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Minutes ... Held at Newtown, June Seventh and Eighth, 1815.
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MINUTES

OF THE

SHAFTSBURY

Baptist Association,

HELD AT

NEWTOWN,

JUNE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH,

1815.

TOGETHER WITH THEIR

CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING

LETTER.

TROY,
PRINTED BY FRANCIS ADANCOURT.

1815.

MINUTES, &c.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7th, 1815.

1. AT 10 o'clock, A. M. pursuant to appointment Elder ISAAC WEBB preached an introductory Discourse from Proverbs, xviii. 10—"*The* NAME *of the* LORD *is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe.*"

2. Chose Elder OBED WARREN *Moderator*, and Elder ELI BALL, *Clerk*.

3. Adjourned until 1 o'clock, P. M.

Met according to adjournment—Prayer by Elder HERRIC.

4. Received letters from the churches, and subjoined the following list of their alterations:

N. B. The names of ordained ministers in the following list are in SMALL CAPITALS: Licentiates in *Italics*: Those ministers with this mark [*] were not present. From churches with this mark [†] we had no information this year, and have given their numbers as when last represented. Churches without an ordained minister settled with them are distinguished with a dash [——].

Churches.	*Messengers.*	*Added.*	*Dism.*	*Excl.*	*Died.*	*Total.*
Albany,	ISAAC WEBB. Dn. Joshua A. Burk. Solun Dutcher.	8	5		1	79
Adams.	Letter. ——	5		1	1	81
Berlin,	JUSTUS HULL.	7	31	6	2	522
Cambridge,	OBED WARREN. Shelden Carter.	4	3	2	3	96
1 Canaan,	SILAS SPALDING.				1	37
2 Canaan,†	——					38
1 Cheshire,	—— LOCAL.*				1	36

* Last year this church made a return of 20 members, and this year of 36: the Clerk of the church must be accountable for the mistake.

Churches.	*Messengers.*	*Added.*	*Dism.*	*Exclud.*	*Died.*	*Total.*
2Cheshire,	———					
	Letter by El. Cornell	1	8	2		194
Chatham,	Job Champion.	4				38
Charlotteville,†	Titus Finch,					54
Clifton-Park,	Abijah Peck.					
	Jacob St. John.					
	Wm. Groem.					
	Elisha Freeman.					
	Richard Clute.	17	1	5	2	261
Clinton,(U C)	———					
	Letter.					34
Egremont,	Daniel Sherwood.					
	Daniel Loomis.	1	2	1	1	100
East-Hillsdale,	Abel Brown.*					
	Letter.	5		2	1	125
West-Hillsdale	———					
	Richard Kinion.	1	3			43
Lansingburgh,	Eli Ball.					
	Dc. Aaron B. Hinman.					
	Napthali Guild.	2	2	1	2	39
Hoosick,	———					
	Israel Keach.					
	Deac Solomon Gale.	1	10	6		106
Nassau,	Enoch Ferris.					
	Deac. Peter Brown.					
	John Harris.					
	Charles Williams.	11	3	3	1	112
Pittsfield,†	———					57
Pittstown,	Charles Lahatt.					52
Pownal,†	———					182
Schodack,	Stephen Olmsted.					
	Henry Tucker.					
	Ezra Benton.					
	[illegible] D. Olmsted.	4	6	1	1	84
Stephentown,†	Julius Leman.*					88
Shaftsbury,	Isaiah Mattison.	3	1		2	124

Churches.	*Messengers.*	*Added.*	*Dism.*	*Exclud.*	*Died.*	*Total.*
4 Shaftsbury,	Elon Galusha. Isaiah Hendrix. Ebenezer Clark.	1			4	323
Savoy,†	Philip Pearce.*					53
Stamford,†						79
W Stockbridge,	*Nathaniel Otis.* Elisha Hubbil.	2	2	6		78
Troy,	Francis Wayland. David Johnson. John Bacc.	12	1	4	2	62
Townsend,(U.C.)†	—— Fairfield.*					56
Sandisfield,	Jesse Hartwell.	2	3	1	2	125
Oxford, (U.C.)†						22
3 New Canaan,	Henry Palmer.					37
Williamstown,	——— John Smedley. David Torry.	6	3			34
Arlington,	——— Rufus Spencer. S—— King.	1	1			65

Dec 5. The Circular and Corresponding Letter, prepared by Eld. Eli Ball, was read and referred to Elders Lahatt, Webb and Morse, with the author, for examination.

