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Baptists. Connecticut. Danbury Association, 1793.

**The Minutes ... in Southington, September 18th, and 19th,
1793.**

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JCB copy.

THE
M I N U T E S
OF THE
DANBURY ASSOCIATION,
HOLDEN IN SOUTHINGTON,

SEPT. 18th and 19th, 1795.

SEPTEMBER 18th.

- I. The introductory Sermon was delivered by Elder ISAAC ROOTS, from 1 Cor. ix. 14.
- II. Elder JOHN HASTINGS was chosen Moderator :—
EBENEZER WAKLEE, Clerk.
- III. Letters from the several Churches were read ; and the following List taken.
N. B. Ministers names in Capitals : from Churches marked thus † we received no letters : Dashes denote no listed Minister.

CHURCHES.

MESSENGERS,

SUFFIELD,	{ JOHN HASTINGS, Ephraim Robins, Judah Phelps, Daniel Beston.
WESTFIELD,	{ Gad Noble, Dudley Lamb.
1st DANBURY,† 2d DANBURY,	DANIEL WILDMAN.
CANAAN,	{ Joseph Wadsworth, Elijah Whitney.
1st WALLINGFORD,	{ Abraham Doolittle, Abner Mitchel. CALVIN HULBERT, Joshua Porter, Daniel Griffis, Ebenezer Hawley, Eber Meriman, Cornelius Cornwall.
1st WATERTOWN,	{ Levi Mola, Amos Tuttle.
STRATHFIELD,	{ SETH HIGBY, Ebenezer Waklee.
TORRINGTON,	{ STEPHEN SHEPHERD, Noah North, Lemuel Lomis.
SOUTH-BRITAIN,	{ Justus Pearce.
WARREN,	{ Asabel Wedge, Truman Beeman.
2d WALLINGFORD,	{ ASHBEL HOSMER, Jesse Dickerman, Ben Johnson.
ANEXIA-TOWN,	{ ELIJAH WOOD.
2d WATERTOWN,	{ ISAAC ROOTS, Zaar Brackitt, Oliver Dutton. Adin Todd.
	Carried forward,

Added.	Dimitted.	Excom.	Died.	Number.
3	..	..	2	17
3	1	..	1	25
11	1	2	1	35
4	1	..	1	27
..	5	..	..	27
4	..	..	..	40
2	1	..	..	17
40	..	1	..	179
..	2	..	..	50
..	..	..	..	27
..	..	1	..	47
5	..	1	..	29
10	..	1	1	23
4	1	1	..	51
85	15	7	6	719

CHURCHES.

MESSENGERS.

		Add.	Dism.	Exc.	Died.	Num.
	Brought forward,	85	15	7	6	75
NEW-HARTFORD,	EPAPHRAS THOMPSON,					
	Samuel Deuham,					
	John Lewis,					
	Zachariah Watson,					
	Hezekiah Welt.	26	--	--	1	64
NEW-MILFORD,	-----					
	Israel Lockwood.	--	--	1	--	53
SHARON,	-----					
	Ebenezer Hanchitt,					
	Nathaniel Jointon,					
	Isaac Donning.	--	--	--	--	40
SIMSBURY,	-----					
	Jared Mills.	--	--	--	--	7
	Total.	112	15	8	7	617

N. B. The two last mentioned churches, were cordially received into our Fellowship, the present year.

4th. Letters from Corresponding Associations, (viz.) New-York, and Shaftsbury were read.

N. B. From Philadelphia, and Stonington we received neither Letters nor Messengers.

5th. The circular Letter written by Elder Hamilton was read and referred to the examination of Elder Hull, Elder Boyce, and Elder Whelpley; they being a Committee appointed for that purpose.

6th. Appointed Elder Higby, to write to New-York Association.
Deacon Whelpley to Philadelphia.
Elder Hooper to Stonington, and
Brother Johnson to Shaftsbury.
Adjourned till to-morrow 9 o'clock, A. M.

Met pursuant to adjournment.

7th. Meeting opened by prayer by Elder Wood.

8th. The Letters to Corresponding Associations; ordered yesterday to be prepared were read and approved of.

9th. Appointed the following Elders, and Brethren Messengers to corresponding Associations, viz.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Elder Hooper, | } to Stonington. |
| — Roofs, | |
| Brother Tuttle, | |
| Elder Hamilton, | } to Philadelphia. |
| Elder Hastings, | } to Shaftsbury. |
| — Higby, | |
| — Wildman, | |
| Brother Wadsworth, | |

Elder Hamilton,
 — Higby,
 — Whippley,
 Brother Waklee, } to New-York.

