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Vermont. Baptists. Shaftsbury Association, 1798.
Minutes . . . at Elder Hull's Meeting House, June 6th
& 7th, 1798.

Pittsfield, Holly & Smith, 1798. 11 pp.
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1798
MINUTES

OF THE

Shaftsbury

ASSOCIATION;

HOLDEN AT ELDER HULL'S MEETING
HOUSE, June, 6th & 7th 1798.

Together with their Circular and Corresponding

LETTERS.

PITTSFIELD;
PRINTED BY
HOLLY & SMITH:
FOR THE REVEREND ASSOCIATION.

MDCCLXXXVIII.

1798

MINUTES, &c:

June 6th, 1793.

ACCORDING to appointment the Association was opened by a Sermon, delivered by Elder Samuel Rogers, from Sol. Songs vi. 9. *My dove, my undefiled is but one.*

1. A Moderator and Clerk were chosen.

2. The letters from the Churches were read, and the following list taken of the Messengers, additions, dismissions and present number of the Churches.

Churches.	Messengers.	Ad.	Dis.	Ex.	Dead.	No.
Watkil.	Edward Barber, Elijah Case, James Coon, Nathan Rogers.	15	2	4	1	240
Wilton.						50
Wassan.	John Golt, James Burrows.	1	2	1		34
Wassan.	Joseph Lusk, Meads Morgan, William Flint.	1	1			33
Wassan.	Job Champin. Isaac Millis.	9	1	1		43
Wassan.	Peter Werden * Nathan Mason, John Leeland.		9			78
Wassan.	Squire Munro, Joel Readaway, Jonathan Fish * Ebenezer Vining.	5	3	1		190
Wassan-Park.	Abijah Peck. Nathaniel Upham.	6				47
Wassan-Park.	Joseph Craw, Abel Barnham	5		1		38
Wassan-Park.	Joseph Cornwell.	5	10	1		66
Wassan-Park.	Jeduthan Gray.					18
Wassan-Park.	Peter G. Prince, Amos Gill	6	4	1		91
Wassan-Park.			4			92

Churches.	Messengers.	Ad.	Dif.	Ex.
2 Greenfield.	Charles Drake.	1	1	1
3 Greenfield.		8	1	3
† Hancock.	* Clark Rogers.			
	Anasa Brown,			
1 Hartford	Ez-kiel Whitman,	15	2	3
	Joseph Crandel,			
	Nathan Lee.			
† 2 Hartford	* Gamaliel Barns.			
Wet 1 Hilldale.	Oliver Teah	7		
	Edward Bagly.			
Eat 2 Hilldale.	William Huntly.			
Mapleton.	Samuel Rogers,	17		
	Daniel Rose.			
Mayfield.	* Hezekiah Gorton,	7		
	Nathaniel Perkins			
1 Milton.	Salmon Child	2		
2 Milton.				
New-Bethle-	Stephen Olmsted.	4		
ham.	Joshua Hall			
Patridgefield	Haac Smith,			
Or Peru Mass	Calvin Belcher.			
	Isaac Webb,			
1 Pittston.	John Rouse,	8	3	
	Cornelius Wilke,			
2 Pittston.	Stephen Hunt	4	3	
3 Providence.	Jonathan Finch,			
	Peleg Hart.			
2 Providence.	Lemuel Covell,	4		
	Joseph Potter.			
	Benjamin Tabor.			
Pownal	Caleb Nichols	3		
	Benjamin Gardner,			
	Johna Mattison.			
Sandisfield.	Jesse Morey.	1		
	Solomon Shepherd.			
1 Saratoga.		2		
† 2 Saratoga.				
3 Saratoga or	Calvin Hulbert,	6	2	
Northumberland	Edward Dunham,			
† Savoy.	* Nathan Huskins.			
1 Shattsbury.				
† 3 Shattsbury.				

Churches.	Messengers.	Ad.	Dif.	Ex.
Shattsbury.	Caleb Blood,	5	2	171
	Jeremiah Clark.			27
Shattsbury.	Justus Hull,			
	Eber Maffat,			
Shattsbury.	James Green,	13	2	126
	Walter Rhodes,			
	Paul Hymes.			
Shattsbury.	Robert Niles,	8	2	2
	Edward Carr,			
Shattsbury.	Justus Goodrich.			
	Lemuel Powers.			
Shattsbury.	Sylvanus Syles,	2	1	224
	Charles DeLaming.			
Shattsbury.	Jehiel Egg.			27
Shattsbury.	Shubael Willson,	2	1	77
	Ezring Willson.			
Shattsbury.	Joseph Burchard.			18
	David Pepple.			
Total		161	61	27

The 2d Church of Hilldale and those of Patridge-
 and Thurman, were received at this session.
 adjourned until to-morrow, 8 o'clock
 Met according to adjournment, and
 Blood preached from John i. 14.
 The circular letter, prepared by Elder Covell, and
 corresponding letter prepared by Elder Niles, were
 sent forward; and after the usual mode of the ex-
 mination of a committee, were approved of,
 Elder Peter Green came visitant from the Phi-
 lothia association; Elder Peleg Randel from that
 of Stonington; Elder Benjamin Baldwin from Dun-
 ham, and Elder Ebenezer Smith from Leyden
 The church at the Nine-Partners having chiefly
 been away, agreed to drop their name from the min-
 istry.
 The church in Pittsfield being greatly reduced,
 their Elder and Deacon petitioned to be likewise drop-

One called
 Pillsbury
 Grant

8. Appointed Elder *Blood* and Elder *Rogers* to visit the 3d church in Stillbury, and report how they find the church, at our next Association.

