

APPENDIX.

I. – BUSINESS MEETINGS OF A CHURCH, ASSOCIATION, ETC.

Where the spirit of Christian love and courtesy prevails, very few rules are necessary in the transaction of church business. The pastor of a church, by virtue of his office, is its Moderator. He therefore presides at its meetings, which should be opened with singing, reading a suitable portion of Scripture, and prayer. The clerk then reads the minutes of the last meeting, and the pastor states, that if there is no motion to amend, the minutes will stand approved. If corrections are necessary, they are made, that the records may show exactly what has been done. The items of business should be taken up thus. 1. Unfinished business; 2. Reports from committees; 3. New business. It is not necessary to make a motion to take up unfinished business. It is before the church and must be acted on, unless a motion to postpone its consideration prevails. So of reports from committees. Under the item of new business any brother can mention what, in his judgment, claims the consideration of the church; but in all matters of importance it is desirable that there should be some previous consultation among the most prudent brethren as to what new business shall be introduced. Nothing has been said as to the time of receiving members, because some churches prefer that this shall be done directly after the devotional exercises; others that it shall be done after all other business is transacted; while others, still, receive members, not at business, but at covenant and prayer meetings.

CONCERNING MOTIONS

A motion made, and not seconded, does not claim the Moderator's notice; but if seconded, he must state it to the meeting. This must be done before there is any discussion.

While a motion is undergoing discussion no new motion can be presented. But it is in order to move to amend a motion by adding or striking out words, phrases, and sentences. It is even parliamentary to move to amend by striking out all after the word *Resolved*, and introducing new matter in conflict with the original proposition. This, however, is not an amendment, but a substitute. An amendment must be germane to the matter embraced in the motion: a substitute is intended to supersede it.

Some suppose a motion can be withdrawn by the mover any time before the vote is taken. Others think that after a motion comes regularly before the meeting it can not be withdrawn except by consent of the body. The practice of deliberative bodies is conforming more and more to the latter view. Unanimous consent, however, is not necessary.

When an amendment to a motion is accepted by the mover no vote on the amendment is to be taken; if the mover does not accept it, a separate vote must be taken on the amendment, and then on the original proposition.

It is in order to move an amendment to an amendment, but this is the utmost limit to which the matter can go, and seldom should go so far.

PRIVILEGED QUESTIONS.

These embrace motions to adjourn, to lay on the table, to have the previous question, to amend, to commit, to postpone. They are called privileged because, it is supposed, they can be made at any time. This, however, is not strictly true; for even the question of adjournment, which takes precedence of all other questions can not be presented while a member is speaking, or a vote is being taken; nor can a motion to adjourn, which has been negatived, be renewed until some other proposition is made, or other business is transacted. (Writers on Parliamentary Roles

differ as to what are privileged questions. Jefferson in his “Manual” includes all named above except the “previous question.” Matthias in his “Rules of Order” embraces all except the motion to lay on the table. Cushing in his “Manual” reduces privileged questions to three, namely, adjournment, questions of privilege, and orders of the day; while he ranks as “Subsidiary Questions” the following “lie on the table, previous question, postponement, commitment, amendment.”)

It will rarely be necessary in the transaction of business in churches, associations, etc., to call for the previous question. When, however, a motion for the previous question is made and seconded, the Moderator will say, “Shall the main question now be put?” If the decision is affirmative, the meeting votes, without further discussion, on the original motion. If the meeting decides that the main question shall not be put – it indicates a desire that the discussion shall go on.

NOT DEBATABLE.

Certain motions, are not debatable, such as the motion to *adjourn*, to have the *previous question*, to *lay on the table*, etc.

But when these motions are modified by some condition of *time*, *place*, or *purpose*, they become debatable.

MOTIONS TO RECONSIDER.

A motion to reconsider a proposition formerly adopted must be made by one who voted with the majority. If such a motion prevails, the original matter is before the body, as if it had never been acted on.

POINTS OF ORDER, APPEAL.

If a member in debate violates any recognized rule or order, it is the business of the Moderator to call him to order. Or, any other members may present a point of order, which the Moderator must decide. If the decision is unsatisfactory, an appeal may be taken to the body; but this should be done only in peculiar cases.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS.

In stating a motion or taking a vote the Moderator should rise from his seat.

If there is an equal division of votes, the Moderator may give the casting vote, or he may, more prudently in most cases, decline voting. If he declines, the matter is decided in the negative. It is not desirable for any question that comes before a church to be decided by a majority of *one* vote, and for that vote to be the pastor's.

No member can speak except on some definite subject before the body unless he wishes to explain why he is about to make a motion. It is generally better to make a motion and then, after it is seconded, speak in explanation and defence of it.

When blanks are to be filled, if different numbers are proposed, the vote must be taken first on the largest number, the longest time, etc.

If a deliberative body decides beforehand to adjourn at a certain hour, when that hour comes the Moderator, without waiting for a motion to adjourn, must pronounce the meeting adjourned.

II. FORMS OF MINUTES, LETTERS, ETC.

There are no invariable forms, but the following are recommended as generally suitable:

1. RECORD OF CHURCH MEETINGS.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 8, 1867.

The _____ church met for business at ____ o'clock, the pastor presiding. After devotional exercises the minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. [After this whatever business is done must be recorded.]

