

# MINUTES

OF THE

## Columbia Baptist Association,

Maintaining "The unity of God; the existence of three equal persons in the Godhead; the just condemnation and total depravity of all mankind, by the fall of our first parents; eternal, personal and unconditional election; the proper divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ; the necessity of his atonement, and its special relation to the sins of the elect only; justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone; effectual calling; perseverance of the saints; believers baptism by immersion only; the Lord's Supper, a privilege peculiar to baptized believers, regularly admitted to church fellowship; the resurrection of the body, and general judgment; the final happiness of the saints, and misery of the wicked, alike interminable; the obligation of every intelligent creature to love God supremely, to believe what God says, and practise what God commands; and the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the complete and infallible rule of faith and practice."

**HELD BY APPOINTMENT,**

AT

*Long Branch Meeting-House, in the County of Fauquier, and State of Virginia, August 24, 25 & 26,*

1826.

SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY  
Wake Forest, North Carolina  
ALEXANDRIA;

PRINTED AT THE PHENIX GAZETTE OFFICE.

received by letter in the  
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ed no intelligence from Hartwood and Nanjer  
en as they were last year.

THURSDAY, August 24.

1. At 11 o'clock, A. M. brother O. B. Brown preached the introductory Sermon from Matthew the 16th chapter, 18th verse: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

2. The business of the Association was opened by prayer by brother O. B. Brown, (the Moderator,) when the letters from the Churches were read, and the Messengers names, &c. enrolled as follows—

SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY  
Wake Forest, North Carolina

NO. CHURCHES.	When Constituted.	MESSENGERS.	MINISTERS.	Days of Preaching.	Number Baptized.		Dismissed.	Excluded.	Deceased.	Total Number.	
						Received by Letter.					
Chappawam-sick	1767	Joseph R. Lynn, Benjamin Cole.	<i>John Johnson.</i>	4th	7	1	3		1	176	
Little River†	1769	James Hixon, John M. Young.	<i>J. Johnson.</i>	1st	15		1			95	
Occoquan	1778	George Carney, George Selectman.	<i>James Reid.</i>	3d	3	2	1		4	108	
Hartwood*	1786	—	<i>Cum. George.</i>	1st						61	
Long Branch	1787	Jno. C Hernden, George Love,	<i>Robert Latham.</i>	4th	1		2	1		64	
Backlick	1791	Henry S. Halley, Josiah Simpson.	—	—	3		2	7	2	3	219
Fryingpan	1792	<i>John Johnson,</i> Nathaniel Barker.	<i>John Johnson.</i>	—	1			2		74	
Nanjemoy*	1793	—	—	—						65	
1st Washing-ton	1802	<i>O. B. Brown,</i> George Wood.	<i>O. B. Brown.</i>	ev'y	7	7	1	4	2	157	
Alexandria	1803	<i>Sam'l Cornelius,</i> Dan'l Cawood.	<i>Sam'l Cornelius.</i>	ev'y	5	2	3	5	3	5	226
Bethlehem	1812	<i>Robert Latham,</i> Benj. Pridemore.	<i>Robert Latham.</i>	2d	1		2		5	56	
Grove	1812	<i>T. Stringfellow,</i> Daniel Hall.	<i>T. Stringfellow.</i>	2d		1				60	
Rock Hill	1812	Thomas Brahan, Nathan Holaway.	<i>T. Stringfellow.</i>	3d	1			3		43	
Mount Plea-sant	1819	<i>James Reid,</i> Noah Martin.	<i>James Reid.</i>	2&4	11	2		6	1	113	
Elk Run	1822	William Bower, E. Hansborough.	<i>T. Stringfellow.</i>	1st.	1	3		1	1	41	
Fredericks-burg	1825	<i>John Bryce,</i> Abner Leach.	<i>John Bryce.</i>	ev'y	1	7		6	1	1	107
Enon	1824	Charles Robey.	<i>James Reid.</i>	2d						16	
					57	25	6	38	13	22	1681

N. B. Ministers names are in *Italics*. A — denotes the absence of Mes-sengers.

†In the printed Minutes for the last year, there was a *transposition* of the num-bers baptized and those received by letter in the Little River Church. Instead of 1 *baptized* and 26 received by letter, it should have been 26 *baptized* and 1 re-ceived by letter.

