

S7946

Baptists. Vermont. Vermont Association, 1805.

Minutes . . . at Poultney October, 1805.

Salem, [N. Y.], Dodd & Rumsey, [1805]. 16 pp.

NRAB copy.

MINUTES

OF THE

VERMONT BAPTIST ASSO-
CIATION,

HOLDEN AT POULTNEY THE 2d AND 3d
OF OCTOBER, 1825.

TOGETHER WITH THEIR

CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING
LETTER.



SALEM, (N. Y.)

PRINTED BY DODD & RUMSEY, FOR THE ASSOCIA-
TION.

P R E F A C E.

HOW pleasant to meet,
With the saints here below :
In fellowship sweet,
Their graces do flow :
But what love divine,
Divine consolation,
Above they'll combine,
In a great Association.

No darkness, no pride,
No rigid debate ;
Disputes laid aside,
Disguise and deceit ;
While Union to JESUS,
And heavenly joy,
Forever will fill us,
And praise the employ.

MINUTES, &c.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1865.

1. **A**T ten o'clock, A. M. Elder ISAAC SAWYER preached the introductory sermon, from Acts, xiii, 26. *To you is the word of this salvation sent.*

2. A Moderator and Clerk were chosen.

3. Letters from the churches were read, and a list taken as follows, of the names of their messengers, their alterations the year past, and their present numbers.

N. B. The name of ordained Ministers, are inserted in **SMALL CAPITALS**: From churches thus marked* we received no information: Dashes ——— denote that the churches have no settled ministers.

CHURCHES.	MESSENGERS.	Add.	Dis.	Exc.	Diad.	No.
1. Clarendon.	—————		3			42
Wallingsford,	{ HENRY GREEN, Dn. Joseph Randal, Samuel Tift.	8	4			225
Salem,	{ OBED WARREN, Stephen Estee, Josiah Goodale.	10	8			84
Parelet,	{ ISAAC BEALL, Timothy Brewster, Timothy Day.	14		1		80
Benson,	{ ————— Darius Gibbs, Josiah Goodrich.		9	9		53
2. Clarendon,	{ WM. HERRINGTON, Dn. Ezekiel Green, Nedabiah Angel,†	1		1		123
*Georgia	—————					18
Hubbarton,	{ NATHAN DANA, William Dyer, Cyrus Ranger.	1	2			55

† In the last year's minutes, the number of this church was by mistake inserted 183 instead of 123.

CHURCHES.	MESSENGERS.	Add.	Dis.	Exc.	Died	No.
Branden,	Moses Ware, Joseph Dagget.	5		2		58
Whiting,	Dn. Jos'h Needham, Jonas Hubbard.					40
Pittsford,	Elisha Rich, Nathan Jenner.	23	10	2		73
Poultney,	CLARK KENDRICK, Dn. ——— Ward, Eleazer Calkins.	1		1	2	81
Monkton,	ISAAC SAWYER, Nathan Douglass.	7	3		1	80
Dorset,	Dn. Isaac Grey.	1		1		16
Bristol,	—————	4				34
Rutland,	DAVID HURLBURD, Daniel Foid, Micah Griffith.					36
N. Haven	Dn. ——— Rogers, Dn. ——— Hamblin, Samuel Rowley.					37
Rupert,	ALVIN WALKER, Dn. Daniel Waldo, Moses Sheldon.					102
Middle- town,	SILVANUS HAYNES, Dn. ——— Smith, Eber Rice.					132
TOTAL,		75	39	17	3	1374

Another *Lewis Walker* was invited to a seat.

3.—The four churches last mentioned, united with us the present session.

4. Received intelligence from corresponding associations. From the Shaftsbury, a letter and minutes, by their messengers Elders Mattison and N. Kendrick. From

Woodstock, letter and minutes, by Elders A. Kendrick and Smith. From Leyden, letter and minutes. From Essex, letter and minutes, by Elder S. Brown. From Richmond, letter and minutes, by brother Ephraim Butler. The above named messengers took a seat with us.

5. A letter was read from the Saratoga association, proposing to introduce a correspondence with us. Agreed to the proposition; and the hand of fellowship was given to their messenger, Elder Amasa Brown, and he was invited to a seat.

6. The circular and corresponding letter, prepared by brother Warren, was read, and referred for examination, to brethren Herrington, A. Kendrick and Green.

7. Appointed brethren Herrington, Green, Warren, Beall, Sawyer, N. Kendrick, S. Brown, A. Brown and Haynes to arrange the unfinished business for to-morrow.
Adjourned till to-morrow, 3 o'clock, A. M.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3.

