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Appendix 6: [Richard McNemar's Memorial to the New Lebanon Ministry concerning Military Pensions, 1833.]

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The above pensioners are of the Society of Shakers of Harvard and Shirley. The two Societies comprising about 300 members and are about 3/7ths of all belonging in this State and in the same ratio as the amounts are for these two Societies, all of the Societies, in this state would now be entitled to \$95,005.75. Of the said sum nothing has been sought in consequence of the conscientious scruples of the above named persons, agreeable to the established faith and principles of said united Societies of which they became members.

Signed

Seth Blanchard

Simon T. Atherton

Jonas Nutting

Daniel Willard

In behalf of the Societies

Appendix 6

[Richard McNemar's Memorial to the New Lebanon Ministry concerning Military Pensions, December 16, 1833.]

[Item 301, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress]

Highly respected Ministry}

Watervliet Monday Dec. 16. 1833.

Agreeably to your request I now take up my pen to present you my views or rather my Reviews of the subject of pensions with respect to the letter which you presented us on that subject. On the perusal of that important letter, I received no sudden impulse to bias & my either way, as respected the propriety or impropriety of Believers claiming the benefits of the congressional act of 1832. I simply desired a recess for deliberation that the subject should be well considered before a final decree should be passed or any permanent rule established. The gift that had "stood good for more than 50 years, was not declared to be unalterable; but admitting that there might be another gift quite different, It was very justly questioned whether due information ought not to have been given why and wherefore.

Now waiving any comment on the preceding gift or attempting to call in question its propriety for the time being, the latter ministration

becomes the main subject to be considered, which we will take up under the following inquiries.

1. Was this Rule of the church relating to pensions, gifts or donations from the war department, ever duly ministered, made public or in any manner enforced as obligatory or in any respect to be observed in establishing the Chh in the West?
2. Does the acceptance of the benefits of this act of Congress violate any of the known and common principles of church order as held forth in the chh covenant?

On these two questions the whole weight of the subject must be suspended. So to the first—The accused brother has already (tho rather precipitately and one side of any order) entered his plea of ignorance, and this must stand until it is refuted.

From all my knowledge of the doctrines, principles, rules and orders taught in this country, I am unable to say that his statement is incorrect, but should he or any other minister sent to this country be detected and convicted of withholding any important matter which ought to have been ministered, they are amenable to those who sent them, but the damage cannot fall upon the Western Societies who never were so taught. But taking it for granted that so good a man would not equivocate or attempt to stain his honor by hiding himself under a falsity, we shall proceed to the second inquiry, which relates to the violation of an implied principle as held forth in the covenant or the common rules of the society. The first step marked out by the gospel was to abandon the military system. This incurred fines and penalties common to all delinquents. these fines were voluntarily paid as the price of redemption from actual service. This was considered to be in conformity to the parent institution which had set the example of paying fines and continued without any pointed objection still after the church was gathered, & constituted in this country. At this period a gift was felt in the west different from what had stood from the first formation of the society. which was apointed refusal to bear arms, shed blood, pay fines, hire substitutes or render any equivalent for military services. This was then considered as taking a step forward of any gift that as yet had been felt in the East. But it gained the Union and approbation of the Mother Church, when duly informed of the Whys and wherefores, all which were based on the church covenant; the individuals held responsible for military fines having consecrated themselves and their property & services to sacred

uses. This plea had its desired effect in several of the states in producing an entire exemption, and laid other states under the necessity of enacting special laws to seize the consecrated interest otherwise the body and subject our people to the most unrighteous & unreasonable persecution, for conscience' sake.

The first written remembrance to this import was drawn up by Richard McNemar in the year 1813 and presented by him & Saml Rollins to Governor Meigs in the town of Dayton. a copy of which was kept but is lost. But the principles therein avowed have never been retracted. Upon these principles it was that six of our brethren being drafted, were driven to Sandusky & there kept under guard for a three month's tour rather than infringe on the sacred interest of the church to aid in military matters.

The next public avowal of this principle and reasonable claim to exemption upon it, was in a Declaration of the church at N. Lebanon & Watervliet in 1815. Which was followed the next year by a very appropriate address to the legislature of New York entitled "Observations on the natural & constitutional rights of conscience in relation to Military requisitions." I think the word pension is not in either of these publications, nor a solitary hint of refusing any favor which the war department would think proper to confer upon us. They dwell entirely on the other side of the question. Their whole force is directed to ward off oppression & unjust demands and to support our claims to the protection of our rights civil & sacred. Much it is true is said of the voluntary acts of charity justly credited to the society in supporting their own poor, their own ministers and releasing the public from such expenses as they might claim. But all these acts & relinquishments are held forth as flowing from generosity & benevolence and not from any obligations of conscience or moral right.

The next avowal of our principles and our claims was in an address to the State of Ohio. Protesting against a certain clause in the Militia law, & showing the inconsistency of Military power interfering with persons or property consecrated to the pious and benevolent purposes of the gospel, dated March 30, 1818. U.V. This address, which is yet extant is in perfect union with the preceding, acknowledging no lawful claim of the society on any branch of the government.

As yet we had not contemplated a surrender of our equal rights, or a willingness to be set off as outlaws and bear with impunity the frauds & privations of an imposing world. In the aforesaid Declaration the sufferings & losses of the WU. Society are particularly set forth, which amounted to

the loss of nearly all their living, supposed to exceed ten thousand dollars. In the subsequent remarks it is stated—“ We have already paid more than 4000 dollars in fines, add to this all that has been paid throughout the several societies east & west, and it will amount to a very large sum. How were these complicated losses & damages viewed in those days? As lawful rights on the part of the government, or as fraud and damages that in the scale of justice demanded reparation? Was there no demand made of the 10,000 dollars damages sustained by Hopkins’ Army? Or was it considered a violation of our principles to enter suit in the highest court of the United States for a reparation of that ~~damage?~~ heavy loss?”

