

MINUTES

OF THE

THIRTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

HALDIMAND,

Regular Baptist Association,

WITH

CORRESPONDING AND CIRCULAR LETTERS,

HELD AT

HALDIMAND, JUNE 23 AND 24, 1854.

TORONTO:

PRINTED AT THE "GLOBE" BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.

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MINUTES.

Haldimand, June 23rd, 1854.

THE introductory sermon was preached by Elder Holman, from 1 Corinthians iii. 11. After which, the association having been called to order, Elder William Geary was chosen Moderator; Brother Milton Ewing, Clerk; and Brother Platt Hinman, Assistant Clerk.

The Constitution was then read by the Moderator; adjournment for one hour. Prayer by Elder John Gerrie.

Met at 2 o'clock, according to appointment.

Prayer by the Moderator. The following letters were then read, and the delegates took their seats in the Association (viz.), Whitby, Reach, Markham, Haldimand, Sidney, Rawdon, Thurlow, Pickering, and East Gwillimbury.

There were no delegates or letters from Cramahe, Murray, Brighton, First Toronto, Bond Street, Toronto, Second Markham, and Yonge Street.

Visiting brethren invited to take seats in this Association.

Whitby Village Church applied for, and received admission into the Association; after which, Elder John Gerrie preached from Psalm cxviii. 25. Adjourned till next morning at 8 o'clock, a. m.

Saturday, June 24, 8 o'clock, a. m.

Met according to adjournment. Prayer by Deacon Hall.

The Moderator then gave the right hand of fellowship to the delegates from the Whitby Village Church; after which, the letter from that Church was read.

Moved and agreed to, that we correspond by our Minutes.

with the Western Grand River, Eastern, Johnstown, Ottawa, and Montreal Associations.

Resolved, That this Association meet next year with the Whitby Village Church; that Elder A. Snyder preach the introductory sermon; and that Elder D. Wait be his alternate.

Resolved, That Elder John Gerrie superintend the printing of the Minutes of this Association, and that it be done in pamphlet form.

Resolved, That Elder D. Wait write a corresponding letter, to be inserted in these Minutes.

Deacon Hall gave intimation that he will (D. V.) next year bring in a Resolution to have the Association divided into two parts. The line of division to be fixed by the Association at its next session.

Sermon by the Moderator. Text, Phillipians iii. 19, 20. Adjournment for one hour.

2 o'clock, p. m.

Prayer by Elder Wait.

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed of Elders John Gerrie, William Hurlbut, and Deacon Hall, to prepare a petition to the Legislature on the Clergy Reserve question, in the name and on the behalf of this Association; and forward the same to the member to whom similar petitions may be intrusted.

Resolved, That Elder John Gerrie write the Circular Letter for the ensuing year.

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to visit the Cramahe and Brighton Churches, and ascertain their reasons for not representing themselves to this association; and that Elders Lacey and Wait, and Brother Milton Ewing, be the Committee for that purpose.

Resolved, That Clarke and Mariposa Churches be dropped from the Minutes of this Association.

Resolved, That this Association do now adjourn, to meet again on the fourth Friday of June, 1855, with the Whitby Village Church.

MILTON EWING,

Clerk of the Association.

Sermon by Elder Snyder, from Deut. xx. 1; and on the Lord's day, Sermons were preached by Elders Snyder, Holman and J. Gerrie, to crowded and attentive audiences.

STATISTICS OF THE CHURCHES.

Churches and Clerks.	Messengers.	Baptized.		Died.	Dismissed by Letter.		Total.		
		Received by Letter.	Restored.		Included.	Excluded.			
First Toronto.....		15	14	7	5	3	5	138	
Bond Street Toronto.....		7	13		2	11	3	255	
First Markham, <i>J. B. Miller</i> Letter.....		4	1				4	10	39
Second Markham.....	No letter.								
Pickering, <i>Geo. Strachan</i>	Deacon R. B. Vardon and Brother J. Turner.								
Whitby, 6th Con.....	Elder Holman and Deacon Doolittle.....							46	
Whitby Village, <i>Jabez Hall</i>	Elder J. Gerrie and Deacon Hall.....		8					28	
Reach, <i>D. Honeywell</i>	Elder Hurlburt and Deacon Honeywell.....		6		1			36	
East Gwillimbury.....	Elder W. Geary.....							28	
Haldimand, <i>Platt Hinman</i>	Elders Lacey and Wait and Deacons J. Mirrell, A. H. Bradley and Brethren M. Ewing and P. Hinman.....	3		3	2			121	
Rawdon, <i>P. White</i>	W. Card, D. Mack, and N. Hubel.....				1			47	
Thurlow, <i>M. Ross, Jun</i>	G. Ostrom, G. Thrashen, and M. Ross.....					1		32	
Sidney.....	Elder Snyder and L. and J. Turner.								
Cramahe.....	Messenger's name unknown.								

