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Minutes . . . at Pittsford, 1792.

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M I N U T E S

1792.

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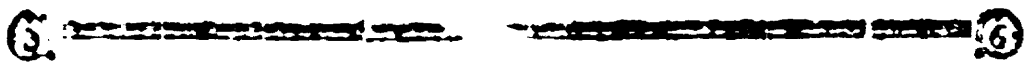
VERMONT ASSOCIATION :

AT THEIR ANNUAL CONVENTION, HOL-
DEN AT PITTSFORD, 1792.

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B E N N I N G T O W N

PRINTED BY ANTHONY HASWELL.



MINUTES, &c.

WEDNESDAY, *October* 3d, 1792.

1. **A**T two o'clock P. M. brother ISAAC BEALL, according to appointment, delivered the introductory sermon, from 1 Pet. ii. 9.

After which, brother OBED WARREN opened the Association by prayer.

2. A moderator and clerk were chosen.

3. Proceeded to read the letters from the churches.

N. B. Ministers names in *Italics*.— Those marked thus *, not present. From the churches marked thus †, we received no letters. Dashes — denote no settled ministers.

Churches.

Churches.	Ministers & Messengers.	Add.	Dif.	Exc.	Died	No.
Clarendon,	{ Isaac Beall, - Lewis Walker, Jonathan Shepherd.	5		4		46
Manchester,	{ Joseph Cornal, - Ebenezer Holibard.	1		1		43
+Granville,	-----					1 16
Middletown,	{ Silvanus Haynes, - Nathan Walton, Silas Rudd.	7	1	1		43
Hubbardston,	{ ----- Nathaniel Culver, Abner Ashley.	1				28
Ira,	{ Thomas Skeel, Benjamin Allen, James Martin.					47
Wallingford,	{ Henry Green, - Colborn Preston, Joseph Randall,	17	1	4	2	88
Orwell,	{ ----- Joseph Needham, Ebenezer Wilson.	1		11		117
Pittsford,	{ Elisha Rich, - Caleb Handy, <i>Handic</i> Abel Stephens,	2		1		45
Salem,	{ Obed Warren, - Simeon Smith.	27				61
+Pawlet,	{ ----- *Solomon Broton.					19
Kingbury,	{ Hezekiah Eastman, - James Covel.	7		5	2	93

4. Received a letter from the Warren Association, by their messengers, Nathan Dana and Abel Wood.

Likewise,

Likewise, a letter and minutes from the Shattsbury Association, by their messenger, *Amasa Brown*. Also, a letter and minutes from the Woodstock Association, by their messengers, *Aaron Leland*, *Abel Wood*, and *John Asplund*.

Brother *David Irish* being present was desired to take a seat with us.

5. Read and approved the corresponding letter to the sister associations, prepared by brother *Beall*.

6. Messengers to the associations are as follows: to Shattsbury, brethren *Obed Warren* and *Henry Green*; to Warren, *Aaron Leland* and *Nathan Dana*; to Woodstock, *Thomas Steel** and *Abel Wood*. And brother *John Asplund* to bear a letter from this to the Philadelphian association.

Adjourned to eight o'clock to-morrow morning.

THURSDAY, October 4th.

MET pursuant to adjournment.

A sermon this morning by brother *Aaron Leland*, from 1 Thess. iii. 8.

1. Agreeable to appointment, brother *Isaac Beall* presented a plan of this association,

* Before the publication of these minutes the Lord called brother *Steel*, (as we trust) to visit the associated Saints in the world of glory.

tion, which being read and amended, was adopted, and to be printed with these minutes.

Adjourned to two o'clock P. M.

Met pursuant to adjournment.

1. We esteem it the duty of this association, to inform the churches in the union, of the characters of those who travel and preach amongst us, to prevent imposition on the churches: therefore, are under the necessity of mentioning the standing of *Jordan Dodge*, a member of the church in Granville, who, in the opinion of a large council (assembled at Granville, October 11th, 1791, for the purpose of looking into difficulties respecting *his* ministerial character) ought not to be recommended as a *minister* of Christ: therefore, we desire the churches not to receive him as such.