Adjourned.

_____, Clerk.

2. LETTER OF DISMISSION.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 15, 1867.

The _____ Baptist church of _____

To her sister, the _____ Baptist church of _____

Dear Brethren:

This certifies that _____ is a member with us in good standing and full fellowship. At _____ own request _____ is hereby dismissed from us to unite with you.

When received by you _____ connection with us will terminate.

By order of the church.

_____, Church Clerk.

This letter will be valid for _____ months.

3. LETTER OF NOTIFICATION.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 5, 1867.

To the _____ church.

Dear Brethren:

You are hereby notified that _____ was received by letter from you to membership in the _____ church, _____ 1867.

_____, Church Clerk.

4. LETTERS OF COMMENDATION.

These are usually given by pastors to members who expect to be absent from home for a time. They are substantially as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, July 4, 1867.

This certified that _____ is a member of the _____ Baptist church in this place, in good standing, and is commended to the Christian fellowship of all sister churches.

Pastor _____ Baptist church.

5. CALL FOR A COUNCIL OF RECOGNITION.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 10, 1867.

To the _____ Baptist church in _____.

Dear Brethren:

There is a company of brethren and sisters in the Lord who wish to become an independent church. You are therefore requested to send your pastor and two brethren to meet in council at _____ at _ o'clock, to take the matter into consideration. If the council approves the movement, said brethren and sisters will be glad to have the moral influence of its

recognition. The following churches are invited to send messengers. _____, _____, _____,
_____, _____.

Yours truly,

(Committee.)

6. CALL FOR A COUNCIL OF ORDINATION.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 20, 1867.

The _____ Baptist church of _____

To the _____ Baptist church of _____

Dear Brethren:

We request you to send your pastor and two brethren to meet in council _____
_____ at ___ o'clock, to consider the propriety of ordaining to the work of the ministry
brother _____ . The following churches (the churches invited should always be
named) are invited to send messengers: _____, _____, _____.

By order of the church,

_____, _____, Clerk.

7. CALL FOR AN ADVISORY COUNCIL.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 10, 1867.

The _____ Baptist church of _____.

To the _____ Baptist church of _____.

Dear Brethren:

We are sorry to inform you that there are serious difficulties among us, disturbing our peace and hindering our usefulness as a church. We therefore request you to send your pastor and two brethren to meet in council, to advise us what to do. The following churches are invited to send messengers: _____, _____, _____, _____.

By order of the church.

_____, Clerk.

8. RECORD OF A COUNCIL.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 30, 1867.

A council, called by the _____ church, met _____, at ___ o'clock. Brother _____ was chosen moderator, and brother _____, clerk. Prayer by _____ . The church records, referring to the call of the council, were read, from which it appear that the object is _____ .

The credentials of the messengers were presented. The following churches sent the following brethren, namely:

CHURCHES.

MESSENGERS.

[Whatever is done must be faithfully recorded.]

On motion the council was dissolved.

_____, Moderator.

_____, Clerk.

9. FORM OF MINISTERIAL LICENSE.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 8, 1867.

This is to certify, that brother _____ is a member of the _____ Baptist church, in good standing and full fellowship. Trusting that God has called him to preach the

gospel, we hereby license him to engage in the great work; and we offer to God our earnest prayers that he may become “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

By order of the church, this _____ day of _____, 18__.

_____, Pastor,

_____, Clerk.

10. CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION.

This is to certify, that brother _____ was, ordained to the work of the gospel ministry, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the eldership, on the ___ day of _____, 18__. He was called to ordination by the _____ church of which he was a member which had ample opportunity to become acquainted with his piety and ministerial gifts.

The ordaining council was composed of _____ brethren from _____ churches, who after a deliberate and thorough examination of the candidate cordially recommended him for ordination.

Our beloved brother, the bearer of this paper, has, therefore, the entire approbation of the ordaining council in being publicly set apart to preach the gospel and administer the ordinances of Christ.

May he, like Barnabas, be “full of the Holy Spirit and of faith,” and through him may “much people be added to the Lord.”

_____, Moderator,

_____, Clerk.

III. MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

Marriage is an institution of Divine appointment, given in wisdom and kindness, to increase human happiness and to support social order.

In the Bible, which should be the lamp to your path in every relation, you will find the directions needed in this.

In token of your decided choice of each other as partners for life, you _____ and _____ will please to unite your right hands.

(Joining of hands.)

Do you solemnly promise, before Almighty God and these witnesses, to receive each other as husband and wife, agreeing to perform the duties growing out of the relation, pledging yourselves to love each other, and to make every reasonable exertion to promote each other's happiness until the union into which you are now entering is dissolved by death?

(When a ring is employed the following can be used. In confirmation of these vows, you will please give and receive this ring, as an emblem and pledge of the pure and enduring love you have promised to cherish for each other.)

