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Baptists. Connecticut. Stonington Association, 1795.

Minutes ... in Woodstock, October 20th and 21st,
M, DCC, XCV.

New London, Green, 1795. 8 pp.

AAS copy.

MINUTES

OF THE

Stonington

BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT

Elder Amos Wells's

MEETING-HOUSE,

IN

Woodstock,

October 20th and 21st,

M,DCC,XCV.

NEW-LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL GREEN.

1795

Minutes, &c.

T U E S D A Y, O C T O B E R 20th.

1. **E**LDER *Peter Werden* preached the introductory sermon from Ezekiel xiii. 22.

2. Chole Brother *John Rathbun*, Moderator, and Brother *Valentine W. Rathbun*, Clerk.

3. Read the letters from the several churches, and took the following account of the members who have been added, dismissed, excluded, or who have died the past year; with the present number in each church.

N. B. Ministers' names in capitals. Licensed preachers in italics. Those to whose names this mark * is affixed, were not present. From churches marked thus †, we received no letters; their number stands as last year. Dashes — denote no settled minister.

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Dead.	Numb.
1st. Stonington,	—————, * <i>Peleg Randal</i> , <i>Jabish Gallup</i> ,				2	143
2d. Stonington,	SIMEON BROWN , <i>Robert Stanton</i> , <i>Asa Spalding</i> , <i>Zebulon Brown</i> , <i>Asher Minor</i> ,	14			2	206
3d. Stonington, Groton,	VALEN. W. RATHBUN , * TIMO. WIGHTMAN , <i>Samuel Lamb</i> ,	3		1	1	44 184
† Saybrook, Exeter,	* ELIPHALET LESTER , —————, <i>Pardon Tillinghast</i> , <i>Benjamin Lawton</i> , <i>Jonathan Dean</i> ,		5		2	30 242
† Church formerly of So. Kingston, now of Richmond, West-Greenwich,	} BENJ'N BARBER, jun. * ELISHA GREEN ,					67
† 1st. Colchester,		CHRISTO. PALMER ,	1		2	49
2d. Colchester,	ABEL PALMER , <i>Denison Palmer</i> , <i>James Rogers</i> , <i>Alpheus Rogers</i> ,	1	2	1		58 88
Richmond,	—————, <i>Sands Perkins</i> ,					37
Hampton,	PETER ROGERS ,	5				68

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Dead.	Numb.
	Willam Elliott, Stephen Utley, * REUBEN PALMER,					52
1st. Chatham,	_____ Elijah Hodge, Ebenezer Harris,					63
2d. Woodstock,	AMOS WELLS, Isaiah Lyon, John Barrett, Jesse Bolles,			7		69
2d. Chatham,	_____ William Bolles, William Welch,	3		4	2	69
New-London,	ZADOCK DARROW, Zadock Darrow, jun.	8		2	1	273
2d. Ashford,	JOHN RATHBUN, David Chaffee,	1	3			52
3d. Ashford,	_____ David Bolles, Edmund Chamberlin, James Wheaton,		10	3		32
East-Haddam,	SIMEON DICKINSON, John Bigelow,	1		2		47
Plainfield,	NATHANIEL COLE, Jenks Malon,	8	2	1	1	95
Total,		45	22	23	12	1968

4. Received and read letters from our sister associations. From the New-York, a letter ; but no minutes. From the Philadelphia, a letter and minutes. A letter and minutes from the Shaftsbury, by the hand of Elder Peter Werden. A letter and minutes from the Warren, by their messengers, Elder Isaac Backus, and Brother Zenas L. Leonard. From the Danbury, a letter and minutes, by their messenger, Elder Stephen Shepard. These, with other brethren present, were invited to sit in council with us.

5. Appointed Elders Stephen Parsons and Peter P. Roots, with Brethren Afa Spalding, and Zenas L. Leonard, to write to the several corresponding associations.

