

28268

Baptists. South Carolina. Bethel Association, 1795.

Minutes ... of James Creek ... 1795.

[Charleston, 1795.]

JCB copy.

M I N U T E S

OF THE

BETHEL ASSOCIATION,

*Met at the Baptist Church on Jany's Creek, Spartanburg County, South Carolina,
on Saturday the 8th of August, 1795.*

- O**N Saturday, 11 o'clock, A. M. the discourse *How to the
business, was delivered by brother Joshua Palmer, from Rom. 12. 5.
So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*
- Letters from 40 churches were read, and the names of their delegates
enrolled.
- Brother James Fowler was chosen moderator, and Brother William Ford
clerk.
- Three churches applied by letters and delegates, for admission into our
union, and, on satisfaction obtained, respecting their faith and practice, were
received. The ministering brethren occasionally present, (not delegates) were
invited to a seat.
- Brother Jesse Mercer attended as messenger from the Georgia association,
presented a letter, and took his seat accordingly. Minutes and a letter were
handed by Brother Fowler from the Charleston association, and minutes from
the Warren association, which being severally read, inform, that love and unity
abound in general among the churches, but they complain of too much
inattention to the public interest of christianity. The messenger appointed to
us by the Charleston association, did not attend.
- Agreed, That Brother Fowler prepare a letter to the Charleston, Brother
Shackleford to the Georgia, Brother Bulger to the Hephzibah associations, and
Brother Waller to the general committee in Virginia.
- Agreed, That John Waller, Richard Shackleford, Joshua Palmer, Joseph
Camp, Moses Holland, James Fowler, and William Ford, be a committee to
take up the queries which appear in letters addressed to the present meeting, and
give their opinion on them to the association. Adjourned to Monday 10 o'clock. The
Sabbath

Sabbath was employed in public exercise of devotion, several sermons being delivered to a numerous audience; the whole concluded in the evening with the administration of the Lord's supper, and a sermon suitable to so solemn an institution.

8. Monday, 10 o'clock. The committee appointed at our last meeting to enquire into a matter of grief subsisting between Middle Fork of Saluda, and head of Enoree churches, report, they were providentially hindered attending the appointment. Agreed, that brethren Joseph Camp, Richard Shackelford, Benjamin Northcut, James Chastain, and Moses Holland, or any three of them, be a committee to attend the aforesaid churches on the occasion, and report their proceedings to our next association.

9. The committee appointed to arrange the business which might appear from the letters to this meeting, report, they think it advisable the association should take up the consideration of five queries.

10. Query from Jamey's creek church. Do the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, forbid a man to marry the sister of his deceased wife? Answer, we do not know that the scriptures forbid such a marriage, but for certain prudential reasons, we think it unadvisable.

11. Query from Little-Horse creek church. Can five members be considered a church? Answer, it has been thought that the essence of a church may be found among a smaller number; but it appears to us, that the constituting or continuance of a church must greatly depend on its well-being, or ability to support worship and discipline, which ought to decide in this case.

12. Query from Bruth creek church. Is it disorderly in members of our churches, to commune with churches of different denominations? Answer, we think what is commonly called *mixed communion*, is incompatible with the happiness and purity of a gospel church.

13. Query from the Cedar Spring church. Is it necessary to print our minutes annually? Answered in the affirmative.

14. Query from Mountain creek church. Would it not be more convenient for the churches which compose this association to be divided into two distinct associations? This question being debated, was, on motion, referred to a committee, who were directed to take up the query, and bring in their opinion thereon. The following brethren were chosen: John Waller, James Fowler, Joseph Camp, Perminter Morgan, John Rowland, Richard Shackelford, and James Chastain, who having first withdrawn, reported, that they find themselves unable satisfactorily to determine on the subject at present. There appears but one reason of weight in favor of the motion; which is the convenience of a few of the most distant churches; on the other hand, the reasons for continuing together are numerous and weighty, particularly those which respect union of sentiment,

sentiment, and the promotion of common interests. They therefore recommend that the subject be laid over to the next meeting for serious consideration. But should a division be finally thought adviseable, they would recommend Enoree as the line between the churches forming the different bodies. This report was agreed to.

15. Agreed, unanimously, that a standing committee of correspondence be appointed to correspond with associations and churches abroad. Brethren Waller, Fowler, Shackelford and Morgan, were accordingly appointed.