DIGEST OF LETTERS FROM THE CHURCHES.

HALDIMAND.—The letter of this church says, “While we mourn the low state of things among us, when compared with former days, we would desire to lie in the dust of self-abasement, and to confess our transgressions to the Lord, and cry that he would yet return and have mercy upon us, and restore unto us the joy of his salvation: there are among us those whose hearts tremble for the ark of God, and who sigh and cry for the abominations that are done in the land; who are willing to take the golden calf and to burn it and grind it to powder and cast it into the waters of strife and carnal ease, and worldly-mindedness and forgetfulness of God; that those who have been guilty of spiritual idolatry among us may be tested and brought to repentance, or if not, they may be taken away from us.

We would just state, that the decayed state of our chapel has led us to resolve on entirely renewing it, and the work is to be proceeded with immediately after the close of the present meetings. Pray for us that he may fill the house with his glory, and renew us as in the days of old.”

FIRST MARKHAM.—The church has nothing of a very cheering nature to communicate. The Lord has seemed to cover himself with clouds in his anger: the love of many waxed cold. Few seem concerned for the peace, the prosperity, and advancement of God’s cause among us. Many seek their own things, and few the things that are Christ’s; yet we bless God that we are not past feeling his strokes and smiting; some yet are anxious and prayerful, and laboring in the work of the Lord, and are waiting for the salvation of our God. We have enjoyed gospel ordinances during the summer, and we pray that God may make his word effectual to the conversion of sinners and building up his church more and more. We beg an interest in the prayers of our Christian brethren.

PICKERING.—The church has enjoyed the labors of Elder Clark, during a good part of the last year, but have not had such seasons of spiritual refreshing as they have formerly

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enjoyed, and still long for: but they wish to look to him who has said, "I will be as the dew unto Israel; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine—and their scent shall be as the wine of Lebanon." We have a very flourishing sabbath school in connection with our church, and some we hope are seeking after the Lord. We need one another's prayers. Pray for us.

REACH.—The church is scattered over a considerable extent of country, and cannot conveniently meet at one place every Lord's day; but we have regular preaching every other First day of the week, and the Lord's supper monthly; and our pastor preaches at a number of stations in different parts of the country, and the Lord seems to be moving in the hearts of a number of the people. Some are coming with broken hearts and confessing their sins; and are inquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward. We ask the prayers of the brethren on our behalf.

EAST GWILLIMBURY.—The church as a body is but small and weak; but they would acknowledge the Lord's goodness to them in hitherto sustaining them, and giving them a nail in his temple. They have enjoyed the labors of Elder Wm. Geary, during the greater part of last year, supported partly by the church and partly by the Regular Baptist Missionary Society, for which they desire to be thankful to God, and to the brethren who contribute to the funds of that Society.

THURLOW.—Things here are rather stationary; we have had preaching part of the time; and although many of us are growing old and feeble, we trust our love to our great Lord and his cause is undiminished, and our faith in him as our Lord, steadfast and unshaken. We beg an interest in the prayers of our brethren.

RAWDON.—The church here has had no regular preaching during the past year, and have only occasionally met for public worship. They lament that the love of many waxes cold; and many, from age and distance, find it difficult to meet with their brethren.

WHITBY, SIXTH CON.—The state of things here has been very discouraging during the past year. Elder Holmen has preached the greater part of the time, but did not consider himself as pastor of the church. There has been a spirit of Laodicean coldness among the members, and this once fair and flourishing church, reduced by removals and death, and other causes, seems in danger of losing its place and visibility among the churches of Christ. They earnestly desire the prayers of the brethren.

WHITBY VILLAGE CHURCH, FIRST CON.—Here we have had public worship regularly during the past year. In the morning at Port Whitby, and at the meeting-house in the afternoon; and we have had a well attended Sabbath school also at the Bay. The attendance on our public services has been very cheering and encouraging at both places; numbers have professed love to the good Word of life, and continue regularly to worship with us. Our preacher, Mr. J. Gerrie, was ordained to the pastoral office among us on the 31st of May, and continues to labor with us. We long for a spirit of reviving and refreshing grace, that we may hear men saying, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

TORONTO, BOND STREET.—This church has greatly enlarged their house of worship, during the past year. They are in harmony and enjoying the smiles of God, their unworthiness to the contrary notwithstanding.

TORONTO, QUEEN STREET.—The brethren of this church, after making mention of God's goodness to them, say, "The gospel has been faithfully preached amongst us; and the ordinances duly administered. Our weekly prayer meetings have been kept up; and also our monthly Concert of prayer, for the cause of missions and the oppressed."

No letter from Second Markham, Yonge Street, New Market, Brighton, and Cramahe. Letter from Sydney retained or lost.