9. Appointed Elder *Ruthun*, Elder *Gray*, Elder *Hull*, Elder *Leeland* and Deacon *Cooman* to visit people in Washington, and make a like report.

10. Likewise appointed Elder *Covell*, Elder *Crow* and Elder *Finch* to visit Norway, and report how they find the church there.

11. Appointed messengers to the Association, as follows:

To Washington Association.	Elders <i>Brown</i> and <i>Cornwell</i> .
To Danbury	do. <i>Hull</i> , <i>Gray</i> and <i>Leeland</i> .
To Vermont	do. <i>Blood</i> and <i>Rogers</i> .
To New-York	do. <i>Webb</i> and <i>Covell</i> .
To Woodstock	do. <i>Hulbert</i> .
To Leyden	do. <i>Werden</i> and <i>Crow</i> .
To Otlego	do. <i>Olmstead</i> , <i>Barns</i> , <i>Gray</i> , <i>Hulbert</i> , <i>Brown</i> , <i>Finch</i> and <i>Gorton</i> .
To Philadelphia	do. Elder <i>Webb</i> .

12. Supplies for vacant churches, are as follows:

	Elder <i>Barns</i> 4th Sunday in June.
	Elder <i>Olmstead</i> 1st do July.
1. Hillsdale.	Elders <i>Finch</i> & <i>Smith</i> 3d. do. July.
	Elders <i>Cornwell</i> & <i>Hull</i> 2d. do. Sept.
	Elder <i>Leeland</i> last do. Sept.
	Elder <i>Crow</i> 4th do. Oct.
	Elder <i>Covell</i> 2d do. Nov.
2. Hillsdale.	Elder <i>Barns</i> 3d Sunday in July.
	Elder <i>Gray</i> 2d do. August.
	Elder <i>Smith</i> 2d Sunday in July.
West-Stockbridge.	Elder <i>Olmstead</i> 3d do. July.
	Elder <i>Covell</i> 2d do. August.
	Elder <i>Leeland</i> 3d do. August.
	Elder <i>A. Brown</i> 3d Sunday in July.
2. Providence.	Br <i>Pearse</i> 2d do. Nov.
	Elder <i>Crow</i> 3d do. Jan.
	Elder <i>Covell</i> 1st do. Feb.
Patridgefield.	Elder <i>Barns</i> 1st Sunday in July.
	Elder <i>Niles</i> 4th do. August.

13. On Motion of Elder *Covell*, agreed to refer it to the churches, whether or not it will be best for the Association to be divided into two; and if it is tho't

not advisable, where the dividing line shall run. The churches are requested to signify their minds on the subject at the next Association.

Several queries from churches occasioned the following advice:

DEAR BRETHREN,

As a number of our churches are greatly distressed by their members joining with the *Free-Masons*; for the peace of the churches, we pray such to desist; It is no moral evil in joining with the *Masons*; but it is sinning against the weak brethren, and he that sins against his weak brother, sins against Christ.

As this Association claims no jurisdiction over members of churches, each church must judge for itself according to fact and circumstance:

Elder *Hulbert* is appointed to write the circular letter, and Elder *Cornwell* the corresponding letter for the year.

The next Association is to be holden at Elder *Hulbert's* meeting-house in Stephentown.

Closed with a sermon from *Isaiah* liv. 17 by Elder *Hulbert*.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

AMONG the many subjects that excite our attention in this day of coldness and declension, that the necessity of Gospel discipline in a church, claims a rank. There is no society on earth can stand without certain rules of decorum, which being broken, subject the delinquent to certain penalties. Christ the king of Zion and Lawgiver to his church, has ordained rules and precepts by which all conduct, as christians or churches ought to be regulated; which when broken, reduce the transgressor (remaining incorrigible) to an exclusion from fellowship. The design of Christ's discipline, is not to divide, but perpetuate the union of his saints. The basis of their union, is the love of God in their hearts, which flows from the glorious fountain of love, of the great Jehovah, through the adorable Mediator, by the agency of the Holy Spirit: Hence their fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son, and one with another: Brethren thus thus united have a fervent desire to maintain that union. When their hearts

