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**Baptists. Connecticut. Stonington Association, 1796.
Minutes ... at Groton, October 18th and 19th, 1796.
New London, 1796.**

BM copy.

MINUTES

OF THE

Stonington Association,

Convened at Groton, October 18th and 19th,
1796.

Tuesday, October 18th.

THE Elders and Brethren, Messengers of the Churches, met at Elder Timothy Wightman's Meeting House, and

1. Brother Stephen Ousford delivered a discourse from 1. John, iii. 2.—“Beloved, now are we the sons of God.”

2. After worship proceeded to business. Chose brother Abel Palmer, Moderator, and brother Asa Spalding, Clerk.

3. Letters from the Churches were read.

N. B. Ministers' names in capitals. Licensed preachers in italics. Those to whose names an * is affixed, were not present. From churches marked thus †, we had no letters. Dashes ——— denote the settled minister.

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.	Added.	Dismissed.	Excluded.	Dead.	Number.
s. Stonington,	—————, * Peleg Randall, Jehish Gallup, Henry Hewitt,		1		4	138
ed. Stonington,	SIMEON BROWN, Asa Spalding, Daniel Main, Abner Miner,			3		209
ed. Stonington,	VALENT. W. RATHBUN, Elnathan Fellows, David Minor, jun.	1	2			43
Groton,	TIMO. WIGHTMAN, (a) Peter Avery,	1			5	178

(a) This venerable minister, departed this life, Nov. 14, 1796, in the 68th year of his age, and 42d of his ministry.

* Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseeth: for the faithful fail from among the children of men.”

“My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.”

David.
Elisha.

		Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Dead.	Numb.
Saybrook,	Benadum Gallup, jun. Samuel Lamb, • ELIPHALET LESTER, Israel Douglass, Benjamin Watrous,					30
Exeter,	_____	10	3		4	239
	Pardon Tillinghast, Joseph Tisdale, Jonathan Dean,					
+ Church formerly of South Kington, now of Richmond.	• BENJAMIN BARBER, (b)					67
+ West Greenwich, 1st. Colchester,	• ELISHA GREEN, • CHRISTOPHER PALMER, Abram Randal, Afa Randal,	2	3		1	49 60
2d. Colchester,	_____			1		57
	John Carty, Alpheus Rogers, James Rogers,					
Richmond,	_____			2	1	24
	Sands Perkins, Gideon Babcock, ABEL PALMER, William Elliott, Thomas Grow.				1	67
Hampton,						
Montville,	REUBEN PALMER, Jehiel Rogers,	1		2	1	50
1st. Chatham,	_____				1	60
	Caleb Tenant, Ebenezer Harris, AMOS WELLS, Isaiah Lyon,					69
2d. Woodstock,						
3d. Chatham,	_____	12	9	7		65
	Squire Goff, Samuel Arnold, ZADOCK DARRGW, Lemuel Darrow, Nehemiah Dodge, Charles Brown, jun. • JOHN RATHBUN,	5		4	3	271
New-London,						
+ 2d. Ashford, + 3d. Ashford,	• David Bolles.					52 32
East-Haddam,	SIMEON DICKINSON, Josiah Hungerford,	1				42



(b) This pious and useful brother in the ministry, died October 19, 1796, in the 331 year of his age.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
Revelation.

Mainfield,

NATHANIEL COLE,

Jesse Mason,
Peter Kindel,

Killingly,

PETER ROGERS,
Jonathan Herrington,

Added	D. Inv.	Exclud.	Read.	Numb
	6	7		82
				62
32	28	24	20	1976

N. B. The last church was received the present session.

4. Read the letters from sister associations. From the Philadelphian we received no intelligence. From the Shaftsbury, we received a letter and minutes, by their messenger, brother Stephen Olmsted. A letter, but no minutes, from the Warren, by their messenger, brother Robert Stanton. From the Danbury, a letter, but no minutes, by their messenger, brother Jonathan Smith. A letter and minutes, but no messenger, from the New-York. These messengers, with other brethren present, were invited to sit in council with us.

5. The circular letter, prepared by Brother Abel Palmer; and the corresponding letter, drawn by brother Amos Wells; were read and referred to a committee.

6. Appointed brother Simeon Dickinson to write the circular letter for next year, and brother Peter Rogers the letter of correspondence.

7. Chose the following brethren our messengers to our sister associations. To the Danbury, brethren Warrons and Arnold. To the Shaftsbury, brethren Pardon Tillinghast and Sands Perkins. To the New-York, brethren Valentine W. Rathbun and Simeon Dickinson. To the Warren, brethren Valentine W. Rathbun and Robert Stanton.

