stanchil,							
	George Guthrie,							
	John Wright,							
	George Edwards,							
Middletown,	Isaac Hough,	0	29	2	4	0	4	107
	John Holmes.							
Piscatawa,	Samuel Morgan, †	0	78	3	0	0	0	297
	John Cook.							
Cohanse,	Reuben Runyan,	0	0	3	8	3	6	200
	Ephraim Pyatt.							
Wells Tract,	Robert Kelsay, †	0	12	0	12	0	1	37
	Providence Ludlam,							
Great Valley,	Nathan Shephard.	0	0	1	1	0	0	30
	John Boggs.							
Cape-May,	Daniel Cornog,	0	0	2	0	0	0	72
	Abner Davis.							
Hopewell,	Artis S. agraves.	0	3	0	1	0	1	293
	Oliver Hart,							
Brandwine,	Nathan Stout,	0	1	0	0	0	0	37
	William Park.							
	Abel Griffiths,	0	1	0	0	0	0	37
	John Kimbler.							
Carried over,		0	117	14	27	3	18	763

Churches	Ministers and Messengers.	Ref- ered.	Bap- tized.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excom- municated.	Debat- ed.	Num- bers.
	Brought forward,	0	117	11	27	3	18	763
Montgomery, † Tulpehocken, Kingwood,	David Loofborough,	0	0	1	0	0	1	37
	Nicholas Cox,	2	10	2	1	0	0	96
Southampton,	David Jones, Arthur Watts, Elias Yerkes.	0	0	0	1	0	1	48
	Thomas Ustick, William Rogers, Samuel Davis, sen.							
Philadelphia,	Joseph Adams, Richard Kelly, Samuel Davis, junior, Elihu Gordon.	0	6	1	3	6	4	105
	Peter Wilson, John Tyndall, William Cubberly.	0	66	1	5	2	0	131
Haight's Town,	William Van Horne.	0	47	2	2	0	5	138
Scots Plains, † Horse-Neck, † Oyster-Bay,								
Morristown,	Ebenezer Blachley.	1	27	0	2	0	1	77
† Knowlton,		0	0	0	0	0	0	35
† Hartford, Maryland,	John Davis. *							
New-Britain,	Josua Jones, Edward Muthew.	0	0	0	0	0	0	37
	Peter P. Van Horne, Samuel Vance.	0	7	3	1	0	0	54
Salem,	James Finn. *	0	0	0	0	0	0	74
† Newtown,	Samuel Waldo. *	0	0	1	0	0	0	54
Pawling's Precinct,	John Waldo.	0	0	1	0	0	0	54
Dividing Creek,	Jonadab Shepherd.	0	0	0	2	0	1	44
	John Gano, Thomas Slaw.	0	41	0	2	0	1	170
New-York,								
Newmills,	Beriah Taylor.	0	10	0	2	0	3	81
† Konoloway,	Joseph Powell, John Blackwell, Edward Taylor.	3	11	3	35	0	3	60
Upper Freehold,	Abner Sutton. Samuel Vail.	1	76	1	2	0	0	106
Mount Bethel,								
† Goshen, Lyon's Farms, † Philip's Patent,		0	5	0	11	0	0	13
Pittsgrrove,	William Worth, David Elwell.	0	6	1	0	1	3	89
† Manahawkin, † Vincent, Tuckahoe,	Isaac Bunnell.	0	8	0	0	0	0	63
† Cortland's Manor, † Stamford, † Kingstreet, Cowmarsh, London Tract,	Ebenezer Ferris. * John Dodge. *	0	0	0	0	0	0	77
		0	0	0	0	0	0	17
		0	0	0	1	0	2	28
Hilltown,	Thomas Fleson, John Thomas, Elijah Britton.	0	2	0	2	1	1	28
		0	6	0	2	0	0	99
	Carried over,	7	445	27	101	13	44	12524

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.	Restored.	Baptized.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excommunicated.	Deceased.	Numbers.
	Brought forward,	7	445	27	101	13	44	2524
† Lower Smithfield, Mispillion (Del. state)	David Jayne. *	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
¶ Baltimore,	Lewis Richards.	0	1	0	1	0	0	16
¶ Duck Creek,	Eliphaz Dazey.	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
¶ Wilmington,	{ John Stow, Thomas Ainger	0	0	0	0	0	0	34
¶ Cance Brook,	{ Obed Durham.	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
¶ Jacob's Town,	{ Peter Sexton, William Snowden.	0	0	0	0	0	0	44
Total,		7	446	27	102	13	44	2755

N. B. The churches marked thus ¶, being found in faith, and regular in practice, were freely received into union with this Association.