16. The Circular Letter being read, as prepared by Brother Waller, was approved; but he was desired, with the assistance of Brother Fowler, to make some enlargement.

17. Brethren Fowler and Rooker were appointed messengers to the Charleston Association, Shackelford and Tilman to the Georgia, and Brother Bulger to the Hephzibah.

18. Supplies for the destitute churches. Bulltown, John Rowland, Benjamin Northcut. French Broad, Abraham Harges and David Forester.

19. Agreed, that our next meeting be held at this place, on the second Saturday in August next. That Brother Waller preach the sermon; in case of failure, Joseph Camp. That Brother Lilly write the Circular Letter; the subject, Good Works.

20. The money was collected for printing the minutes, and Brother Fowler requested to superintend this business, as usual. Concluded with an exhortation and prayer, by the moderator.

S T A T E

STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

The Messengers are in capitals; Licensed Preachers in Italics; Churches distinguished with a (*) were had no account from, their numbers stand as they did last year; a dash (—) affixed to churches, denotes a vacancy.

CHURCHES.	MESSENGERS.	Baptized.	Rec. by Letter.	Dismiss'd.	Excommun.	Dead.	Numbers.
Buffalo,	JOSEPH CAMP, James Collins, William M ^r Brayer.		1	4	4		55
Tyger River,	JOHN WILLIAMS, William Ferd.	10	2	3	1	2	67
Green River,	Samuel M ^r Brayer, John Blakewell.	7					43
Bills Creek, ———	John Owinby, Maversal Elliott.					1	70
Buck Creek,	William Garret, Laurence Banks ton, Joel Blakewell.	27	10	11	1		137
Head of Enoree,	ABRAHAM HARGESS, DA- NIEL FLANNERY.	2	6	2	2		110
Sandy Run, ———	Howfen Marril, John Irvine.			10	5		67
Fair Forest,	Williamm Buckhannan, Joshua Wilburn.	1	1			2	40
Padget's Creek,	JOHN PUTMAN, <i>Spencer Bobo.</i>	1	1	3		2	63
Mountain Creek, N. C.	PERMINTER MORGAN, William Hill, William Green.	1	4	2	2	1	112
Bigg Creek,	MOSES HOLLAND, Joseph Jolly, William King.		7	8	1	1	80
Horse Creek, ———	Jacob Mainer, Jesse Ford.			4		1	21
Cedar Spring, ———	Joroyal Barnet, Wm. Lancaster.	3	2	1	1		22
Upper Duncan's Creek,	JOSHUA PALMER, Roger Brown, Nelson Kelly.	1	5	4	1	3	57
Pacolet, ———	John Cole, John Palmer.	1		19			30
Lower Duncan's Creek,	<i>Reuben Rowland.</i>	3		1	2	1	59
Jamey's Creek, —	RICHARD SHACKLEFORD, Joseph Woodruff, Tyrie Glen.	12	4			3	182
Sandy River,	JAMES FOWLER.		2	2	3	1	72
Buth River,	<i>Jesse Brooks,</i> Providence Willi- ams, William Cole.		2	5	1		99
Secona,*	WILLIAM MURPHY, Joseph Price.						16
Rockey Creek, Catawba,*	EDWARD PIGG.						26
Big Branch, Enoree,	DRURY SIMMS, Hudson Berry.			6	1		15
Middle Saluda,	Archibald Harris.						126
		70	47	82	25	18	1735

