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Baptists. Vermont. Shaftsbury Association, 1792.

Minutes ... at Stillwater, New-York ... June the 6th,
1792.

Bennington, Haswell, [1792].

ABHS copy.

54-53-34-27-1-75-15-14-
2-23-1-75-15-14-
MINUTES

807-1795-95-74-9-
OF THE 1785-

SHAFTSBURY ASSOCIATION;

HELD AT

STILLWATER, NEW-YORK,

AT

ELDER POWERS'S MEETING-HOUSE,

JUNE THE 6th, 1792.

M I N U T E S

O F T H E

SHAFTSBURY ASSOCIATION.

1. **A**T two o'clock P. M. Elder **CAL-
LEB BLOOD** preached a suitable sermon,
from Dan. x. 12, 13.

2. A moderator and clerk were chosen.

3. Letters were read from the several churches, and the following list taken of the number of members who have been added, dismissed, excluded, and died, the year past.

N. B. The names of the ministers are in italics. Those marked with an *, were not present. From the churches marked thus †, we received no letters. Dashes denote no settled ministers.

Churches.

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>					Add.	Dif.	Exc.	Died	No.
Battenkill,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nathan Tanner, Robert Kinyon, Thomas Bentley. 	-	-	-		19			2	190†
Little Hofick,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justus Hull, Robert Niles Eber Morfet, Hezekiah Gorton, Joseph Case. 	-	-	-		8	3	1	1	102
†Halifax,	_____	-	-	-						37
Hillsdale,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _____ Samuel West, William West, jun. Richard Kinyon. 	-	-	-			6			57
Pawlingston,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samuel Waldo, Caleb Barnam. 	-	-	-		35		2	2	99
Great Ninepartners,	Stephen Gano,	-	-	-		3	1	1		51

† There was a mistake in the number last year.

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>				Add.	Dis.	Exc.	Died	No.	
+Pittsfield,	<i>Valentine Rathbun,*</i>	-	-	-					31	
Stillwater,	<i>Lemuel Powers,</i> <i>David Irish,</i> <i>John Andrews,</i> <i>Sylvanus Sales,</i> <i>Ezekiel Sales,</i> <i>Thaddeus Hilted.</i>	-	-	-	112	3	7	1	333	
		West Shaftsbury, _____,	-	-	-					47
		East Shaftsbury, _____,	-	-	-				3	29
		Adams,	<i>Peter Werden,</i> <i>Stephen Carpenter,</i> <i>Jonathan Richardson,</i> <i>Gideon Hinman.</i>	-	-	-	34	5	8	3
New-Bethlehem,	} _____,	-	-	-		1			17	
Jacob Harrington.									64	
-Sandisfield,	<i>Joshua Morse,*</i>	-	-	-		4	2		54	
+Washington,	<i>John Nichols,*</i>	-	-	-						

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>				Add.	Dis.	Exc.	Died	No.
Chelsterfield,	<i>Ebenezer Vining,</i>	-	-	-	8	2			37
Saratoga,	{ <i>Samuel Rogers,</i>				18	2	1	1	61
	{ <i>Hezekiah Dunham,</i>	-	-	-					
	{ <i>Jonathan Pandal,</i>								
	{ <i>Thomas Jordon,</i>								
2d Colrain,	<i>Edmund Littlefield,</i>	-	-	-	1				18
North Easttown,	{ <i>Simeon Dakin,</i>	-	-	-					47
	{ <i>William Willis,</i>								
St. Coyk,	—————, <i>Jehiel Fox,</i>	-	-	-	5	2			17
Palmertown,	{ <i>Joseph Crow,</i>								40
	{ <i>David Malery,</i>	-	-	-					
	{ <i>Elnathan Finch,</i>								
	{ <i>Joseph Card.</i>								
1st Westfield,	{ <i>Amasa Brown,</i>								132
	{ <i>Caleb Cummins,</i>	-	-	-					
	{ <i>Thomas M'Clure,</i>								
	{ <i>Henry Mattison.</i>								

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>		<i>Add.</i>	<i>Dif.</i>	<i>Exc.</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>No.</i>
New Britain,	Thomas Nichols, Afa P. Palmer.	- -	1	2	2		27
2d Lanesborough,	John Leland, Squire Munro, Daniel Coomer.	- -	15		1	2	130
4th Shaftsbury,	Caleb Blood, Abiathar Waldo.	- -			2		125
Stockbridge,	-----,	- -	6		1		20
Ashfield,	Ebenezer Smith,	- -					24
Bullock's Grant,	Nathan Hoskins, Joseph Williams.	- -		3	2		54
2d New Galloway,	Abijah Peck, Wait Palmer, James Warren, Nathaniel Keeler.	- -	7				44

Churches. Messengers.