6. Received from sister Associations accounts, as follows, viz.—

Associations.	*Messengers.*	*Minutes.*
From Philadelphia,		Minutes.
New-York,		do.
Warren,		
Otsego,		do.
Leyden,		
Rensselaerville,	Elijah Herrick.	do.
Cayuga,		
Stonington,	Asahel Morse.	do.
Vermont,	Obed Warren.	
Woodstock,		
Essex,		

Hartford,	Asahel Morse.	do.
Saratoga,	Deac. Selvenu Sail.	do.
Sturbridge,	Joseph Cornell.	do.
Westfield.		
Black River,		do.

* 7. Appointed Elders Webb, Warren, Peck, Hull, Ferris, Lahatt, Olmsted, Cornell, Wayland, Matteson, Hartwell, Purrington, Champion Morse and Galusha, Deac. Gale, Br. *Otis* and Br. Terry, as a Committee to deliberate on the request of some Churches, expressed in their letters, relative to Mr. Aaron Haynes, and the 2d Church in Cheshire, and report to the Association.

8. Adjourned until to-morrow, 8 o'clock, A. M.

Thursday, June 8.

Met pursuant to appointment. Prayer preparatory to business was offered up by Elder Spalding.

9. The Circular and Corresponding letter was brought forward by the Committee appointed to revise it, and adopted by the Association.

† 10. Adjourned until 2 o'clock, then to meet at the house of Br. Calkins, to conclude the business of the Association.

2 *o'clock.*—Met and proceeded to business.

11. Opened a correspondence with the Black River Association.

12. Appointed the following Ministers and brethren to sister Associations, viz.—

To Leyden, Elders Smith, Matteson, and Br. *Otis.*
Rensselaerville, Elders Warren, Champion and Spalding.
Vermont. Elders Warren, Lahatt, and Br. Burdet.
Woodstock, Elder Wayland.
Westfield, Elder Hartwell and Br. Redway.
Hartford, Elders Hartwell and Spalding.

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* At 4 o'clock, P. M. the Association adjourned from the meeting-house to the house of Br. Calkings, to attend to business, while Elder Herrick preached to the spectators from Isa. lxiii. 1.

† At 10 o'clock Elder Morse preached from 1 Peter ii. 4.

Union, Elders PALMER, ST. JOHN and GALUSHA.
Saratoga, Elders WARREN, MATTESON and Br. Herrington.
Philadelphia, ————, (minutes by the Clerk.)
New-York, Elder BELL.
Warren, Elder CORNELL and Deac. Covel.
Stonington, ————, (minutes by the Clerk.)
Otsego, Elders SMITH and OLMESTED.
Cayuga, Elder HARTWELL.
Essex, Elder PECK and Deac. Clute.
Sturbridge, Elders CORNELL, and MORSE.
Black River, Elder FERRIS.

13. The Missionary Committee made a partial verbal report, through the medium of their Clerk, which was accepted by the Association. A full report will be seen at the close of the Minutes.

14. Appointed Elds. PECK, LAHATT, WARREN, CHAMPION, HARTWELL, MATTESON, HULL, and Brethren *Otis*, Brown and Redway, with the present Committee, to cooperate with the Northern New-York Baptist Missionary Society.

15. Appointed Elder GALUSHA to write the Circular and Corresponding Letter for next year.

16. Voted, to hold the next session of the Association in Sandisfield, on the first Wednesday of June next, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

17. Appointed Elder WAYLAND to preach the introductory Sermon. In case of failure, Elder LAHATT.

18. Appointed the Clerk to superintend the printing and distribution of the minutes.

19. Received and adopted the following reports of the Committee appointed to attend to some business relative to Mr. Aaron Haynes, and the 2d Church in Cheshire, (mentioned in our 7th article) viz.—First, relative to Mr. Haynes. "*Resolved*, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that a letter be addressed by the Association to the Church of Stamford, stating that satisfactory evidence has been received, that Mr. Aaron Haynes is regularly out of fellowship: consequently consider it improper that said

Church should retain him as their minister or member; and further, that should said Church continue him as such, under these circumstances, it will be an occasion of difficulty."——"With reference to the 2d Church in Cheshire, this Committee recommend that a faithful and affectionate letter be written to said Church, and a Committee of three be appointed for the purpose of drafting said letter."

