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Baptists. Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Association, 1788.

Minutes ... in Philadelphia, October, 1788.

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AAS ph. copy.

MINUTES

OF THE

BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD IN PHILADELPHIA, OCTOBER, 1788.

TUESDAY, Three o'clock, P. M. OCTOBER 7th, 1788.

1. BROTHER ELIAH HOLMES preached by appointment, from 2 Cor. iv. 5. *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

2. Brother SAMUEL JONES was chosen *Moderator*, and Brother THOMAS USTICK, *Clerk*. Letters from thirty-four 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 Messengers.	Bap- tized.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excom- municated.	Deceas- ed.	Numbers.
Lower-Dublin, Pennepeck,	{ Samuel Jones, Benjamin Dungan, Thomas Holmes, Jesse Dungan.	1	0	2	1	0	67
Middletown,	{ Samuel Morgan, William Blair.	8	0	1	2	0	131
Piscatawa,	{ Reune Runyan, Jeremiah Manning Esq.	8	0	2	0	1	145
Cohansey,	{ Robert Kelsay, Providence Ludam, Jonathan Bowen.	0	0	0	0	3	93
Welsh Tract,	{ John Boggs.	23	0	1	0	3	90
Great Valley,	{ Daniel Cornog, William George, Jonathan Philips, Michael M'Ceas.	36	0	0	0	1	89
Cape May,	{ Amos Cresse.	3	0	0	0	7	63
	Carried over,	79	0	6	3	14	678

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.	Bap- tized.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excom- municated.	Deceas- ed.	Numbers.
	Brought forward,	79	0	6	3	14	678
Hopewell,	{ Oliver Hart,* David Stout jun. Jediah Stout.	2	0	17	1	5	164
Brandywine,	{ Abel Griffith, Joshua Vaughan, John Powel.	5	4	0	0	0	24
Montgomery,	{ _____ _____	0	0	0	0	0	28
† Tulpehocken,	{ _____ _____	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kingwood,	{ Nicholas Cox, Joshua Opdyek, Jonathan Welverton.	54	0	6	0	0	160
Southampton,	{ David Jones, Arthur Watts, Elias Yerkes, Elias Dungan.	1	0	0	0	3	51
Philadelphia,	{ Thomas Ustick, Morgan Edwards, William Rogers,* Samuel Miles Esq. Joseph Watkins, George Ingolls, Benjamin Thaw.	1	3	1	2	2	111
Haight's Town,	{ Peter Wilson, William Covenhoven, Alexander M' Gowan.	45	2	1	1	0	221
Scotch Plains,	{ William Van Horn, Robert Fitz Randolph.	12	0	15	1	2	146
† Horse-Neck,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	14
† Oyster-Bay,	Benjamin Coles.*	0	0	0	0	0	9
Morristown,	{ David Loofborrow,* John Brookfield.	3	0	1	0	0	87
† Knowlton,	David Finn.*	0	0	0	0	0	42
† Hartford,	John Davis.*	0	0	0	0	0	0
New-Britain,	{ Joshua Jones, Edward Matthew, Benjamin Matthew.	0	0	0	0	1	19
Salem,	{ Peter P. Vanborne,* John Briggs, John Walker.	0	0	0	0	0	32
† Newtown,	Silas Southworth.*	0	0	0	0	0	74
Pawling's Town,	Samuel Waldo.*	13	0	0	0	3	67
Dividing Creek,	John Garrison.*	0	0	0	0	0	43
1st New-York,	{ Benjamin Foster,* Thomas Montanye, John Bedint.	14	1	15	2	3	187
Newmills,	Samuel Jones.	13	0	0	0	0	95
† Konoloway,	Joseph Powell.*	0	0	0	0	0	0
† Coram,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	0
Upper Freehold,	Edward Taylor.	0	0	2	1	1	45
	Carried over,	242	10	64	11	38	2297