\*Having received no intelligence from Hartwood and Nanjemoy, their total numbers are taken as they were last year.

3. Brother O. B. Brown was chosen Moderator.

4. Communications were received from the following sister Associations, and their Messengers affectionately invited to take seats with us.

*Ketockton*, Letter and Messengers, Brethren Francis Moore, William Gilmore, Joseph Baker, Owen Thomas and Thomas Buck, sen. Their next Association to be at Broad Run Meeting-House, Fauquier county; to commence on the Thursday preceding the third Lord's day in August, 1827.

*Dover*, Letter, Minutes and Messengers, brethren Robert B. Semple, P. Montague, Neale and Maciu. Their next Association to be at Mangohick, in King William county, on the second Saturday in October, 1826.

*Shiloh*, Letter, Minutes and Messenger, brother Edward G. Ship. Their next Association will convene at Hedgman's River Meeting-House, in the town of Jefferson, Culpepper county, on Friday before the first Lord's day in September, 1826.\*

*Baltimore*, Letter, Minutes and Messenger, brother Joseph H. Jones. Their next Association will be held in the Meeting-House of Pleasant Valley Church, Washington county, Maryland, Thursday preceding the third Lord's day in May, 1827.

*Philadelphia*, Letter and Minutes. Their next Association will be held in the Meeting-House of the Baptist Church, at Blockley, on the 1st Tuesday in October, 1826.

*Albermarle*, Last year's Minutes Elder M. P. Pinkard, their Messenger, did not attend. Their next Association will be held at  
on the third Saturday in August, 1827.

*New-Jersey*, Letter and Minutes. Their next Association will be held with the First Baptist Church, in the city of Burlington, on the first Wednesday in September, 1826.

5. Ministering brethren present during the Session, were invited to seats with us.

6. William F. Broadus and John Oglevie, ministering brethren, being present, were accordingly invited to an affectionate participation with us in our deliberations and worship.

7. *Resolved*, That the business of the present Session commence every morning at 9 o'clock, in the Meeting-House; and that the preaching commence every morning at 10 o'clock, at the stand.

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\*The Shiloh Association for the year 1827, will convene at Mill Creek Meeting-House, near Louray, in Shenandoah county, on the Friday before the first Lord's day in September.

8. The following brethren were appointed a Committee to arrange the business of the Session, brethren Bryce, Johnson and Cornelius, with the Moderator and Clerk.

9. The Church at Enon applied by letter and her Messenger, brother Charles Robey, for admission as a member of this Association. The subject was referred to the following committee, brethren Stringfellow, Hixon, Bower, Halley and Selectman.

10. The report of the committee for arranging the business of the Session, was received, and the committee discharged.

11. The following brethren were appointed as a committee to nominate the ministering brethren, to preach at the stand, during the Association:—Brethren Geo. Love, Jno. C. Henden, Owen Thomas, James Hixon and William Bower.

12. The Treasurer's account was referred to the following committee, brethren Love, Hansborough and Hixon.

13. The Corresponding Letter was referred to a committee, consisting of brethren Johnson, Cornelius, Love and the author.

14. The Circular Letter was referred to the same committee.

Adjourned by prayer, until 9 o'clock, A. M. on Friday.

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FRIDAY, August 25.

Met pursuant to adjournment. The business of the day was opened by prayer.

15. The report of the committee appointed to nominate ministering brethren to preach at the stand, was called for and adopted.

16. The committee appointed last Session, to prepare a system of Church Discipline, was called on for their report, which was received and read by the Moderator. On motion it was

*Resolved*, That the Association go into committee of the whole for the purpose of taking the system under consideration by sections. Whereupon the Association went into committee of the whole, brother Latham in the chair.

At a late hour the committee rose, and the Association adjourned, with prayer, until 9 o'clock, A. M. on Saturday.

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SATURDAY, August 26.

The Association met pursuant to adjournment, was opened by prayer and praise.

Reports of Committees were called for.

17. The report of the committee on the Treasurer's account, was received and adopted. The committee report, that the disbursements are supported by proper vouchers, and that just credits are given leaving a balance now in the

hands of the Treasurer, of 103 dollars and 49 cents, due the Association.

