

HISTORY

—OF THE—

OLDEST BAPTIST CHURCH

—IN—

INDIANA,

—BY—

22680

W. H. McCOY,

(ONE OF ITS MEMBERS.)

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FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CHURCH.

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INSCRIBED

TO THE MEMORY OF

REV. W. T. GORDON,

OUR

BROTHER AND PASTOR,

WHO HAS

VERY MATERIALLY AIDED IN COMPILING THIS

HISTORY,

AND

WHOSE EARNEST

DESIRES ARE FOR THE SUCCESS

AND PROSPERITY

OF THE

CHURCH.

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# HISTORY

OF THE

## CHARLESTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH.

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### PART I.

The history of the Charlestown Baptist Church, located in Clark County, Ind., is most peculiar and sad, but, withal, very interesting. Peculiar and sad because of its many trials, discords and divisions, thereby weakening the local strength of the Baptists and their doctrines of faith and practice; interesting because of its early date in the history of the country, its continued existence through its many trials, and its influence for good in the cause of Christianity.

The Charlestown Baptist Church is the off-spring, or continuation, of the Baptist Church, organized in 1798, north-west of the Ohio River, near the mouth of the creek now known as "Fourteen Mile," in Clark County, Ind. In regard to the organization of this church the records give the following :

"November 22, 1799.—The Constitution—We, the Church of Christ, on Owens creek, in the County of Knox, and territory northwest of the Ohio river, in the Illinois grant, was constituted as a church on the principles of the Baptist Confession of Faith adopted at Philadelphia, in the year of our Lord, 1765. Being constituted by brother Isaac Edwards. We have hereunto set our hands this day and date above written. John Fislar, Sophia Fislar, John Pettet and Cattern Pettet."

The constituent members were four—two men and their wives. The church was called "Fourteen Mile." Isaac Edwards, who constituted the church, was a Baptist preacher, of Kentucky. The stream, or creek, upon which the church was constituted, was

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called "Owens Creek," but soon afterward was called "Fourteen Mile Creek," by which latter name it is now known.

The first meeting of this church, immediately following its organization, was held on the 16th of February, 1799. At this meeting William Kellar was chosen Moderator, and John Pettet, Church Clerk. William Kellar was a Baptist preacher, of Kentucky. From the records, it appears that the church met regularly once each month for the transaction of business ever after its first business meeting. On July 6, 1799, were the first additions to the church, when two were received by letter. to-wit: James Abbet and Margaret Abbet, and one Stephen Shipman by experience and baptism.

James Abbet was chosen pastor March 13, 1802, and on the same day and date, at the suggestion of the newly-chosen pastor, the church "agreed to attend to communion and *washing feet*" at the June meeting following. But, at this meeting, the records show "that, as considerable light was shown upon the 13th chapter of John by several of the members present, the matter of *washing feet* was deferred." (And the records do not show that the ordinance of "*washing feet*" ever again came before the church) December 11, 1802, James Abbet was excluded for the "*heinous and abominable crime of falsehood*," and a public declaration made of the same on Jan. 8, 1803. After sermon, 4th Saturday in August, 1799, the church chose John Fislar and John Pettet deacons, Hinson Hobbs was received by letter, and on Sept. 23, 1799, was chosen elder. July 8, 1801, Elisha Carr was received by experience and baptism. August 27 and 28, 1801, the church met at the residence of Elisha Carr, on Silver Creek, near the present location of the Charlestown church, and at this meeting six were received by experience and baptism. From this period it seems that the church met mostly or wholly in this vicinity. December 12, 1801, the church talked of building a meeting-house; and January 9, 1802, appointed a committee to look out a place on which to build, and to ascertain the probable costs. February 12, 1802, this committee reported that two parties, in different localities, proposed each to give one acre of ground upon which to build, but from some cause the enterprise failed. In April and

May of 1803, the matter of building again came before the church, at which time the church fixed the place of building, "on Silver Creek, near the mouth of Sinking Fork." Subscription papers were circulated, and, by December 8, 1804, an amount of money and material was subscribed and contributed sufficient to finish a comfortable log house.

The log house, becoming old and two small to accommodate the congregations of the church, on February 21, 1818, the church considered the matter of building a new meeting-house, but delayed the undertaking until January 25, 1823, when the enterprise was revived, and by motion it was agreed to build a brick meeting-house, on a spot of ground donated to the Baptist church by Elisha Carr, near the old house. February 28, 1823, the church chose John McCoy, John Bowel and Jonah Harris "trustees," to contract and superintend the building of the brick meeting-house, 46x28 feet. The house was more than one year building, but was ready for occupancy November 27, 1824.

About the year 1803, the name of the church was changed and called "Silver Creek" instead of "Fourteen Mile." Up to this time the church belonged to the Salem Baptist Association of Kentucky. In the year 1812 the Silver Creek Baptist Association was organized at this church, and the church became a member of it.

The church prospered greatly for thirty years, and was the leading church of all denominations in Clark and adjoining counties, and also was the mother church of many churches in other neighborhoods and adjoining counties.

In the years of 1828 and 1829 the "*Isms*," advocated by Alexander Campbell, were imbibed by a majority of the members of the church through the medium of the periodical entitled the "Christian Baptist."

The Articles of Faith, on which the church was constituted, were voted out of the Constitution, and a split of the church was the result. On the 23d day of May, 1829, the division took place. Each party had met at the church on the usual day for business, but the minority being aggrieved at the action of the majority and its continued persistence in the same, on the 25th day of April, 1829, withdrew to the "Shade,"

near a large basin, not far from the meeting-house; and here it was that this minority received the opprobrious epithet, "*The Sink-hole Elect.*" Here in the shade, with prayers and tears, a remonstrance is prepared; and, though a minority of the original church, they determine to stand fast, maintain the Baptist faith, ask their constitutional rights, and declare themselves the "*Silver Creek Baptist Church.*" (And they were so recognized by a council appointed by the Lost River Association in the ensuing August, 1829.) The minority having thus declared itself the church, preferred charges against the majority as "having essentially departed from the faith and practice of the church," and therefore excluded them. The majority also declared itself the "Silver Creek Baptist Church," and decided that the minority had gone out from among them, "contrary to the common usage and discipline of the church," and were no more of them.

The minority changed the time of the meetings for business from the fourth Saturday of each month to the second Saturday, and occupied the house on these stated occasions until February, 1834. The majority continued to occupy the house on the fourth Saturday of each month, until the house became too old to accommodate a congregation, when they built a commodious and neat church-house in an adjoining neighborhood. This congregation now numbers fifty, and is known as the "Silver Creek Christian Church." December 4, 1858, it gave its entire right and title in the old meeting-house to the "Charlestown Baptist Church."

The Silver Creek Association, as a body, imbibed the "Isms" advocated in the "Christian Baptist," consequently the minority division of Silver Creek Church resolved to ask admittance into the Lost River Association, and were received by this body in September, 1829.

