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Baptists. Vermont. Shaftsbury Association, 1806.

Minutes ... at Troy ... June, 1806.

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MINUTES

OF THE

Shaftsbury Baptist Association,

HELD AT

T R O Y,

THE FOURTH AND FIFTH OF JUNE,

1806.

TOGETHER WITH THEIR

CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING

LETTERS.

Troy:

PRINTED BY MOFFITT & LYON,

1806.

Roland D. Grant
Warrenton, Mass.

Minutes, &c.



WEDNESDAY, June 4, 1806.

1. **A**T 10 o'clock, A.M. Elder *John Blood*, according to appointment, preached the Introductory Sermon, from Rev. xi. 1, 2.

2. A Moderator and Clerk were chosen.

3. Letters from the following Churches were read, and the usual list taken.

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

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	<i>Add'd.</i>	<i>Dis'm.</i>	<i>Excl.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Berlin, formerly call- ed Stephentown and Petersburg.	{ <i>Justus Hull,</i> <i>Alderman Baker,*</i> <i>Paul Hynes.</i>	22	5	2	2	358
Cambridge.	{ <i>James Glass,</i> <i>John Mattison,</i> <i>John S. Centre,</i> <i>William Hastings.</i>	8	3	2		105
1 Canaan.	{ ————— <i>John Gott,</i> <i>Malachi Gates.</i>	1	5	1	1	45

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	<i>Added.</i>	<i>Dism.</i>	<i>Excl.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>No.</i>
2 Do.	{ <i>Elisha Barns,*</i> <i>Samuel A. Curtis,</i> <i>Silas Pratt,</i> <i>William Flint,</i> <i>Aaron Lawrence.</i>	3	2	2	2	96
Chatham.	{ <i>Job Champion,</i> <i>Henry Palmer,</i> <i>Joel Champion.</i>	2	2			38
1 Cheshire.	{ <i>Peter Werden,*</i> <i>Stephen Carpenter,</i> <i>Daniel Chapman, jun.</i> <i>Samuel Chapman.</i>	3			1	70
3 Do.	{ <i>John Leland,*</i> <i>Lemuel Covell,</i> <i>Daniel Coman,</i> <i>Stephen Westcott.</i>	11	10	1	2	291
Chesterfield.	<i>Asa Todd.*</i>	32	6		1	129
Charlotte-Ville,	{ <i>Titus Finch,*</i> <i>Abijah Peck,</i> <i>Elisha Carpenter,</i> <i>Nathaniel Upham,</i> <i>Richard Clute,</i> <i>Joseph Lamb.</i>	17	12	3	1	42
		11				138
Cliftonpark.						
Great Barrington.	{ <hr/> <i>Daniel Lomis,</i> <i>Peter Millard.</i> <hr/>	12	2	3	2	108
2 Greenfield.	{ <hr/> <i>John Lewis,</i> <i>John Emeigh,</i> <i>Ichabod Barber.</i> <hr/>	7				45
2 Galway.†						126
Hancock.†						47
East Hilsdale.	{ <i>Abel Brown,</i> <i>Silas Evans.</i>	1			1	70
West Do.	{ <hr/> <i>Samuel West,</i> <i>Jacob Vandeboe.</i> <hr/>				1	38