WEDNESDAY, October 4, Nine o'Clock.

Met pursuant to adjournment.

3. Doctor Manning, President of the University at Providence, Rhode-Island, being present, his company and assistance were desired.

4. The letters and minutes of the Association of Warren, Charlestown, Ketockton and Georgia, containing agreeable accounts, were read. Their numbers are,

Warren	3451
Charlestown	966
Ketockton	935
Georgia	223

5. Unanimously agreed, That in future no person be permitted to speak in this Association more than twice upon the same subject, without special permission.

Adjourned till half past two P. M.

Met pursuant to adjournment.

6. Inasmuch as the difficulty mentioned in our last year's minutes, and occasioned by conversation, &c. of Brother David Jones, which led some of our Brethren

suppose that he denied "our Lord Jesus Christ to be the object of prayer," has not been settled according to the recommendation of last year; wherefore

This Association, after having the whole matter again discussed, concludes

1. That our Brethren *Oliver Hart* and *William Vanborne* had reason to understand Brother *Jones* according to their respective declarations. Nevertheless,
2. Upon Brother *Jones's* free acknowledgment of his full belief in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he is the object of prayer, this Association is willing to continue Brother *Jones* in fellowship.

Adjourned till to-morrow, nine o'clock, A. M.

Sermon in the evening by Brother *Hart*, from *Isaiah xxxv. 10.*

THURSDAY.

Met pursuant to adjournment.

7. Whereas the consideration of a query from the Philadelphia church, relative to "the administration of the Lord's supper, among any of our Brethren and Sisters, however numerous they may be in any one place, during the period of their remaining unorganized or unconstituted as a distinct, regular church by themselves," was postponed to the present year. We answer,

1. That the Lord's supper ought not to be administered to persons who are not members of any church, though baptized.
2. That this ordinance should not be administered to members of churches in a scattered situation, without the consent of one or more of those churches; but permission being first obtained, they may proceed.

8. The churches are desired, within six months, to transmit to the care of Brother *Ustick*, such monies as they are inclined to appropriate to the purpose of printing the materials of the History of the Baptists in the state of New-Jersey, reckoning at the rate of *three shillings* per volume.

9. The letter to the Charlestown Association, prepared by Brother *Fleeson*; that to the Kestockton Association, by Brother *Van Horne*; and that to the Warren Association, by Brother *Rogers*; were read and approved.

Our Brethren *Nicholas Cox* and *Lewis Richards* are appointed messengers to the Kestockton, and Brother *William Rogers* and *William Van Horne*, to the Warren Association.

10. The

10. The circular letter prepared by Brother *Thomas Ustick*, was read and approved. Brother *Peter P. Van Horne* is appointed to write one for the ensuing year.

11. Supplies for destitute places.

Morristown,	{	Brother Nicholas Cox, 3d Lord's day in October.
		David Loofborough, 5th ditto ditto in ditto.
		Abner Sutton, 1st ditto ditto in November.
		William Van Horne, 3d ditto ditto in ditto.
Great Valley,	{	Reube Runyan, 2d ditto ditto in January.
		Brother Nicholas Cox, 3d ditto ditto in November.
		John Boggs, 4th ditto ditto in ditto.
		William Rogers, 1st ditto ditto in December.

12. Voted, That our next Association be held at *New-York*, on the first Tuesday in October, 1787. Introductory sermon to be preached at three o'clock P. M. by Brother *William Van Horne*; in case of failure, by Brother *Jahn Boggs*.

