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Baptists. Vermont. Shaftsbury Association, 1801.

Minutes ... at Galway ... June, 1801.

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M I N U T E S

OF THE

Shaftsbury Baptist Association,

HELD AT

G A L W A Y,

THE THIRD AND FOURTH OF JUNE, 1861:

TOGETHER WITH THEIR

CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING

LETTERS.

T R O Y:

PRINTED BY ROBERT MOFFITT & Co.

FOR THE ASSOCIATION.

1861.

MINUTES, &c.



WEDNESDAY, June 3d, 1801.

1. **A**T 10 o'clock, A. M. Elder *Caleb Blood*, according to appointment, preached the introductory Sermon, from Matt. xxiii. 8: *But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.*

2. Chose Elder *Caleb Blood* Moderator, and Elder *Lemuel Cswell* Clerk.

3. Letters from the several Churches were read, and the following List taken of the names of their Messengers, their alterations during the last year, and their present numbers.

N. B. In the following List, the names of Ministers are inserted in Italic characters: Those with this mark, *, were not present: From Churches marked thus, †, we had no accounts this session; therefore have inserted their numbers as they stood when they were last represented: The Churches distinguished by a dash, —, have no settled Ministers.

Churches.	Messengers.	Added.	Dismiss.	Excl.	Died.	Numb.
Amsterdam,	{ <i>John Holmes,</i> <i>Roswell Glafs.</i>					40
Ballston, †	_____					50
Cambridge, †	_____					59
1 Canaan,	{ _____ <i>James Pettit.</i>	5	4	2		64
2 Do.	{ <i>Elisha Barns,*</i> <i>Samuel A. Curtis,</i> <i>John Crosby.</i>	15				58
Chatham,	<i>Job Campion.*</i>	2	5	2	2	48
1 Cheshire,	{ <i>Peter Werden,</i> <i>Stephen Carpenter,</i> <i>Aaron Bowen.</i>	9	2	3	1	67
3 Do.	{ <i>John Leland.*</i> <i>Brooks Mason,</i> <i>Joel Redway,</i> <i>William Wolcott.</i>	9	12	4	2	385

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	<i>Added</i>	<i>Dism.</i>	<i>Exci.</i>	<i>Dece.</i>	<i>Numi.</i>
Chesterfield, †	<i>Ebenezer Vining.*</i>					80
Cliftonpark,	{ <i>Abijah Peck,</i> <i>Nathaniel Upham,</i> <i>Ephraim Scoughton,</i> <i>Samuel Irish.</i>	36			2	69
Chester,	{ <i>Zekiel Fox,</i> <i>Daniel M'Pride,</i> <i>Obediah Knapp.</i>	44		3	1	121
1 Galway,	{ <i>Joseph Crow,</i> <i>John Lee,</i> <i>Aipheus Moor.</i>	1			1	58
2 Do.	{ <i>James Warren,</i> <i>Nathaniel Kieler,</i> <i>James Job,</i> <i>Henry Ferris.</i>	64			2	129
Grenville, †						18
Great-Barrington,	<i>Jeduthun Gray.</i>	3	2	8		123
1 Greenfield,	{ <i>Israel Crow,</i> <i>Isaac Brewster,</i> <i>Ezra Abbot.</i>			8	7	4
Hadley, formerly 3d Greenfield.	{ <i>Daniel Boardman,</i> <i>Deodat Jeffers,</i> <i>Stephen Call,</i> <i>Caleb Holden,</i> <i>Benjamin Eyde.</i>	6		1	1	62
Hancock, †	<i>Clark Rogers.*</i>					47
1 Hartford,	{ <i>Amasa Brown,</i> <i>Elijah Case.</i>	2		3	1	324
2 Do.						21
1 Hillsdale,	{ <i>Abel Brown,</i> <i>Richard Kenyon.</i>	4	6			27
2 Do.						61
Kingsborough,	<i>William Troop.</i>	3		2		44
Mayfield,	{ <i>Hezekiah Gorton,</i> <i>Nathaniel Perkins,</i> <i>James Sumner.</i>	3		5		75
1 Milton,	{ —, during 3 years past. <i>Daniel Couch,</i> <i>Silas Adams,</i> <i>Moses Leonard.</i>	73	16	3	3	101