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	<i>Added.</i>	<i>Disin.</i>	<i>Excl.</i>	<i>Diad.</i>	<i>No.</i>
2 Hilsdale.	<i>Afa Spencer.</i>	1	4	1		30
Lanfingburgh.	{ <i>Nathaniel Kendrick,</i> <i>Aaron B. Hinman,</i> <i>Daniel Seymour.</i>	1	1			30
Mapletown.	<i>David Rathbun.</i>					21
Patridgefield.	<i>Ebenezer Smith.</i>	5		1	2	72
1 Pittstown.	{ _____ <i>John Rouse,</i> <i>Lovett Head.</i>		5		3	64
Pownal.	{ <i>Dyer Stark,</i> <i>Isaac Choat,</i> <i>Richard Brown,</i> <i>Abiather Buck.</i>	2			1	124
Sandisfield.	<i>Jesse Hartwell.</i>	2	4	1		119
Savoy.†	_____					107
Schodack.	{ <i>Stephen Olmstead,</i> <i>Levi Hughson,</i> <i>Joshua Haff,</i> <i>Benjamin Calkin.</i>	1	1	6		73
1 Shaftsbury.	<i>Isaiah Mattison.*</i>	2		2	2	87
East Do.†	_____					31
4 Do.	{ <i>Caleb Blood,</i> <i>Isaiah Hendrix.</i>	5	3	2	2	358
Stephentown.†	_____					65
West Stockbridge.†	{ <i>Deacon Whelpley,</i> <i>present.</i>					61
Troy.	{ <i>Isaac Webb,</i> <i>Edward Tylee,</i> <i>Silas Covell,</i> <i>Adam Keeling,</i> <i>Ebenezer Jones.</i>	6		3	2	76
Townsend.	_____					24
Williamstown,†	_____					24
		145	65	30	28	3122

N. B.—The Church in Townsend, (Upper Canada) was received this session, being some of the fruits of our Missionary labours in that country.

4. Corresponding Affociations.

1. Philadelphia—Letter and Minutes.
2. New-York—Letter and Minutes.
3. Warren—Letter and Minutes, by their Messengers, Elders Gano and Cornell.
4. Danbury—Letter and Minutes.
5. Stonington—Letter and Minutes, by their Messenger, J. Gallup.
6. Leyden—Letter and Minutes.
7. Otsego—Letter and Minutes, by their Messenger, Elder Halbert.
8. Woodstock—Letter and Minutes, by their Messengers, Stephen Choat and Samuel Kingsbury.
9. Rensselaer-Ville—Letter and Minutes, by their Messengers, Elders Ferris and Comstalk.
10. Vermont—Letter and Minutes, by their Messengers, Elders Warren and Chamberlin.
11. Cayuga—Letter, by their Messengers, Elder Israel Craw and Deacon Squire Munro.
12. Saratoga—Letter and Minutes, by their Messenger, Elder Jonathan Nichols.
13. Essex—Letter and Minutes, by Elder Finch.

☞ The above-mentioned Messengers, and a number of visiting Brethren in the Ministry, were cordially received, and invited to a seat with us.

5. The Circular Letter, prepared by Br. *Webb*, and the Corresponding Letter, prepared by Br. *Kendrick*, were read, and referred to Brethren *Blood*, *Hull* and *Ferris*, with the authors, as a Committee of Inspection, to be reported to-morrow.

6. The following Report was received from the Missionary Committee.—“Your Committee, charged with Missionary affairs, beg leave to report, that during the past year, we have received 172 dolls. 41 cts. which added to 40 dolls. 5½ cts. the surplus remaining in the Treasury at our last meeting, amounts to 212 dolls. 44½ cts.—That we have employed Elder Jonathan Finch three months, as a Missionary, for which services we have paid him 50 dolls.—That we have employed our Brother, Lemuel Covell, six months, as a Missionary; for which we have paid him 100 dolls.—That 3 dolls. have been laid out for

the printing of a number of copies of a Plan or Constitution of a Missionary Society—amounting, in the whole, to 153 dolls. leaving a surplus in the Treasury of 59 dolls. 44½ cts. as appears per Treasurer's report.—

“ That Br. Finch has made a Report to this Committee, of his travels through a part of the state of Vermont, and the settlements in this state, on the west of Lake Champlain:—That the said report of Br. Finch has met our cordial approbation, and impressed us with the importance of continuing Missionary labours in those parts, if practicable.—That Br. Covell has made a report of his travels and labours through the western parts of this state, and in the province of Upper Canada, both among the white people and Indians:—That his report has also met our approbation, and confirms us in the belief, that we have increasing encouragement to use our utmost efforts to send Missionaries into those parts. Both the said Missionary Brethren have letters addressed to the Association, to which, and to their verbal statements, we refer you for further particulars on this subject.