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CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The Haldinand Régular Baptist Association, to the Associations of the same order, with whom we correspond, greeting,

BELOVED BRETHREN,

Through the tender mercy of our God, we have been permitted to meet again on an anniversary occasion. It would be equally pleasing to us, as it would be cheering to you, if we could in truth tell of the gracious dealings of God, by visiting our churches and adding to their number "such as shall be saved;" but this is not the case.

The letters from the churches for the current year, with one or two exceptions, give a melancholy detail of langor, supineness, and diminution. Two churches, whose names hitherto were inserted in our Minutes, we have been compelled after much forbearance to erase from the Minutes of the present session. We have several other churches without pastors, some of which have nearly lost their visibility.

The standard of vital piety among us needs much elevation. One cause which probably has contributed to our present lamentable condition is the want of a greater number of efficient pastors to labor in our churches.

We have at present 17 or 18 churches in the Association, with only 8 or 10 pastors. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

The facts stated above are, as they should be, a cause of grief to us; and could we have acted honorably and done justice to you, we should not have pained your hearts by disclosing such painful details. But we hope one advantage will be gained; that you, affected by our miseries, will earnestly pray that the Lord would revive his work among us in the midst of the years, and that in wrath he would remember mercy.

Nothing special occurred during our session. A degree of harmony prevailed during our deliberations; but we were not cheered by the presence of any delegates from sister Associations. We desire, however, to continue our correspondence with you by an exchange of Minutes, if nothing more, though your delegates will always be re-

ceived with fraternal affection by us. The preceding statistical Table may give you some idea of our condition for the present year; but as a number of our churches have sent no statistical account, it is but a very imperfect view that can be obtained from it.

We respectfully request sister churches to send copies of their minutes by post, with the name of their Corresponding Secretary, and Post Office, addressed to the Rev. D. Wait, Haldimand, the present Corresponding Secretary of our Association.

Brethren, with a fervent desire that the Almighty may bless you, multiply your numbers, and add to your Christian graces, we humbly subscribe,

Your affectionate Brethren,

In Christ Jesus, our Lord,

WILLIAM GEARY, *Moderator.*

MILTON EWING, *Clerk.*

CIRCULAR LETTER.

To the Churches composing the Haldimand Regular Baptist Association.

DEAR BRETHREN,

The practice of addressing Circular Letters to churches associated together for mutual edification, has advantages which the wisdom and the piety of our denomination have long employed to further the general interests of our Lord. We still would seek to do good by the same means. And in doing so, we usurp no authority over your faith; we address you; not in the language of dictation, but of affectionate counsel. We have selected for our theme, *Ministerial support*, and without preface or introduction, we say, *First*, support the ministry, because God has enjoined such a duty upon the churches, and a *voluntary* failure to carry out the revealed will of God on this, as on any other subject, is guilt which must leave a delinquent church to wither away. No man with the New Testament in his hands, if he consults the Book at all, in order to ascertain the mind of the Spirit in reference to ministerial support, can fail to

ascertain at once the will of God on this subject. Paul, in 1 Cor. ix. 11, shows the reasonableness of sustaining preachers of the gospel, and the smallness of refusing to them a generous support. If, says the Apostle, we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If the rich, and glorious, and permanent blessings of God's word and ordinances, are scattered abroad amongst the churches by men who have abandoned every earthly prospect for the single purpose of engaging in this work, is it "*a great thing*" that such sowers should reap from those to whom they minister, enough of the things that perish with the using, to keep them above mental anxiety? Those church members who think it "*a great thing*" to give a half or a two-third's supply of carnal things for a full supply of spiritual instruction, had need to look well to the state of their hearts: Inability to support the ministry is no sin on the part of any people; unwillingness to do so, is criminality, which will meet its own reward.

Covetousness may suggest, that the gospel should be preached without duly sustaining the laborer: but the Holy Spirit has given the following decision upon the matter, which (on the part of all those at least who acknowledge their obligation to bow to such authority) must be final. We read, 1 Cor. ix. 13, Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the Temple; and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? *Even so hath the Lord ORDAINED, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.* Such is the divine law. A distinct and clear *appointment* of the Lord. Under the old dispensation, the priesthood were, by God's special direction, provided for, and it is worthy of notice, that a neglect to carry out this provision, at one period, brought upon Israel the terrible denunciation, "Ye are cursed with a curse." Under the new dispensation, God has also given special legislation for the support of the ministry, and a voluntary failure on the part of any church or individual to carry out the divine arrangement will, with a new emphasis, bring upon such delinquents the withering anathema of the prophet of Israel, "ye are cursed with a curse." Again the Apostle says, Gal. vi. 6,

"Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." Here the pitiable doctrine of state support to ministers of the gospel is utterly condemned, and voluntarism established by divine command. The hearer is to pay the teacher—to communicate to him, not the bare necessities of life, observe, but "*all good things.*" Let this be done, and God's law will be honored, many of his faithful servants relieved, and the gospel will have weight, where now it is fettered.