8. The clerk is requested to forward our minutes to the Philadelphian association.

Adjourned until nine o'clock to-morrow morning.

Public worship this evening in various parts of the vicinity.

Wednesday, October 19th.

Met according to adjournment, and

1. Sermon by brother Simeon Dickinson, from 2 Cor. iv. 5 "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

2. The circular and corresponding letters, as revised by our committee, were read and accepted. Voted, that they be printed with our minutes.

3. Agreed to the following supplies:—

2d. COLCHESTER.

Brother Peter Rogers, the first Lord's Day in April.

RICHMOND.

Brother Simeon Brown, fourth in Nov. and fourth in April.

— Zadock Darrow, fourth in May.

— Valentine W. Rathbun, third in July.

— Simeon Dickinson, fourth in August.

— Amos Wells, fourth in September.

Brother Simon Brown, first in December.

— Zaddock Darrow, first in June.

— Peter Rogers, first in July.

4. A query from the church at Hampton—“Whether, a person immersed in water, in the name of the *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, by a man that hath not been ordained by laying on of hands in apostolic order, neither giveth evidence of a dispensation of the gospel being committed unto him, ought to be received as a baptized person?” Voted, to defer this query to our next annual convention.

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

6. Voted to hold our next association at brother Darrow's meeting-house, in New-London, the third Tuesday in October, 1797.

Business being finished, brother Simon Brown concluded by prayer.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Elders and Messengers of the Stonington Association, met at Groton, on the 18th and 19th days of October, 1796.

To the Churches they represent.

BELoved BRETHREN, **B**Y the protection and smiles of heaven, we have been preserved one year more; and have now enjoyed another comfortable anniversary interview. We have had tidings from the several churches; and have received letters from some of our sister associations. We have received some agreeable intelligence from abroad, notwithstanding the enow, raging in many places, who, yet “goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Altho’ “no weapon that is formed against Zion shall prosper;” the enemy is unwearied, in forming schemes, and executing plans, “to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.” In the former ages of the church, the devil was disposed to use the scriptures, to answer his purposes, and to say, “it is written;” he appeared in the character of an angel of light, and so deceived souls, and a flood of errors (consequently) was breached—The air was darkened—The churches were poisoned—The sons of Zion were wounded, and divisions, and subdivisions, took place, to the grief of the sincere followers of the *Lord*.

Sometimes, Satan attempted to set aside one part of the scriptures, and sometimes another; but the time is now come, when he presumes (daringly) to cast contempt on all the sacred volume: and the dividing line will be drawn, (not between the several denominations of christians; but) between christians and infidels, for the *Bible* is the contempt and jest of many: even some leading characters in town and state, treat it with neglect, disregard and contempt.

Will not these things, serve (as a mean) to unite real christians, of all denominations, (however they may disagree in some lesser matters of the law) and influence them to engage in the war, to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints?” The *holy scriptures*—how precious is that sacred volume! As it is the invention of the *Holy Ghost*, it is full of infinite wisdom and eloquence, even the wisdom and eloquence of the great author: it is the counsellor and

This is a word of salvation; for "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." Rom. i. 16. "Receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls." Jam. i. 21. It is the flower and quintessence of soul-saving wisdom; for the sacred scripture, is the infallible rule of faith—the unmoveable ground of hope—the perfect guide of life—the soul's store-house of provisions—the spiritual arsenal of munition—the sacred fuel of devotion, and the everlasting spring of celestial consolation. There, are divine subjects for the contemplative mind. All that is there taught, is truth. All that is there commanded, is goodness. All that is there promised, is happiness. This word, is to the blind, a light—to them that wander, a guide—to them that are in distress, a consolation—to them that doubt, a counsellor, and to the unlearned, a teacher. This is the seed, whereby we are begotten, and the balm, whereby we are refreshed. As the sun is to the world, so is the word to the church: The light of our life, and the life of our souls. This is bread, to feed us—drink, to quench our thirst—fire, to purge us—oil, to soften us—a staff, to uphold us—a treasure, to enrich us—a light to direct us—a guide to conduct us—a weapon to defend us—ragons of wine, and apples, to comfort us: and time would fail us, to tell you of all the advantages arising therefrom; but while we read, we may exult and say,—Oh, the height, and the depth of the sacred scriptures! And while many dispute their authority, let us prize them as we ought, and adore the author.

"Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in" the scriptures, "do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Amen.

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The Stonington Association, to the Corresponding Associations, sendeth christian salutation.

DEAR BRETHREN, IF God is the highest perfection of happiness, and the best possible good to his creatures; it is altogether reasonable that his intelligent creatures, should not only acknowledge him, as the fountain of all good; but as their proper object of adoration and praise: whose high prerogative it is, to claim, and he doth justly deserve, the sincere affections of every human heart; and that, to be exercised upon his adorable perfections, with unabated zeal.