“ Your Committee beg leave further to report, that at our last meeting we appointed a Committee to draw up a Plan of a Missionary Society; that they have drawn up such a Plan, and that a number of copies of said Plan have been printed, to which we refer you.—That at our present meeting, a Committee from the Saratoga Association have attended with us for the purpose of uniting their efforts with ours in promoting the Missionary interest; and that the two Committees have mutually agreed to recommend to both the Associations to unite their strength in pursuing that object for the present.

“ *By order of Committee.*

“ LEML. COVELL, *Clerk.*

“ *Troy, June 3, 1806.*”

The foregoing report was accepted, and the Missionary Brethren, Finch and Covell, called upon to present the letters alluded to, and to give some more particular accounts of the state of things where they had travelled—which they did, greatly to the satisfaction of the Association.—Br. Finch presented two letters, from the Churches at Plattsburgh and Peru—thanking the

Association for sending a Missionary into those parts, and requesting the continuation of such favours.—Br. Covell presented a letter from the Church at Charlotteville, in Upper Canada, manifesting their gratitude for past favours, and earnestly requesting like favours in future; and especially, that a permanent Missionary might be sent into that country. He also presented a letter from a Church which was formed at Townsend, in the same country, while he was there last fall—requesting admission into the Association, and corroborating the request of the Church at Charlotteville, respecting the continuation of Missionary labours in that country. The said Church at Townsend was cordially and joyfully received into the Association.

Br. Covell also presented a written Talk from the Tuscarora Indians, expressing their thanks for the notice we have taken of their Nation, in sending our Missionaries and our friendly Talks to them from time to time, and requesting us to enter into a covenant of friendship and brotherhood with them: this Talk was accompanied by three strings of wampum, as a token of their friendship, and as a confirmation, on their part, of such a covenant. The interesting account Br. Covell gave of the state of that Nation, the contents of their friendly letter, and the emphatical token of their friendship, expressed by the strings of wampum, occasioned tears of joy and gratitude—and at the same time the strongest emotions of pity towards our poor brethren in the desert. The wampum was presented by Br. Covell, in the name of the Tuscarora Nation of Indians, and received by the Moderator, in behalf of the Shaftsbury Association, as the confirmation of a lasting friendship.

7. After hearing the foregoing report, and the documents accompanying it, together with the verbal accounts of our Missionaries—

Resolved, unanimously, That this Association do cordially approve of the doings of our Committee, and the labours of our Brethren, *Finch* and *Covell*, as reported; and that we will do all in our power to promote the good work which has hitherto been attended with so great a blessing; and, in order to carry this resolution into effect, we do appoint Elders *Blood*, *Hull*, *Webb*, *Peck*, *Kendrick* and *Covell*--and Brethren *Upham*, *Rouse*,

Hendrix, West, Choat and Rogers, our Missionary Committee for the ensuing year.

8. *Resolved*, That suitable answers be sent, by our next Missionaries, to the several letters received from different places; and in particular, that Br. Covell prepare an answer to the Talk from the Tuscaroras, and present it to-morrow for inspection.

9. Adjourned, to meet to-morrow morning at 8 o'clock.—Sermon this evening by Br. Gano, from Heb. xii. 1, 2.

THURSDAY, 5th.

10. Met, pursuant to adjournment: Br. Rathbun preached from Colos. iii. 11.

11. The Circular and Corresponding Letters, as reported by the Committee of Inspection, were approved, and ordered to be printed with our Minutes.

12. The Letter to the Tuscarora Indians was read, approved, and ordered to be sent them by Br. Covell, next fall.

13. *Resolved*, That Br. Covell provide a staff, and bear it, with said letter, to the Tuscaroras, as a token of our friendship, and as a confirmation, on our part, of the covenant of friendship and brotherhood confirmed on their part by the strings of wampum.

14. The Committee appointed at our last meeting to revise our Constitution, reported a draft, which was ordered to be printed with our Minutes; and the Churches are requested to take the same into consideration, and give information, at our next meeting, whether they are willing to receive the said draft as the Plan and Constitution of the Association; and if not, to assign their reasons, and point out what alterations they think necessary.