6. The circular letter presented by Brother Rogers, was read ; appointed to examine the same, Elders Isaac Backus, Simeon Brown, and Peter Rogers.

Adjourned until nine o'clock to-morrow morning.
Public worship this evening in various parts of the vicinity.

W E D N E S D A Y, OCTOBER 21st.

Met according to adjournment,—and.

1. Sermon by Elder Isaac Backus, from Isaiah ii. 2. 3. 4.
2. The circular letter being approved by our committee appointed to examine the same, was adopted ; requested the clerk in addition thereto, particularly to notice the frown of Divine Providence upon this association, since our last meeting, in the death of our worthy, much

lamented, and very useful brother in the ministry, Elder Eleazer Brown.

3. The letter to the Shaftsbury association, prepared by Brother Asa Spalding, was read and approved. The clerk is requested, in addition thereto, particularly to notice the death of that eminent servant of God, Elder Joshua Morse; whose praise is still in our churches, and whose distinguished gifts, ardent piety, unremitting exertions, and faithful labors in the cause of Christ, have been of singular advantage to many souls, and particularly useful to that association.

4. Read and accepted the letter to the several corresponding associations, prepared by Brother Zenas L. Leonard. Voted, that it be printed with our minutes.

5. Appointed Brother Abel Palmer to write the circular letter for next year, and Brother Amos Wells the letter of correspondence.

6. Chose the following brethren our messengers to our sister associations:—

To the Danbury, Brethren Simeon Dickinson, and Stephen Parsons.

To the Shaftsbury, Brethren David Rathbun, and Jonah Titus.

To the New-York, Brethren Val. W. Rathbun, and Sim. Dickinson.

To the Warren, Brethren John Rathbun, Amos Wells, and Valentine W. Rathbun.

7. Brother Valentine W. Rathbun is requested to forward our minutes to the Philadelphian association.

8. Agreed to the following supplies:—

R I C H M O N D.

Brother Simeon Brown, the 4th Lord's-Day in Nov. and 4th in April.

— Nathaniel Cole, 4th in February.

— Zadock Darrow, 4th in May.

Valentine W. Rathbun, 3d in July.

E X E T E R.

Brother Nathaniel Cole, 3d in November.

— Simeon Brown, 1st in December.

— Christopher Palmer, 1st in April.

— Zadock Darrow, 1st in June.

2d. C H A T H A M.

Brother Christopher Palmer, 3d in November.

— Simeon Dickinson, 3d in December.

— Stephen Shepard, 3d in January.

— Stephen Parsons, 3d in April.

— Abel Palmer, 1st in May.

9. Voted, to hold our next association at Elder Timothy Wightman's meeting-house in Groton, the third Tuesday in October, 1796.

10. Brother Valentine W. Rathbun is requested to superintend the printing of the minutes.

Concluded with prayer by Brother Nathaniel Cole.

(C I R C U L A R L E T T E R.)

The Elders and Messengers of the several Churches met in Association at Woodstock, October 20th and 21st, 1795,—To the Churches whom they represent, send Christian Salutation:

DEAR BRETHREN, **B**Y the good hand of our God upon us, we were conducted in safety to, and met at the

place, and time appointed, and were favored with a very pleasing interview: what we have done, our minutes manifest. Being led of course to address you by a general letter, we hope that our attempt therein to promote your spiritual welfare, may not be fruitless.

Love is the true source of happiness to all intelligent beings; a grace of such use and influence among mankind, that without it there can be no christian fellowship or society; and when the churches of *Christ* are united in this endearing bond; when their members glow with the heavenly ardor, the heart enlivening ray of this divine gift; we may with joy and satisfaction adopt the language of inspiration, and admire, "How good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity." How transporting is the sight. It is "Beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners."

