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Baptists. Connecticut. Stonington Association, 1788.

Minutes ... in Colchester, 1788.

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MINUTES

OF THE

Stonington Association,

AT THEIR

Annual Convention,

HELD AT

Elder ABEL PALMER'S Meeting-House,

In Colchester, 1788.

Printed by T. GREEN. M, DCC, LXXXVIII.

M I N U T E S.

Tuesday, October 21st, 1788.

ELDER Eleazer Brown, preached the introductory sermon from Matt. v. 16.—After which,

2. A moderator and clerk were chosen.

3. Letters from the churches were read, and the following account was taken of the members added, dismissed, excluded, or who have died the past year; and of the present number in each church.

N. B. Ministers names in *italic*.—Dashes denote no settled Minister. Ministers marked by an † were not present. Those churches which sent neither messengers or letters, stand as they did the last year, and are distinguished by a *

| CHURCHES. | MESSENGERS. | Ad. | Dic. | Exp. | Died. | Num. |
|----------------------------|--|-----|------|------|-------|----------|
| 1. Stonington, | Elder <i>Eleazer Brown</i> , <i>Peleg Randall</i> , | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 100 |
| 2. Stonington, | <i>Simeon Brown</i> , <i>Zebulon Brown</i> , <i>Simeon Brown, jun.</i> <i>Afa Spalding</i> , | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 130 |
| 3. Stonington, | <i>Valentine W. Rathbun</i> , <i>Sands Niles</i> , <i>Jesse Packer</i> , | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| 1. Groton, | <i>Timothy Wightman</i> , <i>Allen Wightman</i> , <i>Jesse Wightman</i> , <i>Benadam Gallup, jun.</i> | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 159 |
| * 2. Groton, Say-Brook, | —————, <i>Eliphalet Lester</i> , <i>Israel Douglass</i> , | | | | | 35 47 |
| Exeter, | † <i>Solomon Sprague</i> , <i>Joseph Cafe</i> , | 4 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 187 |
| * South-Kingston, | † <i>Benjamin Weight</i> , | | | | | 48 |
| | Church | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------|----|---|---|---|--|----|
| Church formerly of South-Kington, now of Richmond, | } | _____ | | | | | | |
| * West-Greenwich, | | † <i>Elisha Green,</i> | | | | | | |
| 1. Colchester, | | <i>Christopher Palmer,</i> | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 46 |
| | | <i>Afa Randall,</i> | | | | | | 64 |
| | | <i>Afa Bolles,</i> | | | | | | |
| 2. Colchester, | | <i>Abel Palmer,</i> | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 48 |
| | | <i>John Cartey,</i> | | | | | | |
| | | <i>Jabez Rogers,</i> | | | | | | |
| Richmond, | | _____ | 11 | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 42 |
| | | <i>Nathaniel Perkins,</i> | | | | | | |
| | | <i>David Clark,</i> | | | | | | |
| Hampton, | | _____ | | | | | | 76 |
| | | <i>Robert Baxter,</i> | | | | | | |
| | | <i>Stephen Utley,</i> | | | | | | |
| | | <i>Nehemiah Dodge,</i> | | | | | | |

| AD. | DIS. | EXC. | DED. | No. |
|-----|------|------|------|------|
| 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| | | | | 64 |
| 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 48 |
| 11 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 42 |
| | | | | 76 |
| 47 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 1074 |

The last church on this list was received the present year.

4. Received a letter and minutes from the Shaftsbury Association, by their messenger brother David Rathbun.

5. Received a letter from the Warren Association.

6. Received a letter and minutes from the Philadelphian Association.

7. Received a letter from the General Committee of the several Baptist Associations in Virginia, addressed to the several Baptist Associations in the Northern States, requesting a correspondence, &c.

8. Appointed brethren Nathaniel Perkins and Afa Spalding, to draw the letters to the corresponding Associations.

Adjourned till to-morrow morning, 10 o'clock,

Sermon in the evening by brother Valentine W. Rathbun, from Isa. lix. 19. last clause.

Wednesday, October 22. Met pursuant to adjournment.

1. Read and approved the letters to the several Associations.

2. Appointed

2. Appointed brethren Jesse Wightman and David Rathbun, as our messengers to the Shaftsbury Association.

3. Chose brethren Robert Baxter and Nehemiah Dodge, messengers to the Warren Association.

4. The circular letter prepared by brother Valentine W. Rathbun, was read and approved.

Brother Sands Niles is appointed to write one for the ensuing year.

5. Brother Valentine W. Rathbun, is requested to write a friendly letter to the church of South-Kingston; from whom we have received no letter, year after year.

6. Agreed on the following supplies for the church of Richmond, formerly under the pastoral care of Elder Charles Boss, now deceased.

Elder Simeon Brown, the fourth Lord's day in *November*.

Elder Valentine W. Rathbun, the third Lord's day in *March*.

