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Baptists. Vermont. Vermont Association, 1791.

Minutes ... at Orwell ... October, 1791.

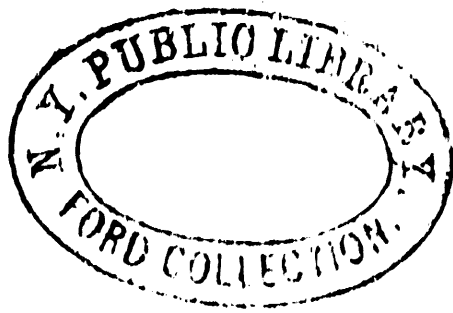
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M I N U T E S
OF THE
VERMONT ASSOCIATION,
AT THEIR
ANNUAL CONVENTION,
HOLDEN AT
ORWEL, VERMONT,
OCTOBER, 1891.

Printed at Bennington, by A. HASWELL.

[1751]



M I N U T E S, &c.

WEDNESDAY, October 6.

AT two o'clock P. M. brother *Baily* delivered an introductory sermon, from Jer. x. 6. *For as much as there is none like unto thee, O Lord ; thou art great, and thy name is great in might.*

2. Made choice of a moderator and clerk.

3. Letters were received from the several churches, and the following account was taken of the members added, dismissed, excluded, or who have died the year past ; and of the present number in each church.

N. B. No accounts were received from the churches distinguished by an *. Dashes denote no settled minister. Ministers names in italic. Those marked with a † were not present.

CHURCHES.

CHURCHES. MESSENGERS.

(Brought forward) 53 16 9 2511

Pittsford, } Caleb Handy, 2 2 3 1 44
 } Abel Stephens, - - - - -
 } William Lutherland, - - - - -

Brandon, } Thomas Turtle, 2 1 4 64
 } Nathan Daniels, - - - - -

Salem*, _____ 1 34
 Pawlet, } Solomon Brown, - - - - -
 } Samuel Abbott, - - - - -
 Kingbury*, ~~Alexander Eastman~~, † - - - - - 93

Total 58 19 10 3765

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4. Received a letter from the Warren association, by which we are informed of the death of two of our honored and beloved fathers, viz. the reverend Nathaniel Green, and doctor Manning. *Be ye also ready.*

5. Chose brother *Haynes* to write a letter to the sister associations.

6. Adjourned until tomorrow morning at eight o'clock.

THURSDAY, October 7.

MET pursuant to adjournment.

A sermon was delivered this morning by brother *Caleb Blood*, from Deut. xxxiii. 3.

1. Received a letter from the Woodstock association, by brother *Baily*, their messenger ; informing of the prosperity of Zion in different places.

2. Received a letter from the Philadelphian association, at their session at Newyork ; by which we are informed, that they enjoy a happy establishment, and sweet union amongst their churches.

3. Voted, that it is inconsistent with the principles of this association, to read, in a public manner, any clause of a letter from any sister church, which would impeach the character of any individual brother.

4. Read and approved the circular letter prepared by brother *Webb*.—Read and approved the letter to the sister associations, prepared by brother *Haynes*.

5. Adjourned for an hour.

MET pursuant to adjournment.

1. Query from the church in Clarendon.

1. If one church has a difficulty against another church, belonging to the Association—What measures ought to be taken in order to obtain satisfaction?

2. If by attending to such rules as may be prescribed, satisfaction should not be obtained, in what sense does such a difficulty affect the churches of the union?

Answer. It is the duty of such aggrieved church to labor with the church that has erred; and if not satisfied, to request a mutual council; and if that is refused, then to call one themselves: and if the council shall think that a church, thus offending, ought not to be continued in fellowship, report ought to be made to the association, at their next session, by said council; that the churches in the union may not be imposed upon, by those who are corrupt: and such a church be considered no longer a member of the association.

2. Appointed brethren, Cornal, Beall, and Green, our messengers to the Shaftsbury association; and brother *Baily* to that of Warren; and brethren, *Haynes*, and *Murry*, to the Woodstock; and brother *Webb* to the Philadelphian association.

3. Appointed brother Haynes to write the circular letter to the churches, for next year—And brother *Beall* to prepare a letter to the sister associations.

4. The association to meet at Pittford next

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year, on the first *Wednesday* in *October*, at two o'clock P. M.

Brother *Beall* to preach the introductory sermon ; and in case of failure brother *Green*

T H E
C I R C U L A R L E T T E R,
P R E P A R E D B Y
B R O T H E R W E B B,
IS NOW PRESENTED TO THE
C H U R C H E S.

Beloved in the LORD,

ONCE more we embrace the opportunity of addressing you from our annual convention, upon the important and precious subject of religion.

At our last annual meeting, we commenced the practice of sending a circulatory epistle to the several churches : a practice which was attended to in the early ages of christianity ; and which may be productive of salutary effects, if rightly improved. Our subject was that of practical piety : the necessity of which hath induced us to offer a few thoughts more on the same point.

With conscious satisfaction we view the increasing spread of the gospel, and the growing empire of King Emanuel : the happy consequences of which are obvious to the eye of the beholder, by the willing numbers who take the Redeemer's visible yoke upon them. Yet with regret and sorrow we must say, that we fear too many profess to take Christ for

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their Saviour, who do not take him for their King ; but live in the violation of his precepts, and yet profess to lean upon the Lord, and trust in his promises. Hence the necessity of insisting upon works of righteousness as the happy evidence of a gracious state.