We learn from the sacred page, the true and only fountain of this stream which makes glad the city of our God: for says the apostle, "God is love;" and "*We love him, because he first loved us.*" This clearly appears from the *Almighty Father's* so loving the fallen world, as to give his only *Son*, in whom was, and is *his delight*; to be born in the flesh; to be found in the lowly form of a servant; to submit to the most opprobrious indignity, that wicked beings were able to offer to this incarnate Majesty of *Heaven*; and at length to die the accursed and painful death of the cross; that whosoever believeth on *him*, might not perish, but have everlasting life.

We are made partakers of the love of *God*, by the regenerating influence of the *Holy Ghost*. When submissive at the foot of sovereign mercy, lies the conquered, yielding sinner; when the rebellious weapons of his warfare are all flung down; when he beholds that there is no created arm that can save him; and trusts alone to the all-sufficient merits of the *Savior*, for relief and salvation;—The *Heavenly Dove* descends to his comfort; dispels the darkness, and the horror of his lost condition; and fills the soul with *divine* love, and peace, in believing.

We write not these things, brethren, because ye know them not; but because ye do know them: as therefore ye have received the *Lord Jesus Christ*, so walk ye in him; keeping yourselves in the love of *God*; watching unto prayer; walking in all the laws and ordinances of *God* blameless.

While Deists around us, vainly suppose that they truly love the great *Author* of all good; because (as they imagine) they entertain some sensations of gratitude, to the *Father* of mercies, for the benefits which they receive from *his* common bounty: when at the same time, they shut their eyes to the light of truth, as shining from the sacred word, and the great volume of creation; which teaches all, if they would but learn, that man is utterly depraved, and unholy, and as such, can have no fellowship with spotless purity; without an entire change of his sinful lapsed disposition: while these seem to come short of the *truth*, as it is in *Jesus*: let us be faithful followers of the bright example of disinterested love and benevolence: ever engaged in the cause of religion and truth; not forsaking the assembling ourselves together for *divine worship*; faithfully improving those gifts, which the *Saviour* hath received, for the edifying of *his* church, for the comforting and strengthening of *his* dear *saints*, in their wearisome pilgrimage state below.

Happy would it be for us, brethren, if there was no reason to lament an abatement of this love and zeal, in any of our churches. Are there not some who are lukewarm in the great concerns of eternity? Let us therefore stir up one another daily, to an intelligent, rational, warm and active zeal; watching against every degree of declension; and enforcing the discipline of God's house, against all immorality and irreligion.

To him that overcometh, will be given to eat of the hidden manna; and the saints overcome by the blood of the *Lamb*, and the word of their testimony: may we therefore ever stand in the testimony of truth, faithful to the death, that we may receive the promised reward.

May the *Great Head* of the church, inspire us all richly with the graces of the *divine spirit*; cause reformation to spread far and wide; build up true and undefiled religion in the earth; cause wars to cease among the nations, and gospel liberty and truth to pervade the whole human race.

We should be guilty of a criminal neglect, should we close this letter, without taking notice of the providence of God, in the removal of one of our ministers,* by death, since our last meeting: his seat among us is vacant; we feel our loss; but we trust he hath experimentally known the meaning of the Apostle, Phil. i. 21. "*To live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" In this instance of mortality; the family, the church, and the world, are bereaved! As a husband and parent, he was affectionate and kind. He faithfully served the church, as their pastor, for many years; § success attended his labours; numerous additions were made to the church, during his ministry; of this number, four have been since ordained to the work of the gospel ministry. "*And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.*" Psalm lxxxvii. 5, 6.