13. Brother *Ustick* is requested to superintend the printing of the minutes, and to forward them to the churches.

Sermon in the evening by Brother *Lewis Richards*, from Mat. x. 16.

( C I R C U L A R L E T T E R . )

The ELDERS and BRETHREN of the several BAPTIST Churches, convened in Association, at Philadelphia, October 3, 1786.

Send Christian Salutation to the Churches with whom we are united.

DEARLY BELOVED,

THE present meeting has afforded us an opportunity of hearing the most agreeable tidings from some of our Churches; which convince us, that "God is waiting to be gracious" and "ever mindful of his covenant," Jeremiah xxxi. 33. I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And again 2 Cor. vi. 18. "I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD ALMIGHTY." We are daily realizing the accomplishment of these divine promises. It is therefore with peculiar pleasure, that we now address you on the interesting and

glorious subject of Adoption. See Confession of Faith Chap. xii.

The adoption of a person into a family imports, that previous to that transaction he did not bear the relation of a child in that family; and therefore could have no claim to the distinguishing name, peculiar titles, proper estates or special interests of the family. He may indeed be an alien, or an enemy, and yet become an adopted son. Because the act, which constitutes him a son in a law sense, entirely depends upon the will of the adopter. Spiritual adoption may be defined, the sovereign or authoritative act of God's grace, by which persons are translated from the family of Satan into the family of God; And being put among

among the children are justly entitled to all the privileges of a divine and everlasting inheritance.

When we consider that it is said of God, "that he calleth those things which be not as though they were," we shall readily perceive that the decree of adoption has its date in eternity: But the manifestation or execution of the decree in time, at different periods with respect to individuals, by the spirit of adoption; and at the consummation of time, with respect to the collective mystical body of Christ, by the resurrection. This distinction is purely scriptural. The decree, moving cause and end are all comprehended in Eph. i. 5. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." For as persons may be elected to offices, before they are qualified or invested with power to execute the office; so in the family of God persons are really elected to the state and privilege of sons from eternity. Hence for the accomplishment of this decree we read, Gal. iv. 4, 5. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Accordingly in their conversion they are recognised by Jehovah as sons and daughters, John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Lastly, the perfect manifestation or consummation of this glorious grace is mentioned, Rom. viii. 23. "Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Justification and adoption are law-phrases. They both have reference to our former condition; and are each in different respects expressive of the important blessings of salvation. No single term could answer the end of fully expressing the nature of our salvation. Different phrases therefore are used to help our conceptions of those blessings, which are ineffable; and for the perfect knowledge of which we must wait, until their consummation in glory.

Justification is a great blessing; but adoption is greater. Justification is the constituting or making a person righteous in the eye of the law; delivering him from every charge of guilt, or obnoxiousness to punishment, and furnishing him with an active righteousness, commensurate to its utmost demands. A justified person then is no longer under condemnation; no longer liable to endure the curse of the law, or the wrath of God. "For we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ." Thus our progenitors whilst innocent were free from every charge of guilt. Wherefore simply to be justified, would be only recovering us from the ruins of the apostacy, and reinstating man in his former dominion, holiness and happiness. This would be grace. It would be free, unmerited grace. And admitting it to be confirmed, would be infinitely valuable.—But who does not see, that the price of our redemption is too precious to be expended in this way and for no greater end? Here then comes in the necessity of the superlative grace of adoption; which is necessary to render our state bet-

ter than it was before—necessary to raise us above the condition of servants; and to enlarge the expressions of the infinite kindness of God towards the elect; and especially necessary to reward, in an ample and satisfactory manner, the beloved Son of God for the arduous work of our redemption. The persons for whom Christ died, were the objects of his delight from eternity. He could not therefore have been satisfied, that they should be eternally removed from his presence. Observe his own declaration, 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." Since then by justification we can look back with joy upon the dangers of sin, death and hell, from which we have escaped; so by adoption we are permitted to look upwards to a state of exalted, permanent, and unalloyed bliss, to which we have an indefeasible right as the sons of God and the bride of Christ.