Again, we read, 1 Tim. v. 17, 18, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the laborer is worthy of his reward." Here the Spirit saith unto the churches, that the preacher of the gospel is especially to be counted worthy of "double honor," that is, a *liberal maintenance*. And this is only carrying out a principle of common justice,—there is no favor conferred; no pauper relieved by mere good will. No! on the contrary, the laborer is *worthy* of his reward, and to detain or keep back that reward, is, to say the very least of it, as unholy and immoral an act as it would be to keep back the wages of any other laborer, physical or literary. God can never sanction injustice, and injustice here, we think, has been, and still is, a bar in the way of the prosperity of many churches. Let, then, our first proposition be remembered, that we must sustain the ministry because God makes it a positive duty, the neglect of which must bring leanness into the souls of church members and barrenness upon the churches. *Second.* Support the ministry liberally, because God is dealing bountifully with you. We live in times of great general prosperity. The mechanic is pursuing his calling with profit; the farmer is amply rewarded for his toil; the products of his farm command an extraordinary price; and the merchant is increasing his fortune every year, with a rapidity which has no parallel in the past. Such prosperity can only be prevented from ruining the souls of men by the counteracting influence of such an extended liberality as God in his Word requires. In view of the manner in which men of means dispose of the claims of Christ upon their property, we can-

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not regard the teachings of the Spirit on this subject without painful apprehension. Paul says, 2 Cor. viii. 12 (see the whole chapter), "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." How comprehensive the phrase, "*according to that a man hath,*" it speaks peace to the poor man, contributing his mite; but what a voice is it to the man who gives a little, a very little out of his abundance, "*accepted according to that a man hath.*" The Apostle continues, verse 13, "For I mean not that other men be eased, and you burdened; but by an *equality*, &c." Now where, amongst the very best and most devoted of our churches, do we find such rules observed? Where do we find *equality* in giving practised? Look at the mode of communicating their earthly substance, their "carhal things," adopted by God's professed people, and it would really seem as if God had commanded in the most positive terms, that in sustaining his cause some should be eased and others burdened, and that equality should specially be avoided. When a man abandons every earthly prospect of gain, leaves every earthly avenue to fortune, for the single purpose of preaching the gospel to his fellow men, and is left without a competency to prosecute his exhausting labors, is not that anxious man *burdened* to sustain religious doctrine and institutions, while others are eased? And where is the *equality* in men pocketing their hundreds or their thousands a year, and keeping the income of the man who supplies them with the bread of life down to the *bare living* point; and (when his circumstances are all taken into consideration) beneath a respectable living point? But this is not all; God's rule of action in the matter of giving is utterly and recklessly disregarded by church members in nearly every contribution that is made. Take, for example, the course pursued in raising means to defray the current expenses of any church within the limits of our Association, and where do we find equality the rule of giving? One man pays three per cent upon his entire income, another two, another one, while others do not pay one penny on the pound. Is not this setting the Holy Spirit's legislation on this subject at defiance; and can churches grieve that Spirit and still expect to prosper? We blame the churches

in this matter, rather than individuals, for it belongs to the churches to carry out *every divine regulation*, and if there are amongst our church members individuals who will not bow to a rule of the New Testament, they ought to be disciplined. What right has any church to dispense with heaven's law of giving? Can we innocently ignore the principle to give as God has prospered us? Can we blot out, in effect, the Lord's law of equality, and still expect the favor of God to be with us? Impossible! Let the churches inquire, then, whether much of their present barrenness may not be referable to the sanction which they tacitly give to that worldly-mindedness which eases one and burdens another. *Third.* Support the ministry if you would have an efficient ministry. It is found to be next to impossible, at the present day, to prevail upon young men of talent to consecrate themselves to the work of preaching the gospel. The reason is, that in almost any worldly profession, whether it be the bar, the counting room, or the farm, an independent competency, to say the least of it, is easily reached, while in the ministry a bare living is the very best that is before them. We do not admire the spirit of such young men as can be turned aside from Christ's work by such considerations, but far less do we admire the spirit and the policy which throw such stumbling-blocks in their way. Sin in one direction will not neutralize sin in an opposite direction. In conclusion, we would earnestly ask, are our churches doing their duty on this subject? Are not our pastors wronged? And is it not a fact, that some brethren, according to Christ's estimate, are doing ten, ay, twenty times as much as others? The Lord saw the rich casting into the treasury *much* money, yet said, in view of the widow's two mites, "Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast *more* in than all they which have cast into the treasury." While, then, we complain of the absence of the Spirit, let us resolutely look these matters in the face. And may God strengthen and build up the churches in the faith of the gospel.