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers and Messengers.</i>	<i>Bap- tized.</i>	<i>Received by Letter.</i>	<i>Dismissed by Letter.</i>	<i>Excom- municated.</i>	<i>Deceas- ed.</i>	<i>Numbers.</i>
	Brought forward,	242	10	64	11	38	2297
Mount Bethel,	<i>Abner Sutton.*</i>	2	0	4	0	0	111
Goshen or Warwick,	<i>Thomas Jones.*</i>	0	0	0	0	0	32
Lyon's Farms,	<i>Joseph Stevens.</i>	3	0	0	0	1	15
† Philip's Patent,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pittsgrove,	{ <i>William Worth,</i> <i>Hosea Snethen.</i>	0	1	0	3	2	82
† Manahawkin,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	0
† Vincent,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	0
† Tuckahoe,	<i>Isaac Bunnell.*</i>	0	0	0	0	0	63
† Cortland's Manor,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	0
† 2d New York,	<i>John Dodge.*</i>	0	0	0	0	0	10
Stamford,	<i>Ebenezer Ferris.*</i>	38	0	9	1	1	89
† Cowmarsh,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	28
London Tract,	<i>Thomas Fleson.</i>	9	0	0	0	0	37
Hilltown,	{ <i>John Thomas.*</i> <i>Elijah Britton,</i> <i>Jonathan Jones,</i> <i>Robert Shannon.</i>	0	0	0	0	1	99
† Lower Smithfield,	<i>David Jayne.*</i>	0	0	0	0	0	29
† Mispillion,	<i>Joshua Dewees.*</i>	0	0	0	0	0	16
Baltimore,	<i>Lewis Richards.</i>	8	0	0	1	0	35
Duck Creek,	{ <i>Eliphaaz Dazey,</i> <i>James Jones.</i>	12	0	0	1	2	64
Wilmington,	{ <i>Thomas Ainger,</i> <i>Caleb Way,</i> <i>John Redman,</i>	2	0	2	1	2	49
Canoe Brook,	_____	6	0	4	1	1	35
Jacob's Town,	{ <i>Burgiss Alifon.</i> <i>Ashur Cox.</i>	1	3	0	0	0	47
Staten Island,	<i>Elkanah Holmes.</i>	3	0	0	1	0	28
Pitt's Town,	<i>James Finn.</i>	0	0	0	0	0	32
Total,		326	14	83	20	48	3198

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8th, half after Eight o'clock, A. M.

MET, according to adjournment.

3. Proceeded to read the Letters from the respective corresponding Associations. Doctor Manning presented a letter from the Warren Association as their messenger, which, with their minutes, contained agreeable intelligence. Brother Stephen Gano, as messenger from Shaftsbury Association, gave in their letter and minutes, which contain comfortable tidings. The Charlestown minutes, and a letter also from that Association, came to hand, by which it appears that their circumstances are prosperous and their numbers increasing. A letter was likewise received from the Ketockton Association, giving accounts of a marvellous revival; that in one particular church three hundred had been added. They further add, that the harmony of

of their Assembly was such, that there did not appear to be among the watchmen, as they beautifully express it, "one discordant note."

4. A letter and minutes, which contain the sentiments and plan of the Stonington Association, were received. From which it appears, that they have adopted the same printed confession, which this Association has heretofore approved. We shall therefore cheerfully concur with them in maintaining a mutual correspondence.

5. A letter, from Salisbury Association, was presented by our Brethren Philip Hughes and Jonathan Gibbons; and, as their sentiments and plan are conformable to ours, their Messengers were unanimously accepted. Agreeable accounts were likewise received from the New-Hampshire Association.

6. Letters from three of our Associations in England, both for 1786 and 1787, forwarded by Brother John Rippon of Southwark, London, to Brother Ustick, were delivered, and received with pleasure: Agreed that Brother Ustick remit at least fifty copies of our Minutes for the different Associations in England.

7. By a letter from the church at the Great Valley, we were informed that the divine Providence has removed in the year past, that ancient and beloved servant of Christ, *Thomas Jones*, as we trust to the church triumphant. The translation of the righteous is *their* gain, but our loss: Let us therefore lay it to heart, and earnestly pray the Lord of the harvest, to raise up faithful labourers to succeed them, whom he is pleased to take home to himself. They subjoin, that there was a mistake in the last year's minutes, and that there have not been for a number of years past any persons excluded from that church.

8. Having received information from the church at Pawling's Town, that it is more convenient for them to meet with the Shaftsbury Association, and that they desire our concurrence in removing their membership—We agree, that hereafter the church at Pawling's Town be considered as belonging to the Shaftsbury Association.

Adjourned till half past Two, P. M.

MET, according to adjournment.

9. Whereas the church at Jacob's Town, after acknowledging the unspeakable mercies of God to our nation and churches, have taken notice of the army of God—the *Hessian Fly*—as a judgment; and propose to the Association the propriety of appointing days of fasting and prayer on this account—Concluded, after considering the matter, that the Association, upon this occasion, rather refer the propriety of conforming to this motion, unto the decision of each particular church, who can determine what days may best suit their conveniency.