Having received information from our sister church in Orwell, that they have excluded their Pastor, *Einathan Phelps*, for openly avowing the sentiment that husbands, or wives, have a right (in certain cases) to put away their companions and marry to others, without any evidence, or even suspicions of their former companions, having defiled the marriage bed by acts of unchastity with others: and receiving persons that have so done, as clean members in the church: And likewise, that a believing husband may put away an unbelieving wife, and *vice versa*

versa, if they have no other cause, than merely because they are *infidels*. And on the contrary, that they have no gospel right to put away their companions (in case they are believers) though they commit acts of lewdness and unchastity with others, (or what we call adultery :)

We therefore, to shew our abhorrence of those sentiments, caution the churches to beware of *him*, and not receive *him* till *he* shall have renounced the above sentiments in a public manner.

2. Read and approved the circular letter prepared by brother *Haynes*.

3. Agreeable to a request from the Warren Association, for a general committee, appointed brethren *Joseph Cornal* and *Isaac Beall*, to meet at Adams, the last Wednesday in June next.

4. Appointed brother *Obed Warren* to prepare a circular letter for next year : and brother *Henry Green* a letter to the corresponding associations.

5. Supplies for destitute places :

Orwel,	{	Br. <i>Joseph Cornal</i> , 3d Sabbath in June.
		<i>Elisha Rich</i> , 1st in November.
		<i>Hezekiah Eastman</i> , 1st in December.
		<i>Silvanus Haynes</i> , 2d in January.
		<i>Nathaniel Culver</i> , 3d in March.
		<i>Obed Warren</i> , 4th in August.

Leicester,	{	Br. <i>Elisha Rich</i> , 3d Sabbath in October.
		<i>Henry Green</i> , 2d in January.
		<i>Aaron Leland</i> , 1st in January.
		<i>Nathaniel Culver</i> , 4th in March.

6. Brother

6. Brother *Isaac Beall* to superintend the printing of these minutes.

7. Voted, that our next association be held at *Salem*, Newyork, on the first Wednesday in October, 1793. Introductory sermon to be preached at two o'clock P. M. by brother *Henry Green*, in case of failure, by brother *Silvanus Haynes*.

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 M R. H A Y N E S.

IS NOW PRESENTED TO THE CHURCHES.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

WITH great pleasure we have addressed you two years successively, upon the subject of practical godliness: a subject pleasing to God, and all holy beings. But the subject on which we shall now address you, is, *the glory and excellency of the Christian Religion.*

Its glories are so many, and so great, that angels wonder and sing, and saints are lost in admiration and surprise, when they behold them; therefore it cannot be expected, that we should fully set them forth in this epistle. We shall therefore only attempt to set forth a few of its excellencies, and leave you to discover the remainder in that world where hope is changed into vision, and faith into fruition.

The glory and excellency of the christian religion appears,

I. In the object of its religious worship : This religion tears all it above all the gods of gold, silver, brass and stone, and looks to the great JEHOVAH, and acknowledges him, and him only, for his God ; believing that this God is possessed of every possible excellency and perfection : eternal in his existence ; unchangeable in his nature ; wise in council and government ; almighty in power, to effect his purposes ; infinitely pure in his nature ; perfectly just in all his conduct ; everlastingly true, and rich in mercy and goodness. This infinite God is the one whom the christian acknowledges.

II. The glory of this religion appears in that it is highly honorable. For,

1. No one ever need to be ashamed to acknowledge such an infinitely great and good God ; but on the contrary, we have the greatest reason to exult with joy and transport, that we have such a God to worship ; and ought to receive it as an instance of the divine condescension, that he pays any attention to us or our services.

2. Its honor appears in saints being adopted into the divine family, and considered as children of God ; consequently heirs of the heavenly inheritance. David tho't it a great thing to be son-in-law to an earthly king ; but how much greater honor should we consider it to be, to become children of the King—the Lord of Hosts—who rules the universe with infinite ease, and sways the sceptre

sceptre of all worlds. Again, it is not only honorable, in an abstract sense, to worship God, but Christ says, *If any man serve me him will my Father honor*; (i. e.) confer honor upon him. He will honor him here with his presence, and hereafter with acquittance and justification in the view of assembled worlds. Thus poor, vile worms of the dust, are brought from the dungeon of this world, to a place of eternal glory, to sing with angels for ever and ever.

III. Another excellency of this religion is, its profitableness. The soul who is united to Christ, exchanges sin for holiness; hell for heaven; the curses of the law, for the blessings of the gospel; the frowns of God for his smiles: drops the vain, delusive, and unsatisfying pleasures of this world, and takes God for his eternal portion, &c.