15. Appointed the following Messengers to Corresponding Associations, viz.—*Leland* and *Hartwell* to the Danbury—*Leland* to the Stonington—*Smith* to the Leyden—*Glass* and *J. S. Center* to the Otsego—*Kendrick* to the Woodstock—*Brown* and *Deacon West* to the Rensselaer-Ville—*Kendrick*, *Rathbun* and *Blood* to the Vermont—*Glass* and *J. S. Center* to the Cayuga—*Peck* and *Brown* to the Saratoga—*Finch* to the Essex.—Also, appointed Br. Webb to forward our Minutes to the Philadelphia, New-York and Warren Associations.

16. Appointed Brethren *Webb*, *Blood* and *Covell*, as a Com-

mittee to publish the whole of our correspondence with the Tuscarora Nation of Indians, as soon as they shall think advisable, after collecting the necessary materials.

17. *Resolved*, To request the Saratoga Association to appoint a Committee, to meet with ours at their next meeting, to direct in applying the money collected for Missionary purposes.

18. Appointed Br. *Rathbun* to prepare a Circular Letter for next year, and Br. *Spencer* a Corresponding Letter.

19. *Resolved*, That the next meeting of the Association be held at the Meeting-house of the 3d Church in Cheshire, the first Wednesday in June next, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

20. Appointed Br. *Webb* to preach the introductory Sermon; and, in case of his failure, Br. *Kendrick*.

21. Appointed Br. *Covell* to superintend the printing of these Minutes.

22. Voted the thanks of this Association to the Baptist Church and Society in the village of Troy, for the many tokens of hospitality, and Christian friendship, with which we have been entertained during our present session with them.

23. The Session was closed with Prayer, by the Moderator.

SUPPLIES FOR DESTITUTE CHURCHES.

West Church in Hillsdale—Br. *Champion* the 1st Lord's day in July, and Br. *Spencer* the last do.

First Church in Canaan—Br. *Brown* the 1st in July.

Account of Monies contributed at this Meeting of the Association, for the encouragement of Missionaries.

	D. C.		D. C.
Church at Chatham,	4 75	Deacon Carpenter,	1 00
1st Church Canaan,	00 50	Deacon Guernsey,	10 00
E. do. Hillsdale & Society,	5 00	Elder Finch,	1 00
Clifton-Park, do.	21 61	Church at Salem,	4 00
West Hillsdale, do.	4 00	Do. at Milton,	6 00
Lansingburgh, do.	9 00	Elder Hartwell,	2 00
Cambridge, do.	2 57	Samuel Rowley,	1 00
Pittstown, do.	10 00	Br. Titus, of Troy,	1 25
4th Shafisbury, do.	6 24	Public contribution, Troy,	27 57
Pownal Delegates,	1 00		
Middletown Church,	1 18		
		Total,	119 67

The Committee charged with Missionary Contributions, avail themselves of this opportunity to inform our Ministers, Churches, Brethren, and friends in general, that besides the money comprehended in the foregoing schedule, we are authorized to set down 50 dolls. as a present from Elder Stephen Gano, of Providence, (R. I.) to our fund. We hope it will not be taken amiss, if, while we acknowledge our grateful obligations to him for this noble act of generosity, we beseech all such as feel interested in the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, to imitate this worthy example of Christian benevolence!

We have appointed our next meeting of business, to be held at Cheshire, the day before the next meeting of the Association, at 1 o'clock, P. M. at the house of Capt. Jonathan Richardson.

THE CONSTITUTION, OR PLAN
OF THE
SHAFTSBURY ASSOCIATION.

IN all incorporated bodies, whether civil or religious, so much power ought to be vested in them as is necessary so carry into effect the use and design of such corporation, and no more. Hence, As every Gospel Church duly organised is fully empowered to execute every branch of Church discipline, it would be usurpation for any other body of men whatever, to claim the right of judging decisively for it, either in matters of faith or practice.