10. Our Brethren, Abel Griffith, Thomas Fleson, Nicholas Cox, Joshua Jones and David Jones, were desired to examine the Circular Letter, and to propose the amendments, which they may think necessary, to-morrow morning.

11. The church at Cape May query, "Whether a member, who professes that Christ died for all mankind, and that every individual of the human race will finally be saved, ought to be excommunicated?" Agreed that every such person, upon conviction, and after proper steps have been taken, ought to be excluded.

12. Agreed,

12. Agreed, that Brother William Van Horn prepare a letter for the Warren Association ; Brother Philip Hughes, for Shaftsbury ; Brother Stephen Gann, for Charlestown ; Brother Montanye, for Ketockton ; Brother Richards, for Stonington ; Brother James Jones, for Salisbury ; and Brother Joseph Stevens, for New-Hampshire.

Adjourned till to-morrow, half after Eight, A. M.

Our aged and venerable Brother *Kelsay* preached in the Evening from Acts viii. 35. His address to the young ministers gave them great pleasure. He advised them, 1st. To study, with earnest prayer, as if all depended on their own endeavours ; but, in preaching, to depend upon divine assistance, as though they had not studied at all. 2d. To be concise in preaching, and to conclude when done. 3d. To pray for a blessing on their labours immediately after preaching ;—and, 4th. To embrace every seasonable opportunity of conversing with precious souls, and not to forget such as were in menial circumstances.

THURSDAY Morning.

MET, according to adjournment.

13. Appointed our Brethren Nicholas Cox, William Van Horn, and Thomas Montanye, Messengers to Shaftsbury Association ; Brother Burgis Alifon to Warren ; Brother Dazey to Ketockton ; and Brother Samuel Jones, John Boggs, Thomas Fleeason, and Eliphaz Dazey to *that* at Salisbury.

14. As the church at Wilmington are involved in debt in building their meeting-house ; and fear that they shall lose their meeting-house unless assisted : And as the church at Staten Island are desirous of building a house for the worship of God—We recommend it to the churches to make separate contributions, at such times and in such way as is most agreeable to themselves, and to forward the same to the aforesaid churches.

15. In answer to a query from the first church in New-York of last year, held over to this time, respecting the Validity of baptism, administered by a person, who had never been baptized himself, nor yet ordained ; we reply, That we deem such baptism null and void :

1st. Because a person that has not been baptized himself must be disqualified to administer baptism to others, and especially if he be also unordained.

2d. Because, to admit such baptism as valid, would make void the ordinances of Christ, throw contempt on his authority, and tend to confusion : for if baptism be not necessary for an administrator of it, neither can it be for church communion, which is an inferior act : and if such baptism be valid, then ordination is unnecessary, contrary to Acts xiv. 23. 1 Tim. iv. 14. Titus i, 5. and our Confession of Faith, ch. xxvii, § 9.

3d. Of this opinion we find were our associations in time past ; who put a negative on such baptisms in 1729, 1732, 1744, 1749 and 1768.

4th. Because such administrator has no commission to baptize, for the words of the commission were addressed to the apostles and their successors in the ministry to the end of the world, and these are such, whom the church of Christ appoint to the whole work of the ministry.

16. The report of the committee appointed to examine and correct the circular letter not being satisfactory, a new committee was nominated; viz. our Brethren Manning, Vanhorne, Boggs and Hughes, who are desired to present their report in the afternoon.

17. This association, receiving information from Dr. Manning, that Mr. Dobson, printer in this city, has now published Mr. Booth's Apology for the Baptists, and likewise proposes to publish Booth's Pædobaptism examined and refuted, upon the principles and concessions of Pædobaptist writers, do recommend both these pieces as worthy the perusal of all enquirers after truth, as affording the most convincing and demonstrable evidence in favour of the principles and practice of our churches. As such we recommend them to all our churches and Sister Associations.

Adjourned till half after two, P. M.

MEET, according to adjournment.

18. In the course of the day the letters for the respective associations, with whom we correspond, were produced and approved.

19. Our brother Allison is appointed to prepare the circular letter against next association.

20. Brother John Dodge is requested to preach the introductory sermon at our next association, in case of failure Brother Lewis Richards.

