

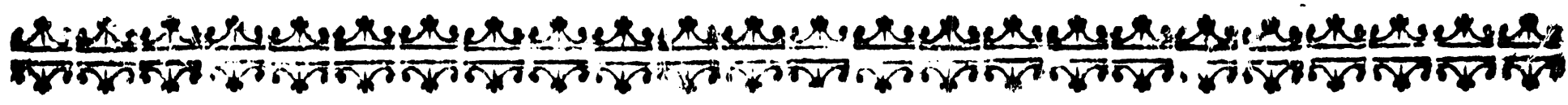
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Baptists. Connecticut. Danbury Association, 1791.

Minutes.... At Stratfield, September 21, 1791.

[Danbury, 1791.] 7 pp.

JCB copy.



MINUTES
OF THE
DANBURY
ASSOCIATION.

Connecticut

HELD AT STRATFIELD,

SEPTEMBER 21, 1791.

At 1 o'clock, P. M. Elder Adam Hamilton delivered the introductory sermon from II. Cor. iv. 5. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord: and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake."

2. Made choice of Elder Adam Hamilton, Moderator;—Samuel Heart, Clerk.

3. Letters from the Churches [were read] and

N. B. Minister's names in capitals. Those to whom an * is affixed, were not present. From Churches marked thus † we received no letters. Dashes denote no settled minister.

† The Danbury Association of 1790 are in p 109

Churches.	Messengers.	Bapt.	Rec. by let.	Dism. by let.	Resto red.	Exc.	Died.	Number.								
Suffield.	JOHN HASTINGS *	4	—	2	—	—	—	114								
1st Westfield,	ADAM HAMILTON,	8	—	—	—	1	2	89								
1st Danbury,	{ Deacon David Parfe, Eliakim Nash, Reuben Ferris,	17	—	91	—	—	—	51								
2d Danbury,	{ Peter Ambler, Daniel Wildman, jun.	—	—	—	—	—	1	48								
Canaan,	{ Joel Coroles, Asabel Hofmer, NATHANIEL NORTON,	1	2	1	—	1	—	24								
Wallingsford,	{ Deacon Jesse Dickerman, Isaac Hall, Joel Ives	3	—	—	—	—	—	52								
Farmington,	{ CALVIN HULBERT, Ebenezer Hawicy, Samuel Heart,	16	—	—	—	—	—	41								
1st Watertown,	— — — — —	—	—	2	—	—	—	17								
Stratfield,	SETH HIGBY, Deacon Nehemiah Grummon, — John Staples — John Edwards, Robert Wilson.	1	—	1	1	2	2	90								
	Squire Beardley.															
	Torington,								{ STEPHEN SHEPARD, Stepen Filer,	—	—	—	—	—	1	53
	South Briton,								{ Deacon Julius Parce, — John Sherman,	4	3	—	—	1	—	37
Warren,	ISAAC ROOTS, mos Fittle Truman Beeman.	10	—	2	—	1	1	86								
	† Amenia Town.								ELIJAH WOOD.*	—	—	—	—	—	15	
2d Water-Town	{ WHITE OS GURN, Edmund Todd	—	—	—	—	—	—	28								
New Hartford	{ PAPHRAS THOMPSON, Zechariah Watson,	—	—	—	—	—	—	25								
New Milford.	{ Deacon Daniel Brillol, John Sturdivant.	—	—	—	—	—	—	31								
Total		64	5	99	1	6	7	801								

N. B The 3 last named Churches were cordially received into our fellowship the present year.

[4. Letters] from corresponding associations were read, viz. Philadelphia, Shaftsbury and Stonington.

[Adjourned to 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.]

There are 16 churches in this union, and a history of 801 members. The association they in their paper quarterly, is written on the doctrine of grace.

[MEETING pursuant to adjournment.]

5. Sermon by Elder CALVIN HULBERT, from Amos, iv. 12. (latter clause) "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

6. Letters to the corresponding Associations [ordered yesterday to be prepared,] were read. [viz. Brother Calvin Hulbert, to Philadelphia; brother Ashbel Hosmer, to Shaftsbury] and [brother Deacon John Sherman, to Stonington. The letters were] approved of.

7. Voted Elder Adam Hamilton, Messenger to the Philadelphia Association; Elder Epaphras Thompson, to the Stonington; and Elder Hamilton, and brother Ashbel Hosmer, to Shaftsbury.

8. Brother Samuel Whelpley's circular letter for the present year, was read, [and] approved of; and ordered to be printed [with our Minutes.]

9. Elder Hamilton appointed to superintend the printing of our Minutes.

10. Elder Hulbert appointed to prepare the circular letter for next year.

SUPPLIES FOR DESTITUTE CHURCHES *were fixed.*

1st Danbury,	2d Lord's Day in Oct.	Brother Finch.
	last do. in Dec.	——— Shepard.
	1st do. in May.	——— Roots,
1st Watertown,	last do. in June,	——— Thompson,
	2d do. in Dec,	——— Hosmer,
	last do. in do.	——— Thompson,
New Milford,	last do. in April,	——— Hulbert,
	3d do. in March,	——— Roots,
	4th do. in Sept.	——— Hosmer,
2d Watertown.	last do. in June,	——— Hamilton,
	1st do. in July,	——— Roots,
	last do. in April,	——— Hamilton,
South-Briton,	1st do. in Nov.	——— Wildman,
	2d do. in Jan.	——— Hulbert,
	last do. in April,	——— Shepard,
Wallingsford,	last do. in May,	——— Hamilton.
	1st do. in Oct.	——— Hulbert.
	last do. in June,	——— Shepard.
Weathersfield.	last do. in July,	——— Thompson.
	3d do. in Aug.	——— Hamilton.