We therefore believe, that individual Churches have no license from the Lord Jesus to enter into any combination or agreement whatever, so as to concentrate their power of discipline by delegation. Consequently, we, as an Association, utterly disclaim all right of interference with the discipline of particular Churches.

It is, therefore, necessary, that we should ascertain the particular use and design of our incorporation, as a body of associated Churches, which are as follow, viz.—

I. **T**O meet by our Delegates, at stated seasons, in a free Christian Conference, for the purpose of enlarging and strengthening our fellowship in the Gospel, by freely communicating to each other our views of the sacred Scriptures, and of the joys and sorrows that await Zion in this world, that we may sympathise with, and pray for each other, amidst the changes of time.

II. To give our opinion and advice, on any queries that may be presented from the Churches, that relate to doctrine or discipline; provided always, the solution of them is not so circumstanced as to interfere with the government of particular Churches.

III. The Association is designed for a medium to receive and communicate official information of the general state of the

Churches, not only in our own, but in other Associations in different parts of the world.

IV. Through this medium, also, we obtain information of the circumstances of those which are destitute of a preached gospel, and have opportunity to advise to, and recommend some suitable method of sending them relief.

V. We also have opportunity to know when individual Churches have searched out and brought to light apostate Churches or Ministers, and to give suitable information to the Churches in our connection, and to the public in general, that they may avoid them. In a word, our design in this combination of Churches is, to be mutual helpers of each other, in striving to promote the interest of the divine Redeemer in the earth; to preserve purity of doctrine and discipline; to guard against men who are corrupt, either in doctrine or practice; and to present to the world our united efforts against the corruptions of the age in which we live.

A Summary of our Faith, which we believe and feel ourselves under obligation to maintain and practise, is as follows, viz.

ARTICLES OF FAITH.

1. We believe that there is but one God, who is denominated in the Scriptures the *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*: that these three are the *one only living and true God*, the author of all created beings and things.

2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God; and that they are an unerring rule of faith and practice for mankind.

3. We believe that God made man upright; that he has fallen and become sinful; that all his posterity is wholly depraved and inclined to evil; that the just demerit of sin is eternal punishment; and that the only way of salvation from sin and mis-

ery, is by the sovereign grace of God, through the atonement of Christ Jesus.

4. We believe that all that ever will be saved were chosen in Christ Jesus before the world began.

5. We believe that all whom God chose in eternity he will call in time, by his efficacious grace, and qualify them for, and bring them to his kingdom of glory.

6. We believe that the Son of God will come to judge the world in righteousness; that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; that the punishment of the wicked, and the happiness of the righteous, will be eternal.

7. We believe that Baptism, by immersion, is the only right mode; and that believers, professing faith in Christ, are the only proper subjects of baptism.

8. We believe that the Lord's Supper is an institution of Christ, designed for his Church, and that none ought to be admitted to it but such as have been baptized upon the profession of their faith, and have united to a gospel Church.

9. We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's day, or the Christian Sabbath; and that it ought to be held sacred to the memory of Christ's glorious resurrection, and devoted, in a special manner, to the duties of religion.

To carry into effect the design of our union, we adopt the following

P L A N.

I. The Association shall be composed of such members as the Churches of the union may duly elect and send for that purpose; and letters from their respective Churches, certifying their appointment, and the present state of their Churches, shall be sufficient credentials to entitle them to a seat.

II. Any Churches who wish to be received into this union, may apply by letter and Messengers; and on giving satisfactory information of their being sound in faith, they may be received;

and, as a token of the same, the Moderator, in behalf of the Association, shall give them the right hand of fellowship.

III. A Moderator and Clerk shall be annually chosen, who shall continue in office until succeeded by a new appointment of persons to fill said offices.

IV. It shall ever be considered contrary to the rules of this Association, for any one church or person to present to this body a complaint against any Church, Minister, or Member of a Church, until the matter of their difficulty has been taken up by some Church or Churches, so that the parties concerned have had a fair trial, and the matter is so circumstanced that it has become necessary, through the medium of this board, to inform the public of the apostacy of the delinquent or delinquents.