Met pursuant to adjournment.

This day Elder ARIEL KENDRICK preached from Rom. xv. 29. *And I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.—*

8. Approved the circular and corresponding letter.

9. Having received information that the church in Kingsbury, with the advice of a council, have excluded from their fellowship, their former minister Mr. Ebenezer Willoughby; and that the church in Orwell, with the advice of a council, have excluded their former minister Mr. Samuel Webster: We hereby inform our churches, and all whom it may concern, that the above-named Willoughby and Webster, are neither of them in our fellowship; and we give it as our opinion, that they ought not to be received as gospel ministers.

10. Considering the circumstance of Elder Aaron Leland's accepting and holding, such a number of offices in the civil department, which we consider very inconsistent with his office as a gospel minister, and which is a grief to us: We earnestly recommend it to the Woodstock association to take the matter into their consideration, and take such measures as their wisdom shall dictate, which may do

honor to the cause of the Redeemer, and relieve us from our grief.

11. As the church in Benson is in a very tried state, appointed Elders Haynes, Dana and Green to visit them, and give them assistance.

12. Query from Branden church : whether any minister, or private member, ought to be held in fellowship, who are masons, and persist in frequenting masonic meetings or lodges ?

Answer—We are of opinion, that it is expedient for every church to determine such matters, when cases occur, according to their own judgment; and if they are in doubt, it would be advisable to call the assistance of a council.

13. Appointed Elders Beall, Chamberlain and Warren, to visit the 1st church in Clarendon, and examine their standing, and report at our next session.

14. Appointed Elder Haynes to write a circular and corresponding letter for next year.

15. Appointed Elders Warren and Chamberlain, our messengers, to the Shaftsbury association : Elders Green, Haynes and brother Dyer, to the Warren : Elders Kendrick, Haynes and Dana, to the Woodstock : Elder Mattison, to the Leyden : Elders Herrington, Sawyer, deacon Smith and brother Ware, to the Essex : Elders Sawyer, Hubbard and deacon Rogers, to the Richmond : Elder Herrington and brother Rowley, to the Otsego : Elders Beall, Wales, Kendrick and Warren, to the Saratoga.

16. Appointed Elders Beall, Wales, deacon Needham, and brother Rich, to visit the Sturbridge association, to propose a correspondence with them.

17. As we understand our beloved brother Elder Wm. HERRINGTON contemplates a journey to preach in the new settlements the ensuing year, we take this opportunity to express our approbation, and do cheerfully recommend him to all who wish to hear the *Word of Life* dispensed, as a regularly ordained minister of the gospel in our fellowship.

18. *Supplies for Dorset Church.*—Elder Beall, 3d Lord's day in October : Elder Chamberlain, 3d do. in November : Elder Warren, 3d do. in March : Elder Green, 3d do. in June.

19. Our next session to be at Salem, the first Wednesday in October next, at 10 o'clock A. M. Elder Green to preach the introductory sermon, and in case of failure, Elder Beall.

20. The moderator closed the session by solemn prayer.



CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING LETTER.



The Ministers and Messengers of the Churches of the Vermont Association, to the churches they represent, and to the corresponding Associations, sendeth Christian salutation.

BELOVED BRETHEREN,

THE last year we addressed you on the important subject of CHRISTIAN UNION. It cannot be expected that this union will be maintained in the visible church without attending to suitable means for its cultivation. One important mean, instituted by Christ to promote union in his church, is a regular GOSPEL DISCIPLINE; which we propose as the subject of this epistle. And,

First, Particular caution ought to be observed, in the admission of members into the church.

The true church of Christ is built up with spiritual materials; none but lively stones are suitable for this spiritual house; none but souls made alive from the dead, quickened by the holy spirit, have any part in this royal priesthood; nor do any others belong to this holy nation. Therefore, none but those who give rational evidence, that they have passed from death unto life, and are born of the spirit ought to be admitted into our churches.

Nor ought any to be admitted on trivial evidence; but every person whom we admit to our fellowship, ought publicly to make a profession of a hearty and unreserved dedication of himself to God and his people; "For with the heart he believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Also, such confession must be attended with a life of uprightness, humble

devotion, and in some good measure a holy conformity to the divine requirements, with a professed desire to keep all Christ's commandments, and a cordial belief of the essential truths revealed in the gospel.