IV. Its glory also appears in its safety. Christ having answered the preceptive and penal demands of the law, the soul, upon believing in him, is freed from its curses: his state now is such, that there is nothing in heaven, earth, or hell that will finally hurt him; for God and holy beings love him, and so have no disposition to hurt him; and as for wicked men and devils, they are all in chains, and cannot go beyond the word of the Lord. In this condition they may worry and perplex the saints, but they cannot destroy them; for they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

And

And notwithstanding all the doubts and fears of the saints, they have no reason to fear a final fall; for they have the nature and perfections of God; the covenant of redemption; election of grace; effectual calling; the regenerating, sanctifying, and sealing influence of the spirit, and the promises of God, in the gospel, all in their favor.

V. Present enjoyment is another excellency in this religion. —Consisting,

1. In the full and free pardon of sin. Here we discover that the vile wretch, who was entirely polluted, totally depraved, (in a moral sense); a child of wrath, and an heir of hell, can be forgiven and made an heir of glory. Then, when souls are bro't to see the natural enmity of their hearts to God; the dreadful scenes of iniquity thro' which their lives have been drawn; their exposedness to eternal wrath; the justice of God in calling them off for ever, and they, with inexpressible horror, crying out, *Men and brethren what shall we do?* we may then, with the greatest propriety, exhort them to lay down their weapons, and apply to Christ for a pardon; and if they become obedient to this exhortation, the promise says to them, *I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions; and as a cloud thy sins.* And if those who are united to Christ should backslide further and further from him, till a sense of their vileness almost sinks them into despair, even then let them look to Christ

as from the borders of hell, and they will soon enjoy a manifestive pardon of their sins, and the light of the divine countenance filling their souls with joy and transport. And it ought to be considered great condescension in God to pardon backsliders, seeing they sin against light, love, and their own most solemn vows and engagements.

2. The sanctification of the soul.

Sanctification consists in the soul's having greater and greater discoveries of the perfections of God; & upon each discovery to exercise greater love, faith, hope, joy, confidence in and dependence on God. Also, by discovering God's perfection; to see more and more the infinite evil of sin, and the infinite vileness of themselves on account of it.—

At the same time to feel a greater degree of hatred of sin, and love to holiness, and engagedness of heart to avoid sin and practise holiness. Then to put those resolutions into practice, by watching the heart, guarding the tongue, and regulating the outward conduct: 1. As it respects his special duties to God; such as praying in private, and family; attending to divine institutions (not the tradition of men) to find duty, and when found to move forward with firmness in the practice and defence of it; to attend the public worship of God (at the time and place appointed by the church) with punctuality, on Sabbath days, church meetings.

ings, &c. Likewise by defraying the necessary charges of the church.

2. As it respects our fellow men: such as obeying rulers, when their laws do not infringe the rights of conscience; pay just debts; being kind neighbors, &c. And wherever this excellency of sanctification is not discovered, let the profession or pretensions of any be what they may, we have no ⁱⁿ grounds to believe that they have experienced the christian religion.

VI. The glory of the christian religion appears in its future prospects.

This religion bears up the soul while wading through the trials it is incident to in this life, and supports it in death by that *faith which is as an anchor to the soul*. And while the Atheist and Deist are expecting to be transmigrated into some despicable object, or annihilated, the christian joyfully expects soon to join the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven—where all sin, sorrow, and tears are for ever excluded; and where the soul can serve God perfectly, and shout forth the perfections of God displayed in redeeming love, and sing with angels for ever and ever,

Now, dear brethren, let a sense of the glory and excellency of the christian religion, constantly excite you to obey its precepts, and patiently, yet earnestly, look and wait for the glory which it promises. Let your hearts be continually warmed with
love:

love to God and your brethren: let your lives be the result of the same. Maintain a close walk with God, and esteem his service and the cross of Christ your greatest glory in the world. In this way banish that fear of man which bringeth a snare. May the Lord enable you to live religiously, die joyfully, and triumph in heaven eternally.

Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever.
AMEN.

BROTHER JOHN ASPLUND, from Virginia, presented one copy of his Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination in North-America, for 1790, for each church of this Association, gratis, together with proposals for the same register for 1791 and 1792.—Voted, That the thanks of this Association be given him for his kind donation.—And as it is a laudable undertaking, we recommend it to our brethren to subscribe for the same.

T H E
S E N T I M E N T S A N D P L A N
O F T H E
V E R M O N T A S S O C I A T I O N .