Adoption may be distinguished likewise from regeneration. By the former we are brought into the relation of children to God; and by the latter we receive the nature, likeness and image of God. Besides, as we can have no idea of regeneration in a subject, who has not received the filial nature; so we can have no finished idea of adoption in one, who has not received the filial spirit. There is that temper or spirit in true believers, which leads them to think and act agreeably to the holy nature of God, and correspondent to the exalted character and dignified relation which they sustain as the children of God. This principle is not natural to man, but is the fruit of the spirit of God. It is said of the wicked, "The spirit of disobedience worketh in their hearts." Their condition is servile. The spirit of bondage exercises their minds and governs their conduct. On the other hand, the sons of God are led to action by the spirit of adoption; who moulds their minds and tempers after a divine manner into the image of Christ. 2 Cor. iii. 18. Hence they are not impelled by the fears of a slave, but are drawn by the cords of love. "For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Rom. viii. 15. The spirit of God, as a spirit of love and obedience to the father, engaged the immaculate Redeemer, in the actions of his life and sufferings of death, to fulfil all righteousness. "This spirit God giveth not unto him by measure." John iii. 34. And we agreeably to his promise receive the same holy unction in our measure. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. iv. 6. This spirit is in all the regenerate sons of God. "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. viii. 14. It is also a spirit of love. "For every one that loveth is born of God." 1 John iv. 7. This love appears to be genuine, when its operations are unconfined and universally extended to all the members of the family of God. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John xiii. 35. Having this spirit in measure, we shall be able

able to support the relations which we sustain in the heavenly family; as the sons of God, brethren of Christ, and joint-heirs of the same eternal inheritance, with dignity and delight, in this present life: But when all the sons and daughters of Jehovah have their adoption consummated in a glorious resurrection, they shall then enjoy this spirit in perfection, as one glorious bride adorned for her husband.

When persons are removed from one family to another by this act of liberality; it is generally supposed, that they make a gainful exchange. Without this prospect, no one would consent to this translation. And, although the consent of the person cannot be obtained, because of non-age or some other impediment; yet the author of adoption says concludes, that he confers an obligation. And in spiritual adoption the subjects are invariably convinced, that the grace is unspeakably great. Wherefore they can never return to the family of Satan, or heartily espouse the interests of sin. For these realize the truth of that divine declaration 1 Tim. iv. 8. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Many would esteem it a great privilege to be translated from a poor family into one that is rich; but to be saved by this means from impending ruin, from immediate death, must inexpressibly enhance the value of the blessing. Though some might be inclined to despise the idea of dependance, which a change of family implies; yet we conclude, that none would refuse the favour, if death must inevitably follow their refusal. Such was the situation of Moses according to the narration in chapter 2d of Exodus. His life was most eminently exposed to destruction, and must have perished, had not God interposed by his providence for his deliverance. Happy for Moses! Happy for the tribes of Israel! that by the disposal of providence, he fell into the hands of one whose heart was made susceptible of the tender feelings of humanity; and who had it in her power to spare his life, notwithstanding the cruel edict of the Egyptian king. The adoption of Moses into the royal family, and the preservation of his life, were closely connected. For by this she not only gave him a new name—Moses; because, says she, "I drew him out of the water;" and made ample provision for his support and royal education: but she also gave him his life; she rescued him from a double death: from perishing in the waters, and from the sword of barbarous jealousy.

How exactly parallel does this history run with the adoption of sinners into the family of God, who were justly exposed to both the first and second death. He, who is author of all compassion, stretched out his omnipotent arm for their deliverance; and with infinite benevolence says of every subject of redemption, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom" Job xxxiii. 24. Thus sparing them as his own children, and even delivering to justice, in the sinners room, his only begotten son; that he might place them in the condition of children, and bring them to the inheritance of everlasting glory. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only be-