We are directed by the Holy Ghost to receive such as are *weak in the faith*; but we are not required to receive those who do not give sufficient evidence that they *are in the faith*; nor ought we to receive any whose admission does occasion doubtful disputation. Many weak christians need, and are willing to receive instruction; such ought to be instructed, received and nursed in the church of God: but he that is weak, or rather unsound in doctrine, and unwilling to conform to all the requirements of Jesus Christ, and at the same time is self-sufficient and self-willed, and inclined to oppose every thing which does not agree with his own particular notions; his reception, if it should not occasion doubtful disputation at the time, would be likely to occasion much trouble to the church thereafter. In a word, we consider a sincere love of holiness in the heart, evinced by a profession of love to all revealed truth, and a life measurably conformed thereunto, to be absolutely necessary for every member in the visible church of Christ: and that it highly concerns every faithful christian, to be as a door keeper in the visible church of God, and as far as possible to hinder any intruding themselves upon the church, who are not christians in deed and in truth; but who when they creep in among the saints, are spots and blemishes in their feasts of charity.

Second, It is necessary, 1. To understand what wrongs are of such magnitude if persisted in, as to deserve church censure: And 2, What satisfaction is requisite in order that an offender may be restored to fellowship. And,

1. There may be many infirmities, or weaknesses in christians, which ought to be borne with; this forbearance is enjoined by the Holy Ghost: We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves. But there is a wide difference between weakness and wickedness. It would exceed the limits of a circular letter to be very particular; but we will name a few things; and 1, Embracing essential error in doctrine is censurable. The distinguishing doctrine of the Armini-

ans, Universalians, and the doctrine that God is the author of sin, &c. is contrary to sound doctrine, and when any embrace either of them, or any other *heresy*, we have divine direction how to proceed. — A man that is an *heretic*, after the first and second admonition reject. — 2. All gross immoralities ; which include fraud, covetousness, intemperance, detraction, back-biting, equivocation, quarrelling, and all evil-speaking, &c. are censurable evils. — 3. A habitual neglect of christian duties : neglecting the public worship of God, a religious observation of the sabbath, the special appointments of the church, the table of the Lord, and the duty of prayer, &c. is censurable. — 4. Joining with the prophane world in their vain amusements ; as balls, theatrical diversions, gambling, all idle plays, and unnecessary frequenting of taverns, &c. is censurable. Be not conformed to this world, but be ye *transformed* by the renewing of your mind. — And we are commanded to withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly. — 5. Refusing subjection to the government of the Church, in matters which are determined by their judgment is censurable. As, when the church have determined on a matter of complaint against a member ; or have judged of the propriety of any member improving publicly, by teaching or exhortation ; or, of the manner of performing the several duties of public worship ; or, of the manner of supporting of the gospel ministry ; or, of supporting the poor of the church, &c. — For a member in such matters to oppose the church and refuse to conform to their judgment ; unless he can make it appear, that they have materially departed from the practice of the primitive churches ; is to prove himself a contentious man. — *But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.*

Our great Lawgiver hath given us a particular rule for proceeding in cases of trespass in Matt. chap. xviii. *If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, &c.* Here the command is positive : we are not allowed to keep his fault to ourselves ; nor to suffer sin upon our brother ; or to tell it to another ; but we are commanded to tell him his fault and that alone : and it ought to be in the spirit of meekness : if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.

The directions given by Christ are so plain that no further comment is necessary, excepting to answer one query (viz.) If there be no other evidence besides the testimony of the offended person, shall he proceed to take one or two brethren and state the difficulty before them? To this we reply in the negative. It is evident by Christ's direction, that he designed that the brethren thus called to hear the difficulty, should give their judgment thereon. For saith he, "If he shall neglect to hear *them*, tell it unto the church." But he does not neglect to hear them unless they give their judgment; nor can they judge upon the testimony of the offended; for in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word must be established. Therefore, if a brother commit a trespass, and it be known only to one individual, and the offender refuses to come to the light that his deeds may be reprov'd, and will not own the crime; it is the duty of the offended to tell him his fault, and in the spirit of meekness to admonish him to repent and forsake his sins; but not to make the matter any more public; nor is it the duty of the aggrieved brother to leave his seat in the church, if he knows a traitor is at the table.

2. In the next place, we shall point out, what satisfaction is requisite, in order that an offender may be restored to fellowship.

In the discipline, of the church of Christ *repentance* is the end of the law. Yet more is required of an offender than for him barely to say *I repent*. Many have said this much when their conduct gave strong reason to suspect, and sometimes it has been evident that the declaration was insincere. For an offender to confess that he is in a fault, and continue to commit the same or similar crimes, is only an aggravation added to the first offence: nor can we consider such a confession satisfactory. A transgressor is not restored unless he is converted from the error of his way: when this is done, *a soul is saved from death, and a multitude of sins are hid*den.

