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Minutes . . . at Salem, N.Y. . . . October.
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MINUTES,

OF THE

VERMONT BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

HOLDEN AT SALEM, N. Y. THE 2d AND 3d
OF OCTOBER, 1806.

TOGETHER WITH THEIR

CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING
LETTER.



SALEM, (N. Y.)

PRINTED BY DODD & RUMSEY, FOR THE ASSOCIATION.—1806.

MINUTES, &c.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1806.

1. **A**T 10 o'clock, the introductory sermon was preached by Elder HENRY GREEN, from *Luke xv. 22. Bring forth the best robe and put it on him.*

2. THE Association agreed unanimously, That the *Moderator* and *Clerk* shall be chosen for the future in the following manner, viz. by each member naming to the *clerk* in a low whisper the person of his choice: and that the brother who shall have a majority of the whole number of votes shall be considered elected. Accordingly,

3. A **M**ODERATOR and *clerk* were chosen.

4. **L**ETTERS were read from the several churches, and a list taken of the names of their messengers, their alterations the year past, and their present number of members.

N. B. NAMES of ordained ministers are inserted in **SMALL-CAPITALS**: ministers names thus marked † were not present: from churches marked thus * we received no direct information: a dash ——— denotes that the church has no settled minister.

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	Add.	Dis.	Exc.	Died	No.
<i>Wallings-</i> <i>ford.</i>	{ HENRY GREEN, Dn. Sanford Moon.	1		2	6	216
<i>Salem,</i>	{ OBED WARREN, Dn. Stephen Estee, Dn. Charles Ford.	5	2	1		86
<i>Pawlet,</i>	{ ISAAC BEALL, Dn. Joseph Haskel, Dn. Alex. Trumbull	6	1		2	83
<i>Benson.*</i>	—————					53
<i>2 Claren-</i> <i>don,</i>	{ WM. HERRINGTON Oliver Steward.			2	1	120
<i>Georgia</i> §	—————	14		1		33

§ *The church at Georgia sent information that they*

Churches.	Messengers.	Add.	Dis.	Exc.	Died	No.
Hubbarton,*	{ †NATHAN DANA.					55
Branden*	{ †MOSES WARE.					53
Whiting,	{ _____ Dn. Jos. Needham.		2	3		29
Pittsford	{ _____ Elisha Rich.	5	2	1		75
Poultney,	{ CLARK KENDRICK, Calvin Malery.	1		1	2	79
Monkton,	{ Isaac Sawyer, Robinson Mumford	7	3	1		83
Dorset,	{ _____ Joseph Myrick,			1		15
Bristol,*	{ _____					34
Rutland,	{ DAVID HULBURD, Dn. Micah Griffith.	5		1		40
N. Haven	{ _____	4	1			40
Rupert,	{ ALVIN WALES, Dn. Roswel Flowers Jesse Shaw.	2	2	3		104
Middle- town,	{ SILVANUS HAYNES.	3	4	4	3	124
Bridport,	{ HENRY CHAMBER- LAIN, Levi Balden.					35

TOTAL. 53 23 21 14 1367

NOTE—The last mentioned church united with us the present session.

5. INFORMATION was received from corresponding Associations. From Shaftsbury, letter and minutes, by Elders David Rathbun and Nathaniel Kendrick. From Woodstock, letter and minutes, by Elder N. Kendrick. From Essex, letter by E. Herrington. From Richmond, by brother Hubbard Burdick. From Saratoga, letter and minutes by Elder Edward Barber. From Otsego letter and minutes by Elder Nathan Baker.

expect to discontinue their connection with us, and unite with the Richmond association, therefore they will not in future be inserted in our minutes.

6. THE above named brethren with others from distant associations, were invited to a seat with us.

7. THE brethren who were appointed the last year to visit the Sturbridge Association, and introduce a correspondence with them, reported, That they had failed of visiting that Association.

8. READ and approved the Circular and Corresponding Letter, prepared by brother *Haynes*.

9. APPOINTED Elders *Herrington, C. Kendrick, Sawyer, Green and Beall*, a committee to arrange the unfinished business, Also to examine a number of queries proposed to the Association, and report thereon to-morrow.

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

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2.

Met pursuant to adjournment; after solemn prayer, proceeded to business.

10. THE committee appointed the last session to visit *Braden* church reported, That they had been providentially hindered attending their appointment.

11. MADE choice of the same brethren, with brother *C. Kendrick*, to visit that church, and report at our next session.

12. THE Committee appointed for the purpose, reported that they had visited the 1st. church in *Clarendon*, and found their number so small, and other circumstances considered, advised them to join other churches and cease to act as a church. And that recent information was obtained, that they had so far received their advice, as to consider themselves no longer a visible church.