For a time the little band enjoyed a good degree of prosperity and success. But the schism, of 1829, caused by the propagation of the principles advocated in the "Christian Baptist," resulted in the gradual adoption of extreme views by the minority party, in regard to the use of means in the salvation of sinners. In their earnest endeavors to avoid the dangers with which the new doc-



trine of "salvation by works" was fraught, it appears that these brethren were led, in no small degree, to condemn the use of human instrumentalities, which, according to their conception of the grace of God in redemption, belonged to the Sovereign God, and to Him alone. Consequently, when the cause of missions began to assume considerable prominence in this country, in order to secure a greater extension of the gospel and bring other nations to accept Jesus, as Saviour, the movement was regarded by many of the members of this church, as well as by a large number in other churches, as an unscriptural innovation, and was to a very great extent strongly condemned and vigorously opposed. And, in the year 1833, the Lost River Association passed a series of resolutions advising her churches to oppose a salaried ministry, an educated ministry, missions, Sunday schools, tract societies, temperance societies, and similar benevolent enterprises. A majority, in fact almost the entire church, adopted this advice, which resulted in a second division. At this date the church numbered seventy, and of this number only *five* dissented from the advice of the Association adopted by the church, and two of these five were deacons, whom the church excluded for "censorious language, and dissenting from the action of the church." The two deacons were John McCoy and John McDanel.

Deacon McCoy was very zealous in the cause of missions and Sabbath schools, and contributed to these interests in word, work and means, notwithstanding the action of his church. For this the church preferred a charge against him, and agreed to admonish him. In the admonition, Elder Wilson remarked that "mission societies Sunday schools, tract societies and temperance societies were of the *devil* and his work," to which Deacon McCoy replied, with no usual mild tone: "Sir, do you say that these societies are of the devil, and are his work? I tell you nay; but, through the blessing of God, the influence of these for good will extend to the ends of the earth. Sir, you might as well expect to turn the waters of the Ohio river upward, by standing on its bank at the falls and throwing straw by straw into its current, as expect to stop the good influence of Sunday schools and missionary societies."

Deacon McDanel, though not so zealous an advocate of mis-

sions and Sunday schools, yet a great lover of liberty, said to the church: "If she proposed to compel her members *not to give* of their means to a cause so apparently harmless, she would violate both the law of the country and the teachings of God. She would be a *tyrant*, and I must compare her to the Church of Rome."

This exclusion occurred February, 1834. The excluded members were received by relation into the Salem Baptist Church, of Salem, Washington county, Ind., and were allowed by this church to be recognized as a "Branch of Salem Baptist Church, in Clark county, Ind." This little "branch" met once per month at the residence of some one of its members. Elder J. D. Crabbs attended as pastor, and a few united with the body. In June, 1837, this "branch" asked of the Salem Baptist Church, that it might be constituted a Baptist church in Charlestown, Ind. July 1, 1837, its members met in Charlestown. (Delegates being present from Salem, New Albany, Mill Creek and Lost River Baptist Churches), the branch was recognized as a regular Baptist Church, with a covenant, articles of faith and rules of decorum. The organization was then called the "Charlestown Regular Baptist Church." The church was in the organization of the Bethel Association, which met with the church at that time, and Deacons John McCoy and John McDanel were the messengers. The church numbered nine at the time of this recognition. The roll at no one time since its organization at Charlestown has exceeded thirty-five. About one hundred and fifty have belonged to it, and fifty of these united with the church by experience and baptism.

The church held meetings in Charlestown from the time of its organization to 1858, but, as only a few members lived in the town, it was thought best to remove the church to the country. April 1, 1858, the church met at the old brick meeting-house, on Silver creek, which was built, as before stated, in 1823-4, and continued to meet at this house and at a school-house near by, until 1861, when the church moved into its own house, which was dedicated in July of that year (the notable day on which was fought the first battle of "Bull Run.") The dedicatory sermon was preached by Dr. Bailey, then President of Franklin College. This church-

house is a substantial and neat brick building 36x24 feet, built of the *very same* brick of which the old house was made in 1824, on a site of ground, for which the church holds a deed, hard by where the old house stood, and on the brink of the basin where the minority party met under the "shade," in 1829, and were called "the sink-hole elect." The church does not know whether she is elected to *sink* or not; but one thing she does know, that Providence has continued to preserve and protect her, and in Him will she put her trust.

PART II.

HISTORIC ITEMS AND QUOTATIONS FROM THE RECORDS.

*I. The Faith of the Church.*

From the records, it appears that the church was, from the first, "constituted on the principles of the BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH, adopted at Philadelphia in the year of our Lord 1765. These same Articles of Faith were strictly adhered to by the church through its trials of 1829. April 25, 1829, the records say that some members wish "to know from this church whether she is governed by the Scriptures of the *Old* and *New Testaments*, or by *Articles of Faith*? Answer—The church says, by the Word of God."

This was not the question as given to the church at the above date; but the question then before the church, *correctly* stated was, "Shall the church still hold to the Articles of Faith adopted in her Constitution?" but was so manipulated by certain members as to appear on the record as just read above. This very matter gave rise to the first division. May 23, 1829, the records of the minority read, "Moved and seconded, to know whether the church is not aggrieved with all those members who have dissented from our original *faith* and *practice*? Answer—She is; and lays the matter over to the next meeting." June 13, 1829, the reference was taken up and proceeded to as follows: "*Whereas*, It has been sufficiently proven to this church that certain brethren [five in all] have essentially departed from the faith and practice of this church, it is, therefore, moved and seconded, to know whether the above named members have committed a crime? Answer—The church believes they have. Then moved and seconded to know to what

the crime amounts? The church unanimously says, to seclusion [exclusion]. They are hereby excluded.”

Again: “Moved and seconded, to know whether the church is not aggrieved with all those members [about fifty] who unite with and hold in fellowship those persons whom the church considers as having departed from the *faith*, and whom the church has now excluded? Answer—She is. The church takes up the matter, but defers it to the next meeting.” July 11, 1829—The matter of reference taken up, but deferred to next meeting. August 8, 1829—The reference respecting the grievance with certain of our brethren and sisters, taken up, and “Moved and seconded to know whether the church can hold in union as members all those brethren and sisters, who hold in fellowship and live in union with those excluded persons (before named) whom the church believes have dissented from the *faith*? The church unanimously answers, She cannot hold in fellowship those persons, and therefore considers them no more of her; at the same time praying the Lord will grant timely repentance to those who lead the *lambs* of Christ astray; and that those who are thus led may be followed by His reclaiming mercy.” The pastor, deacons and church clerk were those who led in this departure from the faith.

June 11, 1808, this question is asked: “Does the church tolerate her members to practice hearing false doctrine preached? Answer—The church conceives it contrary to the gospel and good order for her members to follow after false teachers.”

September 18, 1830, the following resolution was adopted:

“WHEREAS, There is in our country a number of preachers and other persons who profess to be Baptists, yet who differ so widely from us in the most essential and fundamental points of religion, that we think no two denominations of Christians differ more, therefore,

*Resolved*, That this church deems it disorder to invite any preacher to preach or administer in the church among us who is of the pretended Reformation (or, in other words, *Campbellites*), or who vindicate or circulate Alexander Campbell's pamphlets, or his new translation of the New Testament.”

August 4, 1838, a request of the General Association respecting

the approval or adoption of the Declaration of Faith, published in the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, was considered by the church and responded to thus: "We respectfully say to that body, we believe the Articles of Faith (referred to in that request) contain sound Baptist principles—the same in substance with those on which the Bethel Association was constituted, but less liable to misconstruction or perversion, and any measure towards their adoption in this church is referred to next meeting." At the next meeting the subject was "indefinitely postponed," and since the church has assumed the name of the "Charlestown Regular Baptist Church," it has not departed from the faith first held by the church in the earlier history.

## *II. Rules, or "Orders."*

In the early history of the church it enacted strict Rules, or "Orders" for the government and discipline of the members; some of which are the following:

"Order 2.—That our method of receiving members into fellowship be with unanimous consent; and that no member be received into or excluded from fellowship, except on a day set apart for church business, unless every member have due notice."

"Order 5.—No business to be done in private but what is deemed by the church to be of a private nature."