True repentance must be evinc'd by an honest confession. Nor will there be occasion to put words into the mouth of the penitent, heartfelt compunction for sin will give utterance even to a stammerer. *Against thee and*

thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight. I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. Similar to this, will be the language of a sincere penitent; and such repentance will be attended with reformation and if the case require with restitution.

It is not our duty to restore an offender to visible fellowship, without a degree of this kind of evidence of his repentance, nor are we required so to do by Jesus Christ. Luke xvii. 4, *If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day TURN again to thee saying I repent, thou shalt forgive him.* By this it is plain that if an offender does say *I repent*, and does not TURN it is not our duty to believe he is a penitent. By his *trespass* he hath visibly *turned* from Christ, his cause, and his people: by *turning* from his trespass, and making restitution, he again visibly *returns* to them, and ought to be restored to visible fellowship.

There may be many instances, in which an offender may give sufficient evidence of repentance in his first confession, whether it be to an individual, or to the whole church. Of this, those who hear the confession must be the judges. Yet there are instances of crimes being committed of such magnitude, that a confession of the crime, with ever so much appearance of penitence, connected with promises of reformation, would not be sufficient to justify the immediate restoration of the offender.

The crime of the incestuous man was of this kind. The apostle after mentioning the transgression, directs the church of Corinth to put away from among them that *wicked person*. Here no provision is made for his confession; that if he did not repent he should be put away, but the command was positive to put him away. And sometime afterwards, when he had given sufficient evidence of repentance, and had established a good christian character, they were directed to restore him, lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow. This may serve as a model for our imitation, in judging causes of singular criminality.

It is not our duty to continue in our visible fellowship, all those who we have some reason to hope have gracious hearts. We are commanded to withdraw from every *brother* that walks disorderly. His being considered a *brother*

must not screen him from church censure, and if he does not obey the commands of Christ, he must be deprived of the special privileges of the church ; and we ought *to note him and have no company with him* as a brother in fellowship. Yet we must *not count him as an enemy*, but admonish him as a disorderly brother.

Nor is it the duty for a church to receive members, or to retain any in their fellowship when received, who are materially erroneous in doctrine or practice, on the supposition of their being sincere. If any *sincerely* believe or practice that which is essentially wrong, it must be a serious evil to have them in our churches ; for they will be sincerely engaged to promote error, and it might be expected that they would cause *divisions*, and draw away disciples after them. Should this be the case, it would be our duty to mark and avoid them. But what error has ever appeared in the world which has not been sincerely believed by some ? How many gross errors both in doctrine and practice have been introduced into the church, and sincerely believed and zealously supported by many ? And perhaps by some of those who have had gracious hearts. We cannot doubt the sincerity of many at the present day, who profess to believe that an experimental knowledge of the truth, is not essentially necessary for visible church membership ; and even for the work of the gospel ministry ; and who practice accordingly. Nor do we doubt the sincerity of many who believe that infants are incorporated with their parents into the visible church of Christ ; and should they act consistent with their faith, and admit them, not only to one, but to all the ordinances of Christ's house ; for aught we know they might be sincere. Yet we consider such churches not composed only of materials comparable to GOLD, SILVER, and PRECIOUS STONES ; but to have a large mixture of that which very much resembles *wood, hay and stubble*. Finally, it cannot be the duty of a church to retain any in their fellowship on the ground of their sincerity, any farther than they evince that they sincerely love Christ, by believing his doctrine, and keeping his commandments.

Third, Another thing material in *church discipline*, is an attention to the character and qualifications of those, who

are encouraged as public teachers. None ought to be approved as teachers in Zion, but *faithful* men, and men sound in the *faith* ; who are well established in the doctrine of the gospel, who know and love the truth, and are capable to teach it to others. But especially none ought to be recommended, received, or heard, as gospel ministers, who do not sustain and maintain a suitable ministerial character. Men, who have proved, and continue to prove themselves to be pious, humble, sober, patient, watchful, prayerful, honest, upright, temperate, liberal, stable and persevering, are, and such only are suitable for the gospel ministry.

The want of proper caution in introducing men into the ministry, may have been one cause of so many imposters (who profess to be of our own order) strolling about like wolves in sheep's clothing, and who (when they have opportunity) do not spare the flock. Many of the difficulties and divisions in our churches may be traced to this source ; and it is the duty of every church, when they have opportunity, to try those who say they are apostles, and if they find them liars, to reject and expose them. Ignorant, inexperienced men being sent out as preachers, if they are sincere, are not likely to promote the cause they wish to build up. But when men of loose, or rather, base characters, are encouraged as public teachers, though they may be endowed with brilliant talents, yet it will open wide the mouths of gainsayers and give occasion for infidels to blaspheme. Indeed it is presumptuous for a real christian to be out of his place ; for though he might retain a comfortable standing in the house of God, in a private station, if that were his proper place ; yet place him on the pinnacle, and it might be expected he would meet with a tearful fall.