Little

CHURCHES,	Brought Forward, MESSENGERS	Baptized.	Rec. by Letter.	Dismissed.	EXCOMMUN.	Dead.	Number.
		75	47	82	25	18	1735
Little River,	{ GEORGE TILMAN, William Ghant		3	1	2		27
Enoree,	Barberry Hancock.	2	2	7	2	5	71
French Broad River,	James Blythe, James Boydston.			5		2	22
Rockey Creek, Broad River,	— Tho. Burns, John Larrowe.			5			63
Turkey Creek,	{ STEPHEN GAFFORD, Benjamin Northcut.					1	58
Main Saluda,	Joseph Willis	1	1	19			20
Cloud's Creek,	Thomas DeLoach, Robt. Dechazo.						26
Bull-town,	Isaac Vernon.	1	2	2		3	10
Keowee,	_____						17
Concord, _____	Bayles Earles, James Butler.	5		26	1		26
Catawba,	Win. Wright, Charles Brunfield.		2			1	23
Sugar Creek,	{ JOHN ROOKER, John Smith.		1				25
† Poplar Spring,	William Petties.						
Goshen,	John Williams, Thomas Norris	4	2			1	20
Cambridge,	Edmund Ellis, Wm. Wilkerson.	2	3	5			
Shockley Ferry, _____	A Letter.	13	3	48		5	21
Mill Creek,	Cooper Bennet, Tho. Milford.	1	15	7	1		81
Stephen's Creek,	JOHN BULGER, Tho. Berry.	3	3			1	39
Coronaco, _____	John Bridges.	1	2	5			38
Brush Creek, _____	William Long, William Wright.		2	6			22
Mountain Creek, S. C. _____	Levi Wimpy, Nehemiah Payne.			2			19
Little Horse Creek,	Jon. Dewees, Tho. Mullikin.	2	6	10	1		12
Boiling Spring, _____	JAS. CHASTAIN, Wm. Story.	4	18	3			39
Bethabara,	Wm. Cokerel, Wm. Turner.	1	5			1	43
Red Bank,	JOHN WALLER, Wm. Ball.						44
Hopewell, _____	JOHN ROWLAND, Hen. King.						42
	Samuel M'Creary.						12
	† This church was formerly known by the name of Durham.						
	Decreased since last year, 29.	126	102	186	38	35	1408

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

The Bethel Association, met at the Baptist Church in Spartanburgh county, South-Carolina, the 8th of August, and continued to the 11th, send Christian salutation.

IT is an awful fact, that men may notionally and doctrinally believe the truth of the gospel, without saving faith in Christ, or an interest in him. It is, therefore, of infinite consequence to know that we have, indeed, the faith of God's elect; as it is distinct in its nature and operation, from such an empty, lifeless, and fruitless belief; with which the formal, worldly professor, may deceive and destroy his own soul.

Faith

Faith is, by the apostle, described the "Substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen:" that which brings eternal things into nearer view, and represents them unto the soul as undoubted realities. Whence it is that the true believer, when he has experienced the defect of his own endeavours and purposes; when he is wearied out of all his false refuges, emptied of all hope in himself, and is brought to see and feel the danger and misery of his state by nature, is then brought in earnest to look to *Jesus*, as the only refuge of his soul. He then sees the incomparable excellency of a precious Saviour; breathes with ardent desire after him; rests on his word, as the only foundation of his hope; and, proportionably to the evidence of his interest in him, rejoices in *Christ Jesus*, having no confidence in the flesh. Now the blessed Saviour, and his glorious salvation, are the subjects of his serious, frequent, and delightful contemplation. Now an interest in *Christ* is valued by him above all the world; and he is in earnest to obtain and maintain a good conscience, that his hope in *Christ* is well founded. Now the favor of God and the concerns of the unseen eternal world, appear of greater importance than every thing else. He now mourns under a sense of his former sins; he groans under the burden of his remaining corruptions, and with diligence follows after holiness; endeavouring to pursue the way of salvation, though with fear and trembling. And, in a word, he has such an impression from these realities, that whatever temptations, desertions, or opposing corruptions he may conflict with, nothing can so banish the great concern from his breast, as to make him habitually slothful and indifferent about it: nothing can quiet him short of having his heart and affections engaged in the things of God and godliness, and his appetites and passions under the restraint and governing influence of the law of *the spirit of life*.

On the other hand, if we take a view of the influence which a formal, or dead faith has upon the soul, it is visible that this usually leaves the subjects of it secure and careless, trifling and indifferent, in the concerns of the eternal world. These appear to such a person, but distant futurities, which do not engage his solemn attention, and make him in earnest solicitous about the event, nor give any effectual check to his inordinate appetites and passions. Or, if (as it sometimes happens) any awakening dispensation of providence alarms such a person, to a distressing apprehension of his guilt and danger, drives him to duties and external reformation, and makes him more careful and watchful in his conduct, he has yet no sensible impressivè view of the way of *salvation by Jesus Christ*. He either endeavours to pacify the justice of God, and his own alarmed mind, by his duties and religious performances, and so lulls himself asleep again in his former security; or else continues to agonize under most dark, dreadful, and unworthy apprehensions of the glorious God, as if he were implacable, and irreconcilable to such sinners as he discovers himself to be. Such a person may readily acknowledge,

acknowledge, but cannot feel this blessed truth, that Jesus Christ is a sufficient saviour. Though he owns this to be true, yet he can never comfortably venture his soul, or his eternal interests upon it; unless a divine ray shine into his mind, and give him a lively and sensible view of the interesting subject.