V. If any Church of the union shall become corrupt in doctrine or practice, it shall be the duty of any sister Church who may have knowledge of the same, to labour with said offending Church. If satisfaction is not obtained, it will then become necessary for the aggrieved Church to call for the advice and assistance of other Churches; and if they judge that there is sufficient ground to suspend fellowship with the delinquent Church, their testimony and report to the Association shall be a sufficient reason to drop it from the Minutes, and to publish to the world that they have withdrawn that fellowship which they had given to said delinquent Church.

VI. If a Brother in the Ministry has become corrupt, and will not give satisfaction, complaint must be made to the Church to which he belongs; and if they will not put him away, it becomes a difficulty with the Church, and must be proceeded with as above: and if a Church or sister Churches with it, have just cause to reject a Minister from fellowship, it is reasonable that they should give official information of the same to the Association, so that they may give the world such notice as that the public may not be imposed upon by men of corrupt principles.

VII. It is the duty of the Association to give their opinion and advice on such queries as may be sent from any Church in the union; provided always, that the solution of them be not so circumstanced as to interfere with the government of particular Churches.

VIII. It shall be the duty of the Association, from time to time, to suggest to the Churches what they may think most expedient to be done to promote the spread of the gospel in the world.

IX. The Association shall have a right to open and hold correspondence with other Associations, as it may think proper.

X. The Association shall annually publish an attested copy of their proceedings, for the information of the Churches; so that if any Church is dissatisfied, it may have opportunity to remonstrate at the next session. Each Church in the union is considered under obligation to bear their equal proportion of the necessary expences of such publication.

The time and place to meet shall be appointed at each previous Session.

Any Church not choosing to become, or to continue a Member of this Association, shall not be considered as cut of fellowship merely on that account; yet if a Church has joined, it is not Christian-like to leave the Association, without giving suitable notice thereof: in consequence of which, it will be the duty of the Association to enquire after said Church.

XI. It shall be the duty of the Moderator to preside in the meeting; and when any matter is verbally brought forward, to reduce it to a proper form, and to call for the attention of the Association to decide thereon. He is also to see that not more than one speak at a time. If the Brother speaking shall be tedious, or swerve from the point in view, the Moderator shall call him to order; and when a point has been sufficiently discussed, he shall reduce it to a vote.

XII. No Member of the Association shall be allowed to re-

tire from the business thereof, without leave of the Moderator. Every person speaking shall address the Moderator, who shall preside in the Meeting so as to see that all things be conducted with *decorum, propriety, and in good order.*

XIII. Whereas there are papers, and other articles, belonging to the Association, which are of importance; and whereas we have no fixed or permanent depository for them; therefore, the Association shall have a right to appoint a standing Secretary, whose duty it shall be to take charge of such deposits, and do such other business as the Association shall point out to him from time to time as his duty: and the said Secretary shall hold his office during the pleasure of the Association.

Lastly. The Churches shall have a right to alter or amend this Constitution, whenever two thirds of them shall think it necessary or proper.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Elders and Messengers of the SHAFTSBURY ASSOCIATION, to the Churches they represent, send Christian Salutation.

BRETHREN,

AMONG all the virtues of Christianity, none is of more evident consequence to visible religion, than that of union amongst the followers of the Lamb: *None* more dignifying to religion—none more pleasing to the Christian's heart—none more declarative of the glory of God. Permit us, then, from this our anniversary meeting, to suggest a few ideas to you, for your edification on this important subject.

In order for the Church to look forth as the morning, fair as the moon in her profession, clear as the sun in her doctrine, and terrible as an army with banners in her discipline, her members *must be united*. The way in which this is to be attained, deserves a few moments' serious consideration. Our observations, for the sake of perspicuity, we will arrange under three heads, viz.

1. The method of building up the church of Christ.
2. The officers appointed to rule and take care of the church.
3. The walk of church-members towards each other.