20. The Trustees of the Northern New-York Baptist Missionary Society, make the following report of their proceedings in 1815.——The monies remaining in the Treasury at the session of June, 7th and 8th, was $12 38. The monies received from the several districts, churches and individuals, the present session, amount to $151 19, making a sum in all of $163 57.

The committee to whom was referred the regulation of Eld. CORNELL'S mission last year, appointed it for three months in any part of New-York, where he thought it necessary. Returns have been received from Elders CORNELL, and RIPLEY, (also from Elders St. JOHN, and ANDREWS, appointed in 1813, who did not report last year.) These returns bring us the pleasing tidings of frequent awakenings, and some accessions to Zion. The desire we feel of doing something for our perishing race, and the hope of seeing the Divine approbation continue to crown our feble efforts, emboldens us to do all that we can to disseminate the gospel; and we desire to acknowledge with gratitude the donations we have received from a liberal public, to promote this laudable institution.

In order to dispose of the monies now in the treasury, the committee have, in answer to pressing requests from Canada, appointed Elder OLMSTEAD a mission for three months; and have refered the appointment of another missionary to a committee of the following, viz.

Elders WAYLAND and BALL, and Deacon Hinman.

By order of the committee,

ELI BALL, *Clerk.*

An account of the monies contributed at the present session to the missionary fund —

From the district in Troy,	$10	
do. Cliftonpark,	33	37
do. Cambridge,	8	81
do. Schodack,	8	25
Church in Chatham,	6	
do. West Hillsdale,	4	
do. Nassau,	6	06
From Brother Joel Redway,		50
From the 4 church in Shaftsbury,	9	85
From the 1 church in Shaftsbury,	4	
From a friend to missions,		75
From do.	2	
From do.		50
From a female friend,		12
From Eld. CORNELL,	4	80
From Eld. RIPLEY,	8	
From the Female Mite Society in Shaftsbury,	17	79
do do. Albany,	2	
Public contribution at Newtown,	24	89
Total,	$151	69

The Missionary Society is to meet at New Marlborough, (near the border of Sandisfield,) on the Tuesday preceeding the first Wednesday of June next, at the house of Eld. JESSE HARTWELL.

By a vote of the Missionary board of trust, the churches composing the Shaftsbury Association, are informed, that a letter was sent to the Association by the Rev. Mr. RICE, (agent of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions for the U. States,) accompanying 39 copies of the report of the board in Philadelphia, but the contents of the letter was disclosed too late for the Association to act upon it. The object of the communication appears to have been designed, to excite the attention of the churches of the Association to the vast importance of establishing a society *in* the Association, for the purpose of aiding, with others, in foreign missions. The churches are hereby requested to peruse the *report*, refered to above (which have probably been distributed in most of the churches) and in that way which shall be thought best, be prepared to aid in this laudable institution, against next session,

By a vote of the Association, the following article is transcribed from the minutes of the Rensselaer Association.

"We would by these warn our churches against the imposition of a man travelling under the profession of a minister of the gospel, of the Baptist denomination, by the name of JOSEPH SMITH. He is a person of a middle stature and size, dark complexion, black hair and eyes—harsh and stammering voice, says his native place is Barnstable, on Cape Cod. When detected appears very passionate—has two wives—is travelling now in the Eastern States—we request our sister Associations to notice him in their minutes."

CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The MINISTERS *and* MESSENGERS *of the* SHAFTSBURY ASSOCIATION, (*convened at Newtown, June 7 & 8, 1815,*) *to the several* CHURCHES *we represent, and* SISTER ASSOCIATIONS *with which we correspond; present the salutations of Christians.*