Churches.	Messengers.	Added	Dismissed	Expul.	Transf.	Numb.
2 Do.	{ Elias Lee, William Stillwell.	11	4			77
Mapletown,	{ Samuel Rogers, Daniel Rose.	2	2	2	5	54
Northumberland,†	Calvin Hulbert.*					67
Partridgefield,	Ebenezer Smith,	5	2			58
1 Pittstown,	{ Lemuel Covell, John Rouse.	7			2	86
2 Do.	Stephen Hunt.			2		47
Providence, com- prising 1st & 2d united in one.	{ Jonathan Finch, Samuel Hallsted, William Burtch, Caleb Earl, Reuben Wait, John Armitage, Earl Tabor.	44	2	7		132
Pownal,†	Caleb Nichols.*					128
Sandisfield,†	Jesse Hartwell.*					165
1 Saratoga,	{ Hezekiah Dunham, Peter Olev, George Darrow.	6	2		1	68
2 Do.	{ Elisha Langworthy, William Weight, Eliphaz Fish, jun. John Campfield.	0	0		1	44
Savoy,†	Nathan Hoskins.*					32
Schodack,	{ Stephen Olmsted, David Turner.	4		5		91
1 Shaftsbury,	{ Andrew Harpending, Isaiah Mattison, James Slye.	4	1	3	1	97
2 Do.	Judah Werden.	3	1		1	40
4 Do.	{ Caled Blood, Peter Wright.	5	3	4	1	363
Stephentown and Peterburgh.	{ Justus Hull,* Alderman Baker, Walter Rhodes, Job Moon, Paul Himes.	32	6		2	324
2 Stephentown,†	Robert Niles.*					77

Churches.	Messengers.	Added	Dism.	Excl.	Died	Numb.
Stillwater,	{ _____ Silvanus Sales.					
West Stockbridge	{ _____ Samuel Whelpley, Peter Perry.		3		2	72
Williamstown, †	_____ _____					18
Total,		395	88	72	33	4318

The Church at Amsterdam joined us at this session.

4. Letters and Messages were received from the following Associations, viz.—From the Danbury, a Letter, by their Messenger, Elder *Nehemiah Dodge*: From the Leyden, a Letter and Minutes, by Deacon *James Pamerly*: From the Rensselaer-Ville, a Letter and Minutes, by their Messengers, Elders *Truman Berman* and *Reuben Mudge*: From the Otsego, Elder *John Lawton*; but no Letter nor Minutes. The above mentioned Messengers, together with Elders *Beal*, *Warren* and *Herrington*, from Vermont, were invited to take a seat with us.

5. The Circular Letter, prepared by Brother *Lee*, and the Corresponding Letter, prepared by Brother *Covell*, were read; and Brethren *Beal*, *Gray* and *Blood*, together with the authors, were appointed a Committee to examine the same, and report them to-morrow.

6. Appointed the following Brethren our Messengers to sister Associations, viz. Brethren *Paul Himes* and *Waller Rhodes* to the Stonington; Brother *Gray*, Brother *Brown*, and Deacon *Whelpley*, to the Danbury; Deacon *Whelpley* to the New-York; Brother *Leland* to the Warren; Brethren *Blood*, *Finch*, *Covell* and *Olmsted*, to the Rensselaer-Ville; Brethren *Joseph Crow*, *Olmsted*, *Rogers* and *Covell*, to the Otsego.—Prayer attended by Brother *Herrington*, and the business adjourned till to-morrow morning, 8 o'clock.

