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Baptists . Connecticut . Stonington Association, 1812.

Minutes . . . at Groton, October 20th & 21st, 1812.

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MINUTES.

OF THE

Stonington Baptist Association,

HELD AT GROTON,

OCTOBER 20th, & 21st, 1812.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1812.

1 THE Elders and Messengers being assembled at 10 o'clock,
A. M. Brother Joseph Cornell preached the introductory Ser-
mon from Heb. XIII. I.

2. Chose brother Samuel West, Moderator, and brother Nehemiah Dodge, Clerk.

3. After prayer, proceeded to read the letters from the Churches, and took the following account of the number added, dismissed, excluded, died, and the present number in each Church.

N. B. The names of ordained Ministers are in Small Capitals ; those to which a † is affixed were not present ; from Churches marked thus (*) we received no letters ; vacant Churches distinguished by a dash—

Churches.	Messengers.	ad.	dis.	ex.	dd.	No.
1. N. Stonington,	PELEG RANDAL,	1	2	2	1	181
	Elias S. Palmer,					
	Nathan Chapman.					
2. N. Stonington,	SIMON BROWN,	6	0	2	1	279
	JEDEDIAH RANDAL,					
	ASHER MINER,					
	John Stanton,					
	Thomas Wells,					
Groton,	Josiah Brown,					
	John Spalding.					
	JOHN G. WIGHTMAN,	24	0	0	0	232
	Benadam Gallop,					
	Samuel Lamb,					
Saybrook,	Sands Fish,					
	John Daboll,					
	Jonathan Miner.					
	ELIPHALET LESTER, †	0	1	0	2	92
Exeter,	WILLIAM WITTER,					
	Michael Spencer,					
	Stephen Witter,					
W. Greenwich,	GERSHAM PALMER,	6	0	3	3	252
	Nathan Tift,					
	John Steadman.					
W. Greenwich,	Joseph Tillinghast,	0	1	1	3	116
	Stafford Green.					

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	<i>ad.</i>	<i>dis.</i>	<i>ex.</i>	<i>ddl.</i>	<i>No.</i>
1. Colchester,	{ WILLIAM PALMER, Asa Randal, James Lamb.	6	2	0	2	75
Richmond,	PHINEHAS PALMER. †					
2. Colchester,	{ Samuel Morgan, Jehiel Woodworth.	0	1	6	1	72
Hampton,	{ Stephen Webb, Frederick Curtis, Moses Edmonds, Daniel Fitch.	0	0	2	2	82
Montville,	{ REUBEN PALMER, Samuel Bolles, Calvin Bolles.	1	2	5	1	157
Chatham and Haddam,	{ SOLOMON WHEAT, † Constant Welch, George Gates.	5	0	1	0	111
Waterford,	{ ZADDOCK DARROW, FRANCIS DARROW, Solomon Rogers.	10	1	1	3	156
East-Haddam,	{ SIMEON DICKENSON, † Josiah Hungerford,	0	0	0	1	44
Plainfield,	NATHANIEL COLE. †					
S. Kingston,	{ ENOCH STEADMAN, Richard W. Hazard.	11	1	0	1	53
Stonington Bor.	{ ELIHU CHEESBROUGH, Elnathan Fellows, Joseph Palmer, Noah Beebe.	4	0	0	0	60
New-London,	{ SAMUEL WEST, Pardon Lewis.	0	1	5	2	82
Lebanon,	{ NEHEMIAH DODGE, John Wayward, Nathan Clark.	0	2	0	0	80
Mansfield,	{ JONATHAN GOODWIN, William Bennet, Asa Bennet, Orra Martin.	6	1	0	1	75
2. Saybrook,	{ OLIVER WILLSON, JOHN WATERHOUSE, William Carter, Gilbert Avery.	5	0	1	0	66
3. Colchester,	{ John Bigelow, Jeremiah Briggs.	0	0	0	0	24

Total, | 85 | 19 | 28 | 24 | 2294

4. Received from Sister Associations, as follows, viz.

		<i>Messengers.</i>
From Warren,	Letter and Minutes.	Joseph Cornel.
Danbury,	Letter and Minutes.	Rufus Babcock.
Groton Union } Conference, }	Letter and Minutes.	{ Roswell Burrows, & Simeon Smith.
Rensselaerville,	Letter and Minutes.	—— —
Sturbridge,	Letter and Minutes.	—— —
Otsego,	—— Minutes.	—— —
New-York,	Letter and Minutes.	John Lamb.