Here then is an apparent difference between a true or saving, and a formal or false faith. The one realizes the great truths of the gospel by a lively and feeling discovery; giving the "Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The other gives but a lifeless and inactive assent to these important truths. The one influences the heart and affections, and by "beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, changes the soul into the same image, from glory to glory;" the other only swirls in the head, and leaves the heart in a state either of self security, or despondency. The one is an abiding principle of divine life, from which there flows rivers of living water; the other is transient, unsteady, and leaves the soul short of any spiritual principle of life and activity. A saving faith is an hearty consent to the overtures of the gospel, or a reception of Jesus Christ as the eternal son of God, manifest in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil, and to translate his people from the power of darkness into his spiritual kingdom. Accordingly, a true faith in the gospel is described to be a receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." To be a son of God by adoption, is to be begotten to a living hope, that Jesus Christ "is the wisdom of God, and the power of God to effect our salvation from the curse of God's holy law, the power of Satan, and the corruptions of our evil nature." He that hath Christ, hath a principle of spiritual life in his soul, whereby he is made happy in the enjoyment of the divine favour; being reconciled to a true and just God through the merits and mediation of the Eternal Son. This faith, or experimental knowledge, or belief, constitutes the *faith of God's elect*.

The true believer labours, and is heavy laden with the sinfulness of his nature, and longs for a further victory over his corrupt appetites and passions, for more spirituality in his duties, and for a further progress in piety and holiness, and therefore heartily desires the Lord Jesus Christ as his sanctifier, as well as Saviour, and earnestly seeks after the renewing, strengthening and quickening influences of his holy spirit.

But if, on the contrary, we consider the character of a dead or formal faith, it is what never brings the soul to a full consent to receive Jesus Christ as a saviour and redeemer, without some exception and reserve. The unsound professor may imagine he receives Jesus Christ as his saviour, but what is the foundation and encouraging motive of his imaginary compliance? Upon an impartial enquiry, it will be always found to be *something in himself*, his good affections, duties, holy resolves, moralities, reformations, and purposes: these are what he

calls

calls the terms of the gospel, and by these he endeavours to recommend himself to God; and on account of these, hopes to find acceptance through Christ. Or if he feel ever so strong desires of salvation by Christ, yet he is driven to them by fear and self love, and will renew his affections to other lords, as soon as his awakening apprehensions are worn off. He does not feel his want of Christ's enlightening and enlivening influences, for he knows not what they mean. He submits not to the righteousness of Christ, for he is still endeavouring to procure acceptance with God from some good qualifications of his own; some duties which he performs, or some progress he makes or intends to make in his religious course. He cannot submit to Christ as his lord; for there is some slothful indulgence which he cannot forego, some tradition he has imbibed which he cannot resign to scripture correction, some darling lust he cannot part with, some worldly idol his heart is set upon, or some difficult duty which he must excuse himself from.

In the scriptural language, the distinction between these two sorts of believers is most apparent. The one comes to Christ destitute of all hope and help in himself, but sees enough in Christ to answer all his wants. The other is full in himself. The one looks to Christ to be his light, the other leans to his own understanding. The one makes mention of Christ's righteousness, and that only; the other hopes for an interest in Christ and his salvation, on account of his own attainments; and, in effect, expects justification by his own righteousness for Christ's sake. The one brings a guilty, polluted soul to the blessed Redeemer, not trusting in any qualification of his own to recommend it, expecting from Christ all the supplies he wants; for gold tried in the fire, that he may be rich; for eye-salve, that he may see; and for white raiment, that he may be clothed. The other ordinarily raises his expectations from Christ in proportion to his imaginary qualifications, and good dispositions. The one desires salvation by Christ as well from pollution as from guilt. The other has a reserve of some deceitful lust that he hugs as a Delilah in his bosom, which he cannot willingly part with, and hopes God will not charge it to him as sin. In fine, the one is made willing in a day of the power of God to be Christ's, to take up his cross and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; the other will not come to Christ but on terms of his own stating.

Thus, dear brethren, we submit our thoughts on this subject to your serious consideration, hoping by the blessing of God, they may be conducive to your edification. We request a remembrance in your prayers, and remain yours affectionately in gospel bonds,

JAMES FOWLER, Moderator.
WILLIAM FORD, Clerk.