THURSDAY, June 4.

7. Met pursuant to adjournment; a sermon, introductory to business, was preached by Elder *Obed Warren*, from 1 Peter ii. 9th: *But ye are a chosen generation, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a peculiar People; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of Darkness into his marvellous light.*

8. The Circular and Corresponding Letters, as corrected by the Committee, were read, and voted to be printed with our Minutes.

9. The Query from the first Church in Sheshire, mentioned in the 10th section of last year's Minutes, respecting raising a fund for the relief of suffering Churches, was taken into consideration; and the following answer voted to be inserted in our Minutes:—"The Association esteem it duty to afford relief to Churches or Brethren, who are suffering by oppression, (which is the suffering contemplated in the above Query) as far as we have opportunity: but, as there are but very few of our Churches in a situation to suffer in this way, we do not think it necessary to raise a fund for that purpose; but would recommend it to Churches who are thus suffering, to make known their wants to the Association; and they will, undoubtedly, obtain relief."

10. Whereas the Church in Partridgefield have made application for additional assistance in the case they stated to us at our last session; the Association, therefore, recommend it to all the Churches which compose this Body, to make a liberal contribution for their relief; and forward the money they collect to Elders *Werden, Leland* and *Smith*, (the Committee appointed at our last to receive the same and appropriate it to the use above mentioned) by the first of September next: and if more should be collected than is necessary for their relief, said Committee will return the overplus to the Churches, in proportion as they shall severally contribute.

11. Took into consideration the proposition from the Philadelphia Association, respecting a general Conference; and after some deliberation, concluded, that at present we have not sufficient light on the subject to see the utility of such a combination: therefore, voted not to engage therein till we have further light thereon.

12. A proposition was made by Brother *Covell*, for raising a fund, by contribution, for the purpose of sending Missionaries to preach the Gospel in destitute parts of our frontier settlements, and, as far as we may have opportunity, among the Natives of the Wilderness; after deliberating largely thereon, the Association unanimously voted to recommend it to the Churches to take it into mature consideration; and those who are disposed to adopt so benevolent a plan, to signify it in their Letters at our next session; and likewise, to make a liberal contribution, and send it forward at the same time, to begin said fund: to be entrusted in the hands of such Committee or Trustees as the Association shall appoint to receive the same and appropri-

ate it to the above use, as they shall from time to time think proper : and to contribute annually for the support of the same, till the Churches so contributing, shall judge they have sufficient cause to discontinue such contribution.

Closed by Prayer by Brother *Rogers*, and adjourned for one hour.

13. Met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer introductory to business, by Elder *Werden*. Our Committee appointed at our last session, to visit the Brethren at Vermont, made report ; and after examining the same, and collecting all the light we could obtain on the subject, voted to consider the number who have adopted the new Constitution, as the Vermont Association : Accordingly, appointed Brother *Harpending*, and Brethren James Slye and Isaiah Mattison, our Messengers to visit them at their next session.

14. Voted to send Messengers to the Warwick Association, to open a correspondence with them, if agreeable on both sides, after forming an acquaintance with each other. Appointed Brother *Lee* and Brother *Covell*, our Messengers for the above purpose.

15. In answer to the remarks in the Letter from the first Church in Hartford, we think, in ordinary cases, when the Association receives official information through the medium of a Council of Ministers and Brethren in our Fellowship, that a Church in our union has so departed from the rules of the Gospel, either in faith or practice, that they have lost the Fellowship of the Churches composing said Council, they ought to drop said Church out of their Fellowship without further ceremony : yet we conceive there may be cases in which prudence would dictate to make some further enquiry, before the matter is decided. And we further think that in the case stated in said Letter, respecting the second Church in Greenfield ; although we did not intentionally violate the above rule, yet, through some inadvertence, we went too far in the business, after we had such information as is stated above, respecting their corruption ; especially, in suffering them, at our last session, to contest the matter before the Public, after they had been censured, not only by a Council of their own choosing, but also by the Committee we sent to enquire into the matter. Upon reflection, we think such a step was wrong ; and as such, we hereby retract it.