gotten son; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

In this glorious grace, God appears as our father and we as his children. Respecting this relation we can have no knowledge, until we are the "Children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Then we are made to see, "what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." Eph. iii. 9. By this powerful grace we, who are sinners of the Gentiles, are authorized to claim all the privileges of the Sons of God; being no longer considered as strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone," Eph. ii. 20. upon whom the weight of the building rests, and in whom both bodies are united. If therefore we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Although the author of the Romans remarks, that "To the Israelites pertaineth the adoption;" Yet he quickly subjoins, "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: But the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Surely this privilege is beyond comparison glorious; that we, who formerly were not considered as the Lord's people, should now be called the children of the living God. Not by any alteration of Jehovah's plan; but "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." For our regeneration, knowledge of the gospel, faith and repentance are not only the effects of a prior but of an everlasting cause, viz. The love of God. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Behold and be astonished, brethren, at this stupendous grace. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." We miserable sinners! we presumptuous rebels! we profligate prodigals! we the avowed enemies of God and godliness are by this inestimable grace denominated the sons of God. Let the sons of earth boast in their line of famous ancestors; in their near alliance to the great and renowned; yet the pedigree of believers in Jesus is unspeakably more illustrious. Seeing they are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Believers are privileged with peculiar titles and distinguishing names or characters throughout the volume of inspiration; concerning which we cannot now treat particularly, but would rather refer you to that gracious declaration of him that is holy, of him that is true in Rev. iii. 12. "Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

The privileges which believers enjoy in the militant state of the church are many. If depressed with trials and infirmities, they have a compassionate and almighty parent to pity and succour them. If through the remaining power of sin they wantonly transgress, he can and will chastise them. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,



teneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Heb. xii. 6. Wherefore, "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." Jer. x. 24. Should the triple host of darkness; the world, the flesh and the devil violently attack the souls of believers, almighty power is engaged for their protection. Whilst therefore, the ears of our omnipotent and gracious parent are indulgent to our petitions; and whilst "the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;" we may rest assured, that all things will co-operate for the security of our temporal, spiritual, and eternal interests.

"The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold," in the present state, are generally "esteemed as earthen pitchers, which men dash in pieces without any regret." The world knoweth us not. Tho' persecuted with a flood of reproaches and contumely from the mouth of the serpent, the righteous is still more excellent than his neighbour. God delights to honour him. He is, even in this world, indulged with the best company; regaled with the most delicious entertainments; invested with the highest honours, and adorned with a robe of righteousness, beautiful beyond description. They are honoured with his gracious visits, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." The dear redeemer is ever with his church. The holy angels minister to the saints. And their mutual society and conversation is heavenly and spiritual. They unitedly feast upon the emblems of Jesus' body and blood at the table of the Lord, where God manifests his love to their souls. All the special ordinances of the house—all the privileges of the church, which Christ has purchased with his blood, are appropriated to the use of believers. The christian's inventory is most glorious, and comprehensive of all substantial blessings. "For all things are yours, whether

Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. xii. 13. "Thus believers are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." A few more revolving seasons will crown you, the suffering heirs of glory, "to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

The relative duties, incumbent upon us as members of this family, towards God and each other, are many and cannot now be particularised. In general, regard the apostolic exhortation, Eph. v. 1. "Be therefore, followers of God, as dear children; and in love, as Christ also hath loved us." Let us confidently approach the throne of grace with humble confidence and implore divine assistance, that we may be able to support the profession we have made, with that dignity of conduct, and holiness of conversation, which become those who are called to glory and virtue.

Meditate often, brethren, upon that state of permanent bliss, which you shall possess in the kingdom of your heavenly Father. Happiness, which cannot be perceived by sense, nor described by language. See 1 Cor. ii. 9. Let us realize therefore the obligations conferred upon us in this ineffable blessing of adoption; and acknowledge—forever acknowledge, with unfeigned gratitude, the riches of his goodness.

"O goodness infinite! goodness immense!  
And love that passeth knowledge! Words are vain;  
Language is lost in wonders so divine.—  
Come then, expressive silence, muse his praise."

Signed by order of Association,  
SAMUEL JONES, Moderator,  
THOMAS USTICK, Clerk.

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PHILADELPHIA : Printed by ROBERT AITKEN, at Pope's Head, Market-Street. Of whom may be had the Baptist Catechism, Confession of Faith and Church Discipline, Watts's Psalms, Hymns, Lyric Poems and Divine Songs, &c. &c. &c.