13. VOTED, That the 1st church in *Clarendon*, be no longer inserted in our minutes.

14. THE committee of arrangements, reported, That in their opinion it is best for the Association to answer the queries hereafter mentioned. Accordingly,

15. SEVERAL queries were attended to, and answered as follows.

Query from *Wallingsford Church*.—“*Should a church covenant with their minister to give him a certain sum for a certain time; but one member should refuse to pay his equal part, and should plead, conscience; and declare his principle to be that a minister ought to have nothing from his people for his labors in the ministry, unless he is in a*

suffering condition. What ought a church to do with such a member ?

ANSWER, When a church has covenanted with their minister to give him a certain sum for his services ; it is a censurable evil for any member not to submit to the government of the church ; and he does not if he refuses to pay his equal proportion. And we think that instead of its being a matter of conscience, the member is guilty of covetousness, and if he cannot be reclaimed, he ought to be excluded.

Query, from Pittsford Church.—“ *What measure shall be pursued, when a member of a church is accused of immoral conduct in various instances, and but one witness to substantiate any one fact ?*”

ANSWER, It is our opinion that when a man is accused of immorality ; although there is but one evidence to any one single fact ; yet if each evidence testifies to a crime of the same kind, and the witnesses are persons of character, we think it sufficient evidence to convict a brother of immorality. However churches ought to act prudently in such cases.

QUERY, From the Rutland Church.—“ *What is the duty of a church respecting representing members who have moved away, and the church knows nothing about their situation ?*”

ANSWER, Our opinion is, that although members have moved away from the church where they joined ; yet they are members until legally dismissed, let them be where they may, and ought to be returned to the association as such. And to remedy this difficulty of not knowing the standing of members, it is the duty of a church when any person (known to be a member of another church) comes to reside within their limits to visit them and know whether they have any objections to join the church where they live ; and if they have, or neglect to connect with the said church where they reside, that the church which visits them ought to report them to the church where they belong : and by this means we shall know where our members are.

QUERY, from Middletown Church.—“ *When we are visited by a travelling preacher, who is wholly unknown to us, both as to person and character, what credentials*

would it be best for us to require of him, in order for us safely to open our doors to his improvement ?”

ANSWER, It is our opinion that every travelling minister ought to bring with him, and exhibit to any church or people where he presents himself as a preacher, credentials from some church known to belong to some associated body of churches, or church of good standing, Missionary society, or association, and that of a recent date.

AT 11 o'clock, Elder *Edward Barber* preached a sermon from 1 *John v. 2.*

16. WHEREAS there hath been a certain character by the name of *Robert Jones* (as he said) from Greasy Creek in Virginia, preaching through many of the churches in these northern parts, who hath been at sundry places and at sundry times guilty of falshood, and intoxication with spiritous liquors, as appears by good sufficient evidence. And also, there is a certain character by the name of Dr. *Joseph H. Ellis*, from Ireland a few years since ; who, we have sufficient evidence, is not a member of any church in America, and further was censured by a council held at Northumberland, state of New-York, February 14, 1805. And further, a certain *Pillsbury, Williams* and *Clark*, who are advertised in the Saratoga Baptist Association Minutes : all of the above named characters we exhort our churches to be aware of as dangerous persons.

17. APPOINTED messengers to the corresponding associations. To the Shaftsbury, Elders *Warren* and *C. Chamberlain* : To the Woodstock, Elders *Haynes* and *Kendrick* : To the Levden, *Elder Wales* : To the Essex, Elders *Herrington*, *Sawyer* and brother *Brewster* : To the Richmond, Elders *Sawyer* and *H. Chamberlain* : To the Saratoga, Elder *Beall* and brother *Rowley* : To the Otsego, Elders *Green* and *Hurlburd*.

18. APPOINTED Elder *Beall* and Deacon *Needham*, messengers to the Sturbridge association, to introduce a correspondence with them.

19. SUPPLIES for Dorset Church :—Brother *Rich*, the 3d Lord's day in November ; *Barber*, 2d do. December ; *Hulburd*, 3d do. January ; *Herrington*, 3d do. February ; *Warren*, 3d do. March ; *Chamberlain*, 3d do. April ; *Beall*, 3d do. May ; *Wales*, 3d do. June ; *Green*, 3d do. Ju-

ly ; *Roxley*, 3d do. August ; *Kendrick*, 3d do. September.

20. VOTED unanimously, to recommend to the churches to make contributions, and send the monies so collected to the next session of the association, for the purpose of rewarding Missionaries which we may send to preach the gospel in destitute places : And that seven brethren be appointed a committee to take charge of the monies so collected, and appropriate the same as above.