are burning with that love, they need but little reprove one from another; each one will discipline himself. But alas! shall we speak it? Facts demonstrate the melancholy truth that the children of God, whom he has nourished and brought up, rebel against him when they backslide from their God, lose their love and transgress the commands of Jesus, then the discipline of the Gospel becomes necessary; first to reclaim the backslider from the error of his way; *secondly* to restore the soul that has sinned and abide the multitude of sins. As discipline should be administered justly and in season, so it should be in the spirit of meekness love and humility. Much time and labor are spent in vain, and many are lost from society, by a church, when too harsh in some instances and too favorable in others; too precipitant with one and too indulgent with another; But when churches are exercised with as just motives and as much of meekness and faithfulness, as can be well expected in this imperfect state, how often are they obliged, with the knife of discipline, to perform Gospel amputations and cut off the infected member, to prevent the mortification of the body. If a church neglects to withdraw from any brother that walks disorderly, and according to the traditions received of the apostles, such church virtually partakes of his sins: and with *Achan* in the camp, the Israelites of God cannot stand before their enemies. *Secondly*, The discipline of the Gospel is to be used to evince to all beholders that the saints have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them; and that they have so much loyalty to the redeemer, that they will not walk with any persons who live in the breach of his commands; although (in other respects) they are as dear to them as a *right hand, right foot or a right eye*: Neither are those members who have removed their residence, and not their membership, to think themselves out of the reach of discipline; nor the churches, where such members live, to think themselves excused from using faithfulness with such members; for the nature of the christian economy dictates that the finishing stroke of discipline should be executed by the church where their membership is: but the

labor should begin by the persons who have knowledge of the crime. We conceive that members of churches (if circumstances concur) should remove their membership with their residence; otherwise they grow careless, negligent and too often sinful, and thereby the cause, which they profess to love, is brought into disgrace: and let churches be particularly watchful over members who reside among them, as if they were members in every ceremonious form, in the church where they reside.

It is by the just discipline of the Gospel, that the dignity and authority of the church appears: her spiritual health is preserved; many of the cavils of her enemies are repelled in embryo, and the union, strength, peace and fellowship of her members is greatly increased. We also add that we believe that much of the leanness of soul, coldness and barrenness of mind, which so much prevail at present, among the children of God, is owing to the want of due attention to the laws of Christ. Hear what he says "If any man love me, he will keep my words and my father will love him, and we will come and take up our abode in him."

The intended limits of this letter forbid us to enlarge. From the foregoing hints dear brethren, you may learn how necessary and useful it is to pay a strict attention to regular Gospel discipline: should this be universally observed among the churches, then would Zion appear beautiful as Tirzah, as comely as Jerusalem, and as terrible as an army with banners: We therefore recommend it to you to be constant in your duty; faithful and impartial in discipline; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; and let your light shine before men that they may behold your good works and glorify your father who is in Heaven. Brethren, farewell. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. AMEN.

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

By Eld. John A. Miles

The Shaftsbury Association to the corresponding Association sendeth christian salutation.

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

THROUGH the smiles of indulgent Providence another of our wished for anniversary meetings is come, which capacitates us to address you. How badly should we be, could we say in truth, that the kingdom of our Lord flourished amongst us; that the cords of Zion were lengthened and her stakes strengthened; that she broke forth on the right hand and on the left: But alas! instead of that, we are under the painful necessity of informing you that it is a day of treading down and a departure from the faith; so that the hearts of God's people are made sad, whom he would not have made sad: Some are turned away in vain pursuit of perishable objects, and have left the great work of preaching Christ crucified to a dying world, to seek satisfaction in worldly honors and profits; and there is ground of fear that many are trimming their ways to seek love. Under a small degree of sensible grief on this account, we are seeking a *Catholicon* --- Oh! kind heaven, direct us in our choice. To whom shall we go for help, but to thee, O Lord! dear brethren, without attempting to dictate, we will propose a medicine, and endeavor to apply the same: Prayer... solemn prayer... effectual fervent prayer. Our religious and political hemispheres are filled with signs of the near approach of the day of vengeance and visita-

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tion of our God for iniquity: while Satan has lifted up his standard in the field, and rallied a huge host of soldiers; who boldly presume (like those who mocked at his crucifixion) to call upon the redeemer to come forth and show himself, and vindicate his truth (which, by such, is called a lie: These have brandished their laden sword (called reason) and Goliath like, are deriding the armies of the living God and the king of Israel. O brethren, may we unite and cleave to the standard of truth, and look up to the great captain of our salvation, the Lord of hosts, in this day of trouble, to strike and blasphemy; from whom alone our deliverance must come; taking the whole armour of God, and quitting ourselves like christian soldiers, who never lose a victory when they trust in the all conquering arm of Jesus: and let us beware of making a league with any of the Canaanites, but endeavor, through grace to cast them out ever arming ourselves with

ALL PRAYER.

But beloved brethren, indulge us to reverse the subject, and view the conquest which is to be won; not a kingdom that fadeth away, but incorruptible and eternal; not a perishable crown, but a crown of life; not a world of warring and fighting, but of perfect peace; no night there, but day eternal: In fine all the good that a christian ever fought for, and more than ever he conceived of, shall the saints of God obtain: Even the least saint, who loves the appearance of Christ, shall, with a running and fighting Paul receive a brilliant crown.

CALEB BLOOD, Moderator

Attest.

JOHN LEELEND, Clerk,

Finis.