BELOVED BRETHREN,

PROFESSING to believe, as we do, that the *scriptures of divine truth*, (being of Divine inspiration,) are the only *ground* of faith and *rule* of practice, you will suffer us to make the important enquiry, what are the *causes* of the many differences that exist between, and in, many of the churches in our connection with regard to *doctrine*, *discipline* and *worship?* That differences on the above named points have ever disturbed the felicity of Zion, even from the days of the apostles to the present, is a fact so obvious that we need not stop here to prove it. The *causes* of those differences are the subject of our present enquiry: And this enquiry we make, brethren, not to excite, or to gratify curiosity; but with a desire, if possible, to effect an union between the jarring interests of Zion. The scriptures, by which *we* profess to be governed, contemplate man as sunk in ignorance, (Eph. iv. 18.)—and they come to bless him with a knowledge which is eternal life, (John I. iv. & 17 3.) Like the sacred ark, they have fallen into bad hands, and each one has returned them with the peculiar furniture of his own mind. Every person has his prejudices, & being desirous of propagating their sentiments, many have written on divine subjects, and have filled the world with their books, and many have judged of doctrine and of the bible by these publications, without consulting the scriptures for themselves. Many who commence the study of the sacred volume in order to instruct others, form

their system after the model of other men, with implicit faith; and those of whom they become teachers, judge of the meaning of scripture by their preaching. Thus, instead of judging of doctrines by the *scriptures*, we judge of the scriptures by the *doctrine preached*. This may be considered as the source of many errors, and of much division. *Another* reason of the dissimilarity of ideas that exists among us may be attributed to our different FEELINGS. Man, having forsaken the sphere in which he was designed to move, has sought a center of his own, and now, in his depraved state, revolves in his own selfish orbit, governed by no law but that of his own feelings. This error seems inseperable from human nature. They re-reluctantly yield the throne to pure benevolence, and even claim a share in our obedience, though heaven itself commands.

Should we exceed our bounds, brethren, if we should say, that remains of *this* depravity is seen in the best of christians? Perhaps nothing tends to widen the jarring interests of Zion, more than this error. I FEEL SO, is often urged in place of all arguments, and is made to answer all purposes. It serves as a comment on scripture; prescribes rules for churches; is often the ground of difficulty amongst brethren, even where the scriptures have established no precedent; is the ground and rule for the forgiveness of faults; and, in a word, it claims to hold the balance that weighs out rules for heaven and earth!!!

Thirdly. Under the pretext of exalting the doctrine of the cross above human science, many have disproved the study of the scriptures *with the aid* of human science.—By many it is thought, that *ignorance* is one of the greatest marks of honesty in a minister; and as it removes him so far from being *a man made minister*, it is thought an excellent qualification, and a mark of sincerity. This pretext may sometimes be urged in the place of ministerial support; for, (it is said,) if the minister be called of God to preach, he need not study his sermons; he may therefore labor all the week, and preach all the Lord's

day, and the promise for his comfort is, "Lo I am with you."

Those who believe in preaching from the impulse of the moment, without a previous acquaintance with the scriptures, cannot fail to receive as infallible all that is delivered by preachers of the same sentiment. As our feelings, ungoverned by divine inspiration are various, various, and even contradictory ideas may be conceived and advanced concerning the bible. This, therefore, may be considered as another source of discord in Zion.

Lastly. It is to be feared, that too great *neglect* in christians in general, to read the scriptures, contributes much to the promotion of division. The spirit of the world, the spirit of the times, and above all the spirit of supineness, lead to the neglect of the scriptures. With an overcharged anxiety about what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithall we shall be cloathed, we are crouded with concerns, which, instead of being cast upon the Lord, are borne with anxiety, and indulged, even to distrust. The spirit of the times interweaves itself with the feelings of christians, and drives from the breast the spirit of God. Nothing now remains but a languid soul, on the rack of distrust, benumbed with insensibility. A few of the husks of a perishing world are crouded in to fill up the vacuum, and his death-struck devotion, neither kindled with fire from the altar, nor guided by the sacred word, flows tardily in the channel of *formality.*

The above named evils, brethren, we consider as the principal causes of the many differences amongst the dear members of God's Zion.

An important question now demands an answer. By what means shall these evils be remedied, and Zion become one?

We answer, brethren, by reading the scriptures *constantly*, without *prepossession*, with *perseverance*, with *prayer*, and above all things, with a holy resolution, by the grace of God, *to be governed by them.*

Far from lording it over God's heritage, or prescribing for christians' faith, we only desire to excite you to the rule

already given. This consideration we urge on the principle, that the scriptures are the only *standard of religion in the soul.* The only true ground of *fellowship* amongst christians.

