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Baptists. Connecticut. Danbury Association, 1801.

Minutes ... at Colebrook, October 7 and 8, 1801.

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MINUTES.

OF THE

WENBURY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HOLDEN AT COLEBROOK,

OCTOBER 7 and 8, 1801 ;

TOGETHER WITH THEIR CIRCULAR AND
CORRESPONDING LETTERS.

WEDNESDAY October 7.

At one o'clock P. M. Elder Daniel Wilbur, according to appointment, preached the first lecture sermon, from Rev. xvi. 15. "Beware lest ye come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

Deaf Elder Seth Higby, Moderator, and Elder John Sherman,

Read letters from the Churches.

In the following list, Ordained Ministers names are in capitals ; Preachers in Italics ; Ministers with this mark * were not from Churches thus marked † we received no letters ; vacant churches are distinguished by a dash——.

		Added	Discont.	Excl.	Died	No.
	<i>Messengers.</i>					
	{ John Hastings,					
	{ Dea. Judah Phelps,					
	{ Dea. David Hastings,					
	{ Daniel Bester,					
	{ James Hawley,	5	6	1	0	138
Wenbury,	{ Nathan Buckley,					
Wenbury,	{ Seth Barnum,	6	0	0	2	41
	———	0	0	0	0	57

Churches.	Ministers.	Added	Dis- miss.	Trans- ferred.	Dead
1st Wallingford,	Ambrose Huff, Samuel Miller,	3	0	0	0
2d Wallingford,	SETH HIGBY. Dea. Jesse Dickerman,	15	4	0	0
Canaan,		0	0	0	0
Southington & Farmington,	NEHEMIAH DODGE, Dea. Ebenezer Hawley, Ezra Clark,	2	1	0	1
Litchfield,	Levi Morse, William Gran,	3	0	1	0
Stratfield,	STEPHEN ROYCE, David Benedict,	2	2	0	1
Roxbury,	John Beacher, Israel Miner,	12	0	0	0
Amenia Town,	ELIJAH WOOD,*	0	0	0	0
Simsbury,	Thomas Dyer, Jared Mills,	1	0	0	0
Wolcott and Bristol,	DANIEL WILKINSON, Edmund Todd, Amos Brackett,	27	0	1	1
Warren,	Annianus Dethick, Asahel Wedge, Timothy Parody,	4	2	1	0
Colebrook,	RUFUS BABCOCK, Dea. Ebenezer Blawell, Dea. Thomas Miner, Dea. Philip Howe, Aaron Simons,	11	1	2	1
2d Sandersfield,	BENJAMIN BALDWIN, Elcana Richmond, Amos Spring, Jacob Hubbard, Ebenezer Walker, Moses Fargo, jun.	17	1	1	3
2d Paulington,	Joseph Culer, Seth Higby, jun.	3	0	2	0
East-Hartford,	Dea. Palmer Ladd, Samuel Morley,	1	0	0	0
Newtown,	JOHN SHERMAN, Richard Bennet, Joseph Lewis,	1	0	1	0

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	<i>Added</i>	<i>Dismiss.</i>	<i>Excl.</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>No.</i>
St Paulingston,	Joseph Eells,	0	1	0	0	32
Middletown,	Joseph Coe, ISAAC BELLOWS,	0	0	0	0	25
Winchester,	Dea. Joshua Smith, Noah North, Isaac Douglass, STEPHEN S. NELSON,	12	0	0	0	35
Hartford,	Dea. Ephraim Robbins, Luther Savage, Timothy Savage, STEPHEN SHEPHARD,	9	3	1	0	117
Wilbraham,	Dea. Israel Bennet, Nathan Pease,	1	0	0	0	60
New-Hartford.	Dea. Zacheriah Watson, Martin Merrill, CHRISTOPHER MINER,	0	0	0	0	14
Granville,	Joathan Sheldon, Jonathan Barlow,	0	0	0	0	44

N. B. The two last Churches were received this session.

Messengers from Corresponding Associations and ministering Brethren present, were invited to take seats with us.

4. Voted that Elders Royce, Baldwin and Collier, be appointed as a Committee to examine the circular and corresponding Letters.

5. Adjourned till to-morrow morning at eight o'clock.

Sermon in the evening by Elder Hofmer.

THURSDAY October 8.

Met according to adjournment.

Prayer introductory to business, by Elder Backley.