21. Voted—That this Association do consider themselves amenable for, and promise to defray the expences accruing from the proceedings of the ministers of this Association, in attempting to recover the estate demised by Reese Jones, to the ministers of the Association, for the education of young men.

22. The amendments proposed by the committee appointed this morning, to revise the circular letter were accepted; and with those amendments the circular letter prepared by Brother David Jones, was approved.

23. Supplies for Hill-Town—Brother Eliphaz Dazey on the fourth Lord's day in November; and Brother Joseph Stevens, on the fourth Lord's day in February.

24. This Association taking into consideration the ruinous effects of the great abuse of distilled liquors throughout this country, take this opportunity of expressing our hearty concurrence with our brethren of several other religious societies, in discountenancing the use of them in future; and earnestly intreat our brethren and friends to use all their influence to that end, both in their own families and neighbourhood, except when used as medicine.

25. Our brethren, Samuel Jones, David Jones and Burgiss Alison, are appointed a committee to prepare a collection of Psalms and Hymns, for the use of the associated churches; and the churches of this and of our Sister Associations are requested to conclude how many of said collection they will take, sending information to Brother Ustick with all convenient dispatch.

26. Voted that our next Association be held at *Philadelphia*, on the first Tuesday in October, 1789.

27. Brother Ustick is requested to superintend the printing of these Minutes, and to forward them to the Churches, Associations, &c.

Brother Stephen Gano preached in the evening from 1 Tim. iv. 8.

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

The MESSENGERS of the several BAPTIST Churches, belonging to the *Philadelphian Association*, met in the city of Philadelphia, Oct. 7, 1788.

To the Churches with whom they are connected, GREETING.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

THE great design of our annual meeting is to promote the welfare of the Church of Christ, by giving our advice in difficult cases, and by the use of every other means to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace: To accomplish this end, it has been thought expedient to select a chapter of our confession of faith annually to be the foundation of the circular letter: That which comes under consideration this year is, the Doctrine of Saving Faith, contained in the fourteenth chapter.

By such, as have wished to suit their definitions to carnal minds, the subject has been rendered very abstruse; but the divine truth is plain and easy to them who are taught of God, and have learned of Christ to be meek and lowly in heart, believing all things contained in the holy scriptures.

The method in which we propose to treat the subject shall be,

1. To explain what we mean by saving faith.
2. We shall give some distinguishing properties, or marks, of this precious grace.

It has been the custom of divines, in ages past, to use the word *saving*, when treating of this grace; hence it is probable, some have been led to suppose that this grace had something in it so meritorious as to justify the subject before God, at least in a conditional sense; but whoever reads our confession of faith, will find that we exclude any such meaning, and only use the word to distinguish true faith from that kind, which is found in unregenerate men and devils. Saving faith may be thus defined, "That grace whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, which is the work of the spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word." By this grace the person is enabled to believe all divine truths revealed in the holy scriptures; and in particular to apprehend the Lord Jesus Christ, and to rely alone on his atoning blood for acceptance in the sight of God. When the apostle was speaking of the salvation of the Ephesians, he said, "By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2 chap. and 8 verse. The same apostle informs us that

the Ephesians were dead in trespasses and sins, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others; but when the gospel of Christ was preached, the Holy Ghost working with the word, opened their hearts to receive it, and by his powerful operations implanted this grace, by which they were enabled to believe the record that God has given of his son. The precious grace of faith is a free and sovereign gift of God, conveyed thro' the power of the Holy Ghost, and the instrumentality of the word; and is co-existent with regeneration, if not an essential part of it; and as it is not of ourselves, we see that all boasting is excluded, so that we may all say, "by the grace of God, we are what we are." When the apostle was enumerating the fruits of the spirit, he mentions faith as one. Gal. v. 22. This is a truth, which every one, who is born of God, knows, and in substance will acknowledge. We know that this doctrine is too humiliating to carnal hearts, but it is as true as if they believed it; and if it was not so, there would be no true Christians on earth. Blessed be God, he has not left himself without many witnesses in our days, who are willing to confess that they were as unable to believe on the Lord Jesus, as to keep the law of Moses, till God gave them a new heart and a new spirit, thro' the powerful operations of the Holy Ghost. We will freely acknowledge, therefore, that our faith is thro' the operation of God, to the praise and glory of his free grace; and in the Psalmist's words, conclude this head, "Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake."

According to the order proposed, we are now to give some distinguishing properties, or marks, of this precious grace.