18. The report of the committee on the Corresponding Letter was received, and adopted, and the letter as reported, ordered to be printed with the Minutes.

19. The committee to whom the letter from the Church at Enon, soliciting admission into this Association, was referred, reported in favor of receiving said Church. The report was unanimously adopted, and the right hand of fellowship was given to her Messenger, brother Charles Robey; who, thereupon took his seat as a member with us.

20. It was stated to the Association, by one of the Messengers from Long Branch, that a part of the letter from that Church, containing a query, had not been read, but was withheld for awhile, by the consent of her Messengers, at the particular request of some brethren of the Ketchikan Association, who wished first to have an interview with some of the members of the Church. On motion, that part of said letter was then twice read and taken under consideration. The query reads as follows:

*Query*—Is it not a criminal partiality either in the majority or minority of a Church to retain in their fellowship, or to vote for the retention of a member or members who having been charged with railing and other gross wickedness, positively, deliberately and obstinately denies the charges, (which charges were proven or supported by the positive testimony of five or six brethren of respectable standing) and who during the investigation of said charges, before the Church, were moreover guilty of other wickedness, such as using irreverently and with criminal lightness, the awful expression of “so help me God,” by way of affirmation to statements made to the Church. Also, deliberately and obstinately denying the charges after they were proven, and until the Church was about to exclude them. And then sometime afterwards, equivocation and denial in relation to the extent of an acknowledgment made by them, but which at the time it was made, had too much the appearance of being the effect of the fear of exclusion, but which was put in writing at the time it was made, read over by them, entered of record, read over by the Clerk and re-acknowledged by them?

After some discussion, it was decided without a dissenting vote that the query be answered in the affirmative. *It is a criminal partiality.*

21. On motion of brother Bryce, the subject under consideration of the committee of the whole, in relation to the treatise on Church Discipline, was indefinitely postponed.

22. The Messengers appointed last year to visit corresponding Associations, were requested to state, whether they

had fulfilled their several appointments or not. They severally reported, by which it appeared that they had fulfilled their appointments generally, and satisfactory reasons were given in cases of failure.

23. The Ministers appointed last year to attend the Visitation Meetings made a similar report.

24. The report of the Messengers to the General Association of Virginia; was received and read as follows:

"The Messengers appointed to attend the General Association, beg leave to report, that they fulfilled their appointment; were cordially received, and were highly gratified with the constitution, proceedings and prospects of that body, and beg leave respectfully to recommend that this Association contribute to its funds."

25. *Resolved*, That the Messengers to the next General Association, be authorised to receive any voluntary contributions that may be made to them in aid of the funds of that body, and that each of said Messengers be requested to make *at least* one public collection for that object.

26. In consideration of the Circular Letter having been prepared with an express view to the articles of discipline which had been contemplated, which subject has been postponed, it was resolved, That the reading of the same be dispensed with, and that brother Cornelius in conjunction with brother Brown, be appointed a committee to write a Circular Letter to be published with the Minutes.

27. Messengers who had incurred expences in fulfilling the appointments of the Association, were requested to present their accounts.

28. On motion of brother Johnson, the subject was taken into consideration, whether it would not be proper to make the same allowance for horse hire to Messengers sent to other Associations, who use their own horses, as is made to those who incur an actual and direct expense for conveyance. After some deliberation, it was agreed that no other allowance be made than a remuneration for monies actually paid by such Messengers for the means of conveyance.

29. Brother Cornelius presented his account, amounting to \$11 50 cents, which was allowed, and ordered to be paid by the Treasurer. Brother Bryce presented his account of \$10, which was also allowed and ordered to be paid by the Treasurer.

30. Messengers were appointed to the following Associations, viz:

General Association; to be held at Cartersville, Cumberland county, on James River, to convene on the 1st Saturday in June next—brethren Bryce and Cornelius, *messengers*.

Ketockton; at Broad Run Meeting-House, Fauquier county, Thursday before 3d Lord's day, in August, 1827—bre-

thren O. B. Brown, John Johnson, Robert Latham, James Hixon and George Love, *messengers*.

Dover; at Mangohick Meeting-House, King William county, 2d Saturday in October, 1826; brethren Samuel Cornelius and James Reid, *messengers*.]