21. MADE choice of Elders *Green*, *Haynes*, *Herrington*, *Beall*, *Warren*, deacons *Haskel* and *Smith* for said committee.

22. ELDER *Sawyer* was appointed to write the Circular and Corresponding Letter for next year.

23. THE next session of the association to be holden in *Bridport** on the first Wednesday in October next, at ten o'clock, A. M. Elder *Herrington* to preach the introductory sermon : in case of failure, Elder *Warren*

THE session was closed with solemn prayer by the moderator.



CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING LETTER.



The Elders and Brethren of the Churches of the Vermont Association, to the Churches they represent, and to the Corresponding Associations, send Christian salutation.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

LAST year we addressed you on the subject of gospel discipline ; a subject which we esteemed truly important : For in our judgment, the want of regular discipline is the fruitful source of the jars, divisions and ruin of so many churches. On this occasion, you will permit us to turn your attention to the subject of *family religion*. By family religion, we mean the various social duties of visible religion, to be exercised in a family way towards God, and towards our families. This is a sub-

* *Bridport* is about twelve miles westerly of *Middlebury*, in *Vermont*.

ject which has occupied the attention of the truly godly in every age of the world.

THE pious Joshua while about his last work, and when exhorting the Jews to choose Jehovah for their God, and to serve him, breaks out in the following ever-memorable strain ; *As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.* The prophet Jeremiah prays the Lord to *pour out his wrath upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon his name* : Intimating that heathen and prayerless families are considered as being on much the same footing in the view of the word of God, and alike exposed to the divine resentment. The ancient morning and evening sacrifice seem admirably supplied by heads of families calling their households together morning and evening, and reading the holy scriptures to them, and praying with and for them.

THE apostle Peter exhorted husbands and wives to dwell together in honor and harmony, and *as heirs of the grace of life*, and for this reason, *that their prayers be not hindered.* And we cannot discover the force of the apostle's reasoning and exhortation in this passage, unless he refers to family prayer ; for if the wife were undutiful and froward to her husband, and if the husband were negligent and cruel to his wife, it would not in either case hinder the innocent party from praying to God in secret ; but it would be an almost insuperable hinderance of their praying together. Again, the pronominal adjective *their*, seems to refer to the united petitions of husbands and wives. Thus the duty seems plain, and to the pious heart is pleasurable, and in the performance of it, they find a great reward. We are not insensible however, that when we reprove a brother who neglects prayer in his family, he will often tell of his praying in secret, as though that were sufficient. But, from experience we judge that that spirit of sloth which draws men off from family prayer, begins *first* in the closet. Indeed it is hard for us to believe that he who is negligent of prayer in his family, is punctual in his closet.

AGAIN, to family prayer we subjoin family instruction. Much is said in holy writ about parents instructing their children. The Lord commanded the Jews diligently to teach their household in the law, when they sat in the

house, when they walked by the way, when they lay down, and when they rose up.* The new testament command is of the same import. And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath ; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.† And although we believe that neither Noah, Daniel, Job, nor any other godly parent can save either son or daughter by their righteousness, yet we think that parents have great encouragement to hope that their pious labors with their children will not be lost ; for, says the wise man, *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*‡ This, as a general rule, has ever held good. And there is no inheritance which a parent can transmit to his children that is so precious as a pious education, accompanied with prayers and tears.— Such early instructions, attended with godly examples can never be forgotten ; for they deeply impress the memory, and often powerfully sting the conscience, while they pursue the ways of sin. And although for the present the child is vain and careless, and is often disgusted with your pious admonitions ; yet be not discouraged, nor desist from your work, for when providence shall have removed them to a distance from you, they may, and often do reflect seriously upon the warnings of their parents, which frequently prove in the hand of the spirit a mean of the salvation of their souls. But if they live and continue in their sins, by and by the news of your death will reach them, and then what serious reflections they will have. Probably something like the following soliloquy will thrill their hearts. My parent is dead ! and probably gone to glory. While I am sinning, he is sounding loud hallelujahs in heaven. Shall I ever reach those blissful shores ? O no ! unless I turn from my sins to God. O my parent ! how often have I grieved thy pious heart with my wickedness ! Would to God I could for once have the privilege of confessing my faults to thee. But alas ! the season for it is gone forever. Ah ! that godly person will never warn me any more ; and what is worse, he will never pray for my poor ungodly soul again. O my polluted heart ! how I need an interest in Christ !—

* *Deut.* vi. 7. † *Eph.* vi. 4. ‡ *Prov.* xxii. 6.

and these reflections may end in gospel repentance. Thus your warnings which you have administered with tears and sighs, may prove like seed sown in the fall, which suffers the freezing blasts of winter, but in the spring the blade shoots forth, and the blossoms ripen into fruit.