Without real love, and affection to God and his cause—without a true relish for real revealed religion: we cannot be in a sure place of defence, nor in an actual readiness, to oppose the "Man of sin," with his iniquitous errors, that not only threaten us, as near at hand; but are already "come in like a flood." It may (perhaps) be considered a daringly brave opposition to superior numbers; but it is truly a christian enterprise to stem the torrent of infidelity, and immorality, peculiar to the age, in which we live. Although we are

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not directly threatened with the whipping post—with the dungeon—with fire, or with the sword: it is abundantly manifest, that satan has not lost his influence, nor unreconciled sinners the enmity of their hearts. Satan is yet industriously engaged, to destroy (if possible) vital piety, from the earth. And if fire, and the sword, are laid aside, and satan, and his emissaries, cease, thereby, to threaten death, and slaughter, to the faithful witnesses of God; it is not that devils, or wicked men (as such) have any better relish for pure and undefiled religion; but by being suppressed by the over-ruling hand of God in his providence, their engines of destruction are laid aside, and the *beast* is discomfited; but satan not being bound, the wound of the *beast* (tho' deadly) appears presently to be healed, and satan and his accomplices, are assiduously employed, in prosecuting a plan, tho' widely different, yet, in its consequences, equal with the sword, to be dreaded: for although the witnesses cease to bleed on the scaffold, and are not consumed in the flames, yet instead of the flames, and the scaffold, are not fraud, and flatteries introduced; and thereby, a plan, more deeply laid, to seduce, and destroy mankind: in which satan and sinners, too often succeed and triumph; having by the artful practice of fraud, and sawning flatteries, carried captive, the simple, while the unguarded heart, was not prepared for so potent a foe, and so secret, but powerful an attack. Our religious rights, and privileges, are inexpressibly good and great; and to abuse those privileges, to licentiousness, by listening and giving heed, to the alluring charms of an enemy, is the height of folly, and madness: and yet, we have reason to fear, that this is too often the case! While the flattering world, presents the sensual bait, satan urges to embrace it, and the treacherous heart longs to grasp the imaginary good:

Which when embrac'd,

Affords no real joy;

But wailing! Samson like,

The loss of eyes and strength:

and then, alas, what bondage—what slavery and servitude, follows! Indeed, what more to be dreaded, or what, more fatal, to the professors of christianity, than to be led astray, by this flood of fraud, and flatteries; and instead of being detached from the world, are shamefully conformed to the vain fashions, and customs thereof, and so are in a prepared readiness, to imbibe the prevailing errors of the age. Beloved Brethren, we have need of christian fortitude; yea, a soul inspired with sacred zeal, even to attempt (as instruments) to correct the many errors of the people, inclined to forsake the ways of God and religion, and to run with mad career in the road to perdition. And if we would contest the point with the enemy, and cover him with deserved shame, we must (according to the direction of the apostle) put on the whole armour of God," &c. Eph. vi. 10, 18. And that the evil weeds of infidelity, and other prevailing errors, may be rooted out, we consider it necessary, dear Brethren, that we exert ourselves, in the fear of the Lord, trusting alone in God; and that we do our utmost endeavour, by the sacred influence of scripture and enlightened reason, to silence gainsayers; which is not effected by rage

and violence—not by fraud and falshood—not by slander and unbecoming language—nor yet, by calling in the power of the civil magistrate, and the sword to assist us: *Jesus* hath not allowed his followers, such weapons as these; but those of a far different kind, “the sword of the *Spirit*, which is the word of *God* ;” and which, if used with skill, and wielded with christian valor (exercising love to *God*, and love to man.) will not fail of execution; but will pull down the strong holds of satan, and “quench the fiery darts of the wicked.” Let us then, while we “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,” see that we possess the charming grace of charity, which “never faileth:” And although men and devils, or all the powers of darkness, do their worst; the religion of *Jesus* will live: Yea, while the *Lord* omnipotent reigneth, *his* cause will be supported: And blessed be *God*, dear Brethren, we believe there are men and societies, in this age, made and formed, for the glorious purpose of defending and supporting (instrumentally) the christian religion; may everlasting success attend their zeal: and may we, by the sacred influence of the *Holy Spirit*, be enabled to live our religion, and to triumph over our foes on earth: and may we finally obtain a compleat victory over ALL our enemies, and reign forever, with the captain of our salvation, in the world of bliss and glory. Amen.

Signed in behalf of the Association,

ABEL PALMER, Moderator.
ASA SPALDING, Clerk.

New-London :—Printed by S. GREEN.