Shiloh; at Hedgman's River Meeting-House, Jefferson, Culpepper county, on Friday before the 1st Lord's day, in September, 1826—brethren John Bryce, Thornton Stringfellow, Elijah Hansborough and William Bower, *messengers*.

Goshen; brother John Bryce, *messenger*.

Baltimore; at Pleasant Valley Meeting House, Washington county, Maryland, on the Thursday before the 3d Lord's day, in May, 1827—brethren Johnson and Robert Latham, *messengers*.

Philadelphia; at Blockley, 1st Tuesday in October, 1826—brother Bryce, *messenger*.

Albermarle; brother James Reid, *messenger*.

31. Brother Latham is appointed to write the next Circular Letter, in case of failure, brother Johnson.

32. Brother Stringfellow is appointed to write the next Corresponding Letter.

33. The next Association to be held at Elk Run Meeting-House, in Fauquier county, commencing on the Thursday preceding the 4th Lord's day, in August, 1827, at 11 o'clock. Brother James Reid to preach the introductory Sermon, and in case of failure, brother Samuel Cornelius.

34. Brethren Hixon, Halley, Hansborough and Carney appointed a committee to arrange the Visitation Meetings, and to report to-day.

35. The request from Elk Run Church, suggesting the appointment of a day of Fasting and Prayer, was taken under consideration, whereupon it was *resolved*, That it be recommended to the Churches, to set aside the 1st Saturday in November next, as a day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer for the Divine blessing on our Churches.

36. The following contributions were made to the fund of the Association:—Chappawamsick, \$2; Little River, \$3; Occoquan, \$2; Long Branch, \$2; Backlick, -2; Fryingpan, \$3; 1st Washington, \$5; Alexandria, \$5; Bethlehem \$2 50 cents; Grove, \$2; Rock Hill, \$2 50; Mount Pleasant, \$3; Elk Run, \$2; Fredericksburg, \$2; Enon, \$1. Total amount \$39 which amount was put into the hands of brother O. B. Brown, to be paid over to the Treasurer.

37. The Treasurer being absent, it is ordered that brother Brown pay to brother Cornelius his account of \$11 50 cts. and brother Bryce's account of \$10, out of the contributions put into his hands for the Treasurer.

38. The Report of the committee for arranging the Visi-



tation Meetings, was received and adopted. The arrangement is as follows, viz:

At Backlick; the 5th Lord's day, and Saturday preceding, in December, brethren Johnson and Cornelius to attend. Ditto on the 5th Lord's day, and day before in April, brethren Johnson and Brown to attend.

Fryingpan; 5th Lord's day and the day before in October brethren Brown and Cornelius to attend.

Nanjemoy; in April, 5th Lord's day and day before, brethren Cornelius and Reid to attend. Ditto, July 5th Lord's day, and the day before, brethren Brown and Reid to attend.

Hartwood; in December, April and July, 5th Lord's day and the day before, brother Stringfellow to attend each day.

Occoquan; in April, 5th Lord's day and the day before, brethren Latham and Johnson to attend.

Mount Pleasant, (at Pohick;) in July, 5th Lord's day and the day before, brethren Latham and Jacobs to attend.

New Brentown; in October, 5th Lord's day and day before, brethren Stringfellow and Reid to attend.

Enon; in December, 5th Lord's day and day before, brethren Brown and Jacobs to attend.

40. Ordered, that 1000 copies of the Minutes be printed, and the superintendance of the printing and distribution be confided to brethren Brown, Cornelius and Cawood.

41. *Resolved, unanimously*, That the thanks of this Association be presented to the brethren and friends in this vicinity, for the hospitable entertainment which we have received, and especially for the measures adopted by them, to prevent molestation, and preserve good order during our meeting.

42. *Resolved, unanimously*, That it be recommended to the Ministers and Churches of this Association, that a chapter or larger portion of the Holy Scriptures be read publicly at every meeting for public worship.

The Session was then closed with prayer and praise.

O. B. BROWN, *Moderator*.

GEORGE LOVE, *Clerk*.

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## PUBLIC WORSHIP.

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*Thursday, August 24th, 1826.*

Brother Brown preached the introductory sermon, from Matthew, 16 chap. 18 verse.