- 10th. Elder Hamilton's circular letter, referred yesterday to a committee, was approved of, and ordered to be printed.
- 11th. Voted, that Elder Wildman prepare the circular letter for next year.
- 12th, Voted, that this Association be holden at Suffield, on the third Wednesday of September next, at 1 o'clock, P. M.
- 13th. Elder Hulbert to preach the introductory sermon; in case of failure, Elder Wood.
- 14th, Voted, that Elders Hamilton, Hastings, and Hulbert, be messengers from this Association, to meet the general committee at Sturbridge.
- 15th, Appointed Elders Hofner and Shepherd, to collect accounts from the several churches, to send to the general committee.
- 16th, Voted, upon Elder Higby's desire, to give him the following letter of appreciation:—
 "Whereas Elder Seth Higby proposes to take a journey into some of the western settlements, for the sake of preaching the everlasting gospel, and in order to comfort the infant churches in those parts: this Association gives him fellowship in said journey. We consider him as a beloved brother in the gospel."
 Signed, JOHN HASTINGS, Moderator,
 EBENERER WAKLEE, Clerk.

17th, The following supplies for destitute churches were appointed.

Westfield,	Elder Hofner,	2d Lord's-day in December.
	Hastings,	2d do. in January.
	Shepherd,	2d do. in March.
	Brother Wadsworth,	1st do. in April.
	Elder Roots,	2d do. in May.
	Brother Babcock,	last do. in May.
	Elder Thompson,	2d do. in June.
Simsbury,	Brother Tuttle,	Lord's-day next before the Association.
	Elder Thompson,	2d Lord's-day in October.
	Roots,	1st do. in November.
	Brother Tuttle,	2d do. in November.
	Elder Shepherd,	1st do. in January.
	Brother Babcock,	2d do. in February.
	Wadsworth,	last do. in February.
South-Britain,	Elder Hulbert,	2d do. in April.
	Hofner,	2d do. in June.
	Hastings,	last do. in June.
	Wildman,	Lord's-day next before the Association.
	Elder Thompson,	4th Lord's-day in October.
	Brother Tuttle,	2d do. in December.
	Elder Higby,	2d do. in February.
Wildman,	2d do. in April.	
Shepherd,	last do. in July.	
Roots,	2d do. in August.	

glory hereafter. In the second you had held up to view the same glorious truths, together with the universality of the gospel invitation, to every creature among whom it is founded on the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ, to answer every demand of law and justice by which atonement the rights of God's moral government are perfectly secured, and he is magnified and made honorable. His character shines illustriously bright, and his righteousness is declared in the justification of the ungodly, who believe in his love. Christ's duty as a sinner's obligation to repent, and believe the gospel, you had also fully demonstrated. All these things are not mentioned on suspicion of your forgetfulness, nor from jealousy of your being either abridged in the faith of them, but we think it our duty to stir up your piety, and by putting you in remembrance of them, and would always exercise a godly jealousy over you, *"lest by any means we should be found to have been defiled, though by his justice, we are not made guilty, but corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."* *"For now we live as if we had just seen the light."*

Seeing then you have been instructed in the fundamental doctrines of the gospel: give us leave at this time to turn your attention to that practice the gospel requires, for the want of which, Zion (at times) lies waste, and debilitation spreads within her walls. The importance of practical religion will at once appear to the serious, and judicious, from the great ends answered by it. Thereby light is held up in a dark world, the ungodly are reproved, yea often convicted in their own consciences, and almost persuaded to become christians, and may we not add altogether such; (some of them at least.) Through God's blessing the daily pious practice, and example, of his children, to them, *"Let him know, that he who does not let the sinner from the error of his way, shall face a fall from death, and shall hide a man's blood."* This if no more good comes of it, is worth spending our lives in the practice of piety; but this is not all, christians are often made blessings to each other, by their holy walk before one another, and *"God is glorified"* by their *"bearing much fruit."*