Although it is essential for ministers to partake of a spirit of condescension ; yet none ought to be encouraged as public teachers, who share largely in the spirit of accommodation, suited to the *ecclesiastical licentiousness* of the present day. There can be no accommodation between Christ's kingdom and the world ; there is no concord between Christ and Belial ; and there ought not to be any accommodation between a *chaste virgin*, the true church of

Christ, and the *mother of harlots*, nor with any of her spurious institutions.

These few hints on the important subject of *church discipline*, we submit to the consideration of our churches and corresponding associations. We earnestly recommend it to all our brethren, to be cautious in receiving members into their visible fellowship; knowing that our strength does not consist in numbers, but in being in gospel union; rooted and grounded, and built up in the truth. And, if any whom we have owned as brethren, depart from the highway of holiness, and turn aside to bye and forbidden paths, let the salutary laws of Christ, in love and faithfulness, be executed; which may be a mean of bringing the offender to repentance. When this is the case, ever be ready to confirm your love to the penitent by restoration. But should the offender remain incorrigible—his *sincerity* in his error—our esteeming him possessed of a *gracious heart*—his former usefulness—his eminent gifts—his being allied to us by the ties of nature and friendship, even if as dear to us as a right hand, or a right eye—all these together, ought not to secure him from the execution of Christ's law. The command is imperious, *to withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly*.

It highly concerns all, both ministers and private christians, to be well versed in the *laws of their God*: Therefore let the holy scriptures be our principal study; particularly the New Testament, which is the *MAGNA CHARTA* of the christian church. By this mean we may learn how we ought to conduct ourselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God the pillar and ground of the truth.

Be exhorted to keep yourselves from being ensnared by false teachers, who with good words and fair speeches try to make *merchandize* of you. Join not in visible fellowship with those who propose a confederacy, on any other principles than the doctrine, ordinances and discipline, instituted by our unerring lawgiver. Give no countenance to public teachers, whose characters will not bear a comparison with the *law and the testimony*.

Finally, dear brethren, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto

eternal life. And of some have compassion making a difference ; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garments spotted by the flesh. Live separate from the world, and as it becometh those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Let all the old leaven of malice, wickedness and superstition be purged out : and let the gospel feast be kept with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth : looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

And now brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. To him be glory through JESUS CHRIST, FOREVER. AMEN.

Our present interview has been marked with some special tokens of the divine favor, for which we hope to be sincerely thankful.

We wish for the continuance of a friendly intercourse and correspondence with our sister associations.

Signed by order of the Association,

ISAAC BEALL, *Moderator.*

OBED WARREN, *Clerk.*

170
270
40
610

THE GOSPEL MARKET.

WHY stand you here idle my friends all the day ?
Your moments are fleeting, will soon pass away ;
The MARKET is open, the stores you may see ;
Then come take and welcome, all things here are free.

Here's mercy and pardon, here's love and free grace ;
Here's strong consolation, here's great joy and peace :
Here's hope for the hopeless, here th' weary find rest ;
Here's all things in plenty, for th' poor and distress'd.

Here's clothes for the naked, here all may be clad ;
Here's bread for the hungry, here souls may be fed ;
Here's manna from heaven, this food is divine,
Fat things full of marrow, and wine well retain'd.

Here's oil, milk and honey, a plenty in store,
Sufficient for thousands, yea millions and more :
Here's balm for the wounded, here's strength for the weak ;
Here cordials divine, are prepar'd for the sick.

Here medicine for healing, is given out free ;
Here's eye-salve for eyes, for to make them to see :
Here cripples are healed, the lame made to walk,
The deaf made to hear, and the dumb made to talk.

Here lepers are cleansed, and purg'd from their sores ;
Here sinners are pardon'd, and souls are made pure :
Here all that are willing, are eas'd of their pains ;
Here bond-slaves are ransom'd, and freed from their chains.

Here's armour and weapons, for soldiers to wield ;
A breast plate, a helmet, a sword and a shield ;
The poor receive riches, a crown for the head ;
Eternal salvation, and life for the dead.

Oh! come all ye needy, ye poor and distress'd,
Come and receive freely, and be ever bless'd :
Oh come! without money, to Jesus and buy :
Then love him, and praise him, forever on high.