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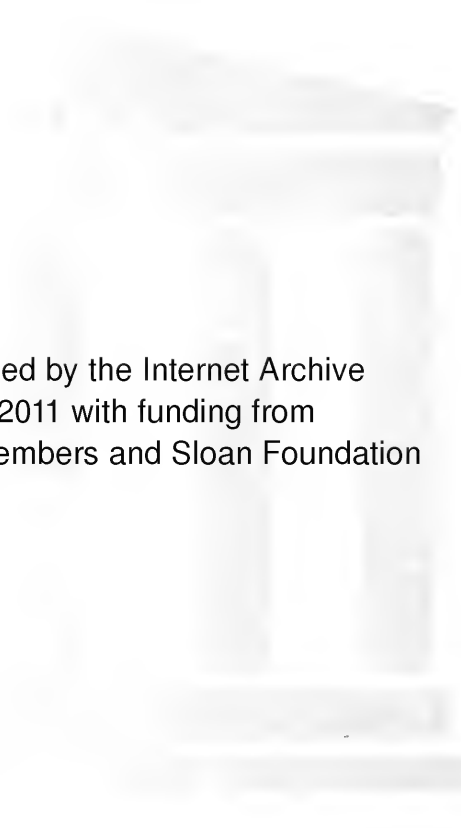
Vol. 1
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Birmingham Baptist
Association.

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1833 to 1873.

Elyton - in constitution
1833 & dissolved in
1846.





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Minutes **MINUTES** *Minutes*

OF THE

FOURTH ANNUAL SESSION.

OF THE

CANAAN ASSOCIATION

OF UNITED BAPTISTS;

Convened with the Bethel Church, Shelby County, Ala.

From the 9th to the 11th of September, 1837.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9th, 1837.

1. The Introductory Sermon was delivered at 11 o'clock A. M., by Elder Hosea Holcombe, from Matthew, 6th chap and part of the 10th verse, "*Thy Kingdom come.*"

2. The delegates from the several churches assembled in the meeting house, and after singing and prayer, proceeded to business. The letters from the several churches were read, and the names of the delegates enrolled.

3. Chose, H. Holcombe, Moderator, and J. Scale, Clerk.

4. Opened a door for the admission of Churches into our Union—whereupon, Mud Creek Church, recently constituted, in Jefferson county, petitioned by letter and delegates, to become a member of our body; they being found orthodox, were cordially received, and their delegates invited to seats.

5. Called for correspondence, and received from the different Associations, the following brethren as corresponding messengers, viz: Elders J. M. Scott and O. Welch, with a letter from the Coosa river; —(their minutes having failed;) Elder Richard Wilkins and brother T. Williams, with a letter and minutes, from the Union Association; Elder O. Radford, with a letter and minutes from the Mulberry; Elder J. Pratt, and J. Sansing, with a letter and minutes from the Tuscaloosa; Elder O. M. Peterson, with a letter and minutes from the Cahawba; all of which were cordially received, and the brethren invited to seats: likewise, ministering brethren, *not* delegates, were invited to seats.

6. Read, the Constitution, Abstract of Faith, and Rules of Decorum, of this Association.

7. By suggestion of the Moderator, proceeded to appoint the following committees, viz: On arrangement of the business of the A

ciation—brethren, H. Cox, D. Buck, and E. King, with the Moderator and Clerk;—On Finance—H. H. Rockett, J. Thomason, and C. Davours;—To examine the minutes of corresponding Associations: M. McMath.

8. Appointed the following brethren as messengers to the different Associations with whom we correspond; To the Coosa River, H. H. Rockett, and A. McCain, brother Rockett to write the letter; To the Union, Elder H. Holcombe, D. Burgin, D. Buck, and W. D. T. Culbertson—D. Buck to write the letter; To the Cahawba, Elders H. Holcombe, and H. H. Rockett—brother Thomason to write the letter; To the Mulberry, Elders H. H. Rockett, H. Cox, and R. Wood—brother Wood to write the letter; To the Tuscaloosa, Elders J. Seale, A. McCain, R. Wood, H. Cox, and brethren E. King, and A. McDonald—brother King to write the letter,

9. Chose, the following brethren to occupy the stand on the Sabbath, in addition to brother Seale, who had been previously appointed to preach the Missionary sermon, viz: G. F. Heard, Jesse Cox, O. Welch and J. Pratt.