16. In as much as our beloved Brethren, Elder *Joseph Crow* and Elder *Samuel Rogers*, have manifested an intention to travel abroad in the course of the present year, for the purpose of visiting, and preaching in distant parts of the Wilderness ;

therefore, this Association doth hereby certify that they are Ministers of good report, and in good standing with us, and go forth in our fellowship: and as such we recommend them to the notice, favour and encouragement of all good people wherever they may be disposed to travel, to bear the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; and we sincerely pray that a divine blessing may attend their labours, and crown them with abundant success.

17. Appointed the following supplies for destitute Churches:

Stillwater,	{	Brother <i>Israel Crow</i> ,	1st	Lord's Day	in July.
		Brother <i>Lee</i> ,	last	do.	do.
		Elder <i>Smith</i> ,	2d	do.	in August.

Milton, Brother *Israel Crow*, 1st Lord's Day in October.

18. Appointed Brother *Abel Brown* to prepare a Circular Letter, and Brother *Gray* a Corresponding Letter, for the next year.

19. Voted our next Anniversary Meeting to be held at the Baptist Meeting-house in Pittstown, on the first Wednesday in June next, at ten o'clock A. M.

20. Appointed Elder *Elias Lee* to preach the Introductory Sermon; and in case of his failure, Elder *John Leland*.

21. Appointed Brother *Covell* to superintend the printing of these Minutes, and forward them to the Churches.

Concluded with exhortation and prayer, by the Moderator.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The ELDERS and MESSENGERS composing the Shaftsbury Association, convened at Galway. June 3d and 4th. 1801, to the several Churches whom they represent, send Greeting.

DEAR BRETHREN,

WHEN we address you from our public conventions, we think it always most beneficial to present you with something immediately adapted to the times and seasons, and to the circumstances of things, both in the World and in the Zion of GOD. Time has been, when religious bigotry and superstition, supported by civil tyranny, extended their gloomy reign over the greatest part of the Christian World; and, by their various artifices and impositions, had buried the light of reason and revelation in almost impenetrable shades of darkness. Men were, therefore, in those times, either subjected by fear, or ignorantly attached to the nefarious schemes of designing Priests and Politicians, so that little or no trait of real principle could be discovered amongst them.

But now the scene is changed, and gives the fairest opportunity, especially in our country, of discovering and trying every man's principles, of what sort they are. But it is yet to be feared that very few, in comparison with the whole, have any just notions of half the things they undertake to support and maintain, either in a civil or religious capacity. Many people, unable to support their former notions of religion, with any colour of reason, and more than half convinced of their being erroneous, and yet ashamed of publicly abjuring them, are seeking an asylum under the mask of indifference to any form of religion whatever; pretending that all the religious persuasions among us are viewed in the same light by the Divine Being; and that sincerity, in any profession, is the certain criterion of truth and acceptance with him: And indeed this opinion is rapidly prevailing in the world, even among professors of the Christian religion, under the specious character of Philanthropy and universal GOOD WILL. But nothing can be more injurious to religion, or detrimental to society: for, however plausible it may appear at first view, the following absurdities, with many others, will necessarily and unavoidably result. 1st. That human inventions, in matters of religion, are