1. This faith receives the whole mind of God, and has a due respect to every part of his counsel, when made known to the subject. The language of this grace is, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? It never selects some parts and rejects other parts of God's will. This grace never wishes any doctrines expressly contained in the Bible, to have been left out: No; as far as it knows the mind of God, so far it obeys. It is a truth to be lamented, that education directs too much the practice of many in the world; but where the voice of this grace is attended

attended to, the person receives the truth in the love of it. This is evident, that the apostle had no exception to any part of the revealed will of God; therefore, when he was before Felix, he said, "but this I confess unto thee, that after the way, which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, *believing all things*, which are written in the law and the prophets; and have hope towards God,—that there shall be a resurrection, both of the just and unjust." Acts. xxiv. 14, 15. Here is the distinguishing property of this grace, "*believing all things*." Whether acceptable or not to the Jews or Gentiles, yet his faith believed all things written in the law or prophets, and his hope was according to his faith. The Psalmist could say, "then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Pf. cxix, 6. Has the Lord requested us to take up our cross and follow him; then, says faith, I will confess him before men. The true Christian is pleased with the whole counsel of God; the way in which he walks is a straight and narrow way, but it is as wide as faith wishes it. Christ is to the unbeliever, a stone of stumbling and rock of offence; but to the believing soul he is altogether lovely and precious.

2. This faith is not dead and fruitless, it will not allow men to live in sinful way. The doctrines of grace may be abused to lasciviousness and all manner of ungodliness; but the work of God in the soul cannot produce such effects. There are many vain talkers in the world, who walk after their own lusts, and speak much of salvation by Christ, and walk according to the course of this world; but where this precious grace is communicated, it is as fire in the soul, which will produce works meet to repentance; hence says the apostle, "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; *but faith which worketh by love*." Gal. v, 6. There is a faith which, which works not at all, or it works either out of fear of punishment, or with a view of reward; but this divine grace, which is peculiar to the regenerate, obeys out of love. If there was neither heaven, nor hell, the true believer would wish to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. We are taught to pray that the will of God may be done on earth as it is done in heaven, and this is the case when all our obedience flows from love. It is then to serve the Lord our God as the angels in heaven, when all our works originate from love, and our souls are humbled in us, because we serve him no better; we find that when we would do good, evil is present with us, but this leads us to make Christ our all in all.

3. Another distinguishing property, or mark of this grace, is to be dead to the law with respect to our dependence on works for justification before God; we see

that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags after regeneration, as well as before. The apostle said, "yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Phil. iii, 8. Faith can bear no other recommendation to God, but the atoning blood of the blessed Jesus; it can admit of no other righteousness, but of that which God imputes unto us without works, even the righteousness of the Lamb of God, which can justify us from all things, from which which we never could be justified by the law of Moses. Hence we may see that all legal, conditional preaching, is wounding to the souls of true believers, and can answer no other purpose than to support the hope of hypocrites; but when Jesus is represented as bleeding and dying on the cross, to atone for our sins, our languishing hope is quickened, and the soul says, the life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who *loved me*, and, O amazing to express! gave HIMSELF for me. The language of faith is, now I can venture into the eternal world, when I behold my bleeding Lord, as the way of acceptance into divine favour. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee! But it would exceed the limits of a circular letter to speak fully on this pleasing subject; we must, therefore, leave what has been said to God's blessing and your serious improvement.

Dearly Beloved, we have briefly endeavoured to explain what we mean by Saving Faith, and have given some of the distinguishing properties or marks of it, and it has been with this view, to alarm the formalist, and refresh the soul of the sincere humble Christian, as well as to detect all vain talkers, whose faith is not productive of works agreeable to the gospel of Christ. If you can say, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief; remember that full assurance is not essential to the being of this grace; and little faith is always attended with fear and doubting. Let the disciples prayer be yours, "Lord, increase our faith." By it, the elders obtained a good report; and as you are partakers of like precious faith, endeavour to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, and add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love; for if these things be in you, and abound, they will make you to be neither barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory in the church throughout all ages. Amen.

We remain your brethren in the fellowship of the gospel.

Signed by order of Association,

SAMUEL JONES, *Moderator.*

THOMAS USTICK, *Clerk.*

Some of Dr. GILL'S WORKS, and RIPPON'S new SELECTION of HYMNS, may be had of the Rev. THOMAS USTICK; also, Dr. Gill's Works to be had of the Rev. WILLIAM ROGERS, neatly bound in calf letters 4.