10. On motion, adjourned until 8 o'clock, Monday morning.

SUNDAY.

The stand was occupied by those brethren appointed, who preached with zeal and fervor, the unsearchable riches of Christ; and it is earnestly believed that the word had access to many hearts; that Christians were fed with the bread which came down from heaven; and many sinners were made to weep, and crave the prayers of the righteous. And we believe that during the progress of the meeting, not less than ten or twelve; professed a hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

MONDAY MORNING.

11. Met pursuant to adjournment, and after having called the names of the messengers, proceeded to business;—and invited ministering brethren to seats with us.

12. Called for the report of the committee on arrangement, which was read and received, and the committee discharged.

13. Appointed the following brethren delegates to the Baptist State Convention, viz: H. Holcombe, H. H. Rockett, J. Seale, A. McCain, and E. Wood—brother Rockett to write the letter.

14. The report of the committee on Finance was read and received, and the committee discharged.

15. The report from the domestic Missionaries was called for, and brother Armstrong having moved out of our bounds, consequently made no report; brother Seale reported that he had spent 7 months, or 210 days in the service of the Association, had preached 248 times, baptised seven, aided in the constitution of one Church, and in the ordination of two Deacons, collected seven dollars and fifty cents, &c. Report received.

16. Went into the appointment of Domestic Missionaries: when brethren H. H. Rockett, and J. Tate, were appointed, to spend three months each—and they requested to spend the chief part of that time,

in attending protracted meetings in the most destitute places; and that they be allowed \$1, 25 cents per day, while in the service of the Association. Likewise, the Association recommend that all the ministers in our Union, visit each Church, at least once in the year; and that they hold a protracted meeting in each district.

17. Called for the report of the Union meetings, when it appeared, that for the first district the Union meeting is to be held with the Hebron Church, in Jefferson county, on Friday before the second Sabbath in July, 1833. Second District, at Ruhama, on Friday before the 3rd Sabbath in August. And for the 3rd District, at Rupe's Valley, on Friday before the 3d Sabbath in July.

18. *Resolved*, That it be the duty of the Clerk to designate in these minutes, under the head of constitutions, the several objects for which they were intended.

19. *Resolved*, That we most cordially approve of the late separate organization of the American and Foreign Bible Society, and that '*The field is the world.*'

20. *Resolved*, That we recommend, to the liberal patronage of our brethren and friends in general, the *Mobile Monitor*, edited by brother G. F. Heard.

21. On motion, *Resolved*, That it shall be the duty of the corresponding Secretary, to act as assistant recording Secretary.

22. *Resolved*, That our Constitution, Abstract, and Rules of Decorum, be inserted in these minutes.

23. *Resolved*, That in future, the Missionary sermon shall be the second sermon preached on the Sabbath, at each annual meeting of this body; and that a collection be taken at the close, for Domestic Missionary purposes.

24. On motion, *Resolved*, That the word *shall*, in the 20th article of last years minutes, should have been *ought*.

25. The former Treasurer, being about to remove, made his report which was received; and brother J. H. Wood chosen to fill the place, into whose hands the money not needed, at this session, was paid.

26. Called for the Circular letter, written by H. Holcombe, which was read and adopted, without alteration.

27. On motion, *Resolved*, That we, for the present, discontinue the practice of writing Circulars; and in place thereof, insert a digest, and miniature history of the Churches; and that the Churches be requested to send up to the next session of this body, a concise sketch of their history.

28. Next session of this body to be held with Union Church, Jefferson county, Saturday before the second Sunday in Sept. 1838.

29. Appointed, brother J. Byers to preach the next Missionary sermon, and brother H. Holcombe to be his alternate. Brother A. McCain to preach the introductory sermon, and brother H. Cox, his alternate.

30. *Resolved*, That brother Holcombe superintend the printing of these minutes, and have 500 copies struck, and reserve 100 for corresponding Associations, and the remainder to be reserved for the Agents in their respective districts, to be distributed according to the

contributions of the Churches; and that brother Holcombe receive, for transcribing, preparing, and superintending the printing, \$15 for his services—and that the Treasurer pay over to him, for those purposes, \$48. The distributing Agents appointed as follows, viz: 1st District, A. McCain—2d District, J. Thomason—3d District, H. H. Rockett.