as acceptable to God as his own institutions. Now, if it be so, that he has given his sanction to all the religious forms and doctrines which are current among professors, his administration must certainly be one of the greatest pieces of jargon and inconsistency that ever appeared in the known world. Pray, what kind of being must he be, to declare himself a GOD of infinite WISDOM, POWER and HOLINESS—to demand our highest adoration—that we should neither have, nor make mention of, any other Gods beside him—that he is the only living and true GOD—that we should worship him as the LORD our GOD, and him only—that we should not worship the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath—that he is our Father, that he is our Master, and therefore we should call no man Father, or Master, on earth—that the word, or law, which he hath given us, contains a perfect fulness of all things necessary to be known and practised in religion—that the man of God is thereby thoroughly furnished unto all good works—that men's traditions make it void—that we should separate ourselves from such traditions—that if we speak not according to his law, it is because there is no light in us—that he will severely punish them that presume to add to, or diminish from it; and yet, after all, admit that men should be placed on a par with himself!—that their wisdom, their power, their holiness, their laws and inventions in religion, should be set up in competition with his own, and be adhered to and obeyed in the same manner! *Be astonished, O ye Heavens, at this!* Again,

2d. What kind of sincerity is that which is plead for in this case? And what kind of people must they be who possess it? Sincerity in any case, is a true regard for the cause in which we are engaged: But is that a true regard for the cause of Christ, which esteems the laws, orders, institutions and works of men equal to his, and makes the same conscience of submitting to the authority of men, in matters of religion, as it does to the authority of God?

3dly. This opinion would oblige us to suppose, that to be more attached to one religious denomination than to another, under a conviction of its being nearer the truth, is downright bigotry and superstition: For, if all modes, forms and constitutions of religion are equally acceptable to God, they ought, in reason and justice, to be so to us; and to go beyond reason and justice, in this case, is bigotry and superstition indeed.

4thly. All examination, investigation, free enquiry, &c. are necessarily excluded by it. If all religions are the same with God, and ought to be so with men, why should we seek after their differences and distinctions? Only let people acknowledge

to each other that their different persuasions are equally right, and agree to support them on this principle, in harmony and friendship, and the use of the old maxim, "*Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good,*" is at an end, at once. Indeed, all revelation would thereby become useless. There would be no need of enquiring after the *good old way*: All would be good ways. There would be no need of running, striving, wrestling, praying and watching against dangers and innovations; for, upon this plan, wrong is out of the question, in respect to the visible order of religion; and the *enemy* that soweth tares hath an equal right to assert the propriety of his plan among the rest.

5thly. This opinion considers all reformation, in matters of religion, as the fruit of folly and enthusiasm: For if all religious systems are equally good, there can certainly be no need, at a time, of separating, changing, expunging, renewing, &c.—One state, condition and circumstance will answer quite as well as another.

6thly. It would oblige us to believe that all complaint, that has been, or could be made, (either by *God* or *men*) of false teachers, hypocritical professors, or impostors; of any kind of innovations and corruptions in religion, has no foundation at all; and that all the threatenings of *God* against such characters and things are highly absurd and contrary to reason.

7thly. People who support this opinion do most wretchedly expose their ignorance and inattention to the nature of things, as well as themselves to the intrigues and designs of impostors of every kind. These are they of whom the prophet speaks, who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; or rather, that make a virtue of uniting both under one character, and reprobate every attempt to distinguish or separate them: Such may as easily be persuaded to believe a lie as the truth—to suck in a deadly poison as a nourishing cordial.

8thly. Such people do evidently prove themselves to be destitute of all principle, and therefore cannot, with safety, be trusted by any society whatever. They would, in general, as soon be of one as another; and if at any time they discover a preference, it is on account of some worldly honour or emolument, and not of real truth. Sensible people, therefore, of all persuasions, would say to them: We cannot trust you—you are like men in a military profession, who make it a matter of no consequence what cause they undertake to support. You may find them engaged on one side to-day, and, peradventure, on the opposite to-morrow; and then on no side; and yet again

on all sides at once : And thus their want of knowledge, truth and integrity, renders them wholly useless to any cause whatever.

Moreover, as all the different religious constitutions in the world do harmonize with one or other of the three great principles on which all governments are founded, viz. *Monarchy, Aristocracy and Republicanism*, must not those who are so very indifferent, in matters of religion, be every way suspected of entertaining the same opinion with respect to politics? What civil society, therefore, could place the least dependence on, or confidence in them? Would not every sagacious and discerning politician, of either class, esteem them as not only useless and unprobable, but as highly calculated to enervate, relax, and even betray the very principles on which his government was founded?