BUT if while the parent lives, the Lord in mercy should bless his feeble efforts, and the children should prove obedient and pious, (O how amply would the parent be rewarded ! How ready would he be like good old Simeon to say, *Now Lord lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* But if the children prove disobedient and impious, yet the pious, faithful parent has this to bear up his sinking spirits, that through grace assisting, he has been enabled in some good degree to be faithful to them ; and that they do not pursue such courses for want of better instructions. In such cases the parent enjoys a clear conscience, although an ungodly child should at last sink below the Sodomites. But if parents prove unfaithful, they (in all probability) will often be put to shame by the wicked conduct of their children, while they may feel inwardly stung with the reflection, that they were never at pains to teach them better ; and that now it is too late to remedy the evil. To all this we may add, that in such cases, the parents are in a degree chargeable with the crimes their children commit as long as they live ; and must in a measure answer for them at the great day. And how sad it is, and how dismal an aspect it affords both church and state to see multitudes of ignorant and unprincipled youth ascending the stage of action. What good can either church or state promise themselves from such ? We not only lose the help we might otherwise have had from them ; but what is worse, they by their pernicious examples, and poisonous conversation spread the contagion of bad morals among those who have been better taught. Here we would remark, that parents should not only warn, exhort, and reprove their children, but if they persist in evil courses, it is their duty in a prudent manner, by parental authority, to suppress, and expel from their houses the vices of the times, and all the bad morals which their vigilance can discover. If you fail of this, and like Eli of old, only say, *My sons do not so wickedly,* you may like him live to see the destruction of your children.

HERE we would notice the keen remorse which must seize the conscience of an unfaithful parent in a dying hour. How dreadful will it be *then* to reflect that they have seldom said any thing to their families about the concerns of their souls and another world. That their children scarce ever heard them pray ; that from their example, their offspring may be *now* thinking there is nothing in religion. They now long to warn them, but alas ! it is all too late. Their strength is gone, and their tongue already begins to feel the silence of the grave. Thus they reflect, *O the precious souls of my children ! Who knows but my neglect may prove the mean of hardening them in sin, to the ruin of their souls, and their blood be found in my garments at last !—O for a little more strength, and few more moments ! and then how would I warn them from the sides of eternity, with all the eloquence of ghastly death !—*But the curtain drops, the scene closes, and the poor man says no more to his family. Alas ! he dies, and leaves them hardened in their sins.

If any who have heretofore been negligent, should now be aroused to feel the importance of diligence in future, let them be encouraged to vigilance and perseverance from the following considerations : And

1. THE example of one may stimulate many others to pursue the shining path, and so a reformation in society may begin from the example of an individual. And such a hero in piety may soon see the joyful fruits of his labor, not only in his own house, but in the surrounding neighborhood ; and thus, by the bright example, and pious conversation he has (through grace) been enabled to exhibit, a foundation is laid for the flourishing of the church of God, not only while he lives, but long after he has gone to the land of silence ; and he being dead may yet speak to the glory of divine grace, and the good of Zion in the world. Thus God is glorified, and the church is edified. To this we may add, that in this way he may have the testimony of a good conscience, the light of the divine countenance, and the soul-reviving approbation of God at last.

2. HE may die in peace. With what composure can such an one recline upon his dying pillow, while he wholly confides in the blood and righteousness of the great

Redeemer. His enraptured soul is ready to cry out, like the triumphant apostle, *The time of my departure is hard ; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* Then how sweet it will be for the poor way-worn pilgrim to arrive at Mount-Zion, the city of the living God, and join the glorified company above, in adoring the God, and admiring the grace that ever brought such a poor sinner hither. O what joyful work it will be for him then to lay down the sword, and take up the palm ; to dismiss the helmet, and put on the crown ; and to lay by the shield and take up the harp, and strike up the new song, and sound loud hallelujahs to God and the Lamb forever and ever. O ye followers of the lowly Jesus, will not the consideration of the glory of God, the good of the church, the testimony of a good conscience, and such a heaven as this stimulate your hearts to be all activity in the service of God?

WE have abundant cause of gratitude to the great head of the church, for such peculiar favors as we have experienced in our present session. Our deliberations have been attended with a very great degree of peace and harmony. It might with propriety be said, *Behold how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to meet together in unity.*

By our minutes, corresponding associations may learn the state of our churches. We wish to continue a brotherly intercourse with them.

By order of the Association,

HENRY GREEN, *Moderator.*

OBED WARREN, *Clerk.*