First.—The method of building the church is not only nearly connected with this union under consideration; but herein is the foundation laid for it in the church. All false religion leads directly to the building up of churches upon worldly principles. These are imbibed by a worldly spirit, and lead to a worldly conduct: And should a number of God's children and the children of this world be built up together in a church, they would form a heterogenous mass, totally incapable of

gospel union, and more like the image of Nebuchadnezzar than the Spouse of Christ.

The foundation of all union consists in a similarity of sentiment, and a oneness of objects. The understanding Christian has derived his sentiments from the word of God, and his highest object is the glory of God. Hence we see the necessity of receiving into the church none but those who really appear to have experienced a work of grace on their hearts, and who can give a reason of the hope that is within them, in meekness and fear.

In doing this, we shall fall in with the device of Infinite wisdom in the plan of the gospel; which is to call out and separate the church from the world, and to make it appear as a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid. It will hence appear that the foundation of gospel union is laid in the reception of church members; for how can two walk together unless they be agreed? Let us, then, be careful to receive no man to doubtful disputations; and that every person whom we receive into the church be fully united with us in the great truths of the gospel.

Second.—In order for Christians to enjoy the union of the gospel, they must have good men, well experienced in the things of God, and deeply acquainted with their own hearts and the frailties of human nature, to lead them and go before them; to watch over them, and to admonish them in the Lord; to reconcile their little differences, and to awaken their religious sympathies; and to set examples of patience, of meekness, of forbearance and of brotherly kindness continually before them; and thus to provoke them to love and to good works.

Hence much depends, under God, upon ministers and deacons; and Christians ought to be careful whom they set over them in the Lord, to fill this important department in the church of God. This leads us to observe,

Thirdly—That Christians, in their conduct towards each other, can never be too careful to avoid giving offence, to Jew, to Gentile, nor to the church of God. We must watch over our own spirits, lest we get the beam in our own eye, whilst we are over-anxious to pluck the mote out of our brother's eye.

Some Christians are too much disposed to play the critic on their brethren's failings. In doing this, they often metamorphose a silly, harmless fly, into an ugly and poisonous wasp. But, brethren, we have enough to grapple with in this world of trial and affliction, without having our imperfections magnified, and our mistakes turned into positive crimes. The foibles inseparable from human nature are sufficient, without having to bear the uncharitable censures which flow from a want of tenderness and compassion.

Brethren, let us hence learn to avoid little bickerings, groundless jealousies, and cruel backbitings: These things frequently, like the serpent's tooth, inflict wounds which are incurable: for when evil surmises have once got in amongst brethren, hardness is excited, confidence is destroyed, and union is gone. The oracles of truth are full on this point. Hear the apostle's observations on the subject: *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment—* 1 Cor. i. 10. Again: *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from among you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you—* Eph. iv. 31, 32. This is enough—a volume could say no more: If we will not attend to this, it must be because the love of God has but little influence on our hearts, and his word still less authority on our lives. We beseech you, brethren, to attend to these things: they are the result of experience and the voice of wisdom. Instead of giving way to hardness

towards our brethren, let us be jealous of ourselves; let us watch over our own hearts, and mourn over our own failings, and thus be humbled under a sense of our own vileness in the sight of a holy God. Then shall we feel disposed to look with pity upon the imperfections of our brethren: we shall pray for them, and bear with them, and strive to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. At the same time, let us carefully avoid the opposite extreme, viz.—that laxity of sentiment, which dispenses with truth in order to please men; and is more concerned about the praises of men than the honour of God. This will lead us to wink at sin, for fear of offending mortals; and to seek the approbation of men, more than the promotion of truth and the purity of the gospel in the world.

Brethren, our meeting has been highly edifying, and peculiarly pleasing. Our hearts have been made glad, and our souls have been fed with the precious truths of the gospel. Our accounts from our churches have been, taken in the aggregate, very encouraging: our cause increases with unexampled rapidity, and Christ is making displays of his grace amongst the children of men. Whilst we entreat you to attend to the exhortation in this our anniversary address, we subscribe ourselves yours in the gospel of Christ Jesus.

By order of the Association.