Practical religion should be daily exhibited, both in public and private life; it respects the prince, as well as the peasant: and it consists in the faithful discharge of those duties incumbent on us, in our several stations, and relations, in life. It is productive of happy consequences; and the want of it is attended with contrary effects. Does an individual saint, let his light so shine before men, that they behold his good works; God is not only glorified thereby, but, *"mark that perfect man, and behold that upright" soul, "for the end of that man is peace."* Does the religion of Jesus appear in family peace, order, and good government are the happy consequences. Does each member of a church stand in his lot, and *"as he that received the gift, even so ministers the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; Then Zion looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners, but a neglect of the duties of religion; whether as individuals, families, or Churches, exposes us to censure, and lays us under great disadvantages to promote the cause we have publicly espoused. For though it should even appear that we were of the most unexceptionable denomination of christians, in principle: Yet if our daily practice corresponds not with our sentiments, and profession, what are we but sounding brass or tinkling symbols.*

The scriptures are our rule, both in doctrine, and practice, nor need we be at any loss to know our duty if we but search them with a right frame of mind; inward conformity to God is absolutely necessary both to know and to do his will. If we ask wisdom it must be *"in faith."* *"For without faith it is impossible to please him."* *"Lord what wilt thou have me do? teach me Oh Lord I the way of thy statutes,"* is the sincere genuine language of those who have felt heart holiness or inward conformity to God. Nor does the Lord command any outward

positive rite to be performed, without requiring an inward moral temper at the same time. "It is a God of knowledge and by his will is a reward." His nearest enquiry after God's will can not be made by any but those in whom such an inward temper or heart holiness exists. If this idea be true, we can see clearly the reason why God's will is no more sought after, and known: it is wholly for the want of a good disposition. This is confirmed by the following portion of sacred truth: "They say unto God depart from us, for we refuse not the knowledge of thy ways: as for the holiness, thou we should love him; and what benefit could we have if we pray unto him?" The strong rooted prejudice (and enmity against God and his law native to every man) is the sole cause of darkness in the human mind, for "The scripture is of no private interpretation;" but "so plain that he may read that readeth;" and, dear brethren, tho' this was once your state; and, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye lights in the Lord." "Ye are children of the light." And seeing a holy temper is necessary to seek to know and do the will of God, Oh! be importunate at the throne of grace for such a temper, and for a divine dwelling, to attend all your searches after truth; and as divine light breaks in on your minds, let it be your diligent care to reduce it into practice, "For if you do these things, ye shall never fail." But bear it in mind, that "the servant which knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

From hence, we may safely infer: that much (if not the whole) of the darkness we at times labor under, originates from ourselves: for while we "regard lying vanities;" we "forsake our own mercy." Nor have we ever served God for nought, or sought his face in vain: but while "willing and obedient," we have eaten the good of the land. The scriptures are replete with promises to God's people, to seek his face: they also furnish us with arguments to exhort each other daily, and to provoke one another to love, and good works. They inform us "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." The commands of God are not grievous, but are calculated not only to promote his glory, but also afford delight, and great peace, to those who love and practice them. Nor is it possible for us to find a reward, but in obedience. The scriptures, and our own daily experience, demonstrate this, and put it beyond dispute. O then dear brethren, as we would wish to promote God's glory, have peace and an increase of it in our own souls, and seek the good of Zion, and of those also who are without: let us not be slothful; but zealous in that practice which by the blessing of the Lord may be conducive to answer these important ends. Now if the importance of religion appears in the great ends answered by it; so also will its importance appear by the sad effects consequent on its declension in the hearts, and the delinquency in the lives, of its professors.

The neglecter of practical religion is set forth in an emblematical representation by the wife man: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man without understanding, and lo it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof were broken down." Oh! how many professors are there in such a circumstance, they are immersed in the cares of this world, which like thorns choke the good seed of the word, which they have heard and prevent its growth, they are not happy in their present circumstances; bitter reflections (at times) sting their consciences, as nettles would their flesh: they have lost their government over themselves and families; the stone wall is broken down and they become an easy prey to every temptation, which pleaseth their carnal mind. Such professors will often be heard complaining of darkness, and stupidity. Is it any wonder having *lost their religion*, that they should *grow blind and cannot see*? If their evidences for Heaven are dark; and they grope as blind men, in the midst of the

noon-day of the gospel; nor can it be otherwise with them since they have neglected to "add to their faith virtue, and have ceased to follow on to know the Lord, these are counted as the vineyard, and stumbling blocks to many, both saints and sinners, such characters infect families, neighborhoods, and churches, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Children are not instructed, prayed for with fervency, or brought up in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord: neighbors are not reprov'd for prophanity, or vain conversation; they are not exhorted to flee from the wrath to come; nor are they affectionately pressed to believe the record God hath given of his son. And why is not all this and more done by them; the reason is obvious; their own walk testieth against them; and they jultly fear that retort, "Physician heal thyself," thus for want of their faithful practice, children and neighbors are suffered to go on in a course of evil and grow hardened therein; nor is this all.