Finally, dear Brethren, you may, hereby, see what we, who profess ourselves BAPTISTS, ought to be, according to our profession : And perhaps this would be a good consideration for all Christian PROFESSORS.

If we believe our religion is from God, we must also, of necessity, believe we have the whole platform of it in his word. Whatever, therefore, we believe the meaning of his word to be, we must fix down upon it, and abide by it, to the very last. In this case we should *endure hardships, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ*, and not give over the contest, though we have to *wrestle against flesh and blood ; against principalities and powers ; against the rulers of the darknesses of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places*. Whatever others may do, we must not make it a matter of indifference whether we obey God or not ; nor whether we obey God rather than *man*. Attention to the word of truth, and obedience to the divine law, give the only genuine evidence of our being the true people of God. If we love him, we shall keep his commandments, rather than the commandments of men. We ought, therefore, to be a people given to enquiry---to seek after knowledge and understanding, that we may know how to distinguish the *institutions* of God from the *traditions* of men : And indeed, no people in the world have so great an advantage in that respect as we. Our constitution carries in it the soul of liberty and free examination, and is calculated to open all the avenues of reason and revelation, and pour forth the eternal truths of heaven, in a blaze of *light and glory* upon a dark and benighted world.

But oh ! what reason have we to lament, that we have so excellent an instrument in our hands, and so fair an opportunity of using it, and yet suffer it to lie neglected, as a thing of little consequence, and very little understood : And above all, that

Some who profess to be of our denomination, should set an example of indifference towards the great ordinances of the gospel, by admitting to their communion persons whom they *themselves* do not allow have been baptised in such a manner as would satisfy their own consciences in respect to the true meaning of the gospel in that case. Such people must virtually make it a point of indifference, whether they abide by their own conscientious opinions of truth, or admit the opinions and practices of others, though quite different: And we cannot discover why any denomination of people, who adopt this opinion, might not, with equal propriety, adopt all the religious opinions and practices in the world, without distinction. But we ought to remember, that *a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways*; and that *a house divided against itself cannot stand*.

We are yours, dear Brethren in the gospel of Christ.

What is the Bible? is it good for aught?
 Is it a real number, or a nought?
 Is it a *man of counsel*, and a guide?
 Or must it be by ev'ry fancy try'd?
 Is it a mine, where richest treasure's found?
 Or like a shore, where pebble-stones abound?
 A stable pillar, girt with golden bands?
 Or like an empty bag, which never stands?
 If God and Baal be one, we'll worship both:
 If two, then we must stand to one, by oath.
 So, then, we'll shove old Baalim from the throne,
 That we may truly worship God alone.

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The SHAFTSBURY ASSOCIATION to the several ASSOCIATIONS with whom we correspond.

ARE YOU IN HEALTH, DEAR BRETHREN?

WE trust we do not ask you this question with the perfidious design of a *murderous* Joab, with the fatal dagger in his hand; but with the glowing affection of *real* Brethren, with true friendship in our hearts.

In as much as our correspondence loudly proclaims **WE ARE FRIENDS**, permit us, at this time, to offer a few remarks on the nature, progress, and effects of **CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP**.

Christian Friendship is not that sordid principle, which inclines the rich in this world to look with affected complaisance on the sons of *wretchedness*, nor that mercenary principle which confines its good will to the hand of *benefaction*: It is not that perfidious principle, which pretends great respect for those whom it would gladly employ as instruments; nor that selfish principle, which bestows gifts with the sole design of effecting its own purposes: It is not that party spirit, which circumscribes itself to those of its own *cast*; nor ~~contracted~~ spirit, which delights only in those of its own *family*: It is not that *variable* spirit, which is easily attracted by new objects, but can retain no lasting attachment to any, consequently is variable, fickle and unstable; nor is it that blind bigoted spirit, which never discovers any imperfections in the objects of its delight, and therefore maintains an obstinate attachment, supported neither by reason nor friendship, but by a stubborn predilection: But,

That Friendship which is the subject of this letter, is that divine principle, which, by assimilating our souls to the Great Eternal Source of all *true* friendship, knits ~~and~~ cements them ε ~ ε the most indissoluble union.