Brother Jos. Baker, from 2d Corinthians, 4th chap. 5th verse.

*Friday, 25th August.*

Brother John Oglevie, from 2d Timothy, 3 chap. 16 verse.

Brother John Miciu, from 32d chap. Isaiah, 18th verse.

Brother Philip Montague, from 10th chap. Romans, 13th verse.

Brother John Bryce, from the 3d chap. Galatians, 29th verse.

*Saturday, 26th August.*

Brother Jos. H. Jones, from the 14th chap. Proverbs, 32d verse.

Brother Wm. F. Broadus, from the 3d chap. Hebrews, 3d verse.

Brother Robert B. Semple, from the 10th chap. Romans, 11th verse.

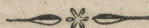
Brother Samuel Cornelius, from the 16th chap. Mark, 20th verse.

*Lord's Day, 27th August.*

Brother Stephen Whittlesey, from the 1st chap. Romans, 16th verse.

Brother John Johnson, from the 1st Corinthians, 2d chap. 7th verse.

Brother R. B. Semple, from the 15th chap. Romans, 33d verse.



## CIRCULAR LETTER.

*The Columbia Baptist Association, convened at Long Branch Meeting-House, Fauquier county, Virginia, August 24, 25 and 26, 1826.*

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ to the Churches of which it is composed.

**BELoved IN THE LORD:**

Assembled in the name of the Head of the Church, for the purpose of advising upon the best means of promoting the purity, peace and prosperity, of Zion; and for the further purpose of enlarging our acquaintance with Christian brethren, and of strengthening the affection and confidence which we have in each other: we have been blessed with a season of satisfaction, such as belongs peculiarly to Saints.

We have freely and affectionately communicated to each

other our views of Christian Doctrine, and Christian Discipline. Those of us who minister, as the servants of the Churches, in the Gospel, have prophesied upon the slain—have endeavored to comfort the feeble minded—to encourage the trembling sinner to look for salvation, in the reigning mediator—and to confirm the souls of the Disciples of Jesus: while with united hearts, we have all joined in praise for blessings bestowed upon the Churches, and in fervent prayer for the continuance of our civil and religious institutions—for the prevalence of evangelic truth—and for the gathering together in one, the children of God, who are scattered abroad.

It remains, that we solicit your attention to a few thoughts upon some subject connected with the common salvation. And where shall we begin?—In this age of speculation, invention and uncertainty: when a spirit of free inquiry is gone abroad over the whole Christian world—when almost every one hath a doctrine, or a system in religion to propose—when Fabrics once thought by their fond admirers, firm and immovable as the pillars of the universe, are seen to have their foundation in the dust—when some errors, the offspring of superstition and ignorance, which have survived for ages, are wasting away, and others which have long been dead, are resuscitated, called from their graves and presented to the world as new and important discoveries—when doctrines built upon the ever-during rock of immutable truth, are scrutinized by some with a boldness and a daring truly impious, and rejected by others as falsehoods. At such a time as this what shall we believe, or do, or teach?

What shall we believe? Do we look to tradition? Which of the ten thousand times ten thousand doctrines of men—old wives fables—endless genealogies—can credulity herself believe? Like Milton's spirits, we may "reason high of Providence, fore-knowledge, will and fate; fixed fate, free will, fore-knowledge absolute"—but like them we shall "find no end, in wandering mazes lost." Do we consult the writings the expositions, the controversies, or even the practical writings of men? Learned, ingenious and instructive as many of them undoubtedly are, yet their inconclusive reasonings, their contradictory sentiments, "their weak directions, leave the mind bewildered in a dubious road." We enter a chaos, where order is confusion—where light and darkness hold a never ending dispute for ascendancy.

What shall we do? Shall we launch out upon this troubled sea of opinion—offer our assistance to the distracted and wandering mariner, and endeavor to lead him through rocks, and dangers, and deaths, to the haven of truth? Were our courage equal to the daring exploit, our principles forbid it.

There are too many guides---too many religious pilots, while the chart, the compass, and the lights of heaven, have been disregarded.