6. Called for letters, minutes and messengers from the corresponding Associations. Received a letter by Elder Hofmer; a letter and minutes from the Shaftsbury, by Elder Gray and Joseph Turrel; also a letter and minutes by Elder Dodge, from the Stonington. From the New-York, a letter and minutes, by Elder Collier.

7. Elder Nelson's corresponding letter and Elder Wildman's circular letter were read and adopted.

8. Took into consideration the proposition from the Philadelphia Association respecting a general conference; and after some deliberation concluded that at present we have not sufficient light on the subject to see the utility of such a combination: therefore voted not to engage therein till we have further light thereon.

9. Appointed the following elders and brethren as messengers to our Association:—Elder Seth Higby and Elder Stephen S. Nelson,

to the New-York; Elders Baldwin, Morse, and Deacon Robbins, the Shaftsbury; Elders Hastings, Dodge, Deacon Robbins, and Brother Beiler, to the Stonington; Elders Royce, Buckley, Dodge, and Brother Seth Barnum, to the Osego association.

10. Appointed Elder Dodge to write our circular, and Deacon Robbins, our corresponding letter for the next year.

11. Voted that this association set next year at the Wells Presbyterian meeting-house in Wallingford, with the 2d Baptist church in that place.

12. Appointed Elder Sherman to preach the introductory sermon, and in case of failure, Elder Morse.

13. Appointed Deacon Robbins to superintend the printing of the minutes.

14. Query from the church in Simsbury:—"Is it the duty of a dissenter to acknowledge the right of civil government, distating in matters of religion, so far as to give a certificate to the clerk of a Presbyterian society what religion they are of?"

Answer—We are of opinion that it is oppression for one society to require certificates of another, but whether God requires us at this time to say as Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego did in another case; "Be it known to thee O king, we will not," we leave for the present, for individuals to judge and determine for themselves, as they can answer it to God.

15. Voted that Elders Royce, Wildman, Dodge, Nelson, and Deacons Mills and Robbins, be a committee to prepare an address to the President of the United States, in behalf of this association.

As it respects the committee appointed last year to look into the faith and practice of Mr. David Austin, upon further enquiry and consideration we find that notwithstanding he proposed it, the association never received, nor had power (according to our regulations) to receive him as a member: upon which account we do not call for the verdict of the committee, but say we have nothing to do with any such matter. Furthermore, as the association does not consist of the same members every year, the matter was not fully understood last year when said committee was appointed.

16. *Agreed to the following supplies.*

Paulington,	Brother Baldwin,	2d	Lord's-day	in March.
Litchfield,	Brothers Robbins,	2d	do.	in May.
	Buckley,	1st	do.	in May.
	Baldwin,	1st	do.	in September.
N.Hartford,	Brothers Budge,	1st	do.	in December.
	Bates,	2d	do.	in Do.
	Shepherd,	1st	do.	in January.
	Babcock,	3d	do.	in May.
	Bellows,	1st	do.	in June.
Roxbury,	Elder Royce,	2d	do.	in June.
Simsbury,	Brother Dethick,	2d	do.	in January.
	Elder Bellows,	1st	do.	in May.
	Brothers Wildman,	2d	do.	in June.
	Robbins	1st	do.	in July.
	Elder Hastings,	2d	do.	in July.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

Elders and Messengers of the Churches composing the Danbury Baptist Association, convened at Colebrook October 7th and 8th, 1851, to the Churches whom they represent—And greeting.

BELLOVED BRETHREN,

REFERRING you to our Minutes, for information concerning the present state of our churches, and the particulars to which we attended, feel it our duty, (and having by an indulgent providence enjoyed a most agreeable annual interview) to address you, on the importance of a critical and thorough inspection of your present state, both as churches and individuals, agreeably to Paul's exhortation, 2d Corinthians, 13. 5. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." To be *in faith*, is to cordially agree with and practice the gospel, or *word of God* in its doctrine, and institutions. The duty enjoined, intends a full and impartial inquiry into the present frame of our hearts, our belief and practice; and determining according to the light given us, whether they be according to godliness; it also implies the immediate rectifying of all our mistakes, by the unerring rule of the holy bible. In order to engage you to this work, we will represent to you in a few particulars the propriety and present necessity of the duty.