5. Voted, to open a correspondence with Westfield Association by Letter and Messengers when convenient.

6. Appointed brethren Nehemiah Dodge, John G. Wightman, and Reuben Palmer, to be a committee to examine the Circular and Corresponding Letters.

7. Voted, that the above committee, be a committee to examine the Constitution of this Association, and make report whether it stand in need of any alteration or not.

8. Voted, to adjourn until to-morrow at 9 o'clock, A. M.

WEDNESDAY, OCT 21.

Met according to adjournment.

Prayer by Elder Rufus Babcock.

9. Read the Circular letter prepared by brother Goodwin, and the Corresponding letter by brother Witter, and accepted them.

10. Heard the report of the committee relative to the constitution of this Association, which was, that it wanted no alteration, and voted that the constitution be printed and annexed to the minutes this year.

11. Appointed Messengers to Sister Associations next year.

<i>To the</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>
Warren,	Nehemiah Dodge.
Danbury,	Oliver Willson.
Groton Conference,	Peleg Randal.
Sturbridge,	Asa Bennet and Stephen Webb.
Shaftsbury,	Asa Randal.
New-York,	Oliver Willson.

Appointed brother Oliver Willson to forward our minutes to Philadelphia and Warwick Associations ; brother Jedediah Randal and Elihu Cheesbrough to forward our minutes to the Otsego and Rensselaerville ; brother Oliver Willson to forward our minutes to the Leyden ; brother Nehemiah Dodge to the Boston ; brother Jedediah Randal to the Madison ; and brother John G. Wightman to the Westfield.

12. Appointed brother Oliver Willson to write the Circular letter, and brother John G. Wightman the Corresponding letter for next year.

13. Appointed Elder John Sterry to superintend the printing of our minutes.

14. Voted, that notice be taken of the death, of Elder Benjamin Wait, of South Kingston, in our minutes.

15. Voted, to hold our next Association with the first Church in Saybrook, on the 3d Tuesday in Oct. 1813, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

16. Voted, that brother Nehemiah Dodge preach the introductory Sermon next year, and in failure brother John G. Wightman.

17. Voted, that it be recommended to the Churches of this Association, to introduce a quarterly prayer meeting, on account of the war; to begin on the second Tuesday in January next, at 2 o'clock, P. M. and to be attended quarterly, until we may be blessed with National peace.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Ministers and Messengers of the Stonington Baptist Association, to the several Churches they represent, send Christian Salutation.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

THROUGH the goodness of God we have enjoyed another anniversary, in which we have seen many who are dear to us, because we trust they are the purchase of the Redeemer. Permit us to solicit your attention to the nature, effect and blessedness of christian humility. No one does honor to the Christian Religion, but he that is of an humble heart; nor does any grace more adorn the Christian profession, than that of humility, without this, all other graces are wanting, and the professor, however learned and great in the eyes of the world, appears but a hypocrite in the sight of God; while the meek and quiet spirit, is, in his sight of great price.

A full discussion of the subject, will not be expected in the compass of a short letter; but we hope to notice some things which are of the most importance.

1st. Humility may be termed lowliness of mind, it arises from a deep sense of one's own unworthiness, when compared with God; and his littleness when compared with some of his fellow men; his depravity, frailty, inability, and entire dependence upon God for every good. It may also be denominated contentment, thankfulness and charity, all which are included in this excellent spirit. Such a sense of God and of ourselves, must be considered the effect of the holy spirit operating upon the man, and bowing the soul at Emanuel's feet.

2d. The *effects* of humility may be seen in the exercise of every christian grace. The humble soul loves God as the supreme good. As love always places the subject at the feet of the object, so he, far from finding fault with the character, laws and government of God, sits down under the administration of heaven, and wishes to be first in obeying his commands. He that loves God loves his creatures, and especially those who bear most of his image; he is pleased with the plan of salvation, as revealed in the gospel; that doctrine which exalts God and abases man, is that to which his soul subscribes.