What shall we teach? Shall we propose some reconciling expedient—some scheme of doctrine, which shall bring all parties together? We confess our poverty—we have no system to propose. And we say again, that in our opinion, there are too many system-builders—too many pilots—too many *infallible* expounders of what is too plain for the wise men of this world to understand. If we have not erred greatly in judgment, one principal reason why the truth is perplexed, why the Church is distracted, is the fondness of obtruding “I think” and “in my opinion,” upon every occasion. The metaphysics and the philosophy of christianity have banished plain, honest bible Christianity, in a great degree, from our social circles—from our publications—and, what is still worse, from our pulpits.

Brethren, we have no novel doctrine or system to propose. We would not dare to waste our own time or yours in idle speculations. The object of our letters is to stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance, to the observance of whatsoever things are lovely, just, pure, honest, and of good report. We believe with Dr. Owen, that “the best way to refute error is to preach the truth.” So that, instead of entering the field of controversy—engaging in the disputes of the day, and answering the “curious questions” of those who desire to be wise above that which is written, we would call upon our souls to rejoice, and ask you to joy in our joy, because our covenant God has, in his infinite wisdom and love, shewn us a more excellent, plain and certain way of attaining a correct knowledge of his will, and of diffusing that knowledge in the world. “*We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well that we take heed.*”

Indulge us in a few reflections upon this interesting fact.

1st. Endeavor to have your minds constantly impressed with the conviction of *the true and proper inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures*. This truth, though acknowledged by every christian, is not perhaps so strongly and so constantly present to our minds as it should be. And the manner in which portions of the word are sometimes quoted, may have served, in some measure, to weaken the impression: as when we say the “Gospel of John,” “What say the Sacred Writers upon this subject,” “Paul was of opinion,” &c. &c. Perhaps if those holy men were present on such occasions, they would say—“It is not we that speak but the spirit of our Father that speaketh in us.” The inspiration of the Scriptures is a first principle in the examination of truth. If this be doubtful, all is uncertain. We do well, therefore, to settle this point fully in our minds; for when

we once understandingly assent to it, it removes ten thousand difficulties. This truth is susceptible of the fullest proof. Did time permit, we could call a number of witnesses, who would all unite in testifying that *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

2ndly. *Endeavor to obtain a clear view of the whole truth, as taught in the book.* In order to this, we must read it diligently, constantly, and thoroughly. Occasional readers and partial readers can never know the whole will of God. Whenever we open it, let us say, "*I will hear what God the Lord will speak;*" then open our ears to hear, and our hearts to embrace, whatever he teaches. Delight in the Sacred Writings has ever been considered as one distinguishing characteristic of a child of God. David spake the feelings of every good man when he said—"Oh! how I love thy law. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath to thy judgments, at all times. Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver."

To our diligent reading and meditation, we must always add fervent prayer for divine illumination. "*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*" In former days, those who pleased God better than many who live in these times, were accustomed to read the word upon their bended knees; convinced that the spirit which indited it, could alone enlighten the mind into its true spiritual meaning. He who thus diligently and prayerfully reads the Scriptures, cannot fail to increase his knowledge.

They are designed to make the man of God perfect. They are able to make him savingly wise. The testimony of the Lord is said to be sure, making wise the simple: and David, who gave his days and his nights to this sacred study, obtained more understanding than all his teachers.

Let the benighted traveller, through some trackless wilderness, tell how cheering to his soul is the appearance of light. Such to the christian pilgrim is the word of God. It is a light shining in a dark place. It is a lamp to his feet, and a light to his paths. Let the troubled and anxious spirit tell what sweet satisfaction is found in the presence and hearty counsel of a friend. Such, and infinitely more, does the believer find in consulting the word of truth. It is the man of his counsel: in all his spiritual difficulties, it is his adviser. Would he become acquainted with those perfections, which constitute the glory of the Divine Character: some of them he may spell out in the works of creation, for

Heaven and earth are full of his praise. But in this volume he reads them clearly, both in that holy, just and good law, in which they are transcribed, and especially in the glorious Person and finished work of the Lord Redeemer. For God was in Christ, manifesting the glory of his wisdom, in the plan of redeeming love; displaying his awful justice in punishing sin; his unbounded mercy in accepting his substitution and sufferings in the room of rebellious man; and his Almighty power, in sustaining him under his conflicts and bitter agonies—in raising him from the dead—exalting him to the Mediatorial throne—and in giving him a name, a kingdom and authority above every other.