In view of the promises thus made, I do now, by virtue of the authority vested in me, as a minister of the gospel, pronounce you husband and wife, henceforth in interest and destiny, as in affection, ONE. And what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

IV. THE PROVINCE OF ASSOCIATIONS AND COUNCILS.

It is customary among Baptists for the churches, according to their convenience, to form District ASSOCIATIONS. These bodies are composed of messengers from the churches. And as no fixed number of churches is necessary in organizing an association, it may be either large or small. Every church acts voluntarily in connecting itself with an association. There is not –

there can not be – compulsion in the matter. This results from the fact that the Scriptures recognize no higher tribunal than a church.

There are many prudential reasons for the formation of associations. Some persons seem to think that the chief business of associations is to collect the statistics of the churches and publish them. This is the least part of their business. Their great work is connected with local Church Extension, the Missionary Enterprise, Bible, Book and Tract Distribution, Ministerial Education, and the Sunday-school work. Combined action for these objects is more effective than isolated action. This is the supreme reason for associations.

It follows, of necessity, that an association is only an advisory body. It may recommend to the churches that they do thus and thus; but it can go no farther. It can enact no decrees; and if it did, it would have no power to execute them. It is no Court of Appeals, whose decisions are to nullify those of the churches, Baptists must, with holy jealousy, watch and arrest the first encroachments of associations on the independence of the churches.

There needs to be something said about COUNCILS. Like associations they are advisory bodies; and while this fact is kept distinctly in view, their utility can not be questioned; but there is danger lest they assume authority over the churches; and lest the churches acquiesce in the assumption. The following remarks on councils, from a judicious author (Rev. Warham Walker, in his “Church Discipline,” pp. 63-64.), are recommended to the Christian brotherhood:

“The true theory of councils appears to be that which regards them as merely advisory. In ordinary cases of discipline, involving no doubtful or difficult question, they are not needed. But cases of a different character may arise. A church may be called to act upon questions of the highest importance, and so complicated and difficult, as to render needful all the wisdom and experience that can be brought to bear upon them. Or, a church may be so divided in opinion on

questions seriously affecting its vital interests, that no approach to unanimity can reasonably be hoped for, except through the influence of such a council as may command the respect and confidence of the body. Or, the pastor of a church may be guilty of some misconduct, involving a forfeiture of his ministerial and Christian character. In this last case, although no doubt may be entertained in relation to the course to be pursued, still it is important that the advice of other pastors and able brethren should be obtained. The removal of one of Zion's watchmen is a matter of painful interest, not merely to the one church over which he presides, but to many. As a public teacher of religion, he has had a place in their affectionate regard; and his fall, like the extinction of a star, is felt by them to be a public calamity. It would seem, therefore, in the case supposed, to be due to the neighboring churches, that before any decisive action is had, a council should be called to deliberate upon the whole matter, and say what action in their judgment is advisable. The opinion of such a body, although not binding upon the church, is entitled to consideration; and if adopted must add greatly to the weight of its final decision.

“In this, and in all cases, where the aid of a council is sought, the right of a decision rests with the church. It is the province of the council, not to act authoritatively, but to advise the churches how to act. The advice so given ought by no means to be lightly rejected, but if, in the deliberative judgment of the church, it is contrary to the will of the Master, it can not be adopted. When a disagreement of this kind exists, perhaps the most effective means of restoring harmony may be to have recourse to a second council. Still, the ultimate decision belongs to the church.

“It is supposed by some that the power of ordination to the Christian ministry resides, not in the church, but in a council, assembled at the call of a church, and acting through a presbytery of its own selection. And this being assumed, it is supposed to follow, that the power to depose from the ministry, which is an act of equal authority with the other, must be lodged in a body

similarly constituted. But whence, it may be demanded, does the council, as such, derive its origin and its powers? Evidently from the church. But for the call of the church it would never have existed. It is the creature of the church, and can not, without manifest impropriety, exercise an authority superior to that of its creator. Besides, -- if a church be incompetent to depose from the ministry, it must also be incompetent to exclude a minister since the former act is virtually included in the latter. The discipline of the church, so far as ministers are concerned, would thus become an empty name. The truth seems to be, that the ordaining power is in the church. Inasmuch, however, as the exercise of that power is an act of public importance and interest, it is due to the neighboring churches, that the advice of their pastors and such other members as they may designate for this purpose, should previously be heard. Especially is it due to the presbyters who may be called upon to act, that they should have opportunity to satisfy themselves in relation to the character, call to the ministry, and qualifications of the candidate. For these reasons, a council ought always in such cases to be called, -- not to ordain, but to advise the church in respect to ordination; nor is it easy to conceive of a case in which it would be expedient for the church to insist upon proceeding, contrary to such advice. Still, the right of decision is in the church; and the officiating presbytery should be regarded as acting, not in behalf of the council, but in behalf of the church."

This long extract has been made, because the views it presents are believed to be of great importance. Councils composed of judicious brethren may be expected to give good advice, and good advice should be taken; but as councils are advisory, they are not authoritative bodies. Hence for a council to require a church to give a pledge beforehand to abide by its decision is a direct assault on church independence. And for a church to give such a pledge is disloyalty to

Christ; for it is a surrender of the great principle that a church is the highest tribunal, and is the only competent authority to pronounce a final decision.