This is, undoubtedly, what the Great Apostle means by *The unity of the Spirit*, Eph. iv. 3d; by *the fellowship of the Spirit*, Phil. ii. 1st; and by that oneness, by which *Christ is all and in all*, Col. iii. 11th; but more particularly, that *charity* delineated, 2 Cor. xiii.

To trace this glorious principle to its exalted source, is a work at once pleasing, interesting and sublime. In this delightful

stretch of contemplation, we have the infallible word for our guide. Let us listen a moment to its language.

“ The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was—Then was I before him, as one brought up with him : And I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him : rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.”——“ And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”——“ As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.” Here we have the most emphatical description of true friendship, and are led to see that it has its source in the ever blessed God, and therefore, that its nature is heavenly and divine.

We learn also, from the scriptures of truth, that the adorable medium through which this divine principle has made its appearance in our world, is the blessed Immanuel. The Father hath “ *So loved the world, that he hath given his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” If any man loves the Son, the Father will love him, and they will come and take up their abode with him : And thus every Christian is united to God, by the same divine principle which unites the *Father and the Son.* “ *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us—And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*” What could be more expressive ? Will not this language of the blessed Jesus justify the Apostle, in saying that we are made partakers of the divine nature ? *2 Peter, i. 4th.*

Having thus, by tracing this heavenly stream to its source, discovered its nature, let us, for a moment, turn our attention to its progress and effects.

The Eternal Father and his dearly beloved Son, being united by that holy Spirit of love, union and friendship, which dwells in, and proceeds from both, and by which they mutually dwell in, and are delighted with each other, have early devised a plan, which brings into view the exercise and progress of that ever-living, ever-active principle, in all its beneficent effects. This glorious plan, called by some the *Covenant of Grace*, by others the *Covenant of Redemption*, and is emphatically both, as it is a gracious plan to redeem sinners, embraces the elect of God, with all the means of their salvation ; and discloses that

eternal friendship which the Father had towards them, in his dear Son, before the world began; and exhibits its progress through all the divine dispensations, till it shall appear complete in their consummation in Glory. We may see it shine through the shadows of the ceremonial law, through the gracious promises interspersed through the Old Testament, and in repeated predictions of the holy prophets respecting the Messiah and his gracious and peaceful reign: We may see it, likewise, in the miraculous ways by which Jehovah delivered his ancient people out of Egyptian bondage, and from all their enemies; and in the various ways by which he has delivered Godly men out of, or supported them under their afflictions, in all ages. But when we turn our attention to the incarnation, work and passion of our DEAR REDEEMER, we see that glorious principle repelling every obstruction that appeared to retard its progress, and bidding defiance to all the powers of *Earth* and *Hell* when combined to prevent its gracious effects, till by one offering he has completed the work of atonement, made an end of sin, brought in everlasting righteousness, opened a way into the holiest of the holies for the reception of his people, and for ever perfected them that are sanctified. Advert our eyes to his resurrection, his friendly addresses to his disciples, on several occasions subsequent thereto, the affectionate manner in which he took leave of them at his ascension, the glorious commission he gave them to preach the glad tidings of salvation to all nations, the promise of his divine presence with them, and their successors in the gospel ministry, to the end of the world, the accomplishment of that most gracious promise, in the descent of the *Holy Ghost*, and his irresistible influences accompanying and succeeding their labours down to the present day, and we may see additional displays of the progress of Divine Friendship.