"Order 7.—The church believes it to be the duty of *all* her members to fill up their seats at meetings of business, and any member omitting so to do, we believe to be guilty of disorder, unless providentially hindered."

"Order 8.—That no member when seated, to be absent without leave, observing always and continually to keep up the strictest discipline [order] in the house of God."

"Order 9.—That all members offending in heinous crimes worthy of *seclusion* [exclusion] to be read out by a public declaration on Sunday, after sermon; but lesser offenses committed, worthy of seclusion, be done within the church by erasing their names out."

Dec. 11, 1802—James Abbet was excluded; and on Jan. 8,

1803, a public declaration made of the fact. This "Order 9" was repealed July 9, 1803.

Sept. 13, 1806—The church ordered that, "in future, every male member pay a proportionable part of the church expenses according to their several abilities, and that the sum of five dollars be assessed by the deacons for that year."

Feb. 23, 1811—"The church agrees that all members not filling their seats for the space of three meetings, shall be cited by the church to attend and give their reasons." This was repealed Sept. 24, 1814.

Dec. 25, 1824—The church orders "that after the reception of members by baptism, and after the church shall have admonished them to their duty, the church shall give them the right hand, bidding them welcome to all the privileges of the house of God."

Feb. 26, 1825—The church orders "that whenever any person shall be chosen to the office of deacon, and the church is satisfied with his *doctrinal principles*, some person, under the approbation of the church, shall proceed to call his attention to the important work of a deacon, give to both him and the church an exhortation suited to the occasion, and at the close, give him the right hand of approbation," to be followed by the church.

### *III. Corrective Discipline.*

In the execution of the laws, the church appears to have kept in view the good of the membership and the glory of their Lord. Scarcely a meeting has been held for the last seventy years when there has not been a case of discipline before the church. A large number of cases were upon complaints of "non-attendance" at the meetings of business. Many personal grievances found their way into the body for final settlement, and occupied a large part of the time of business. Some few gross offenses, and quite a number of minor violations, are found upon the records. Male and female, old and young, ministers and private members, all alike, are under the rule of the church, and share the punishment due them for their wrongs. Admonition, reproof, and exclusion, constitute

the penalties administered according to the grade of offense committed. A few of the many examples are here given.

In 1802, certain persons were received as candidates for baptism, but for some cause neglected to be baptized, until the church decided, "that the members received and not baptized, should be talked to," [admonished to duty] for "omitting the ordinance." June 12, 1802, a committee reports that "the sisters freely resign to the ordinance." At this same meeting the church accounts a certain sister "worthy of seclusion [exclusion] for committing that *henious* and *abominable* sin of *defrauding*."

Aug. 7, 1802—"A majority of the church is grieved with Bro. Abbet for his disorderly conduct;" and at a called meeting, Aug. 12, he "confesses his fault and is forgiven." But on Dec. 11, the record says, "James Abbet was excluded for the *henious* and *abominable* crime of *falsehood*."

March 12, 1803—A committee was appointed to "talk to" Bro. Pettet for some offense not mentioned in the records. April 9, he "remains impenitent." June 11, he appears before the church, but relates nothing satisfactory, so a committee is appointed to "labor with him in private," and he "still remains impenitent." Hoping to reclaim him, his case is continued until July 9, when he is "excluded from all union and communion with us, until restored by repentance."

Nov. 10, 1804—A brother is excluded "for a breach of covenant."

Oct. 10, 1807—Charges are preferred against a brother for "gambling." The brother is "admonished."

Jan. 9, 1808—A sister had "joined another society." It was decided "she had committed a crime against the church." The church "excommunicate her."

June 11, 1808—The church appointed a committee to "talk to" five of the brethren and sisters who had "absented themselves from church meetings."

Nov. 12, 1808—A complaint is entered against a brother for "using profane language, and non-attendance," and a committee appointed "to talk to the brother." Dec. 10, 1808, this committee reported that the brother "confesses to the complaints," but as he did not attend the church-meeting to answer in person,

“on motion, the church asked, Is Brother —— ripe for excommunication? Answered in the affirmative.”

March 11, 1809—A brother, of his own accord, “expresses a dissatisfaction with himself on account of his liquor to excess.” The church says that the brother shall be “reproved by Bro. Reece, and forgiven.”

May 25, 1811—A sister is excluded for saying of a brother, “If I had done as he had done, he would have had me before the church before now,” then denying the same, and again saying, that she “would not swear false for father nor mother, sister nor brother, *let alone for old Moore!*” and using language concerning the good brother which severely reflected upon him. June 26, 1818, this same sister was restored to fellowship (on the sixth application), giving satisfaction to the church.

June 22, 1811—A sister is “talked to” by a special committee for “not putting her letter into the church.”

Sept. 21, 1811—A charge is preferred against brother R—— for “making a bet of one dollar at a shooting match,” and Dec. 21, 1811, the church “excluded him from fellowship,” for the offense.

Dec. 26, 1812—A brother is charged with being “intoxicated,” and “judge at a shooting match.” Jan. 23, 1813, the brother appears and “acknowledges.” The church “reproves and admonishes him to his duty.”

Feb. 27, 1813—The church complains of a brother for “not complying with the requisition of the church in contributing to her necessities.” May 24, 1813, the brother appears and satisfies the church that “his circumstances would not admit of his so doing.” But he is reproved for “non-attendance.”

Dec. 25, 1813—Two brethren were taken “under dealings for a breach of the Sabbath.” Jan. 22, 1814, one of the brethren acknowledges, but is reproved. July 23, 1814, the second brother appeared and said “he considered himself justifiable in doing as he had,” from which the church dissented, and said “he should be reproved, which was accordingly done.”

Feb. 26, 1814—A brother is reported “treating his slaves ill,” but a committee having been appointed to investigate the matter,



it was ascertained that, although the brother had chastised his slaves, yet not so severely as reported. The church decided that "the brother ought to receive a *caution* for the future," and he was "cautioned" accordingly.

April 23, 1814—"Moved, that the church shall communicate to Burk's Branch Church, by letter, the conduct of Comfort Corman, it being contrary to that of a Christian."

Feb. 24, 1816—A brother acknowledges "himself to be concerned in a lottery." It was asked: "Is it consistent with gospel principles for a member to be concerned in a lottery?" The church answered "that she believed it to be inconsistent." The brother made "satisfactory acknowledgments, and peace abounded."

March 23, 1816—A brother "acknowledges himself to have been guilty of striking a man," for which the church moved "that the brother be *sharply* reprov'd and admonished, which was accordingly done"

Nov. 22, 1817—A brother is accused of "practicing a *fraud* in trading a gun; found guilty, admonished and restored." Some months after he is excluded for a similar offense.

April 24, 1819—Complaint is made against a brother "for selling spiritous liquors on the Sabbath day." May 22, 1819, the church finds him "in a fault, admonishes and restores him."

July 22, 1820—The records present this unique case: "An enquiry made for peace, which does not appear to abound, on account of a distress taking place with brother ———, on account of his killing a shoat, belonging to a sow, that he could not properly claim. A motion was made to know whether brother ——— has committed a crime? The church said he has. The mind of the church taken to know what the crime amounts to Decided by a majority that he be excluded. The church was then at peace."

Feb. 2, 1839—A brother made a statement to the church of his "having done wrong, by stepping aside, in resenting an insult from a malicious person; and, on manifesting sorrow for the same, the church, by her expression, considered him in fellowship."

March 6, 1841—A committee was appointed to visit a certain

brother and inquire "why he does not attend the meetings of the church when he is near; and why he suffers the business of his profession to engross the time of church-meetings?"