His frequent calls to preach on public occasions, sufficiently prove that his brethren entertained a high opinion of his ministerial abilities; but, alas, the places which once knew him, in the family, in the church of God, and in the world, shall know him no more! His countenance is changed, and he is sent away! Dismissed from the toils, and pains, and sorrows of mortality; he is gone, we trust, to receive THE CROWN OF LIFE: *That crown* may we who have laboured together with him for the faith of the gospel, being united in a firm belief of the same important truths, and having the same ends in view, the glory of God, and the good of souls; *That crown* may the surviving partner of his joys and cares; *That crown* may his children, for whose welfare, he so oft has prayed; *That crown* may the congregation of his charge, who so frequently heard the word of life from his lips, and for whose good,

* *Elder Eleazer Brown, Pastor of the first church in Stonington who departed this life on Saturday, July 11th, A. D. 1795. On Lord's-day following, his remains were carried to Elder Simeon Brown's meeting-house, where a sermon was preached on the occasion, to a numerous audience: after which, the corpse was decently interred in the house appointed for all living.*

§ *The writer regrets his want of information, respecting the age of this worthy minister; and the time when he was ordained.*

he so long patiently laboured ; *That crown* may you, dear brethren ; *That crown* may we all receive ; and triumph in *redeeming love*, for ever and ever. AMEN.

(CORRESPONDING LETTER.)

The STONINGTON ASSOCIATION, to the Corresponding Associations,
Sendeth greeting :—

Dearly beloved Brethren,

AMID the ravages of death, and the many inconveniences and disappointments incident to our apostate race, we are again favored with the privilege of gladly hailing the return of our anniversary session.

We have great reason to rejoice, that while we consult among ourselves the state of the *Redeemer's* cause, we are not under the necessity of confining our information and happiness to our own sphere. Thro' the medium of letter, we can hold familiar conversation with our brethren at a distance ; we can mingle our joys, and alleviate our sorrows. Sensible of the great advantages resulting from a christian correspondence, we wish by all means for its continuation. Happy, truly happy shall we be, if (while we thus correspond) our hearts should be warmed with the ardent glow of *heavenly* zeal, and united by the ~~endearing~~ bond of evangelical love and benevolence.

We can inform you there is great peace and harmony in our churches, though no remarkable revivals. We wish for greater animation in the cause of the ever blessed *Jesus*. Too often the harps of professors bend the mourning willows, while Babylonian employments allure and engross the mind ! Sentimental knowledge abounds ; but true heart-felt religion is wanting ! Complaints of spiritual *delirium*, are indeed very general throughout united America ! Oh ! Christian friends, what shall be done at this critical, this interesting crisis ? Will you join with us, and drop a mournful tear over Zion's drooping cause ? Oh ! Let us unite our addresses at the throne of grace, for the descent of the *Holy Ghost* ! Let us pray that life from *God* might enter into the witnesses who are slain.

Not only the want of religious ardor among christians, calls for sighs, prayers and tears ; but also the great prevalence of error in our land. How does iniquity triumph over religion ! How is Antichrist set up, and adored, while the name of *Jesus* is branded with calumny, and blasphemous contempt ! Indeed the beautiful city of our *God* is assaulted on every side, and the gospel is trodden down ! But let us not despair. Glorious events are rolling on. This darkness forebodes the dawn of an auspicious day. Let us wait with christian patience, and be in readiness to meet our *God* and *King*. The gospel has hitherto survived the violence of infidelity and the rage opposition ; and can it now be conquered ? *Jesus*, its author, has swept the field ; and *he* must reign, till all *his* enemies are destroyed.

The sophistry and bombast of the deist, united with the intrigues and malice of hell, never can shake, nor subvert the foundation of truth.—The sun and stars must fade away, and the world must sink in death ; but the despised religion of *Jesus*, will live, and shine forever. Let us therefore not only enlist under its banner ; but let us display its unri-

valled beauty, in our daily deportment and conversation. Let us not strive to embellish the gospel, by the aid of human wisdom ; but rather, by this, hold forth its native excellence, independent of every garb.

Let us guard against the bane of popularity, and extravagance. Let us truly take up the cross, and follow the great Captain, who leads the way. Though we may be separated in time, yet let us enjoy, and practise that religion, which will prepare us in this militant state, to walk the golden streets above, and join the blissful theme of everlasting praise.

Signed in behalf of the Association,

JOHN RATHBUN, *Moderator.*
VALENTINE W. RATHBUN, *Clerk.*