Elder Eleazer Brown, the fourth Lord's day in *May*.

Elder Simeon Brown, the fourth Lord's day in *July*.

Supplies for the destitute church of Hampton.

Elder Abel Palmer, the third Lord's day in *November*.

Elder Christopher Palmer, the third Lord's day in *January*.

Elder Simeon Brown, the first Lord's day in *June*.

Elder Eleazer Brown, the first Lord's day in *August*.

Elder Valentine W. Rathbun, the first Lord's day in *September*.

7. Voted, That our next Association be held at Elder Solomon Sprague's meeting-house, in Exeter, the third Tuesday in *October* next, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

8. Brother Valentine W. Rathbun, is requested to superintend the printing of the minutes, and to forward them to the churches.

Elder Eliphalet Lester, made the concluding prayer.

Now follows our Circular Letter.

Beloveds in the Lord,

SUFFER us to address you, at the close of this interview, on the necessity of a close walk with God. Gen. v. 24. "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him." A close walk with God, presupposes an agreement. "Ye were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Eph. ii. 3. But God by *his Spirit* hath awakened you to behold your forlorn situation,—the spirituality of *his law*,—and the danger you were in of being banished from *his* blissful presence forever. In this hour of distress, every false hope was swept away, and an earnest enquiry succeeded—What shall I do to be saved? Anon, *Jesus* was revealed as the *only Saviour*,—by faith you called *him* yours,—tears of repentance flow'd—fear subsided—the spirit of adoption enabled you to cry, Abba, Father,—and a comfortable hope of life and immortality succeeded. Thus united to *Christ*, having "a good hope through grace, that *heaven* would be your home shortly, the next object of solicitude should be, how you may possess as much of *heaven* by the way as possible; to effect this, it is necessary that your time and talents be improved for God. A close walk with God implies, faith in *his* word,—obedience to *his* commands,—conformity to *his* ordinances,—communion of saints,—delight in the worship of God,—humility of mind,—patience under sufferings, &c. First, the *holy* scriptures contain the whole will of God, necessary to be known for our salvation; and are given us for a rule of our faith and practice, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. and 2 Pet. i. 19, 20, 21. In the word of God, we are taught *his* precepts,—the path of our duty—and the nature of our warfare. To the believer who views the nature, beauty, and necessity of holiness, as a living principle in the heart; what God has forbidden in *his* word, appears hateful,—what *he* has commended, necessary,—what *he* has promised, desirable—and what *he* has revealed, glorious. But, it is to be feared, that too many, instead of taking the word of God for a rule, are too attentive to the practices of men, who, though they may be christians, are, at best, but fallible creatures: it were to be wished, that instead of thus measuring ourselves by ourselves, each would strive to outvie the other in acts of obedience to the rules of God's word. May you, brethren, like the noble Bereans, search the scriptures daily, with diligence and care; and may the holy Spirit, (whose office it is) take of the things of *Jesus*, and shew them unto you. Again, obedience to *his* commands is necessary, to our maintaining a close walk with God. We are informed in Gal. ii. 16. "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Also, Rom. x. 4. "*Christ* is the end of the law, for righteousness, to every one that believeth." Hence arises the necessity of that faith, which worketh by love, and purifies the heart; without which, it is impossible to please God. This faith is the gift of God to *his* chosen, whose privilege it is, to yield obedience to *his* commands:—John v. 3. "His commandments are not grievous."—Psal. cxix. 77. "Thy law is my delight." "I ye love me, keep my commandments," says *Jesus*, John xiv. 15.—Again, "this is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved

ved you." John xv. 12.---" Love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 10. Love to God, *his law, his word, his children, his ordinances, and his worship,* is the characteristic of the real saint. They desire above all things, the glory of God,---the success of *his cause,*---the prosperity of *his people,*---and the accomplishment of *his will.* Again, "love worketh no ill to his neighbour." Rom. xiii. 10. The christian not only loves God, but his neighbour, also: He contemplates his Lord's command---Mat. vii. 12. "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Observe his daily walk, and his language will be truth, and his dealings equity. Dear brethren, we exhort you that in this, and all other respects, you walk worthy of God, who has called you to his kingdom and glory,---mortify the whole body of sin,---strive to gain a victory over the world and self, and to make daily advances in conformity to the mind that was in Christ; "and be ye not conformed to this world, says the great apostle, Rom. xii. 2. Conformity to the world, it is to be feared, is a growing evil among professors at this day; but he that "is born of God, overcometh the world." John v. 4. As believers, we are strangers and pilgrims upon earth,---heaven is our country, and the Lord is our king. We are to be known as *his subjects,* and therefore we must not speak the language, or adopt the customs of this world, as in the days of our ignorance. Though our respective callings may lead us to transact the same business with the men of the world, our particular ends are, or should be entirely different: we may not conform to the world, in their amusements and diversions. "What fellowship hath light with darkness, or what concord hath Christ with Belial." Is it not necessary that we avoid all those places and companies, where the fear of God has no place, and where every thing tends to banish all serious thoughts of God, and ourselves? The men of this world have not the love of God in their hearts, or *his fear* before their eyes, and of course, are engaged in such pursuits and practices, as are inconsistent with our *holy calling,* and in which we cannot imitate them without hurting our peace and profession. Let us therefore, "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." Heb. xii. 1. Conformity to God's ordinances is the duty of believers. Luke i. 6. "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." By ordinances we mean baptism,---the Lord's supper,---prayer, &c. Suffer us to make some remarks on the duty of prayer; prayer is the desire of the soul, and privilege of the believer; the necessity of attending to this duty at the present day, is apparent from the following reasons; iniquity has overspread our land,---the love of too many of God's children is waxen cold,---the laws of God are violated to a great degree, not only by men and women, but trampled upon by the rising generation,---the sacred name of *Jehovah* is profaned in our streets,---false doctrines are propagated among us,---errors and delusions prevail, yea, the enemy has come in like a flood: with these alarming views, where is the saint that can avoid crying out, Good God, have mercy upon us. Every saint should