#### *IV. Ministerial Gifts.*

The church considered herself the only custodian and guardian of all the immunities belonging to the exercise and use of "ministerial gifts." No member could exercise his "gift" unless first the church gave him a permit, or "privilege;" and the privilege was always locally limited. A church could not ask a brother of another church to exercise his gift in the bounds of the former without first getting consent of the latter.

July 27, 1799—"James Abbet applied for liberty to exercise his gifts. The church grants him liberty."

Aug. 30, 1800—The church grants Hinson Hobbs "license to preach."

July 11, 1807—The church asked if "Bro. Isaac McCoy has an impression of mind to exercise a public gift? The church takes his case into consideration, and requests the brother to give a relation of the exercise of his mind; and, after hearing his relation, grants him liberty to exercise his gifts in the bounds of the church" Aug. 13, 1808, "Does the church approve of Bro. McCoy's gifts so far as he hath been tolerated?" Answered in the affirmative. Again it is asked, "Does the church think it proper to put Bro. Isaac McCoy as a licensed preacher? Answer: The church thinks proper;" and "gives him a license to preach the gospel wherever God, in His providence, might cast his lot."

Aug. 25, 1810—The church agrees that "Bro. Hoagland shall appoint a meeting for a trial of his gifts."

April 27, 1816—The church "agreed that Bro. Royce McCoy shall have liberty to exercise a public gift within the bounds of the church." He visits in Kentucky afterwards, and is asked to preach while there, which he does. On Sept. 20, 1816, he comes to the church and "acknowledges that he had exceeded the bounds given him by the church to exercise a public gift. After consideration the church forgave him, and cautioned him for time to come; and then peace abounded." On July 26, 1817 "the

church agreed that Bro. Royce McCoy should have the privilege to preach in Kentucky, if invited."

Jan. 26, 1817—Thomas Broadstreet was granted the privilege to exercise a public gift "in the hearing of the church;" and April 18, 1818, "in the Muddy Fork church."

Feb. 22, 1817—"The request of this church," asking "Pigeon Roost church for the services of J. Stark," was granted.

March 22, 1817—Royce McCoy and John T. Littell were granted the privilege to exercise their gifts "within the bounds of the Silver Creek and Blue River Associations."

July 25, 1818—Absalom Littell granted privilege to exercise his gift, "until next meeting." In August the "privilege is continued in the bounds of the church."

May 27, 1820—Daniel McDaneld granted privilege to exercise his gift, "in the bounds of the church."

Feb. 23, 1822—"The church privileged brother Isaac Worrall to exercise a public gift in the bounds of this church." June 22, 1822, "Bro. Worrall privileged to exercise a public gift at Muddy Fork." June 26, 1824, his privilege is "extended to the bounds of Silver Creek and Blue River Associations." On Dec. 25, he is "granted license to preach wherever God, in His providence, may cast his lot."

June 26, 1824—"The church agrees to privilege Bro. Sellers to exercise a public gift in the bounds of this church until next meeting." June 25, 1825, "Bro. Sellers' privilege extended throughout the bounds of the association."

After this, ministerial gifts do not appear so frequently.

#### *V. Ordinations.*

The first of the members who was "set apart" to the work of the gospel ministry, by the solemn service of "prayer, and laying on of hands," was James Abbet. Feb. 13, 1802, a council met from Buck Creek, Elk Creek, Harrod's Creek and Long Run churches, of Kentucky; and, after hearing a "trial sermon" from the candidate, on Feb. 14, he was ordained a minister of the gospel. At the same time "John Fislar was ordained a deacon in the

church." It appears that John Pettet (chosen deacon at a previous meeting) was not ordained, for the minutes of the meeting, Feb. 12, 1802, contain the statement that "the church agreed to put Bro. Fislar forward for ordination, but Brother Pettet to stand as he is, until further consideration."

Nov. 24, 1821—The church calls a council to consider the propriety of ordaining Absalom Littell to the gospel ministry. Dec. 22, 1821, Knob Creek, Fourteen-mile Creek, New Albany, Muddy Fork, and New Providence churches, were represented in council with the church, and "Brother A. Littell was examined with respect to the Articles of Faith, and his call to the ministry, which was satisfactory." Elders John Wilson, Mordicai Cole and John Littell, as a presbytery for the church, ordained the brother "by prayer and the imposition of hands." In eight years after, this same Brother Littell departed from the faith which he had so solemnly espoused, and led the majority party in the first division of the church in 1829.

May 26, 1827—The church sent delegates to sit in council to aid in the ordination of Moses W. Sellers, at Camp Run church.

July 28, 1827—Delegates sent to aid in the ordination of Brother Washburn to the ministry at Muddy Fork.

June 2, 1844—Lewis McCoy was ordained a deacon.

June 5, 1841—A council from Salem, New Albany and Jeffersonville churches, convened with the church and "set apart" Bro. J. C. Post to the ministry. The same council, at the same time, ordained Wm. McCoy to the deaconate.

Aug. 5, 1843—According to request from Salem church, the church agreed to send members to aid in the ordination of Wm. McCoy to the ministry.

June 23, 1827—This query is put to the church in relation to the rite: "From Scripture authority is it the prerogative of the ministry, or the church, to ordain a minister?" The church says: "The sole power is with the church." Then it is asked: "Is the laying on of hands essentially necessary to the ordination of preachers? The church says not; but would not object to any course this or any other church might choose to prefer."

### VI. Churches Constituted.

Sept. 11, 1807—At the request of “brethren in the Purchase,” the church sends delegates to “aid in the constitution of a church.”

June 24, 1826—Moses W. Sellers and nine others are granted “letters of dismission to form a church at Camp Run.”

July 23, 1826—A council sent to aid in constituting a church in “Biggs’ Settlement.”

March 22, 1817—Eight members ask for letters of dismission in order to “go into the constitution of a church upon Muddy Fork.” Requests granted, and delegates as councilmen sent to assist in the organization.

Dec. 25, 1819—By “request of brethren living in New Albany,” the church appointed delegates to assist in the organization of a church in that place.

June 1, 1839—“Wm. McCoy was granted a letter of dismission to go into the organization of a Baptist church at Jeffersonville.”

May 6, 1843—“Thomas Adams was granted a letter of dismission for himself and wife, for the purpose of constituting an African church in Jeffersonville.”

Aug. 21, 1819—“A request from brethren on Grassy Fork,” Jackson county, to aid in constituting them into a church was considered, and delegates appointed to attend.

Jan. 6, 1844—The church agrees to send aid to constitute a church in New Philadelphia.

Nov. 1858 (first Saturday)—Upon a request from Memphis, the church agrees to send aid to “establish a church at that place.”

### VII. Missions.

Sept. 23, 1815—The church “purchases, for the use of the church,” one copy of the “Report of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions of the United States, for the year 1815;” and Jan. 26, 1817, the church purchased the “Second Annual Report of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions.”

June 21, 1817—The church “agrees to consider the propriety

of assisting the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in supplying destitute places with the preaching of the gospel." There appeared to be some opposition to the movement, so it was "agreed to refer the division on the matter to the next meeting."

July 26, 1817—The "reference" in regard to missions, "taken up," and it is asked: "Is it proper to assist the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in supplying destitute places with the preaching of the gospel? The church says: *It is proper.*"

Jan. 12, 1833—"Motioned by Brother Nathan Kelly, and seconded by Brother Joshua Sellers, to know whether the church approves of the mission cause in its present form? The motion was objected to by Brother John McDanel, and seconded by Brother Lewis McCoy. The mind of the church was taken, and a majority decided that they disapprove of the mission cause in its present form. \* \* \* Motioned by Brother John McDanel, and seconded by Brother Jerry Perry, whether a member may exercise his pleasure in bestowing or contributing his own money in support of missions, or any other moral institution? The church says they may."