STEPHEN GANO, Moderator.

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

*The SHAFTSBURY ASSOCIATION, to the Associations with whom
we correspond, Greeting.*

BELoved BRETHREN,

SO great is the variety, and so important is every subject which the gospel contains, that we can find none uninteresting, or undesirable to have place in our correspondence.—Notwithstanding this, there is much room for the exercise of judgment in the choice of our subjects; inasmuch as we shall see but a small number investigated by the militant church, and some stand first in the train of doctrine and practice.

We address you, dear brethren, on a holy complacential Love. Should this be thought a common-place subject, having lost the advantages of novelty—we wish to render it more so. Unlike many other subjects, it retains its power to please when it ceases to be common or strange. We give it no ornaments, nor is it capable of any: it is the most acceptable in its artless simplicity.

To describe the *nature* and *effects* of love, would open the subject before us, and present us a welcome view of the heart-ravishing scene.

On the nature of love we observe—its radical principles are essentially the same, wherever it is found. The essence of love consists in a holy pleasure of mind, in view of an object, together with a desire and fixed purpose to render the beloved object the best possible services. Love in God, and love in the people of God, is the same in kind, though not in degree. God's love to his people consists in his having a holy pleasure in them, with a fixed purpose to make them happy.

1. His pleasure in them is abundantly expressed in all his word. Their beauty is perfect through his comeliness, which he hath put upon them. He hath placed them as a seal upon his heart and upon his arm; and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, so doth the Lord rejoice over them.

2. The rich blessings which God hath promised them are divinely fraught with an unchangeable purpose to make them happy. He hath sworn by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, that they might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before them.

These two grand characteristics, which enter into the essence of God's love, are equally essential to a holy love in his saints and angels. In proportion to their strength of love to God, they have a heart-felt pleasure, arising in view of the Divine Character, with a desire to render him their highest services. The love which the saints have towards one another, includes all the pleasure they feel, arising from their social connection, and is the basis of holy designs to render mutual favours.

The *effects* of love, dear brethren, are too great and numerous fully to pass under the eye of the militant church—much more to be investigated in a single letter. The effects of God's love are as boundless as his nature. In heaven, in earth, and through the unbounded universe, they are every where seen, and loudly proclaim, that *God is love*. In this world, the effects of his love are great. The favours of his providence—the infinite gift of his beloved Son—the descent of the divine Spirit—the reign of grace—and all the blessings of heaven in promise, are effects which have astonished angels, made poor sinners the sons of God, and placed them in a sea of wonders. Here is produced eternal life, in souls alienated from the life of God; and they are united in one glorious society, of which Jesus Christ is the head. They are sweetly bound together in everlasting bonds, which never can be broken. Stimulated by a

hoiy love, they will endure hardships as good soldiers, labouring for the glory of God, the good of his cause, and the happiness of each other. Its uniting effects surpass all description. Where it prevails in a Church, it renders it invulnerable, and stronger than an army with banners. But a member without love, is a dead, unpolished stone in the building: he knows no place, and ought to have none. The holy commands of God—the doctrine, examples and precepts of the gospel, are to him as green withes to Sampson, and as easily broken. May such unmanageable converts be few!

Our last letter, dear Brethren, to you, was upon the advantages of Correspondence. In this we advert to the cause. We are happy to think it originates in divine love, and partakes of heavenly qualities. This alone can fix it on a broad and unshaken basis, and render it lasting as the theme of eternity, and blessed as the joys of heaven. We have much interest in your prayers and letters, and heartily wish their continuance.

This pleasing anniversary, which we trust has been attended with a sweet favour to God, brings us nigher the great assembly above—where we hope ere long to meet you all in person. 'Til then, you will receive our Letters and Messengers, as tokens of love.

STEPHEN GANO, *Moderator.*

P. S.—Since our last, our aged, worthy, and beloved Brother and fellow-labourer in the gospel, Elder CLARK ROGERS, of Hancock, has been called from the field of labour, (we hope) to the royal palace of eternal rest. May God help us to be also ready!!