First,—It appears suitable that we should comply with this exhortation, because God has furnished us with all necessary assistance. St. Paul says, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*" John says, "*We have an unction from the holy One, and know all things.*" The anointing of the Holy Spirit therefore, and direction of the word, is sufficient; so that if we have wrong hearts, sentiments or practice, the fault must be ours, and we must be guilty in so great a degree, of inattention to the rule given us.—Secondly, the propriety of self-examination further appears, from the dark and imperfect state in which we always are in this world, by which we are constantly exposed to error and delusion: Our highest attainments in the knowledge and grace of God in this life, are exceedingly small; by which means it often becomes difficult for us to distinguish between truth and error, and makes duty of frequently examining ourselves the more necessary.

Thirdly, Frequently examining ourselves tends to the enlightening of our minds, the rightly disposing of our hearts, and directing us in our faith and practice; in this, we have an approving conscience, enjoy light and peace within, and become the happy instruments of leading others by the way into the way of righteousness.

Fourthly, the absolute necessity of a general and critical attention to this duty, both in our private capacity as Christians, and in our relation to churches, appears, 1st, From its being strictly enjoined in the word of God. We must therefore become guilty before God if we live in the neglect of it. 2d, From the present broken and declining condition of the church at large, both in principle and practice.

Surely it highly concerns us, while many professing the religion of the gospel, are crying, Lo here is Christ, and lo, he is there, to see to it, that we ourselves are right. 3d, The dark and mysterious providences of God which at present affect the nations of the earth and threaten sore judgments on an unbelieving world, and the total ruin of the kingdom of Antichrist, loudly call on us to look out precisely whether there be any thing among us, which may expose us to the desolating calamities which are predicted shortly to take place on them that dwell on the earth.

If in the days of the apostles the mystery of iniquity was already at work, we must conclude that there is much of the same spiritual wickedness in many, if not all the churches in our land at the present day, for the state of the church cannot be considered so pure now, as it was then. We are likewise told that the nations in general have held communion with the apostate church, by which means the same spirit has been communicated, and national churches have appeared bearing the resemblance of the mother of harlots, and considered in scripture as her daughters. These all being seated on the waters, or having the powers of the earth for their support, when revolutions in government take place, have their foundation shaken and their united cry is, *Religion is in danger!* and if the shaking of the heavens and earth by the mighty judgments of God, and convulsions of earthly powers tends to the final removal of any thing professed Christians hold sacred, so far they are possessed of something that belongs to Antichrist. This general overturn is permitted by God to take place, that nothing but that which cannot be shaken may remain. This great work is already begun, and will under the conduct of divine providence, be carried on until Zion shall appear in her apostolic form, and be under the sole direction of him whose kingdom is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, on which account the language of divine truth addresses Christians in general, saying "Come out of her my people, and be not partakers of her sins that ye receive not of her plagues."

Fourth—The promise of the speedy coming of the heavenly bridegroom to display his kingly authority and glory, and call his church forth from her present low and mournful condition into a state of long prosperity and peace, to reign with him in holy triumph over all her enemies a thousand years; likewise strongly enforces on all who are looking out for his appearing and kingdom, the importance of acting by examination, trimming their lamps by gospel preparation, and going forth by holy obedience to meet their Lord.—Lastly, our constant approaches to death and the invisible world, loudly call on us to see whether our title is good to the kingdom of glory. If we should we would pass through and end the journey of life with Christian confidence, meet death in a prepared state, and be ready to stand before our final judge, the bible direction is, to give diligence to make our calling and election sure.—Let us then brethren suffer the word of exhortation to engage us to come forth to the light that our deeds may be manifest that they are wrought in God. We shall then be prepared for the present and future dispensations of divine providence, and fearless while awful threatening judgments are denounced.

of God on the angry nations and apostate church, there in the blessedness and glory of the kingdom of grace, and finally enjoy an entrance into the holiness and dwell with God forever.

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The Danbury Baptist Association met at Colbrook October 7 and 8, A. D. 1801, to the several Associations in our correspondence, sendeth Christian salutation.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

THE kind providence of our God has induced us with another happy interview. From a number of different churches and associations our souls have been refreshed with the good news of large accessions to the visible kingdom of our great Redeemer. In many instances the power and glory of God have been so visibly displayed in building up his cause, as to make the stoutest hearts to melt before him, and the tallest mountains of opposition to bow down at his presence. When these glorious scenes have been displayed, opposition has generally changed its persecuting form into flattering friendship: which indeed is less suspected, but far more dangerous than open persecution. When the Lord makes bare his arm and lets armoured mortals know that he will send by whom he will, and that he will carry on his own work in spite of all opposition, the common language is, Let us build together. Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. And if any objection is made, the reply is, why will you be so biggoted? Let us put on charity. We can receive you as Christians, and acknowledge your baptism; why will you not receive us and acknowledge ours? As an answer to these questions, and to establish wavering minds in the real gospel rule, we propose as the subject of this letter to describe the nature of a visible gospel church, and the propriety of close communion.