Nov. 9, 1833—John McDanel handed in this query to be read: "Will the church receive and enforce the advice of the Association [Lost River], as it respects taking a stand against the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, tract, temperance and Sunday-school union societies, etc., or suffer each to enjoy the liberty of conscience that is guaranteed by the country, and not prohibited by the laws of God?" [See Appendix]. Dec. 14, 1833, the church "acquiesces in the advice of the Association."

Sept. 7, 1837—It was voted to send a representation to the General Association of Indiana Baptists at the ensuing anniversary. Lewis McCoy and Robert Laws were appointed messengers. Oct. 6, 1838, the church contributed four dollars to aid the General Association.

June 5, 1841—It is decided "to send a delegation to the Western Convention of Baptists, at Louisville, on the 9th inst."

April 1, 1843—A request was made that the church would "consider the work of the Baptist Indian Missionary Society.

located at Louisville, and do what they find to be convenient for the benefit of the Indians."

Oct. 7, 1843—Certain brethren are appointed to meet with the Jeffersonville church to organize a "Bible Society."

July 6, 1844—"Sister Osgood being appointed a missionary to the Indian Territory, is granted a letter of dismissal. May the Lord bless her with success in the important work to which she is called." Sept. 7, 1844, "the church agreed to contribute cash, books or clothing, for the help of Sister Osgood."

July 5, 1845—A letter from Sister Osgood was read before the church, and resolved that the "prayers of the church should be fervent and unceasing for the blessing of heaven upon her labors in behalf of the benighted Indians."

Jan. 2, 1847—"The church agreed to apply for aid from the Baptist Home Mission Society, through the General Association of the State, for the support of Elder Wm. McCoy, who is serving as pastor of the church." Application was also made to the same society, June 4, 1853, to aid Elder E. L. Seeburn, who was then pastor.

Feb. 8, 1852—A memorial sermon was preached by the pastor, on the death of Sister Osgood, who died Jan. 7, 1852, at her station among the Weas. Sister Eliza McCoy was present, and took a collection for the Putawatoma Indian Mission, in which she had been laboring during the seven years previous.

#### VIII. *Miscellaneous.*

Oct. 11, 1801—James McCoy is received by experience.

March 13, 1802—"The church agreed to pay the ferriage of any Baptist minister that wishes to cross the river to visit the church."

July 9, 1803—Request sent to Plum Creek church "for ministerial help to attend us at our stated meetings."

Sept. 10, 1803—The Plum Creek church is "willing to supply such help as we need, viz: Brethren Wm. McCoy and George Waller, alternately."

Jan. 7, 1804—"The church decides to have communion every three months." Heretofore it was observed only occasionally.

Dec., 1806—"A motion made that the mind of the church be taken whether brother Stott [James] is *ripe* for ordination or not." The church answered in the affirmative.

Nov. 11, 1809—"Agreed that in future the deacons shall be prepared to pay the ferriage of ministering brethren coming to visit the church."

March 21, 1812—The church invites Crooked Creek, Indian Creek, Buck Creek, Fourteen-mile Creek, Upper Blue River, Lower Blue River and Knob Creek churches, to meet, on Friday before the fourth Lord's day in July, by letter and delegate, at the Silver Creek meeting-house, to "consult with this church on forming an association this side of the Ohio river."

July 25, 1812—The church considers it "inexpedient" to have the Pigeon Roost church as an "arm of this church."

Aug. 21, 1813—"Agreed that the second Thursday in September be set apart as a day of humiliation and prayer—the church to meet on the occasion."

Oct. 23, 1813—Agreed that the church shall furnish implements "for grave digging, and enclose the grave-yard, near the church, with a post and rail fence."

Nov. 27, 1813—"Amos Littell received by experience and baptism."

Oct. 22, 1814—The church "agreed that on next Saturday week, the male members shall meet to repair the meeting-house and furnish firewood; and that those who do not come and work shall pay whatever may be deemed proper by the church."

Nov. 26, 1814—The church "agreed that the members, who did not come and work on the day mentioned last meeting, shall pay 37½ cents each."

Feb. 25, 1815—"Agreed that what is subscribed for the relief of the ministering brethren be equally divided among them; and that the Friday before the fourth Lord's day, in March, be set apart as a day of humiliation and prayer; and that brethren Stark and Buckley attend on the occasion."

Aug. 19, 1815—"Agreed that the church take into consideration, until next meeting, the matter of settling brother Buckley with us as a preacher;" but on Sept. 23, 1815, it was abandoned.



Jan. 27, 1816—"Moved that Bro. Abraham Griffith attend<sup>d</sup> with us as a minister of the gospel."

Dec. 21, 1816—"Agreed that we write Bro. Jonathan Stark to attend us monthly, and we agree to get him a '*great coat*,' money for the same to be raised by subscription." Jan. 26, 1817, "Bro. Carr reported that he had obtained a '*great coat*' for the brother; and that it was *paid for*."

July 24, 1819—Absalom Littell granted a letter of dismission.

Nov. 19, 1819—The church "agreed to purchase Butterworth's Dictionary and a Concordance, for brother John T. Littell. Bro. Wilson, by his own request, was released from his obligation as pastor, and the church agreed to call brother John T. Littell in his stead, and ordered a letter written informing the Muddy Fork Church."

Sept., 1821—The church, by request of the brethren in the Pigeon Roost Church, sent a deputation of brethren as "helps" to settle a difficulty in that church.

Dec. 21, 1821—David Drummond received by experience and baptism.

March 23, 1822—The church considers an act of the Silver Creek Association, adopted at Pigeon Roost, requesting its churches to drop the name "Regular" from their letters to the Association, and decides against it.

April 26, 1823—The church authorized Amos Goodwin and Moses W. Sellers, deacons of the Silver Creek Church, to take a bond from Jonah Harris, to themselves and their successors in office, for the ground donated by Elisha Carr to said church. May 24, 1823, "the reference from last meeting, authorizing the deacons to take a bond from brother Harris, taken up, and the church exonerates them from that duty, and appoints the fourth Saturday in June next for the purpose of choosing three *trustees* for the church, who shall take the bond." On June 28, 1823, "agreeably to appointment the church elected three trustees, viz: John McCoy, John Bowel, and Jonah Harris," the same persons whom the church had appointed the 28th day of February previous, as the building committee, or, as they called them, "*trustees*."

Dec. 27, 1823—The record for this date gives this query:

“Is it consistent with gospel order for any member of a church, in common cases, to sue at law a brother or sister of his own church, or of a sister church, previous to bringing the same before the church? Answer: The church says not.” It was then represented to the church that a member of Hebron Church had sued at law a member of this church. The church then directed the clerk to write a letter to the said Hebron Church, informing her of the circumstances, and send brothers William and David Gray, to bear the same. Feb. 28, 1824, the matter concerning the brother of Hebron Church, who had gone to law with a sister of this church, was taken up. The Hebron Church sent a statement of her dealings with the brother; and he, being present, “made such arrangements that the church was satisfied.”

Oct. 23, 1824—“A door opened for the reception of members—received John McCoy, by experience.” John McCoy received by experience.

Nov. 27, 1824—The church “appointed Isaac Worrall their door-keeper [sexton] for one year.” This custom was kept up annually for many years.