“Here his whole name appears complete;  
 “Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove,  
 “Which of the letters best is writ,  
 “The power, the wisdom, or the love.”

Would he know what the Lord requires him to believe?—What he would have him to do? What are the evidences of an interest in the blood and righteousness of the Saviour of sinners? In a word, would he know what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God in Christ Jesus concerning him? This sacred volume is able to teach, in the most simple, and at the same time, in the most satisfactory manner, all that is necessary for him to know and to do. It is ready to talk with him *when he sitteth in his house, when he walketh by the way, when he lieth down, and when he riseth up.* Oh! brethren, *let the word of Christ dwell in you richly—in all wisdom.* Dig for this knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding. Endeavor to obtain a clear, full, enlarged acquaintance with its doctrines, its precepts, its miracles, its prophecies, and its exceeding great and precious promises.

3d. *Bring every doctrine you hear to the touchstone of the word.* In that word “the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the last days some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy.” Beyond all dispute, there are many false teachers and many false doctrines now in the world. It is therefore as necessary now as in the apostolic age; to try the spirits. And what is the test of truth? Not human writings—not our experience, except so far as these accord with the inspired writings. We utterly disclaim for ourselves, and as utterly deny to all other fallible men, the right of imposing any dogmas as the test of truth. We do most firmly believe and most cordially rejoice in this truth that nothing ought to be believed as Christian doctrine, or practised as Christian duty, but what is revealed as truth and commanded as duty in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. But to *this test to this touchstone*, it is our duty and our privilege to bring every doctrine and every spirit. This was the

rule in the days of the prophets, "Isa. 8, 20, *To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*" Our Saviour more than intimates, that all religious errors result from ignorance or perversion of Scripture; *ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God*. Hence he commands us to *search* them; and hence the Bereans are commended, as more noble than the Thessalonians, because they *searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so*. The sacred writers denounce the most awful judgments against those, who should either pervert their writings, add to them, or diminish from them. "Though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed, Galatians, 1, 8. Whatever thing I command you, observe and do it--thou shalt not add thereto, or diminish from it, Deu. 12, 32. If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, Rev. 22, 18, 19."

He who can hear or read such language without trembling; must either prove to us that he has fully comprehended the revelation of God, and believes and teaches it without any mixture of error: or we shall fear that he has no just apprehension of the majesty and justice of God--of the value and importance of his truth--or of the terror of his wrath when once he is angry.

On this subject, let every immortal being dare to think for himself. The ministers of Satan are often transformed as the ministers of righteousness--and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Whatever name a man may assume, who comes to us as a teacher sent from God--whatever may be his talents, his learning, his eloquence, or his ignorance--whatever his professions of self-denial--of will worship--of humility, let us try the spirit. If it be of God, honor it as his messenger: if of Satan--resist it, flee from it. Its words are canker--its doctrines are wormwood--its end is destruction.

4thly. *Contend earnestly for the truth*. Never give place to error, no not for an hour. And if because you are unyielding in this cause, you should be charged with bigotry--if you are told that opinions are indifferent, &c. make your appeal to the testimony of God's word. If he persist, tell him you ought to obey God rather than man--tell him you are commanded to "hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Are we called of God to preach the Gospel? Let us by "manifestation of the truth, commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Let us not count our lives dear unto our-

selves, so that we may finish our course with joy and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Let us so preach, and so live, as to be able to say to our congregations at the close of our labors, "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

Are we called of the Church to the office of deacons? We must "hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, if we would purchase to ourselves a good degree—and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." In a word; have we the high honor of a name and a place among the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty? It is our privilege to be his witnesses: to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Earnestly—mark the expression: earnestly—but not angrily. We are to speak the truth, but it must be in love. Oh yes, let it ever be remembered that angry disputation for the truth gives no better evidence of our possessing it than that criminal indifference to it, which is so much commended in the present day. However, we may be satisfied of the inspiration of the sacred scriptures—however diligently we may read them—however we may contend against false teachers and false doctrines: unless we have experienced the power of the truth in renewing our hearts—subduing our sinful tempers and appetites—sanctifying our souls—and enabling us to live and walk in newness of life: though we may have made a long and a loud profession of religion—we are sounding brass—we are tinkling cymbals—we are—nothing.