31. Called for corresponding letters, several of which were presented, read and approved.

32. The committee appointed to examine minutes from corresponding Associations, report, that they find nothing necessary to notice on our minutes.

33. *Resolved*, That the minutes of the Canaan Bible Society, organized during the session of this body, appear on the minutes of the Association.

Adjourned, with singing and prayer, by the Moderator.

HOSEA HOLCOMBE, *Moderator*.

JESSE SEALE, *Clerk*.

<i>State of the Finances.</i>	<i>Minutes.</i>	<i>D. Miss.</i>	<i>F Miss</i>	<i>Bible Trans.</i>
Remaining in the hands of the Treasurer,	\$10,00	\$ 51,50	\$2,50	
Sent up by the Churches,	38,00	218,31		\$ 11,50
	48,00	270,31		
<i>Disbursements.</i>				
Delivered into the hands of the superintendant, for printing minutes, &c.	48,00			
Paid Domestic Missionary for 7 months service,		210,00		
Paid into the hands of bro. H. Holcombe, to be forwarded to the State Convention,			2,50	
Paid into the hands of the same, to be forwarded to the State Bible Society.				11,50
Remaining in the hands of the Treasurer,		60,31		

Ordered that the Treasurer hand over the funds on hand to the delegates of the A. B. B. S., viz: H. Holcombe and H. H. Rockett.

STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

Note.—The names of Ordained Ministers are printed in italics—those of Licentiates are marked thus *; and those of Absentees, thus †.

Churches.	Commis.	Messengers.	Pastors.	Deacons.	Post Offices.	TRIBUTIONS.														
						Baptised.	Rec'd by Letter.	Dismissed.	Excluded.	Restored.	Dead.	Males.	Females.	Coloured.	Total.	Sabbath Meetings.	Minutes.	Domestic Mission.	Bible Translations.	
Union	Shelby.	J. L. Skidman, J. Butler, W. Wyatt, J. Seale, R. Hood, E. J. Seale.	A. M. Cain.	J. Smith.	Flora.	2	3	3	1	1	1	2	2	12	11	21	2	\$1	\$7	
Shoal Creek	"	J. King, J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	A. M. Cain.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Shelbyville.	6	6	2	2	1	1	2	35	35	35	35	3	1.50	18.50	
Bethel.	"	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	A. M. Cain.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Cedar Grove.	4	5	4	1	1	1	1	35	35	35	35	3	1.50	11.62	
Hebron.	Jefferson.	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	H. Cox.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Branchville.	2	4	15	2	1	1	1	17	17	17	17	1.50	20		
Bethel.	St. Clair.	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	H. Cox.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Springville.	6	3	5	4	1	1	1	36	32	106	15	15	29.50		
Mount Zion.	"	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	H. Cox.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Trussville.	2	1	6	6	1	1	1	36	32	106	15	15	29.50		
Cedarwaba.	Jefferson.	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	H. Cox.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Elyton.	5	2	13	1	1	1	1	23	24	2	33	33	17.50		
Rathanna.	"	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	J. Byres.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Elyton.	5	2	13	1	1	1	1	23	24	2	33	33	17.50		
Elyton.	"	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	J. Byres.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Elyton.	5	2	13	1	1	1	1	23	24	2	33	33	17.50		
Granann.	"	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	J. Byres.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Elyton.	5	2	13	1	1	1	1	23	24	2	33	33	17.50		
Rock Creek.	"	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	H. Holcombe.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Jonesboro.	00	4	11	1	1	1	1	28	41	21	90	44.50	27		
Union.	"	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	J. Tate.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Jonesboro.	7	22	22	1	1	1	1	29	21	53	32	2	5		
Liberty.	"	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	J. Byres.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Jonesboro.	4	6	3	3	1	1	1	19	20	4	43	2.50	10.25		
Rupe's Valley	Fuscaloosa.	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	H. Holcombe.	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Bucksville	1	16	13	6	1	1	1	53	69	11	133	4.50	38.50	11.50	
Mud Creek,	Jefferson.	J. Hays, J. Gilbert, G. Wilder, A. M. Cain, H. B. Moore, W. White, Alton M. Donald, H. Cox, W. Smith.	H. H. Rockett	E. King, J. Lawley, J. Gilbert, J. Wilder, H. B. Moore, A. Goodwin.	Jonesboro.	18	1	2	2	1	1	1	31	23	2	55	32	5		
						45	53	107	29	2	4	243	295	49	821	38	218.81	11.50		

CONSTITUTION, WITH THE AMENDMENT.