should exert himself, and every talent be improved for God. We rejoice that there is a number, whose eyes affect their hearts, and who are stirred up to unite in prayer for a blessing upon our sinful land, and that those justly deserved judgments may be averted, with which we are threatened,--but we must also adopt the practice of the too much neglected duties of family and secret prayer. It is enjoined on parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Strict attention should be paid to the morals of youth, and religious education of children: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The examples and instruction of parents hath a greater influence on children, than all are aware of. "Pray without ceasing," is a scriptural direction: how culpable is he, then, who neglects the duty of secret prayer? A resting in past experience, without continual desires for fresh communications from the fountain of life, is the canker, we fear, that eats away the fruitfulness and beauty of many professors in the present day,---they grieve his spirit, and he withdraws.--If this is your case, brethren, may the Lord make you sensible of your folly and loss,---teach you to mourn after him, and intreat his return; if so, perhaps he will meet you at his throne of grace, and permit and enable you to acquaint him with all your cares, fears, wants, and troubles, with more freedom than you can relate your feelings to your nearest earthly friend,---communion with God, and conformity to him, should be our chief study and pursuit. Communion of saints, is another great privilege of the children of God; they may be separate from each other in body, and yet may daily meet at the throne of grace,---they feel the same desires,---aim at the same objects,---and bear each other upon their hearts in prayer,---they bear burthens with each other, and together find access to the table of the Lord. We may not complain that we are serving God alone,---the family is large,---yet there is room,---there are many mansions prepared,---a place for us all. Again, the living christian delights in the worship of God; he will not think that four or six hours in a week is too long a term to spend in the service of his Redeemer,---he will not absent himself from the worship of God on every trifling occasion; but he will endeavour to promote the worship of God, according to his ability, and strengthen the hands of his minister. The psalmist David prefers one day in the courts of the Lord to a thousand, spent elsewhere; because there he met with his Lord. One thing more on this subject; a comfortable freedom for public service, depends much upon the spirituality of our walk before God and man. Again, humility is a very necessary grace: a measure of this grace is to be expected in every true christian; but it can only appear in proportion to the knowledge they have of Christ, and their own hearts. The believer, under the influence of this grace, styles himself less than the least of all saints. - "Know thyself," says one of the wise men of Greece; this is a great attainment; but from the exercise of the grace of humility, we are taught to esteem others better than ourselves -- "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Mic. vi. 8. "Let us remember the de-
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denotation of our Lord." Luke xviii. 14, and xiv. 11. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Once more, the humb' saint hath ordinarily a measure of patience under sufferings—Job was an eminent patron of patience; let us, then, under the afflictive dispensations of *divine providence*, go to him, and learn submission to the will of God: a view of our own vileness and unworthiness, and of the goodness of God towards us, would teach us in every state, therewith to be content. If you suffer in your persons, character, or interest, from the men of this world, for your testimony of Jesus, remember our Lord's affection in Mat. v. 44. Also, the apostle's declaration, 2 Tim. iii. 12. Trials are peculiar to the children of God, who are surrounded with enemies; the world, flesh, and devil. You will have frequent occasion to remember, dear brethren, that you have not yet got out of reach of the artillery of Hell: you have known something of Satan's devices; how has he envied your privileges,—assaulted your peace, and laid snares for your feet! He still desires to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but, blessed be God, that we fight with an enemy already vanquished by our Lord, and that we have a sure promise of victory. Finally, brethren, suffer us to remind you of the greatness of your character;—children of the kingdom,—family of God,—a garden inclosed,—the Lamb's wife,—the light of the world,—a peculiar people.—May the great Head of the Church enable you to live accordingly. Amen, and Amen.

Signed in behalf of the Association.

SIMEON BROWN, moderator.

VALENTINE W. RATHBUN, clerk.