May 25, 1825—By his own request, Elder John T. Littell, is released from his duty as pastor, and Elder Absalom Littell called “to administer” to the church “in word and ordinances.”

April 26, 1826—“Agreed in future to record the decease of the members of this church.”

July 23, 1826—“Elder A. Littell, John McCoy, and A. Richardson appointed as delegates in council to the New Albany Church, to assist in the ordination of brother Seth Woodruff,” who was the first Moderator of the Bethel Association.

Jan. 26, 1828—John Norris granted privilege to exercise gifts.

Dec., 1836, (first Saturday)—“The members who were allowed by the Salem Regular Baptist Church to constitute a branch of Salem Church in Clark county, Ind., met at Thomas McCormick’s.  
\* \* Sister Eliza McCoy was received by letter of dismissal from Aurora Church.”

Oct. 7, 1837—“A contribution of \$6.50 made to send by the messengers to the General Association, with instructions that the same be appropriated in the bounds of our own Association.”

Oct. 5, 1839—A certain brother “observed to the church that he expected soon to take a journey to the Westward,” whereupon the church “granted him a letter of recommendation.”

March 7, 1840—The church met at Charlestown. “Agreed that when thought best for the advancement of the cause of religion, the church hold its meetings alternately in the country at some suitable place.”

March 5, 1842—The church considered the “expediency of dissolving.” It was first decided *not* to disband; but after eight of the members had requested and were granted letters of dismissal, it was “agreed to dissolve.” This movement was unsatisfactory, for on March 11, 1842, the members met again, reconsidered the decision of the meeting of March 5, rescinded the act granting letters of dismissal, and “agreed to travel together again as a church.”

Nov. 4, 1843—The church agreed to “raise a subscription for the pastor.” This method appears to have been continued up to 1871. Heretofore the pastor’s salary and other expenses seem to have been met by collections from assessments made by the deacons.

June 3, 1848—“Elder D. Robison, agent for Franklin College, made an appeal in behalf of the College, and the church gave him a collection.”

April 2, 1853—At this meeting (also at several others) special mention is made in the minutes, of a “short sermon,” preached by the new pastor.

July 7, 1855—“Our beloved Elder Stedman, who had been written to by the clerk to attend this meeting, had promised to be here, but while on his way, and at New Albany, died of cholera.”

Jan 2, 1856—The clerk makes this record: “Started to Charlestown for meeting, but the weather was so cold, could not travel; consequently, there was no meeting.” He lived some distance in the country.

March, 1871—A finance committee was appointed to make a “just apportionment of the church expenses, which the members are expected to pay each month.”

May, 1874—Resolutions were adopted condemning “the use of

intoxicating drinks, as a beverage," and commending the Christian women in their "crusade" against the "great evil."

The Bethel Association has convened with, and been entertained by the church five different times, since it assumed the name by which it is now known.

The Anti-mission element, claiming to be the old Silver Creek Church, continued its connection with the Lost River Association, until that body became extinct, because of its Anti-mission spirit. The church then united with the Brownstown Association, and appeared upon its minutes under the name of "Silver Creek Church," until within a few years past. It still has an existence, but a membership of only *one*, and has a church-building within three miles of the present location of the Charlestown Baptist Church.

### PART III.

"Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."—*Jesus*.

It will now be seen from the foregoing historical statements that the Charlestown Baptist church is the *oldest church* of the *Baptists* in the *State of Indiana*. In fact, it is now recognized as not only the oldest Baptist church, but the *OLDEST EVANGELICAL (OR PROTESTANT) Church* in the State. Since the first organization in 1798, until now, the church has endeavored, amid all its trials and vicissitudes, to maintain and practice the teaching of God's word, never slack in duty, ever liberal in contributions to the cause of Christ, always laboring for the good of men and the glory of God.

#### *The Ministry.*

From the time of the Constitution until now, the church has been favored with the services of no less than twenty-seven ministers, who, at different times, have "labored in word and doctrine, feeding the flock of God," over which they were made "overseers."

The following ministers have served the church, in the order in which they are named: Elders Isaac Edwards, Hinson Hobbs, James Abbet, Wm. Kellar, Wm. McCoy, Sr., George Waller, Allen,

John Reece, Jonathan Stark, Buckley, John Wilson, John T. Littell and Absalom Littell, from 1798 to 1829. These were followed by Elders Moses W. Sellers and Isaac Worrall, from 1829 to 1834. Then Elders J. D. Crabb, J. C. Post, J. Reece, Wm. McCoy, Jr., H. Robb, E. L. Seburn, M. C. Clark, John E. McCoy, John R. McCoy, Wm. B. Lewis, Stephen A. Chambers and W. T. Gordon, from 1834 to the present time. Besides these who served as pastors and teachers, four of the members, Rev. Isaac McCoy, Christiana McCoy, Eliza McCoy and Sarah Osgood, have become missionaries to the Indians. Many of these have gone to their eternal reward. They who remain are laboring in different parts of this great country, waiting to be called, to join those who have gone before, to share the everlasting blessedness, prepared by the "Great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls."

#### *The Deacons.*

The office of deacon appears to have had special relation to "the pecuniary concerns of the church, in providing the necessary funds for incidental expenses," and was held until declared vacant by the church. John Pettet and John Fislar were the first to hold the office. They were followed by Elisha Carr, James McCoy, Amos Goodwin, Thomas Broadstreet, Jeremiah Payne, Moses W. Sellers, Alfred Hough, John McCoy, David Gray, John McDanel, William McCoy and Lewis McCoy. John Pettet held the office until he was excluded in 1804. John Fislar was released from office April 12, 1802; and May 3, 1802, Elisha Carr was chosen in his stead, which position he held until Nov. 23 1822, when Amos Goodwin was chosen to fill the place. April 27, 1816, Thomas Broadstreet was elected deacon, but was granted a letter of dismissal, Feb. 21, 1819, when Jeremiah Payne was elected to fill the vacancy, which office he held until succeeded by Moses W. Sellers, Nov. 24, 1821. On the 26th day of Feb. 1826, Amos Goodwin was released, and John McCoy was chosen in his stead. July 23, 1826, Moses Sellers was dismissed, and David Gray succeeded him. Feb. 28, 1829, John McCoy was released from the office at his own request; and July 11, 1829, after the first division, he and John McDanel were chosen to the office, by the minority

party, which they held until excluded by the anti-mission party, Feb. 8, 1834. William McCoy was elected deacon May 1, 1841, and served until dismissed by letter, March 5, 1842. Lewis McCoy was elected June 1, 1844, to fill the office made vacant by John McDanel, who was dismissed by letter, April 6, 1844. W. H. McCoy was elected in Oct. 1876.

### *The Elders.*

At first, it appears, the church was inclined to support an eldership, distinct from the preaching-elder. At a meeting held Jan. 2, 1802, this question was submitted to the church: "Should the church have *elders*?" Answered: "The church concludes to have elders." Feb. 12, 1802, the record says: "Reference concerning elders laid over for the church to consider who was a person fit for an elder," and at the next meeting, March 13, 1802, "Bros. Harrod, James Stuart and George Newland were nominated and put forward to the office of elders." July 9, 1803, "Bro. Harrod requests the church to release him from the office of an elder," and the church defers the matter "for further consideration." Aug. 13, 1803, "the church agrees that brother Harrod's request could not be granted, but he is to stand in the place he has heretofore." Nov. 12, 1803, he persists in his request to be "released from the office of an elder," but it is again deferred. Dec. 10, 1803, his request is considered again, and it is asked, "if any member objects to brother Harrod holding office;" no one objects, therefore, his request is not granted. Oct. 12, 1805, the question is again before the church, and the brother gives as his reasons for desiring to be released from the office, "that he finds no Scripture authoritative for the office of *lay-elder*." He is then released. No further mention of the office is made on the records until Jan. 26, 1822, when "the church agrees to erase the word 'elder' in the 3d Order," which reads: "When any member is about to speak, he shall respectfully address the moderator, or elder," etc. Exactly what significance was attached to the office, is not easy to understand. It is certain, however, that "lay-elders" were not recognized by the church, after this.