ARTICLE 1. This body shall be known by the name of the Canaan Association of United Baptists.

2. It shall be formed of Delegates from all the Churches, who may connect themselves with this Union.

3. Any Church may be admitted into this Association, by the general consent of the Delegates present, at any regular meeting.

4. Any Church may withdraw from this body at its own discretion on application for dismission.

5. This Association may at any regular meeting, declare a dissolution of Union with any Church deemed corrupt, either in doctrine or practice.

6. Any Church in this Association, with fifty members or under, may send three delegates, and an additional one for every fifty, after the first fifty.

7. At each session of the Association, a Moderator, a Recording and Corresponding Secretary, shall be chosen by ballot; who shall hold their offices until successors are elected.

8. The meeting of the Delegates shall be held on the Saturday before the second Sabbath in September of each year, and should occasion require, on their adjournment.

9. The design of this body, is to promote the cause of true religion within the several churches of which it is, or may be composed, by domestic missions, the education of pious and promising young men, hopefully called of God to the ministry, and by other benevolent plans, so far as the churches may enable them by their voluntary contributions.

10. In addition to the objects specified in the foregoing article, this Association will extend its favorable regard to all the benevolent plans now cherished and supported by Evangelical Christians.

11. As it respects the internal concerns of the Churches, this body shall have no authority, but shall be considered, merely as an advisory counsel.

12. As it respects our external or general concerns, and for the mutual benefit of the Churches composing this Union, it shall be the duty of each Church to forward with their Delegates, a written Communication to every annual meeting of this Association, specifying the names of their Delegates, and the state of their Church.

13. Any Church being thoroughly convinced that she has a member called of the Lord to the work of the ministry, and feeling it her duty to send him out to preach the Gospel, shall call from two or more Churches the aid of their Ministers, who in connection with the Church, shall examine the Candidate, and if deemed qualified, may license him to preach the Gospel among the Churches at discretion; which shall be reported to the Association, and entered on the Minutes.

14. Any Church in this body, having a preacher whom she deems worthy of ordination, shall call a Presbytery of Ministers from sister Churches, to officiate in the work; and all Presbyteries in ordaining

ministers or deacons, or in constituting Churches, shall be governed by the abstract of faith adopted by this Association

15. The business of this Association shall be (when deemed necessary) committed to a board of thirteen managers, seven of whom shall constitute a quorum to transact business, and make report to the next session of the Association.

16. The Delegates from the Churches shall be considered as holding their appointments until others are chosen to succeed them.

17. This Constitution may be altered or amended, by two thirds of the Delegates present at any annual meeting.

ABSTRACT OF FAITH.

ARTICLE 1. We believe in one only, true and living God, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that the Scriptures, comprising the Old and New Testaments, are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

3. We believe in the doctrine of election, and that God chose his people in Christ before the foundation of the world.

4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

5. We believe in man's incapacity, by his own free will and ability to recover himself from the fallen state in which he is by nature.

6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God by the imputed righteousness of Christ only.

7. We believe that God's elect shall be called, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy spirit.

8. We believe that the saints shall persevere in grace and never fall finally away.

9. We believe that baptism and the Lord's supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and true believers are the only subjects of baptism, and that immersion is the apostolic mode.

10. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in the general judgment; and that the felicity of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.

11. We believe that no minister has a right to administer the ordinances of the Gospel, but one who is regularly baptised, called, and come under the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery.

12. We believe that none but regularly baptised members have a right to commune at the Lord's supper.

RULES of DECORUM.

ARTICLE 1. The Association shall be opened and closed by prayer.

2. A Moderator and Clerk shall be chosen by the suffrage of the number present.

3. The Moderator shall be considered a judge of order, and shall have a discretionary right to call to order at any time.

4. Any member not satisfied with his decision, may appeal to the Association on the same day, but at no other time.

5. But one member shall speak at a time, who shall rise to his feet, and on obtaining permission, proceed; which permission shall be signified by the Moderator's naming the person, or otherwise.