Somerfet, { James Parmele, . . .
 John Lawton, . . .

1st New Galloway, { Simeon Smith, . . .
 Abel Potter, . . .
 Ephraim Smith, . . .

2d Ditto. { Jonathan Finch, . . .
 Studson Benson, . . .
 William Burch, . . .

Hosacktown, { Joel Butler, . . .
 Harper Rogers, . . .

Pittstown, { Isaac Webb, . . .
 Gerthorn Hinkly, . . .
 John Rouse, . . .

	Add.	Dis.	Exc.	Died	No.
	271	34	30	25	234
<i>Total,</i>					

The seven last churches joined at this association.

4. After reading a number of letters, appointed Elder Gano to write a letter of correspondence to the association of Philadelphia: Elder Blood to that of Vermont: Elder Warren to that of Woodstock: Elder Aaron Leland to that of Warren: Elder Morfet to that of Stonington: Elder Powers to that of Danbury.

5. Adjourned till tomorrow morning 8 o'clock.

THURSDAY, July 7.

MET according to adjournment.

6. A sermon was delivered by Elder John Leland, from Dan, xi. 34, 35.

7. Proceeded to read the rest of the letters.

8. The minutes of the Stonington association came to hand by elder Abel Palmer, their messenger; who was desired to take a seat among us.

9. A letter and minutes from the Woodstock association, also came to hand by their messengers, Elders Aaron Leland and Isaiah Stone, who were desired to act among us.

10. A letter and minutes from the Vermont association, likewise were received by their messenger, Elder Joseph Cornal, who was requested to take a seat among us.

11. A letter and minutes from the Warren association came to hand ; but their messengers failed.

12. The minutes from the Danbury association were forwarded ; but there came no letter nor messenger from them.

13. The brethren who were appointed to prepare letters to the corresponding associations, were called upon to make their return, who brought in such draughts of letters as were approved of, and our messengers to Philadelphia were, Elders Gano and Webb : to Warren and Stonington, Elders Werden, Powers, Morfet, and Leland : to Woodstock, Elders Rogers and Insh : to Danbury, Elders Dakin, Morfe, and Vining—Brethren Ganzy and Samuel Whelpley, junior : to Vermont, Elders Blood, Brown, and Hull.

14. The circular letter was brought forward and read ; but not being satisfactory for the present juncture, it was judged most convenient to suppress it ; and Elders Blood, Werden, Leland, Hull, and Butler were appointed to prepare a substitute, some time before the minutes are sent to the press, and have it printed with the minutes.

15. Elder J. In Leland is appointed to prepare a circular letter for next year.

16. Voted to transcribe into our minutes the following article, taken from the minutes of the Warren Association of 1791 ; as fully expressing our sentiments.

18. The association being impressed with a sense of that freedom which every child of Adam is entitled to by nature; and of which they cannot be deprived but by hostile usurpation; take this method of manifesting their hearty detestation of the **SLAVE TRADE**: and recommend it to all our brethren, to pray Almighty God, to hasten the auspicious day, when the Ethiopian, with all the human race, shall enjoy all that liberty due to every good citizen of the commonwealth; and the name of *SLAVE* be extirpated from the earth.

18. *Query*—Whether a civil magistrate, who decides on a certain action in law, according to the best of his judgment, and afterwards becomes a member of a church, shall be required by the church to reverse said judgment, provided he still thinks it was just, and provided the law does not require such reversion? Answered in the negative.

19. Appointed Elder Blood to superintend the printing of the minutes.

20. The next association is to be held at Pittstown, the first Wednesday in June next, at two o'clock P. M. Elder Samuel Waldo to preach the introductory sermon, and in case of failure Elder Joel Butler.

C I R C U L A R L E T T E R.

Beloved Brethren,

AT our last association we addressed you on the power of individual churches and the design of associations; and therefore have now only to remark on that subject; that whenever an association is clad with ecclesiastical authority, it becomes tyrannical: whenever it attempts a lordship over churches without, it only becomes ridiculous.

We are so far from wishing to see our association destroy the independency of churches, that it gives us pain, to have any controversies intruded into the association that ought to be settled in the churches where they originated: for whenever churches lose a sense of their own importance so far that they durst not decide on disputes, for fear of the frowns of the association; they eventually dignify the association with a clerical power which is inadmissible in a land of freedom. But the subject that we shall now recommend to your perusal, is that of the *influence of religion in the human heart.*

Such is the depravity of human nature
—So great the fall of men from God and

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and godliness ; that not an individual of Adam's progeny will ever turn to God and perform spiritual exercises, until the spirit of regeneration new models the soul. This moral change of heart is effected by the sovereign agency of the Holy Ghost, and is properly expressed by *a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness*. This important change, which is not wrought by human efforts or moral swasion ; but by the spirit of God, raises the soul to love and adore the divine character, and abase the creature in the dust. Though doubts and fears may attend such souls as long as they remain on earth, yet they have a regard for the divine glory, and an utter abhorrence to sin.

