

Original Handwritten Minutes
Typescript

3rd General Assembly
January 8-12, 1908
Cleveland, Tennessee

Cleveland, Bradley Co. Tenn.
The Church assembly held Jan 8 – 12 – 1908

Introductory – Wednesday, Jan. 8 – 1908 at 7:00 P.M.

After song and prayer service, Eld. R. G. Spurling delivered the opening sermon.

Thursday morning Jan. 9

Prayer and praise service .

At 10 o'clock the assembly opened in regular order. General reception and greeting as members arrived. The following resolution was offered and adopted. viz – This assembly is not legislative, nor executive but judicial only. Reports from the different churches read and discussed and oral reports given by the ministers.

At 11 – 15 M. S. Lemons in an address impressed upon the assembly the importance of the themes & subjects for discussion.

Noon

1 P.M.

Prayer service by W. F. Bryant.

1 – 30

Diverged from order of program on account of the absence of one on duty and "Sundry subjects" were discussed. Viz. Our duty about voting. Can church members belong to lodges? Worshiping God as conscience may dictate. The uniting of Church and state, The law and its relation to the Church. R. G. Spurling opened the subjects followed by H. L. Trim Alex. Hamby, W. F. Bryant and J. H. Simpson. The following was the final conclusion on all the subjects by the Assembly.

Viz.

1. Church members should vote provided they can do so with a clear conscience.
2. No person that belongs to a lodge is eligible to membership of the Lord's Church. 2 Cor. 6:14-17. Eph. 5:4-7, 11, 12. 2 Tim., 3: 4, 5. and Math. 5: 34-37. Jas. 5:12 and expositions as to the laws and practices were given as a reason for the above decision.
3. Should obey laws so long as said laws do not conflict with Christ's law.
4. Would be mockery to worship God contrary to a man's conscience but his conscience should be purged, and trained according to the laws and commands of Jesus.
5. Opposed to the union of Church and state under any circumstances.
6. The Church should appreciate the laws that protect public worship and should recognize the officers of the law as God's ministers. Rom. 13:1-6

2 – 30 P.M.

Training of Children. Was discussed at some length by M. S. Lemons, H. L. Trim and others. The speakers waxed warm and sharp as the differences in views were brought out, but all with good feeling toward each other and toward the truth. The questions as to whether they could be raised up right so they would never go astray was decided in the affirmative provided all the Bible conditions and requirements were met and applied.

6:30 P.M.

Prayer and praise service by Alex. Hamby.

7 – P.M.

The difference between the “Church of God” and other sects or bodies of Christians; Discussed at some length by R. G. Spurling. The speaker showed that there was a germ of life in the true Church that was now in men’s organizations. The Lord pitched His Church and men pitched theirs. The Church must be made exact in very part as the tabernacle was exact. Must be subject to Christ in everything. Eph. 5: 24 etc. No need for more than one, Jesus prayed for oneness.

Second day. Jan. 10 – 1908

8 A.M.

Question. Is anyone having two or more living husbands or wives, with or without divorce, eligible to membership in the Lord’s Church?

After hours of discussion and searching of the Scripture and an extra session that lasted until after midnight besides a real decision was never reached, but it was finally agreed to extend the subject another year. However it was decided that there was only one cause granted for a divorce that would leave either party innocent and at liberty to marry again and that was fornication or adultery. It was advised that it was really the safest for all parties to remain unmarried who were divorced for any cause. It was further decided that none who are divorced and married again are eligible to membership in the Lord’s Church except the innocent party of Math. 5:32 or perchance it might be the woman who was the innocent party. And these were the contraverted points that were extended for further consideration. It was recommended by the assembly that this subject should have due attention in receiving members into the Church.

R. G. Spurling and others spoke on the advantages of a church organ (paper) and printing press and gave plan for securing same but no decision was reached except to await developments.

The financial question was discussed briefly by M. S. Lemond and Jesse Clark.

Noon.

1 – 30 P.M.

The following questions were discussed and answers given – viz.

1 Should Elders give themselves entirely to the ministry of the word and prayer?

ans. Elders may be others beside ministers of the word and all should work at something when not directly engaged in the ministry of the word, although it would be good for preachers to not be entangled too much with the affairs of this life.

Does the use of tobacco disqualify a man for the office of Deacon?

ans. Yes without a dissenting voice.

Should the church unite in colonies?

ans. Some slight teaching in that direction but proof not sufficient to establish a belief that it should. The answer then directly as left after discussion was No.

Deaconesses and their duties: Discussed at some length and decided that women who are qualified and feel the call to the work as outlined in Rom. 16:2 in connection with Acts 6:3 which indicates that she is a female Deacon, therefore her work is similar to that of a Deacon, should be appointed by the Church to exercise such qualities as she is gifted with. We further recommend her as the woman mentioned in Titus 2:3-5 which duty she should exercise as directed by the Spirit. Also she may along with the elder men, take her part of 1 Peter 5:1-4.

Selecting Pastors: After considerable study, searching the Scriptures and discussion it was finally decided that at present it would be best to continue the plan already in practice (each church choosing her own pastor) for another year or until more light might be received on the subject.

7 P.M.

R. G. Spurling spoke on sanctification and the experience as we have it today, the removal of the carnal nature, belonging only to the Gospel age, or to the time of the New Covenant.

The Sunday School. (This should have appeared before above minutes.) A. J. Lawson and A. J. Tomlinson & others spoke at some length on the value and importance, and offered some suggestions for advancement. Qualified teachers an important feature. Prompt attendance necessary. Home class department mentioned. Sunday School conventions recommended also a regular S. S. Evangelist.

8 A.M. Saturday, Jan. 11.

The care of the Churches, Bible plans and practices. What shall we do? These subjects were discussed at some length and with much interest, and the tenor of the discourses was as follows, viz. – Seeing our imperfections as we compare ourselves with the standard we should strive for the standard as rapidly as possible. As to just what we shall do was undecided except everyone should act according to his best knowledge and ability, at the same time seek for more light.

Various hindrances and how to overcome them by R. G. Spurling and others J. H. Simpson said, False teaching, skating rink nickelo and shows should be exposed and opposed. These subjects we dealt with squarely and many good suggestions given.

Every Church member a worker, outline of work. Was considered at some length and some suggestions made but nothing definitely acted upon by the assembly.

On account of so much time being spent in discussing the divorce and tobacco questions the subject on “The Bounty” and the question drawer were omitted. An extra session was called on Sat. night after preaching for the final discussion of the divorce problem which decision is given above, and to consider about people using tobacco being received in the church or not.

It was finally decided that those in the Church who use tobacco should be dealt with kindly, fairly, and squarely and given a little time for consideration and those who rigidly refuse to discontinue the use of tobacco in a reasonable length of time be disfellowshipped (and here after not to receive any into the church who used the filthy stuff.) Among the scriptures found upon which to base this conclusion were the following, viz. – Isa. 55:2.
2 Cor. 7:1 Gal. 5:19-21. Eph. 5: 3-7.

The minute on the use of tobacco which appears on pages 14 & 15 of this book was read, and approved. (In addition to that minute the assembly decided that the use of tobacco disqualifies a person for becoming a member of the Lord’s Church.)

The above minutes are not laws made by the assembly, but only the laws given us by Christ and His disciples searched out by that body and brought to light that the Churches might take action upon the same as they see fit. The Assembly closed at a few minutes past midnight after Jan. 11-1908 expecting to assemble again at the usual time in one year at a place yet to be decided upon by the providences of God, leadings of the Spirit and those having charge of the same.

A. J. Tomlinson Clerk.