Churches suffer by delinquent brethren; "The ways of Zion mourn because none come to her solemn feasts, all her gates are desolate; her Priests sigh. But few communicants to celebrate the Lord's Supper, where the neglecters of practical religion are multiplied. Church meetings though publicly notified, are often adjourned, on account of the slackness of the members, even at a time, when the affairs of Zion are very alarming, and loudly call for her children's helping hand. These delinquents can also live in their *cieled houses*, painted with vermilion, while they can totally neglect the house for Gods public worship; or at best deal out towards it with a slack and sparing hand. Which house in consequence of this is either not finished or if it is; not kept in repair. "By much slothfulness, the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands, the house droppeth through." and thus it becomes an object of derision, and the church, and society exposed to that proverb (altered a little,) "This people began to build, but were not able to finish." But do the sad effects consequent on the neglect of practical godliness end here—No, the poor of the church have not that attention paid them as their temporal exigences require, and as christians we are particularly bound to supply. We not multiply scriptures to prove duty in this case; let the following portion of truth suffice, *who so hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him how dwelleth the love of God in him.* An appeal to the civil law's provision for the poor is vague, it extenuates not our fault, and is used only for a cloak for our covetousness, nor do the evil consequences of neglecting gospel practice end here neither.

The Lord's messengers are deeply affected both spiritually and temporally, through the neglect of those from whom they might hope for better things. Does not the apostolic injunction run thus; let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Oh! brethren are you liberal in your prayers for him, or those who are set over you in the Lord, who daily watch for your souls, and from whose lips you "hear all the words of this life," do they want your Amen, to their discourses; the most convincing way to say it is to practice what they teach, they "can have no greater joy then to hear their children walk in the truth, look to yourselves, (brethren) that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Has the Lord risen early and sent you his servants, how should you hear without a preacher, has it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe; are their feet beautiful in the mountains, do they bring good tidings of joy unto all people. Oh! then crowd around their ministry; nor cause them to mourn, so few come to hear the Gospel of salvation promulgated by them. Remember also they are men, and stand in need of your generous communications, towards their decent support. The trials the ministers of Christ meet with in this respect through the neglecters of practical religion; are only known to God, and their

own souls. And any who are groaning under this burthen cannot attend to the directions given in scripture, viz. to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to do trine, to meditation, and be wholly given up to these things, that their profiting may appear to all. And from hence is the reason why many bright natural talents, in gracious men, in the ministry, are not improved so as to gain other talents ; for as well may we expect the " ruffin to grow without mire, or the flagg without water ;" as men to grow in useful knowledge, who use not the means. Oh ! brethren if you wish your teachers to grow in wisdom and be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, " muzzle not the ox that treadeth out the corn, for the labourer is worthy of his reward." Necessitate not the preachers of the gospel to quit their bibles, like the Levites of old, (through the neglect of Israel) to betake them to their fields to seek that support their exigences require : but rather lend them your friendly aid ; and thereby keep them in the field of the gospel breaking bread to the hungry thousands, of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (We wish you not to encourage " dumb dogs who are too lazy to bark, nor yet greedy dogs who can never be satisfied nor say they have enough.) Where there is a want of natural ability, in this or any other duty, it is a justifiable excuse ; but it is too notorious to be denied, that this is not the case with many of the neglecters of this duty, but rather a want of a gospel temper.

These are some of the things which make Zion waste, and spread desolation within her walls. For these things God has a controverfy with us, and *except we repent, and do our penitence, the candlestick will be removed out of its place: yea and " a famine of hearing the word of the Lord," will ensue: The kingdom will be taken from us and given to those more worthy, who will bring forth the fruits of righteousness in due season.*

And now, dear brethren, we conclude this letter, with the words of the apostle Paul, " *that ye be not slothful; but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise; and we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope, unto the end.*" Let us amend our ways, which have not been good, and so run the race set before us, as to obtain the prize. The crown is but a little way off; press towards it, in all the duties of your most holy calling, and may " the God of peace and consolation, which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the shepherd, and bishop of our souls, make you perfect, strengthen, settle, stablish you in every good word, and work, and preserve you blameless, to his coming, and kingdom," for Christ's sake. Amen.

Signed by order, and in behalf of the Association,

JOHN HASTINGS, Moderator.
EBENEZER WAKLEE, Clerk.