*The Clerks.*

Those who have been entrusted with the important duty of keeping faithful records of the proceedings of the meetings were John Pettet, James McCoy, Royce McCoy, James Downs, and David Drummonds, to 1829. From 1829 to 1834, John McCoy. From 1834 to 1880, Lewis McCoy and W. H. McCoy. Besides keeping faithful records of the meetings of the church, it was made their special duty to "keep a file of the minutes of the Bethel Association, and also the minutes of the General Association of the State of Indiana, for the use of the church in future."

*The Membership.*

From the organization to 1829, *two hundred and thirty* have been gathered in and added to the *four* constitutional members. From 1829 to 1834, there were *thirty four* received into fellowship and from 1834 to the present (1880), the increase numbers *one hundred and fifty*, making a total of *four hundred and fourteen* additions to the membership in the eighty-two years of its history. About one-half of all these were received by experience. The present number is *fifteen*.

The four constitutional members are no more with us. John Fisler and wife were granted letters of dismissal, May 26, 1814, to unite with the "Fourteen Mile Church" (a second church of the same name given the organization of 1798, and located in the same vicinity.) John Pettet was excluded July 9, 1803. His wife, Cattern Pettet, died a member of the church in the year 1829.

*Conclusion.*

For several years the little band has been struggling for existence. It still lives and struggles on. The congregation now has regular preaching one Sunday in each month, and sometimes a sermon by one of the students from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. The present pastor is a student from that institution. An "evergreen" Sunday school (a Bible school every Sunday in the year) is a point of no small interest, and marks some progress for the church.

While the present membership is not favored with any large

degree of temporal prosperity, it has withal contributed in cash and bonds, within the last few years, *four thousand dollars* to the Baptist College at Franklin, Ind. But the little flock is not satisfied; it seeks enlargement; it desires to do even greater things for the Lord's cause.

We have been cast down, but not forsaken; discouraged, but not left without help. Through all our trials the Lord has sustained us; and in the Lord we will continue to trust. Awaiting His good pleasure, we hope to be admitted, one by one, into our "Father's Triumphant Kingdom;" and join the "General Assembly and Church of the First-born, whose names are written in the Book of Life." To this end, we pray, and labor, and wait; looking for the coming of our Lord and Saviour. "EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."



## APPENDIX.

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The following "Remonstrance," referred to on page 8, in the body of this work, was adopted by the minority party of the division of 1829.

### REMONSTRANCE.

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OUR BRETHREN :—The time is come when it becomes our painful duty in a plain, faithful, and affectionate way, to lay before you, for your consideration, certain things which have become grievous and afflicting to extreme—so much so that we consider forbearance on our part any longer would be criminal.

We would first state that this church has now existed upwards of thirty years as she was originally constituted upon certain defined principles, and in maintainance of which the church has been peaceable, happy, and to some extent prosperous, and considered by others a "mother church," until about two years past, within and during which time successive and too successful attempts have been made to introduce among us views of the divine economy which we esteem subversive, not only of the principles upon which we were constituted, but of the religion of the Bible. We wish to be plainly understood to refer to the views so widely and so destructively diffused through the medium of the paper styled "The Christian Baptist," and wish it plainly understood that we do not complain of any items in our original Constitution. No, brethren, to these we exercise undeviating adherence. It is to that which we consider an *innovation* upon these principles that we except. It affords us some consolation that, from the first appearance of these pernicious ideas which we oppose, we have employed our feeble powers, with humility and much anxiety, to guard our brethren against the dangers, which so strongly threatened our peace and happiness, in the language of "The Christian Baptist"—a language so incongenial with the soothing accents of the gospel that we were alarmed at its first appearance. The epithets which it employs in denunciations of our own brethren in the ministry, whom we esteem faithful in the Lord ; its opposition to our union of churches by associational compact, and even the union of individual members, one with another, made more strong by a declaration of their faith, such as that to which this church subscribed in her Constitution ; and continually exclaiming against all creeds and confessions of faith,

at the same time disseminating the most pernicious creed; were such as we esteemed unholy, and even verging near to profanity. It grieves us to discover that too much of the same spirit seems to be enkindled, and enkindling among us, so as to threaten the destruction of the churches.

At the April meeting, 1829, of this church, a majority of the church virtually renounced their former Confession of Faith by vote (though the minutes of that day read somewhat differently), and at the same time (and also previously) rejected the practice of laying on of hands in ordination, at once regardlessly plunging the minority into the difficulties and distresses they now undergo, although faithful to their covenant, to the church, and to their God. The minority in these awful and pressing exigencies, with uplifted hands and hearts, solemnly appeal to God, the Divine Author of our existence, for the justness of their cause and the rectitude of their course.

In conclusion, we must state, however painful the task, that we are fully convinced that to attempt to live together longer under existing circumstances is vain, as "two cannot walk together except they be agreed;" and considering the above brief statements to contain most warrantable facts, we, whose names follow, being in the minority of the church, and desiring to live in a church capacity, to maintain our Constitutional rights, and to retain as our faith the Articles of the Faith of said Silver Creek Church, and peaceably to enjoy all the rights and immunities of the church as in former and better days, have determined, in the fear of God, to keep up our regular meetings, to be faithful in guarding against inroads of heresies and corruptions, to deal faithfully and tenderly with our brethren, always strictly observing the rules of discipline exhibited in the Word of God. And may each member of the church be more fervent in prayer, continually looking up to the Great Head of the Church for direction and protection, hoping the Lord, in His own time, will again visit His Zion with the sweet cordials of His grace.

James Worrall, Sr.,  
James J. Worrall, Jr.,  
Nathan Kelly,  
Rachel Worrall,  
Jincy McCoy,

John McDanel,  
John McCoy,  
Jeremiah Perry,  
Hannah Worrall,  
Jane Worrall.

The following "Circular Letter" was prepared by Rev. Royce McCoy, for adoption by the Lost River Association in 1832, but was rejected by a majority vote of the body at the meeting of that year. It was afterward published by request of the friends of Missions, with the addition of the "N. B.," which is appended. This publication was condemned by the Association at its next meeting, in 1833, at which time all missionary operations, and other benevolent enterprises were denounced as unscriptural, and the churches warned to beware of them. [See page 9.] Immediately following this rejected Circular Letter, will be found the action of the Association in regard to it, copied from the minutes of that body for that year.

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## CIRCULAR LETTER.

BY REV. ROYCE MC COY.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS:—We would be thankful to God that you continue your Christian regard for each other, and have sent letters and messengers to perpetuate union, etc. May an enemy in no form whatever make such inroads upon us as to cause schism and distress; to prevent which we exhort you to live near to Jesus and cultivate acquaintance and brotherly kindness with each other.

And now we call your attention to the use of some of those means for the promotion of true religion, which the Lord has directed in His holy and inspired Word. Maintaining as we do, and as we think all genuine Baptists have ever done, from John, the Baptist, and forerunner of Christ, till the present time, that candidates for baptism, and members of churches should be regenerated by the Spirit of God, we conclude His rich and sovereign grace lays them under the strongest obligations to do all they can to magnify His good cause, always taking care to be governed by His unerring Word.