6. No member shall be interrupted while speaking, unless he depart from the subject; and every motion made and seconded, (in order) shall come under the consideration of the Association, and be decided on, unless withdrawn by him who made it.

7. Every case taken up by the Association shall be decided on, or withdrawn before another shall be offered.

8. When a question is taken up and sufficient time allowed for debate, the Moderator shall take the voice of the Association on the subject, and those in the affirmative of the question shall signify the same by holding up the right hand (then if need be, reverse the question) and pronounce the decision before the standers resume their seats.

9. The Association shall be governed in all cases by a majority, except in the reception and exclusion of Churches, which shall be by two thirds at least, of the members present.

10. No member shall speak more than twice to the same proposition, without leave of the Association, nor more than three times without the concurrence of three fourths of the members, nor shall any proposition be made to close the subject until the debates have been carried through.

11. The appellation of brother, shall be used in the Association by members in their addresses to one another.

12. Any member wishing to retire, shall obtain leave of the Moderator.

13. The names of the Delegates shall be called as often as the Association may direct.

14. No members shall be tolerated in any practice which has a tendency to interrupt public speaking.

15. The Moderator shall be entitled to the same privilege of speaking as any other member; *provided*, he appoint another to his seat during the time, but shall not vote, unless the Association be equally divided.

16. Any member violating these rules shall be reprov'd at the discretion of the Moderator, but only on the day the breach shall have been made.

17. These rules shall be read at the opening of every session of the Association, and may be altered or amended, when two thirds of the members present, at any annual meeting, shall deem it necessary.

An additional rule added in 1835, see minutes page 7.

Resolved, That the Moderator appoint committees for the transaction of any business that may come before our body from time to time; but the occasion and number of each committee shall be by consent of this body.

CIRCULAR.

The following Circular, is substantially, a part of an Address to the Baptists in Alabama; written for the history of the Denomination—especially the first half.

BELOVED BRETHREN.—We have thought proper, this year, to offer to you a few thoughts, on the subject of organizing Churches; and to name some of the duties of Churches and of Church members.

The proper and scriptural organization of Churches, is confessedly, a most important subject. As the Baptists profess to derive all their laws, rules, and regulations from the Bible—there we ought to look for their authority, and their model, for organising their Churches:—But we feel constrained to admit, that in many instances, *that* attention has not been paid to Apostolic example, which ought to have been; yet our plan of church government, every intelligent Christian will acknowledge to be scriptural. For it is manifest, that in primitive times, each Church was a separate distinct community owing submission to no external jurisdiction. Each Church, from the very beginning of Churches, was a spiritual body, not licensed by the civil power, nor legalized by the edict of the Emperor, but built upon the foundation of divine authority. We do therefore, cordially rejoice in the independence of our Churches. Here we have occasion to remark; that a Church of Christ, is an independent, religious body; but it is a CHURCH. And let it be borne in mind, that something more than the name is requisite to constitute a Church. Mere members, without qualifications, cannot, in our estimation, form a Church. The constituent members should be, not only baptised believers, consenting and uniting, but believers of experience and spirituality—possessing a reasonable acquaintance with the word of God, capable of sitting in judgment on the momentous affairs of the Lord's house; being for the time such as may be able to teach others, and not needing to be taught, which are the first principles of the doctrine of Christ; and such as have their *senses* exercised to discern both good and evil,—*Heb v 14*;—that is, being able to distinguish true doctrine from false, and having an understanding and taste in divine things. A Church is a sort of bench of judges, before whom causes of great importance are tried. Questions relating to the sending forth of Gospel Laborers,—of calls to ordination, of the retention, or exclusion of members under censures and criminal charges, are submitted to the deliberations and decisions of the Churches. It must make its own rules of order, appoint its own Pastor, elect its own officers, and in short, arrange all its own internal affairs, in conformity to the will of its Great Head. Such are a few of the responsibilities of a Church.²

Now compare carefully and impartially these responsibilities, with the actual condition of a number of Churches in Alabama, which help to swell the number in the different Associations, as appear on the minutes of those bodies. Without pretending to know the private history of the whole, is there not reason to apprehend that many, alas! too

many, would fall lamentably below the scripture standard? Little companies, crude in knowledge, imperfect in experience, utterly defective in wisdom, are too often huddled together, and miscalled a *Gospel Church!!* The consequences, in such cases, are readily foreseen. Discipline is either abused or neglected; opportunities are offered for the successful machinations of bad, designing, and disorganizing men; the doctrines and truths of the Bible are left unexpounded, and unvindicated in the hands of ignorant pretenders; and the cause of Christ is abandoned to the chances and changes of the capricious genius of events and circumstances. How should it grieve the heart of sensibility to see that cause so deserted.