When no money is in circulation, counterfeits are not imposed on the public : and if there was no religion in the world, there would be no hypocrisy. But religion prevails, and light abounds. Men in our day, know their duty better than they do it. Many have a speculative knowledge of the bible ; but how few have the spirit of the gospel ! and thus deny the precious truths of the gospel, and live agreeable to their principles. What shall be done then in this time of trouble, in which damnable doctrines, and erroneous principles are so industriously spread abroad ? Let him who is jealous for God step forth : in short, let us all (both ministers and people) reform from this very day ; let us cry, solicitously cry to God for the life and power of religion : and let us be careful to perform every part and point of religious duty, with a sincere desire to promote God's glory and the good of souls. Let us go without the camp, willingly bearing the reproach of our Divine Master ; that the world may see that religion is not a mere chimera—a whimsical notion ;—but a living powerful principle of love—supreme love to God : and by so doing our hearts will be encouraged and our hands strengthened in the work of the Lord.

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But in order to effect this desirable purpose, a certain notion, which too much prevails, in practice at least, namely, that of measuring our duties by our *feelings*, must be removed; and another must not only be recommended, but practised, viz. that of living by *faith*. Most plain it is, even to a demonstration, that the man who makes *feelings* the measure of his duty, or the rule of action, is greatly exposed to the subtle craftiness of the adversary; by taking for good *feelings* those which have not God for their author: besides, *feelings* can never lessen our obligation to glorify God every moment. Hence then, let us take *faith* for our pilot, and the word of God for our compass, in our voyage thro' this sea of troubles.

But what is *faith*? Is it a bare assent to the truth of the gospel? Is it the adopting of creed, or orthodox of articles? Is it a belief that Christ died for me in particular, and therefore I shall be saved?

No.—True saving *faith* is not wrapped up in any of these things; it is that grace by which the soul is sensible of *its* undone condition—is enabled to lay hold of Christ as *its* life—to take him as *its* righteousness, and as *its* only way of access to, and acceptance with God. In short, *faith* disposes the soul to look from earth to heaven—from things visible to things invisible. It is the eye of the soul, by which *it* is enabled to look unto Jesus, Heb. xii. 2. Hence the soul gets such

transporting, assimilating views, as fills it with wonder, adoration, and love.

By *faith* the believing soul gives itself up to the disposal of God, both for time and eternity : waits the result of unerring wisdom, cheerfully acquiescing in the divine will. But *sense* or feeling, seeks present gratification, and knows not how to wait until *eternity* for the consummation of *its* desire s.—*Faith* is valiant ; *sense* is a coward ; *faith* leans upon the promise ; *sense* despairs of *its* fulfilment. *Faith*, like an indigent petitioner, with empty hand and humble heart, receives Christ, and confides in his promises, and they become marrow and fatness to the soul. *The just shall live by faith.* Are we in darkness, and have little or no light, let us in this case, by *faith* trust in the name of the Lord, and stay ourselves upon our God ; casting ourselves in the most unreserved manner, upon his watchful providence ; being more solicitous about the performance of present duty than the possession of present happiness : by so doing we shall experience the accomplishment of that precious promise—*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength : they shall mount up with wings as eagles : they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.* Isaiah xl. 31. Yes, brethren, as the aspiring eagle bursts through the yielding air, soars aloft, and gazes on the meridian sun : so the heavenly minded soul bursts through every difficulty—soars aloft upon the pinions of *faith*, and obtains a glimpse of the Redeem-

er's glory. May a consideration of these things, become a stimulous to our souls, that we may be strong in *faith*, giving glory to God.

Again—Suppose our graces seem to languish, and our earthly comforts die, let us in this case hear the language of *faith*, triumphing over all adversity—*Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.* Hab. iii. 17, 18. Let us endeavor to imitate the example of this holy man; and whilst others trust to their *frames* and *feelings*, let us learn to trust in the promises: but see that you do this in a way of duty; that you obey, as well as believe, every promise is an excitement to duty; let *love* be the *heart*, and *faith* the *hand*, in the performance of duty; then will it be acceptable to God, and happifying to the soul. If we would grow in grace, we must not allow ourselves in any known sin; nor in the omission of any known duty; for *it's the hand of the dilligent which maketh rich*—in spiritual, as well as in temporal things. Indolence is opposed to the health of the soul as much as it is to the health of the body; for *Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.* Prov. xix. 15.

Finally, if we would live godly ourselves, and by our examples excite others to the same,

let us carefully avoid a light and trifling spirit, and flee from levity as from fire. The man that indulges himself in lightness and vanity, betrays his own soul, and robs it of that peace which is an attendant upon seriousness and meditation : and the minister who does so is like the drowsy watchman, who is able to take care of neither the city nor himself. Let us therefore endeavor, by prayer and meditation, to cultivate a solemn, serious and watchful frame of soul. These will arm you against sin, and be sweet preparatives to the performance of every duty. Thus the soul will become a retentive reservoir for all the graces of the holy spirit ; which will enable you to manifest the truth of your profession by the circumspection of your conduct and holiness of your lives ; by which the mouths of gainayers will be stopped, and the name of God set on high.

And now, dear brethren, wishing that you may be built up in the unity, purity and truth of the gospel, we conclude our address in the words of the apostle—*Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ : to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

JOSEPH CORNAL, Moderator.

By order of the association,
ISAAC WEBB, Clerk.