11. Elder Seth Higby appointed to preach the next Association sermon; in case of failure Elder Roots.

12. Elders Hamilton, Higby, and Finch, appointed a committee to treat with the New-York Convention in the behalf of this Association; and, if they judge it eligible, unite with them in one Association, if approved of by the Convention.

13. This Association to be held the 3d Wednesday in September next, at 1 o'clock, P. M., in New-Hartford.

Circular Letter.

[BY BROTHER WHELPLEY.]

DEAR BRETHREN,

WE judge it necessary and very important ^{to} that we address you upon the great doctrines of grace. The erroneous extremes of Arminianism and Pseudo Calvinism make such rapid progress in our day [and nation] that we fear the most serious and alarming consequences. The errors of the oriental Jews and Heathens seem very prevalent at this day. While on one hand we are harangued with the Heathen philosophy of eternal a solute universal fate; on the other we are deafened with Jewish ~~in duty~~ viz. Salvation by works — But amidst this confusion of innumerable jarring principles let it be our care to pursue the straight uniform line of truth, and avoid the bewildered path of error.

The primary consideration in the doctrines of grace is an infinite eternal immutable intelligent and holy God. The infinite perfection of God must at once determine our ideas respecting his plan of government; which must be free from all contingency, accident; innovation or change. To suppose that God has no fixed plan of government would be as clear atheism as to deny his existence, but to suppose that he or any of his creatures can alter his plan of government would argue an imperfection in its original formation. But an imperfection in any scheme always proves an imperfection in the mind which formed it and an imperfect God is no God at all. Therefore the divine plan must be as perfect as God is perfect — must be incapable of improvement and of course unalterable. The safety of Gods kingdom instead of being indangered, intirely depends upon an unchangeable scheme of administration. Where can we find room for any alteration or amendment of a plan in the formation and execution of which infinite power, wisdom and goodness were exerted?

This great plan encircles every creature and event, and makes provision for every event to eternity. So that nothing can take place independant of it or beyond its limits. The salvation of the church of Christ is a part of this great system and was foreknown and predetermined from eternity. Nor was this predetermination founded on Gods foreknowledge of their obedience or good works. This will appear ^{most} evident if we consider the method of salvation which God makes use of. In which ^{it} will most certainly appear that the bestowment of his grace is an absolute unconditional thing. All will own that regeneration is necessary to salvation; for *except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God*. We know certainly that no one ever was, or will be saved, without he is born again. Let us now enquire whether the sinner has any hand in his own regeneration? What is regeneration? It is a moral change—a change of heart—a change of disposition from enmity to friendship to God. In short it is the commencement of true holiness in the heart. Now if there is any degree of true holiness in the human heart, naturally, then regeneration is not the commencement of

John Wheelpley

true holiness, and if not then what is it? It must certainly be either the commencement of holiness, or increase of holiness, or of light. To say that it is only an increase of holiness or of light, resolves it all intirely into sanctification. And indeed if there is any degree of moral goodness in the human heart by nature; the work of regeneration is all a sham; for nothing can be necessary to the salvation of that creature, but an increase of that goodness, which is sanctification; which being suitably increased without any moral change would in due time make them holy as the angels in heaven. Therefore it is matter of fact, that they who deny total depravity of heart, also deny regeneration. *Nor is that all*

But we can prove that there is no degree of goodness in the heart of sinners by nature. Gen. vi 5. We are expressly told, that *every imagination of mans heart was only evil continually*. Now if every imagination i. e. if every exercise of the heart is only evil continually, then surely there was in it no degree of moral goodness there. Of course nothing acceptable in the sight of God. Again Rom. 3 9 12. *For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin—They are all gone out of the way—they are together unprofitable—there is none that doeth good, no, not one*. What bold deceiver will dare start up and say against the glaring light of divine truth that there is the smallest degree of moral goodness in the human heart naturally? Bold indeed he must be!—Here the Apostle includes the whole race of man *all i. e. both Jews and Gentiles*; and declares that *there is none that doeth good, no, not one*. Now if there is not one that doeth good, then certainly all must do evil; according to Gen. vi 5. And if all do evil, and that continually, then every thing which they do must be displeasing to God previous to the commencement of true holiness in the heart, or regeneration. Now if God bestows regenerating grace, in consequence of something which they do it must be in consequence of some evil which they have done, *for there is none that doeth good*. But if the exercises of mans heart are wholly evil by nature; then [let me ask] what is the cause of the first holy exercise in the heart? Does it spring up without any cause? Surely nothing can take place without a cause? Is it caused by the sinful exercises which precede it? No: unless we would make sin the cause of holiness, which would destroy all distinction between them. What then is the cause of it? I answer God—God is the immediate, the only and the absolute cause of it. ~~For~~ *it is God that worketh in you, both to will and do of his own good pleasure*. Hence