THE mere formalists, with all his circle of rituals, is ignorant of these exercises, and worries himself in his mean vassalage, while he wonders at, or wantonly opposes the joy of pardoned sin. The love of God in the heart of men is a mystery out of his sight : and he lives and dies a stranger to that religion, which conquers the turbulent passions of the soul, and subjects the heart to sovereign grace. The narrow souled bigot, whose wishes are all confined in the mean circle of self love ; and whose charity extends to none but those of his party, is unacquainted with the religion of Jesus, ignorant of divine benevolence, and far very far from that supreme love to God, which makes a man conceive himself to be a citizen

of the world : and while his soul is peculiarly delighted in the household of faith, his heart vibrates with affection to all the children of Adam.

THE vain philosopher and empty systematic, is feeding his soul with fancy and speculation, not considering that a man may have all knowlege to scan any plan with coherence, connection and dispendence ; and yet be as destitute of any real good, as the heart of Lucifer is of love. His knowledge and self-conceit only puff up his soul ; while he is destitute of the grace of the gospel which edifies the mind, mortifies the flesh, overcomes the world, sweetens the cares of life and ripens the child of God for eternal glory.

No doubt but what the Almighty former of spirits, indulges rational creatures to roam through all the fields of nature, providence and grace, to see the power, goodness and love, of the eternal god-head, and to admire his handy works ; but when the searches and researches of finite beings tend only to agrandize themselves, puff them up with self conceit, and gain the applause of fellow worms ; such knowledge is vain. How far superior is that disposition which fills the soul with wonder and awe at the incomprehensible perfections of Jehovah !—with godly sorrow and humility on account of the heinousness of sin ! and makes the holy

mourner exult free grace, and lie submissive at the feet of the dear Redeemer.

RELIGION, properly signifies, *to bind a-gain*. Sin has rent man from God, and souls from virtue; but religion binds up the breach. Jesus restores that which he took not away, and by the balm of his grace, wounded spirits are bound up and healed. If we consider religion, as it respects the kingdoms of this world, the disciples of Jesus are not to go to Moses, the servant of the Lord, for precepts or precedents to regulate them in social worship; but to Jesus the son of God, who has been faithful in all his house; and whatsoever he saith, they are to do. Nor are the subjects of Christ's kingdom to have recourse to civil kingdom or laws of state, for their institution or protection. That religion which cannot save itself without law and sword, can never save those that embark in it. Every kingdom has laws for the protection of its citizens and support for its officers; which is true of the kingdom of Christ: and for the subjects of Christ's kingdom to appeal to civil authority for protection and support, is as insignificant, as it would be for the federal government, to appeal to the state governments to protect the citizens of the nation and support the federal officers. As the kingdom of Jesus is not under the control nor subject to civil authority; so likewise, it does not extend its influence to the destruction of either

domestic or state government; but leaves them to operate distinctly upon their respective basis. The blending of Christ and Moses—Christ and Cæsar—Christ and the head of a family together, has done infinite mischief.

Having said something of the influence of religion, and the kingdom of Christ, we have here to add something respecting ourselves.

We cannot boast perfection! Like the disciples going to Capernaum, we sometimes strive which of us shall be the greatest, and sometimes our unruly passions will put our reason and religion to the blush; but, dear brethren, though we live in the flesh, we do not war after it; and we desire to praise Almighty God, that he has so far restrained the wrath of man of this association, that we have enjoyed peace and delight, in hearing of the work of God in various places, and seeing the engagedness of the people where we are associated. We have had a good degree of harmony and concord in our deliberations, and have a great cause of triumph in the power of God's grace which has turned this late howling wilderness into a fruitful field.—Brethren pray for us; study to be quiet—maintain lives of godliness—shun all appearance of evil—encourage hopeful gifts—guard against immoral imposters—endeavor to keep the unity of the

spirit in the bonds of peace, and the God of love and peace be with you—Amen.

Signed by order,

JUSTUS HULL,

Moderator.

JOHN LELAND,

Clerk.

N. B. Brother John Asplund from Virginia, has presented one copy of his annual register of the Baptist denomination in North-America, for Nov. 1790, for each church in our association, (gratis) and as he intends now to continue the same for 1791, and 1792, he therefore requests the churches to be subscribers for them, they will come out next April, consisting of at least 20 sheets, including all the association minutes and circular letters for 1791, and 1792, and the price will be two pence per sheet, stiched in blue.