‘It is true that the New Testament no where defines the number requisite to constitute a Church. Nor does it inform us whether the Church should be composed of males and females in due proportion, or in undue proportion. No need existed for any exact rules or definitions on this head. But the qualifications of members are fully exhibited in the inspired writings. The pictures which these draw of those suitably prepared and qualified materials which enter into the composition of the Lord’s house, is full, intelligible, and striking. They are represented as children of the light, as spiritually minded, as assuming the bond of intense charity, as adding to their faith virtue and knowledge—as possessing and practising the wisdom from above—as comprehended with all saints the love of God which passes understanding—and as being able to warn them that are unruly—to comfort the feeble minded—and to give a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. We are aware that it may be said, that it will be very difficult to form new Churches, or even to avoid unchurching many which exist, provided so high a standard of membership qualifications be set up. This may be admitted. And what then? The difficulty referred to is not one of human invention—nor an arbitrary decree of human prohibition. It is just what the Lord himself has made, and put in the way. Faith and knowledge, experience and charity, must be found in every *true* Church. The absence of these abrogates its claims to Churchship, and renders it nothing other than a society.’

Gospel discipline is very much neglected in a number of Churches; indeed we have reasons to believe, that there are many Churches, and a far larger number of members, who do not understand the discipline of the Gospel, or of Churches, as laid down in the New Testament.—And yet, it is too common, for even a *novice*, in the Church, to set up his own judgment, in opposition to that of his Pastor, and the eldership of the Church; and perhaps brand the Minister of the Church, with introducing innovation in the Church, when he is attending strictly to the laws of the Lord’s house, as revealed in the divine word.—The ignorance of such members, is sometimes manifest by a misconstruction, and misapplication of some of the plainest texts on the subject, to be found in the New Testament. We will give the following as a specimen, viz: ‘*how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven.*’ Matt. xviii. 21, 22.—Here some of our brethren will use arguments, if arguments we may

call them, to prove, that when a member has been *overtaken* in a fault—*has been drunk*, and that repeated from six to twelve times, that the Church shall forgive, and continue the offender in fellowship; notwithstanding these transgressions have been aggravated beyond description, by the offender's fighting, or wishing to fight, and with horrid oaths and bitter imprecations, and a score of other aggravating circumstances.—Yet after all, if the transgressor, *turn to thee and say he repent*, the Church must forgive him—fellowship must not be broken—he must be retained. Is it reasonable to suppose that such members know in what Christian fellowship consists? We would advise such brethren to study the Holy Scriptures, and Church discipline, to better purpose, and to more advantage. Let Christians consider the high station which they occupy, and remember well their calling; that they are bought with a price, and should glorify God, by close attention to his word; their acts being conformable to the same. If all our members would thus act, they would manifest greater consistency in their profession and their conduct; and would find it a much better employment, to study the scriptures, than to visit those sinks of iniquity denominated doggeries, drunkeries, or grogshops.

The Churches of the Baptist denomination, would do well to encourage their young members, to devote more of their time and attention to the study of discipline, and all those subjects connected with the religion of the Saviour. Every one has, or ought to have something to do in the house of God. The primitive Churches were not mere assemblies of professing Christians, who agreed to meet together once a month, or oftener, and attend to a formal round of ceremonies, connected with religion. They were bands of men and women, whose hearts the Lord had touched; attracted by the cross; to the cause of the Redeemer; they were set as lights in the world, and for the defence and propagation of the Gospel. In this grand object, they took a most lively interest; and in a well regulated Church, there will be ample scope for the exercise of every talent, and every believer may become a fellow-helper of the truth. Our brother *Oncken*, native Missionary at Hamburg, in Germany, observes, as follows, with regard to the members of his Church, 'There is, (says he,) in fact, not a member in our Church but what is, in one way or another, doing something in promoting the extension of Christ's kingdom.' Blessed Christians, and blessed their employ. O dear brethren, if our Churches were composed of such God-like Christians, what a heaven it would be on earth.