I. It appears from the oracles of truth, that the disposition of mans heart is altogether depraved, i. e. sinful. And that there is not one exercise acceptable in Gods sight previous to regeneration. A continual succession of evil exercises must be a continual series of enmity against God: And against every degree of true holiness. There is no law, or article of requirement under the divine government, but what is holy. Every law of Christs kingdom, is a holy law. Now it is clear that the laws of God, and of Christ, take into consideration the heart of the subject. They have nothing to do with outward actions, destitute of their relation to the heart. Therefore to yield only an external conformity to any requirement, when the heart is not right, is in fact nothing of the nature of virtuous obedience, and is no conformity at all. For God is the judge of hearts. And he is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. Therefore he says *Son give me thine heart*. God weighs the actions of men by looking into the principle or motive, from whence they spring: and they are always approved or condemned according to that. From this appears the extreme folly of exhorting men to perform the less duties of christianity, in order to make way for the greater. Since in fact it is just as hard for a man in a state of nature to give a cup of cold water upon a right principle, as it is to love God. For it is just as easy for the heart to be right in one case as the other. In reality every exhortation to duty is an exhortation to have a good, virtuous heart, and

an exhortation to one duty upon a right principle is in fact an exhortation to every duty. Hence saith the scripture, he that is guilty in one point is guilty of the whole law. Therefore,

II. Regeneration is the work of Gods spirit, and consists in a change of heart in the production of which the creature has no hand: and is in no sense aiming or instrumental. Nor are there any peculiar qualities in those who are changed, previous thereto, which determine the divine choice on them in preference to others. For it is not of works, but wholly of grace that the purpose of God according to election may stand, nor is it of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For it is God that worketh in them, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Hence

III. None can be heirs of salvation, but such as are regenerated. For except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. And the omniscient God from eternity knew every soul on whom he designed to produce this important change. The contrary of which no creature can effect, who has the least idea of God. Every regenerated person, is a child of Abraham. For if ye be Christs, then are ye Abrahams seed and heirs according to the promise. Which glorious promise God Almighty has seen fit to confirm by an oath. Wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation. This oath to which St Paul alludes is seen Psalm lxxxix. 35. 36. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David, his seed shall endure forever and his Throne as the sun before me. ~~By~~ David here ~~means~~ Christ / his seed true christians. Hence

IV. The security of every true christian is promised and sworn by Jehovah. Of course, no one ever was or ever will be lost. If there is in fact one of Davids seed who does not endure, the sacred promise is void and the oath is violatē. For if it is consistent with an immutable promise and oath that one shall be lost, then ten may, and if ten, ten thousand and ten thousand million. If ye be Christs then are ye Abrahams seed and heirs, according to the promise. - What is it that constitutes heirship? Nothing but the absolute promise of God. For every one who is saved, is saved by the election of grace; that Gods purpose may stand. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work. Gods promise of eternal life is an infinitely gracious promise which plainly proves that it was made to creatures infinitely vile and undeserving. The vileness of sinners who were included in the covenant of grace is what makes it a covenant of grace. [Therefore] nothing is more abominably corrupt and unreasonable, than to suppose that virtue in the creature was a condition of that covenant; Since in that covenant there is the only effectual provision made for the recovery of the creature to virtue: And the bestowment of virtue on the sinner is infinitely the greatest blessing of the covenant and is made only in consequence of his being included in the covenant. How unspeakably foolish and absurd, to say that the only condition or terms on which sinners can be interested in the covenant of grace, is that they must on their part be in possession of the greatest blessing which that covenant contains, before they can be intitled to any part of the covenant.

True virtue in its essence is nothing but reconciliation and union to God. And nothing else can be pleasing to God. The least degree of this therefore rising out of the sinner by nature, must destroy the necessity of his being interested in the covenant of grace in order to salvation. Because the creature would himself be stepping into the very place to which that covenant would bring him. But nothing is even more impossible than to suppose creature-virtue a condition of the covenant of grace, for such a condition would destroy the constitution of the covenant, the ground of which

instead of being the merits of the creature, is the infinite goodness and mercy of God. Every degree of good whether natural or moral, which ever comes to the sinner is a benefit of the covenant of grace — A covenant which is an eternal, unalterable promise of God to his son Jesus Christ. Away therefore with these preposterous absurd notions that it is a conditional thing. The sinner is not interrelated in it, in the first instance by a single ray of goodness in himself. nor does his continuance in it to eternity depend in the remotest sense on himself. The prime benefit of the covenant of grace is twofold. It effectually secures to the sinner, *First* moral good. *Secondly*, natural good and each of them to eternity.

But there is not room for further enlargement, We wish you to grow in every christian grace, until grace shall be made perfect in glory.

Yours in the bonds of the Gospel.

Signed by order of the Association.

ADAM HAMILTON, *Moderator.*

SAMUEL HEART, *Clerk.*