The same may be seen in all that support, comfort and consolation which his people have experienced, under all the trials, persecutions, and afflictions, which they have been called to pass through for his name's sake, ever since the gospel was first introduced into the world; and in the continuance of gospel privileges in his church to the present day, notwithstanding all the efforts of *Men* and *Devils* to prevent it.

The effects of Divine Friendship are—a complete reconciliation to God, produced in the hearts of the most obdurate and rebellious sinners, by the powerful operation of divine love shed abroad in their hearts by his holy Spirit, by which that enmity of heart is removed, by which they were opposed to God and his law, and full of malice and hatred one against

another; their being united in the delightful bonds of love and fellowship, and mutually engaged to seek and promote each other's good; and that holy communion with God and his people, which every Christian enjoys, in a greater or smaller degree, by the sweet influences of the holy Comforter, the Spirit of Truth: In short, the effects of that glorious principle change the rebel into a loyal and faithful subject, the alien and stranger into a child, and the foreigner into a fellow-citizen: it causes the sinner to love the things he once hated, and hate the things he once loved: it constrains its subjects to unite all their efforts to build up and maintain the visible cause of God in the midst of a sinning world; and to comfort, encourage and edify one another in those things which pertain to his kingdom.

Hence we see, dear Brethren, that Christian Friendship is the same in nature with that love which dwelt in the bosom of the Father towards his only begotten Son, and his people in him, which arose in the breast of the adorable GOD-MAN, first towards his HEAVENLY FATHER, and then towards his BRIDE, *who was chosen in him before the world began.* We also see, that it is the same spirit of union by which the great eternal Father dwelt in and glorified his dear Son with his own self, by which the blessed Immanuel dwelt in the bosom of the Father, before his works of old, and was daily his delight; that by which the Lord Jesus Christ dwells in his people, and the Father in him, by which they are made perfect in one—GOD IN CHRIST—CHRIST IN HIS PEOPLE—HIS PEOPLE IN HIM. THIS, *dear Brethren,* is that *threefold cord*, which neither *Life nor Death, Time nor Eternity, Sin nor Holiness,* can dissolve. This is that immutable, all-powerful principle, which, in its progress, hath run through all the divine dispensations, and effected all its beneficent purposes, in defiance of all opposition; that which, in its effects, slays the enmity of our hearts, reconciles us to God, and unites us together in the *unity of the spirit and bond of peace.*

This view of the subject exhibits the Great JEHOVAH as the inexhaustible fountain of true *Friendship*—the blessed JESUS as the *Friend of Sinners*, who has laid down his life for them, and the HOLY SPIRIT as that glorious Teacher, who will inculcate the same principle in their hearts.

Now his friends learn of him, not barely the name
Of Friendship Divine, but they live in the same:
And, dear Brethren, we trust our souls well do know
The union of hearts, made one here below.

All along as we pass through this waste wilderness,
 A friend true and faithful will add to our bliss:
 Our great friend on high, and a friend here below,
 All the joys of pure friendship will give us to know.

Let us then, dear Brethren, unite our efforts to cultivate union and harmony while we are passing through this vale of tears, till we arrive in that upper and better world, where Divine Friendship reigns, in all its unfading GLORY, and sheds its benign influences on all those happy Millions who surround the THRONE OF GOD AND THE LAMB FOR EVER.

It is with the utmost pleasure that we receive your Messengers and friendly Letters, from year to year; and we sincerely desire to continue our correspondence with you.

We refer you to our Minutes for an account of the alterations that have taken place since our last, and the present situation of our Churches.

“ Finally, Brethren, farewell! Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the GOD of Love and Peace shall be with you:” Which is the sincere desire and earnest prayer of your affectionate Brethren in the bond and fellowship of the Gospel.

By order of the Association.

CALEB BLOOD, *Moderator.*

LEMUEL COVELL, *Clerk.*