1. All true faith or a belief of God's testimony, (which is the instrumental cause of salvation,) regards TRUTH, and rests upon it as its foundation. This *truth* is the word of God. This therefore must be known, for "faith comes by *hearing*, and *hearing* by the word of God." Rom. x. 17. Without knowing and believing the truth as it is in Jesus, however rational our views may appear to ourselves, or however elated our feelings, we must be destitute of that faith without which it is impossible to please God. Take away the word of God, and there is nothing to prevent our being driven by the gust of feelings, or swept away in the vortex of infidelity, or sinking into dry formality, and perishing at last without hope. On the principle that the scriptures reveal eternal life, we are commanded to SEARCH them, John v. 39. While the scriptures, the *only* standard of religion in the soul, and the measure of our obedience to God, is neglected, all pretendedly *conscientious* acts of devotion are but *will-worship.* If such, then, be the importance of the scriptures in religion, let each devoutly say,

> My favour'd soul shall weekly learn,
> To lay her wisdom at *God's* throne,
> Too weak HIS secrets to discern,
> Shall trust HIM for her guide alone.

2. We urge the importance of the study of the scriptures, on the principle that they are the only *true ground of fellowship*, amongst christians. The manner in which the scriptures are received, and the impression they make on the soul ought ever to govern the hand of fellowship. Although every truth of divine revelation ought to be received, yet they differ as to their importance. The fundamental principles of religion are such, that if we err in them, there can be no evidence of religion within us. The belief of what the sacred word relates respecting the *person*, *office* and *work* of Christ, is presumed to be essential to salvation; consequently the only proper ground

of fellowship, for any *as christians.* Such, it is presumed, was the ground of apostolic fellowship. Their love to the saints was for *the truth's sake.* 2 John 1. 2. 3 John 1. So far from having CHARITY for *all* who talked about religion, they believed that *whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, had not God.*—— Hence they commanded, "If there come any unto you and bring not *this* doctrine, *receive him not into your houses, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*" 2. John x. 11. If it were ever important that these rules should govern the church of God it is *now*, while iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold. The bleeding cause of Christ is every where neglected, and the flood of wide spreading heresy threatens to swallow it up. The long predicted heresy *denying the Lord that bought them*, (2 Peter II. 1.) awfully prevails.

This error becomes more or less dangerous according to the pretexts by which it is propagated. Some pretend to have received more *light*, and others to have arrived to more *purity.* It is not uncommon to find teachers in the bosom of our country, and sometimes in the bosom of our churches, who, under the *assumed name* of CHRISTIANS, deny the *essential Deity* of Jesus Christ!!!—— In this way the very vitals of religion are aimed at, dying love is undervalued, sovereign grace denied, and every ground of the perishing sinner's hope is swept away!!! What can now save the cause of God from being incorporated with these errors, but an immediate repair to the standard of *truth?* This, brethren, is the only ground of christian *unity*, the only ground of *peace.* Here, on the broad base of sacred truth rests the disciple of Jesus, reposing beneath the blood of the covenant, amidst a venerable group of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the corner stone of unity. How sweet is correspondence formed on such a plan as this?

With the warmest emotions, we hail the return of another aniversary, when we can exchange with our brethren our usual tokens of love. Nor can we forget the auspices of heaven under which we have met. We have no longer

to turn our anxious eyes to the place where differences are adjusted between contending nations. We hail with rapture the returning *peace*, and sweetly repose beneath its shade, in the possession of our domestic, civil, and religious privileges, in a land that freedom calls her own. —But God forbid that our repose should be a repose of neglect, or that we should be content to dwell in our ciel-ed houses, while the house of God lies waste. May our united prayer be for the peace of Jerusalem, when all the Lord's watchmen shall see eye to eye, when they shall lift up their voices *together*, and *together* sing.

At 1-2 past 3 o'clock the business of this agreeable session closed with an appropriate prayer by Elder HULL, at the same time Eld. GALUSHA was preaching to the people in the meeting house, from 2 Cor. v. 20. During the session the preaching was appropriate and solemn—the people attentive, and liberal in their contributions—and the business attended to with much decorum. Corresponding letters were received with affection, and read with pleasure.

OBED WARREN, *Moderator*.

ELI BALL, *Clerk*.