O. B. BROWN, *Moderator.*

GEORGE LOVE, *Clerk.*

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## CORRESPONDING LETTER.

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The Columbia Association, convened at Long Branch, Fauquier county, August 24th, 25th and 26th, 1826.

*To the Associations who correspond with us, GREETING :*

BELOVED BRETHREN,

Blest with a foretaste of Heaven, in the fellowship of the saints during our present interview, it is a subject of no small degree of felicitation to us, that the same privilege is common to the whole household of faith. United in one general head, with one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, to your epistles of love we respond with pleasure, and the affectionate regard of your Messengers, we gladly reciprocate.



The present season brings with it much cause for gratitude and praise to our Heavenly Benefactor. All our national blessings are perpetuated. Liberty and peace are still our inheritance, with all their concomitant train. The Husbandman enjoys the fruit of his labor, and the pilgrim is permitted to pursue his way to glory unmolested by legal restrictions, while the Church of God remains uncontaminated by the touch of secular power.

When, in the Apostolic age, the "Churches had rest, they were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they were multiplied." So in these days, there is a general combination of effort to promulgate the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, beyond what any former age has known. Within the bounds of almost every Church, various institutions are in active operation, all having the same end in view, the instruction of the ignorant—the diffusion of the gospel to the poor, and the deliverance of immortal souls from the thralldom of sin. Tongues that were dumb have learned to articulate the praises of God. Many have caught the joyful strain. The sound has reverberated to the distant shores of Asia; and Africa begins to rejoice in the blessings of redeeming grace. In these events, with the gladdening prospect which they open to our view, we present to you our sincere congratulations.

But it is the lot of humanity that, till we arrive in heaven, no pleasure can be unmixed. The gold is mingled with alloy, and the fine gold is subject to dimness; so in the events which excite our joy, we discover much to damp that joy, and to admonish us of the necessity of watchfulness and prayer.--- Conformity to the sentiments and fashions of this world, has almost ceased to be regarded as a blot upon the christian character. If the earth helps the woman, that help is but a hard earned stipend—a poor remuneration for the contaminating influence which she receives from her helper. Christianity in name has become popular; and to confirm this popularity, the most offensive doctrines of the cross are often concealed. By many, the ordinances of the Gospel are mutilated to an entire perversion, and persons having a name and place in our churches, seem unapprized of the danger. While error is springing up, in every direction around us, its countenance by those who profess the whole truth, has obtained the proud name of liberality, and its indulgence is disguised under the more specious epithet of christian charity.

In this mixture of heaven and earth there is no affinity. The gold must be separated from the dross, though the intensity of the refiner's furnace may be required in its accomplishment.

To preserve and strengthen what is valuable, to discountenance and destroy that which polutes, should be the fer-

vent prayer and leading object of us all. And as God's instruments for this work, our hope is in the churches of our denomination. We trust the Lord has taught us to know the truth, and to view the Saviour in his ordinances. Then we cannot undervalue them; nor for any consideration compromise what our God has committed to us. Being of one spirit with you all, united in one faith, taught with you to be of one mind and to speak the same things, it is a subject of ineffable delight to us, that no local distance can separate our hearts or divide our prayers. When we feel our Saviour's presence, we will remember that you also are there. When we rejoice in what he is doing for the enlargement of his kingdom, we will remember that you participate in that joy. When we pray for the extinction of error and the establishment of all truth, we shall feel strengthened in our hope from the conviction that our prayers are mingled with yours; and when in the enjoyment of that true charity, which enables us to bear our beloved brethren of other associations upon our hearts to the throne of grace, we shall enjoy a confirmation in that love from the assurance, that in your prayers we have a perpetual interest.

Permit us brethren, beloved in the Lord, to solicit a continuance of your correspondence. Our next Association will be held, if the Lord permit, at Elk Run Meeting-House, in Fauquier county, on the Thursday preceding the fourth Lord's day, in August 1827, where we hope to receive and impart mutual salutations, through your messengers.

O. B. BROWN, *Moderator.*

GEORGE LOVE, *Clerk.*

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