Our sense and our reasoning in those days were one and undivided. We say where a fine is imposed a crime must be supposed to exist; therefore if we consent to pay fines as delinquents, do we not virtually acknowledge delinquency to be a crime? which would at once amount to a renunciation of the whole doctrine & example of Jesus Christ on the subject. Hence we justly inferred that no fine could be paid or damages sustained voluntarily; but the perpetrators were in the eye of justice and culpable as the thief or high way robber, and as much bound by impartial justice to make restitution.

The Memorial of 1823. I do not recollect that I ever saw and what is quoted from it as the established faith of the society, I do not think I ever heard in my life. I can therefore say but little about that publication, as I have no certain information how or wherefore it was made, or upon what authority those ideas about bounty lands and pension money were declared to be catholic principles, or incorporated among the essentials of our faith. I have always submitted freely to be taught but could never receive instruction to any purpose without liberty to inquire & get explanation until I could understand the thing. I confess myself ignorant of the proper grounds of this article of faith It is said to be based on an expression found in the 27th Chapter and 6th verse of Matthews gospel. This text as I translated would read thus—“It is not allowed to cast it into the (corbanan) [alms basket] donation fund for it is the price of blood. Now in order to be taught I am willing to expose my ignorance that I have never found this expression used on any other occasion either in the old or New Testament or in any ecclesiastical writer as applicable to any other circumstance whatever. I have never been able to find where this grand council were prohibited by law from making use of that money which they chose, or what point of law took particular cognisance of that

money. Had they been influenced by the law, they would not have dared to purchase the life or blood of any innocent person. But the term price of blood seems to be used to show that the money not being a free gift could not go into the treasury. They had paid out the money as the price of any object which they considered of great value and when Judas brought back the money, his object was to get a rue bargain, but they refused to recant and he with remorse and horror of conscience cast down the money, he did not even offer it as a gift, therefore (non licet) [not allowed] there was no liberty to put it into the treasury, among the sacred gifts, when it was no gift. common sense & not the law forbade them. Now let me ask was this circumstance (recorded by Matthew alone) intended as a precedent to regulate the church in all after ages? Were these chief priests and Elders inspired by a good spirit to set a precedent of propriety for us, or was this circumstance overruled by the providence of God to fulfil in a striking manner the prophesy of Zechariah concerning the purchase of the potters field. If there is any other importance attached to this record, I would gladly hear & submit to it. But at present suffice it to say, that the contents of said “Memorial of 1823” never came before us and therefore did not stand in our way in deciding on that matter as we did. We took it for granted that we understood every established principle of the gospel not only from the voluminous writings which had been published but from the constant teaching and freedom of discussion public & private doctrinal & practical that had been carried for 28 years. Perhaps no one among us all ever thought of applying for counsel to the east in a matter that seemed to be of common occurrence simply to determine upon what principle those benefits were to be accepted and to what uses they were to be applied, as appears by a review of the counsel.

I did object to the idea of those individuals receiving such monies, and ~~having them~~ and using them for their separate & individual benefit, but that it was included in their act of dedication I had no hesitation and as such ought to be collected by the trustees who were authorized by the covenant to take the immediate charge and oversight of all gifts, grants and donation given or bestowed to the use & benefit of the church and considering that those gifts or donations were their lawful interest I did not see or do I yet see how they could conscientiously get round disposing of the same as they did, transferring it to the trustee the same as a legacy willed by a natural relation or any other property to which they had a just right They must either suffer that money to remain in the pension bank and add it by their

voluntary consent to the thousands & tens of thousands of which Believers were unjustly robbed; or they must empower the deacon to take the charge & oversight of it and apply to the benefit of that sacred cause to support of which their all was devoted without reserve. Eleazar

Appendix 7

A few remarks on the subject of Military Pensions.

by Freegift Wells

[VII:B-261, OCIWHI]

This subject being again brought up, thro' the instrumentality (at this time,) of a pretended friend, who has proffered his services in procuring a pension from the general government, for an aged widow, who is now a member of our society, but formerly the wife of a Revolutionary soldier, who is now deceased.

As this subject has again arrested our attention, it appears necessary, (notwithstanding our past discussions & conclusions,) to take a general review of the same; & see, if in this day, there is any insurmountable barrier in the way of receiving from government a just compensation for services actually rendered, & losses sustained; a compensation which they feel it their duty to bestow, and have raised funds for that purpose.

It appears that this is a subject which has been called up in Congress at several different times, & has been thoroughly discussed & weighed by a philanthropical review of the sufferings & losses sustained by the Officers & soldiers of the revolution; and as a remuneration for such losses, in health, limbs & property, they have enacted laws by which appropriations are made, for the purpose of furnishing all such sufferers, with pensions adequate to their losses, and to support them in their old age &c. And in case the pensioner is outlived by his wife, she is entitled to the same during her life.

As the spirit of the gospel positively forbids all wars & fightings among its subjects, it seems to have been strongly imbibed in the minds of some, that whatever they had done to aid in war & bloodshed, even before the sound of the gospel had ever reached their ears, was wicked & offensive in the sight of God, & that an indemnity for such services, could not be received in justification.

This was the impression which Brother Jonathan Slosson received from Mother Ann's answer to him when he asked her counsel respecting