Preamble.

FROM a long series of experience, we, the churches of JESUS CHRIST, being regularly baptized upon the profession of our faith in Christ, are convinced of the necessity of a combination of churches, that thereby we may more effectually maintain the order and *faith once delivered to the saints*; our correspondence enlarged; our union increased, while we mutually consult each other's welfare, and the prosperity of our brethren in general. We therefore propose to maintain and keep the orders and rules of an association, according to the following plan or form of government:

Article I. THE association shall be composed of members chosen by the several churches in our union, and duly sent to represent them in the association; such members as they shall judge expert in the laws of God, and judicious in the scriptures, that thereby
help

help may be administered to the inquiring mind; and producing letters from their respective churches, certifying their appointment, shall entitle them to a seat. Their expenses to be borne by the churches which send them.

Article II. The several churches by their messengers to send letters addressed to the association. In the letters the names of their messengers to be inserted; the state of their churches; their increase; their diminution, by death, or dismission to other churches, or excommunication since the last association, and the present number of members.

Art. III. The members thus chosen and convened, shall not have any ecclesiastical power over the churches; nor infringe any of the internal rights of any church in the union.

Art. IV. The association when convened shall be governed by a regular and proper decorum.

Art. V. New churches may be admitted into this union, who shall petition by letters and delegates, and upon examination (if found orthodox and orderly) shall be received by the association; and upon suffrage being given in favor of the petition, the moderator, in token of fellowship, shall give the messenger his right hand.

Art. VI. Every church in the union shall be entitled to representation in the association.

Art. VII. Every query presented by any member of the association shall be once read; and before it be debated, the moderator shall put it to vote; and if there be a majority for its being debated, it shall be taken into consideration, and be deliberated: otherwise it shall be withdrawn.

Art. VIII. Every motion made and seconded, shall come under the consideration of the association; except it be withdrawn by the member who made it.

Art. IX. The association shall endeavor to furnish the churches with the printed minutes of the association, together with an address to the churches: and each church in the union to be their proportional part of the expense thereof, and all other necessary charges of the association—and a person appointed to superintend the printing of the minutes, and forward them to the churches, who shall receive a compensation, yearly, for their trouble.

Art. X. The minutes of the association shall be read (and corrected, if need be) and signed by the moderator and clerk before the association rises.

Art. XI. Amendments to this plan or form of government may be made at any time by a majority of the union, when they may deem it necessary.

Art. XII. The association shall have a right,
1. To give the churches of the union all necessary advice in matters of difficulty.

2. To

2. To inquire into the cause why any of the churches fail to represent themselves at any time in the association.

3. To appoint any member or members, by and with his or their consent, to transact any business which they may deem necessary.

4. To withdraw from any church in union which shall violate the rules of this association, or deviate from the orthodox principles of religion.

5. To admit any distant brethren in the ministry, as assistants, who may be present at the time of their session, when they shall judge expedient.

6. The association shall have power to adjourn their meeting to any future time or place they may think most convenient for the churches.

RULES OF DECORUM.

1. THE association shall be opened and closed by prayer.

2. A moderator and clerk shall be chosen by the suffrages of the members present.

3. Only one person shall speak at a time, who shall rise from his seat and address the moderator when he is about to make his speech.

4. The person thus speaking shall not be interrupted in his speech by any except the moderator, till he has done speaking.

5. He shall strictly adhere to the subject under consideration, and in no wise reflect on the person or persons who spoke before,

to make remarks on his or their slips, sayings or imperfections.

9. No person shall speak more than three times to the subject; and not exceed fifteen minutes either speech, without liberty of the association.

7. The moderator shall not interrupt any member in, or prohibit him from speaking, except he break the rules of this decorum.

8. No member of the association shall have liberty of laughing during the sitting of the same; nor whispering in the time of a public speech.

9. No person shall abruptly break off, or absent himself from the association, without liberty obtained from it.

10. The names of the several members of the association shall be enrolled by the clerk, and called over as often as the association requires.

11. The moderator shall be entitled to the same privilege of speech as any other member; provided the chair be filled (by the clerk or any other member) during the time of his speaking.

12. Every member who shall break any of the above contained rules, shall be re-proved by the association as they shall think proper.*

Signed by order of the Association,
 OBED WARREN, Moderator.
 JOSEPH RANDALL, Clerk.

* The articles of faith annexed to the above plan will probably appear in our next year's minutes.