What remissness there is in Baptist Churches generally, in the members not attending Church meetings for business. There are but few Churches where one half of their members meet regularly; yet these very brethren once vowed to God, and covenanted with the Church, to keep the ordinances of the Lord's house, and attend to all the requisitions of his word, according to their best ability. How will such delinquents answer for their conduct, when called to render unto God, an account of their stewardship? How many Church members not only neglect their conference meetings, but fail to attend on the word preached; although they do not have a sermon more than once a month. And when there is no preaching on the sabbath, those brethren

ren; with many others, are loitering at home, spending their time for that which is worse than nothing; or paying idle visits, or doing their odd business on the Lord's day; or profaning that holy day. O ye professed followers of Jesus, these things ought not so to be! Should you not meet every Sabbath day at your respective houses of worship, or some other convenient place, and unite in the solemn worship of Almighty God? Prayer meetings should be regularly kept up in every Church. What encouragement given in the scriptures, to the industrious, importunate soul. 'Ask,' says the Saviour, '*and ye shall receive, &c.* and wherever two or three are met in his name, he has promised to be in the midst: and in whatever they may agree, and ask in the name of Christ, *it shall be done for them.*' The faithful prayer is heard, and the cry of his children will ever reach his gracious ear.

The great advantages resulting from humble, faithful prayer, is known, and has been realised, in a very good degree, by every humble follower of the Lamb. Why then, should Christians be so careless, so stupid, and so negligent of their own mercies? But this is not all, family worship, is almost, or entirely omitted by too many heads of families. And even in many families where it is not altogether neglected, some of the members of the family are not invited to attend, especially where there are servants: they, in many instances are entirely neglected. What can an humble follower of Jesus, think of those brethren, whom he has been taught to love and reverence, when paying them a visit, and asked to take the lead in the family devotions, and not a servant called to attend to the worship of God; and yet a number seen on the premises? No instruction given to those poor creatures. Is this doing as we would be done by? Is this treating them, as we really believe is right? Can masters excuse themselves on this ground? Will the God of heaven smile on such conduct? *He cannot.* O brethren, arouse from your lethargy—from your stupidity—from your sinful neglect of duty.

It is not expedient that we enlarge on the duties and responsibilities of Churches or individual Christians; but we must suggest a few things more, before we close this Circular; and let it be recollected, that *the Church is the light of the world.* But if the light which is in you, be darkness, how great is that darkness! If the eye, which is the light of the body, be single, the whole body is full of light; but if the eye be evil, the whole body is full of darkness—i. e. if the heart, the seat of the affections, be right with God, it will direct to Christian actions, and the whole conversation will be full of light; the understanding and the affections, the aims and intentions, yea, and all the actions, will be regular and gracious—pleasing to God, and comfortable to yourselves. But on the contrary, where the eye or the heart is evil, and fixed on the world, the love of God can not dwell there. The hypocrite is like the waterman, that looks one way, and rows another; but the true christian, is like the traveller that has his journey's end in his eye.—The hypocrite soars like the kite, with his eye on the prey below; the christian soars like the lark, higher and higher, forgetting the things beneath. *No man can serve two masters.* Our Lord here exposes the cheat of those who think to divide between God and the world; to have a *treasure on earth* and a *treasure in Heaven* also—please God,

and please the world too. But, *ye can not serve God and mammon.* Mammon, signifies riches, or gain; so that whatever we account in this world to be our gain, is mammon; to some, their ease, sleep, pastimes, riches, honors, &c. is their mammon. The applause of men, was the mammon of the Pharisees. In a word, the vuity in which the world's trinity centres, sensual, secular SELF, is the mammon—which can not be served in connection with God. God says, *My son, give me thine heart:* Mammon says, 'No, give it me.' God says, 'Be content with such things as you have.' Mammon says, 'Grasp all you can get.' God says, 'Be charitable.' Mammon says, 'Hold thy own, this giving undoes us all.' God says, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Mammon says, 'Keep all you get and get all you can.' God says, 'Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase.' Mammon says, 'Money, money, is all the cry—it is all speculation—do not give, or you will hurt my feelings.' God says, 'They shall bring their gold and silver with them unto the name of the Lord.' Mammon says, 'If you give one dollar to any of the benevolent institutions, (falsely so called,) you shall be excluded from the Church.' God says, 'Be careful for nothing.'—Mammon says, 'Be careful for every thing.' God says, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' Mammon says, 'I will not be debarred of my liberty.' God says, 'It is not good to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is made weak, or is offended.' Mammon says, 'I will drink my wine, or grog when I please, and if he is offended, let him be offended, and if he dies, let him die, *I care for none of those things.*' God says, 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.' Mammon says, 'Make use of that day as well as all others for the world.' Thus we see we cannot serve both.