1st. Let each one examine his own heart and see that it be *not haughty*; that the love of God be richly shed abroad there by the Holy Ghost; that it may have a deep sense of God, the cause of religion, and the worth of souls—and "*keep thy heart with all diligence.*"

2d. All that are heads of families, especially, should recommend the blessed religion of Jesus to them, and begin and end each day with prayer and other devotional exercises. Tell your little children and others they are sinners against God, although they are continually dependent upon Him—that *He* is exceedingly good, and has borne long with sinners, and has provided a great salvation for them. Teach them to respect His holy Word, His worship, His people, and the Sabbath day; teach them they are always in His presence, and soon will have to give account to Him for all they think, say, and do; and that there is a necessity for all to repent immediately of their sins, and believe in Jesus Christ.

3d. As we have opportunity, let us do good to *all* men, especially to them of the household of faith. Give your brethren and sisters evidence, by your sympathy and Christian kindness, that you love them as members of Christ's body. Esteem it a privilege and duty to meet with them, talk with and encourage them in the good ways of the Lord. Let the cause of God be ever regarded as the best of all causes, and let not the affairs of this life crowd so on your minds as to make you neglect the great concerns of religion.

4th. Let your conduct towards your neighbors, and the world in general, be according to godliness, and be zealous in every good word and work. In your intercourse with your neighbors let no opportunity pass unimproved to advance the religion of your Lord. Tell them often of His love His rich gospel, and entreat them to be reconciled to Him. Tell with humility and reverence what he has done for *your own* soul. This often produces a great effect, both on those who speak, and those who hear. Are any of your neighbors, or acquaintances, destitute of a Bible? Endeavor to have them supplied with one, and impart to them any religious information and instruction you can that accords with God's holy Word.

5th. Let the children and youth of our land be a matter of serious concern. No doubt they have been quite too much neglected, but they ought not to be neglected in any wise. They are born in sin, their souls are precious, and they might be of immense service in the church of Christ. Moreover, the Lord, by the prophets, alluding to gospel times, gives encouragement on this subject [see Isaiah, 44, 3; Joel, 2, 28; Psalm, 8, 12.] And children in the temple once cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Jesus heard, and approved the deed [read Matt., 21, 15, 16.] Religious impressions may be made earlier on the minds of children than most people are aware of. Then let fathers, and especially mothers, be actively and affectionately engaged to instruct their children and youth in the happying doctrines of the gospel. Here is also a profitable field for active and zealous labors of the ministry, and forms an important part of their duties. Children and youth will often regard and remember the affectionate counsel of a preacher especially if it be given individually, accompanied with prayer and tokens of affection.

6th. Give all the encouragement you can to the preaching of the gospel among the churches and in destitute neighborhoods; when you pray, try always to pray for preachers, and that the Lord would increase their number, their zeal and faithfulness. Often when a preacher is invited to preach more frequently, and to extend his labors further abroad, he has to reply, "My temporal concerns, and the wants of my family forbid it." Yet surely, every preacher, called of the Lord, feels bound to preach, and to do all he can to make known the glorious gospel. O brethren, would it be wrong? Would not Heaven approve the deed? for his brethren and friends, to supply his needs, so that they should not, in anywise, be a hindrance to him? Surely,

Jesus would regard such acts of kindness as done to Himself, and grant an ample reward in the rewarding day. Then, let your hearts and hands be open in this tender, yet important matter; and if the preacher neglects preaching in any case, let not the sin lie at your door—God sees it. Neither let any insinuate, he is a hireling, or preaches for money, because he receives something to afford him opportunity to labor in the gospel; fear of this makes many preachers shrink from their glorious work, and almost sink down in distress and silence. But God sees them. Therefore, endeavor to encourage your preachers, and let them know by your affection, sympathy, and brotherly kindness, that you feel a deep interest in their prosperity and usefulness.

7th. Preachers, also, should especially consider that the state of religion, both in and out of the church, depends much on them and their labors, as instruments of usefulness or injury, of honor or disgrace. They should study the Scriptures, pray to understand them, be established in the faith, use sound speech, seasoned with grace, endeavor every way they can to win souls to the Lord, build up Christians in Christ, and take great care to give no occasion for enemies to speak reproachfully of His good cause.

8th. Let all duly consider the obligations they are under to fulfill the Saviour's high command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." &c. Remember, there are millions of our race that have no Bible—have no knowledge of Jesus, and are worshipping idols, while their souls are perishing in sin; let each one ardently inquire, "Can I do something to make known the riches of that glorious grace that brought me, a stranger, outcast, and rebel as I was, to the feet of Jesus, my Lord, and made my poor soul rejoice in hope of His glory?" Let each one reflect, while using means to obtain temporal benefits for himself and others, it is his indispensable duty to use means to declare the glory of God, and, that sinners may be converted and saved. Remember that "he that soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly;" and "he that will not plow by reason of the cold, shall beg in harvest and have nothing."

9th. All—*all* should be done in accordance with the direction the Lord has given us, with humble dependence on Him, and with fervent, unceasing, and united prayer to Him for His direction, energy and increase. 'Tis He that makes it our duty to act—prescribes the means for us to use—and He alone can crown our labor with a glorious end.

O, then brethren, whatever we find to be our duty, let us do it without delay. God calls to labor, fight and run; time is precious; our children are dear; our fellow mortals have souls above value, and are hasting to eternity; and God's cause is often wounded by the neglect of its professors. O then, we beseech you, by the *love of God*, by the *sufferings of our dying Saviour*, and by the *invaluable worth of souls*, to work while it is day—to pray while Jesus is on the mercy seat, and by lively faith rest on His unshaken promises

for the glorious reward. O! to see our children and youth become religious, and uniting their voices in sweet hosannas to Jesus—our neighbors and fellow mortals of every nation converted—surely would be most joyful to every Christian. Then let us awake to duty, and let us never be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. May the Lord bless us all, revive His work, and save us, for Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

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N. B.—The above Circular was submitted to a select committee by the Association for examination; and while before the committee, the following are some of the objections made by a minority of said committee, and others: They first objected to examine the letter by the Scriptures, and said the Scriptures were no standard to write a Circular Letter by. 2. They objected to the latter clause of the first section, "keep thy heart with all diligence," Prov. 4, 23; and said it was impossible for any to do so. 3. They objected to a part of the second section, "and begin and end each day by prayer and other devotional exercises;" and said they would be hurt with any of their brethren if they were to make it an established rule to pray night and morning. 4. Objected to part of the fourth section, "are any of your neighbors or acquaintances destitute of a Bible, endeavor to have them supplied with one;" and said they did not care a cent whether their neighbors had a Bible or not. The balance of the letter, was objected to throughout; and after a second reading in the Association, it was represented by some as "a shameful thing," etc.

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### LOST RIVER ASSOCIATION ITEMS.

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16th. \* \* We instruct the churches concerning the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, Tract Society, Temperent Society, and Sunday School Union, etc., in our associated capacity: That the above named men-made societies are nowhere, in our opinion, predicated in the Sacred Scriptures, but are the invention of craftsmen; and advise the churches to take a stand against them all, and beware of their influence.

18th. The publication of the rejected circular, written by Bro. Royce McCoy in 1832, was rejected by the majority of the Association in consequence of the men-made institutions of the day, or mission spirit couched in it. We do say, Bro. McCoy did wrong in suffering the publication of said letter over the counsel of the Association, \* \* and the publisher if a Baptist in the connection, violated the gospel mode of dealing, and ought to be dealt with by the church he belongs to.