Our English word church, was originally taken from the Greek word *eklesia*. The root of which is, *ex* and *ekale*, to call out of, separate from, or set apart for a particular purpose. This word *eklesia*, or church, is applied to the four different classes or separate bodies of Christians. The church triumphant, the spiritual invisible church militant, the visible Jewish church, and the visible gospel church. Each of which have their essentials to admission, essentials to communion, and essentials to exclusion.

To enter the church triumphant, perfect holiness is requisite. Hence we are told, "No unclean thing shall enter there," and "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Then shall I be justified when I awake in thy likeness." &c. The communion of this church essentially depends on a perfect knowledge of the members. So long as they retain their spotless holiness, and see as they are seen, and know as they are known, so long they will retain their standing and continue their communion. But should they become guilty of the least imperfection, their hearts would be hardened and their minds blinded; and so long as they are seen and know as they are known, of course, their communion must be cut off, and the fallen angels be excluded from and be reserved in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day.

Such is the church in admission, communion and exclusion in the church triumphant. But so with the spiritual invisible church militant. Sanctification in perfect holiness and perfect knowledge, is essentially requisite for admission there. The members of this church are the members of visible churches, and are received into membership by baptism. All who are really born again, are members of the church. And admission to the church is the communion of the church with each other as to nature.

as a symbol for affilation, and feel a christian union to each other. Then they will, in the same language, drink into the same spirit, feel the same joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, and enjoy all that Christian union and fellowship which essentially constitutes true spiritual invisible communion. This communion will continue just so long as the union and fellowship is felt. And nothing can exclude from this church, but falling from grace, or losing regeneracy and becoming unborn again; which is impossible.

To enter the visible Jewish church, it was necessary to be born of Jewish parents, be bought with Jewish money, or proselyted to the Jewish faith and circumcised. Such might enjoy the rights and privileges of that church which constitutes their communion, so long as they obeyed its ceremonial laws. But whenever they violated those laws they were cut off from among the people and excluded from that church.

The essential prerequisites to entering the visible gospel church are still different from all the rest. To enter this church, a credible profession of faith is essential. "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And when baptized and admitted, the members of this church may enjoy their visible communion while they obey its laws. When they violate these, their communion must be suspended and their discipline commenced. If proper discipline will not reclaim them; in due time their exclusion must take place.

Such are the different churches and such the essential differences between them. Can any now suppose there is no difference? Will men of sense, learning and piety, continue to say the Jewish and Christian church are essentially the same? If they will, to convince them of their error, let them bring forward the members of each church and see if they can commune together. Let a member of the Jewish church come to the door of a visible gospel church and call Abraham father as long as he pleases, and see if he will gain admission. Far otherwise; the reply will be "bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father." But some are ready to say, Christ communes with us, and why will he not? To which we answer, we will in the same sense that Christ does. Again, it is often said, we shall all commune together in heaven, why can we not here on earth? Undoubtedly we can, in the same manner we shall there. But our design, brethren, is, not to represent that Christ has two different gospel churches here on earth, for all real saints belong to Christ's mystical body and are visible to him. Nor would we intimate that he owns any church any further than they really walk in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. But we have made use of the above distinctions mainly to shew the difference between visible and invisible communion and the different grounds on which each is to be received. We sincerely hope that these distinctions may be duly observed, that our conduct may be consistent with the spirit of the gospel, and we be found blameless at the coming of our Lord.

By order of the Association,

SETH HIGBY, MODERATOR.

JOHN SHERMAN, CLERK.

It is requested by the committee appointed to superintend the Dissenters' Petitions, that all persons who are engaged in circulating them, and such as are friendly to them, should get as many of the Friends of the State to sign them as they can, and have not set their names before, and return them to Deacon John Bolles, Hartford, as early as the first of March A. D. 1802.

In behalf of the Superintending Committee,

STEPHEN S. NELSON