Are there not many in our Churches who have never given a *groat* for the furtherance of the Gospel of the Redeemer? Notwithstanding the Lord has said, "*Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things, &c.*" How vain are the hopes of the disobedient? For the Lord says, "*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name,*" &c. "*And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.*" How important the consideration! How can brethren live and neglect to discharge some of the most plain and important duties revealed in the word of God?—yet call themselves christians—the servants—the children of the living God? The day is coming when every one shall be judged *according to his works.*

One more consideration, and we shall close our remarks, for the present. The subject of temperance has considerably occupied the attention of our brethren, composing the Churches which we have the pleasure to represent, for several years. And we conceive in this day of glorious enterprise, when such a flood of light has been shed on the subject, that no humble follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, can be at a loss to form a correct judgment on the matter. And yet we lament, that we still hear of members in some of our Churches, who continue to swallow the *poisonous* beverage—to quaff the flowing bowl—and in some instances, to visit the *drunkeries*, those abodes

of wickedness and blasphemy; and there to drink with the drunken, regardless of the cause of Christ, or of the threats and frowns of Jehovah—and knowing that God has said, “*No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God.*” Brethren, we entreat you, in the name of the blessed Saviour, that you *purge out the old leaven—that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.* ‘The principle of *entire abstinence* from all intoxicating liquors as a drink, or *beverage* ought to be declared a term of communion in every Church.’ It is objected, that the course proposed, would be an infringement of the rights, a violation of the liberty of our members. If the objection be good for any thing, in this case, it is equally good against every principle and precept of the Gospel of Christ; for there is not one which does not deny to every christian the right to sin, and restrains him from an *indulgence* in evil, which in this case he miscalls *liberty*.—The Gospel is a system of holiness, and is opposed to every thing unholy and impure. Its great design is to lead us from sin to holiness, from the love of sensual gratification, to a desire for spiritual enjoyment, and from conformity to the world to a likeness to Christ. In doing this, it deprives us of no liberty, but that which would indulge us in sin; and the position we are now urging on the Churches, is in direct accordance with this glorious feature of our holy religion.—“The adoption of this principle will elevate the Church to her proper station, as a light in the world. The Church, by her course, has increased the gross darkness, which has been over the earth; and while she is unwilling or neglects to come up to the true and holy standard of entire abstinence, she is hindering the diffusion of light. For while members are retained in full communion, and no disgrace is attached to the indulgence of the depraved appetite, which craves the liquid fire, or which deals it out to the cravings of others, the world will judge that it is not so great an evil as it is represented, and that entire abstinence is not so necessary as it is declared to be. Thus does the Church hide her light, prevent her usefulness, and become a stumbling-block, over which many stumble to destruction. But let her pursue an opposite course; let her purify herself, elevate the standard and lift up the warning voice as she ought, and she becomes at once a light, by which the darkness will be expelled—ignorance will be removed—and the truth will be exhibited in all its purity and loveliness, to attract and save men from ruin.”

But if the Church will not feel her responsibility—if her members, compromising with death, will cleave to the wine-cup as innocent and lawful, hers must be the guilt, hers the woe of dragging souls unnumbered to the pit. God will remember her, but not in mercy. Beloved brethren, up and be doing—let your cries ascend to God, from the closet, from the domestic and social circle, from the assembly of the saints—from morn to night and night to morn—let your contrite, indefatigable supplications ascend. Direct your efforts to promote a revival. Begin with yourself. Are you not living in the practice of some known sin? Do you regard the Lord’s day as you ought? Are you not guilty of some one, or more, of those sins pointed out in this circular? What are you doing with a view to benefit others? Ought you not be a teacher in a Sabbath school or a Tract distribu-