The humble man exercises faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and embraces all the precious promises of the gospel. He mourns on the account of sin, and hates even the appearance of evil; he hopes in the mercy of God, and patiently waits for his salvation. Far from contending by the way who shall be the greatest, or seeking to be called of men Rabbi, he views his own unworthiness, and feels himself to be less than the least of all saints. If marks of distinction are conferred upon him, and honorary titles given him, the language of his heart is, I am not worthy, because I have sinned against God. Another effect of humility is that it greatly disposes to peace in the Church.

Again the humble man strives to keep the unity of the spirit, in the bonds of peace; and had much rather bear a great burthen himself, than to see the prosperity of the Church hindered: he looks not on his own things alone; but also on the things of others. If called to the ministry, humility disposes him to strive to be an ensample to the flock, and not a lord over God's heritage. He will make it his daily study, and constant prayer, how he shall best glorify God, and promote the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. Finally it disposes the brethren to be content with their lot in the Church, and not to stretch themselves beyond their measure; nor to strive about words to no profit; but to the subverting of the hearers. Hating the garment spotted by the flesh, they will strive to keep themselves in the love of God, having compassion on some, making a difference. And others saving with fear, pulling them out of the fire, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

3d. The *blessings* of humility are many and great.

1st. It evidences the subject of it to be a child of God, one with whom God dwells. Isaiah 57. 15. For thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite, and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

2d. It renders the subject *Christ like*. He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, humbled himself and became obedient, even unto the death of the cross; yet was owned of God the Father, who said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. What greater blessing than to be made like unto the Son of God?

3d. It places the subject, where he may plead all the precious promises of the gospel. Is he humble? Then he is poor in spirit, and an heir of a kingdom, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Is he poor in spirit? Then he is cast down and mourns. When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, there is lifting up, and he shall save the humble person. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. Does he mourn for sin, and is he humbled on the account of it? Then he is meek, and longs for purity of heart, hungers and thirsts after righteousness; such our Lord hath said shall be filled. Is he in the exercise of humility? Then he will live a Godly life, and must meet with opposition; for all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, but he is not without a promise. Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake, rejoice ye and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

4th. Humility places the subject out of the reach of all his enemies, being humbled out of self, he places all his dependence on God, in whom is his treasure, his hope and his confidence. Hence he becomes like mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Neither all the devils in hell, nor all the temptations of the world can hurt that man, that is humble and depending on Christ.

5th And lastly, humility renders the soul triumphant in a departing hour. The dying saint meets the king of terrors; not like the proud

unrelenting sinner, who shudders at the even thought of death ; bidding a reluctant and eternal farewell, to all his joys ; and plunging into eternity to meet his awful doom, leaving his all behind. But he after the example of those holy men that have gone before him with unshaken confidence, can say though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better : For we know that if our earthly nouse of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. With raptures of joy he exclaims, O death where is thy sting ? O grave where is thy victory ? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ; in as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.



Corresponding Letter.

The Ministers and Messengers of the Stonington Baptist Association, to the different Associations with whom they correspond, send Christian Salutation.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

THROUGH the goodness of God we have been favored with another anniversary Session ; the opportunity has afforded us much comfort ; being convinced by a heartfelt experience that Christian love and fellowship are enjoyed amongst us. We feel new springs of gratitude arising to God for the season we have enjoyed and joyfully improve this opportunity of addressing you by letter. Our spirits have been refreshed by receiving information from you by your messengers and minutes, and we feel it an indispensable duty of ours to give you information from us in return.

Dear Brethren, we remember the words of the beloved disciple, " little children love one another," and we rejoice that there is a tie that binds Christians together, which is strong as death. It must be true, for such is the will of God concerning us, who hath shed abroad his love in our hearts by his spirit, and we can truly say with David, " Thy favor is life, and thy loving kindness is better than life itself." The cause of this indissoluble tie, we freely confess must be the love of God, which was commensurate with his existence. A love which is like a sea without bottom or shore. From this sprang the appointment of his beloved Son from eternity, to suffer the ignominious death of the cross, to redeem his bride, which he betrothed to himself, and which was given to him by his father, in the covenant of redemption. This love, influenced the Lord Jesus, to take upon himself the heavy load of suffering, that he might magnify the law and make it honorable, prepare a garment for his bride, and be the complete salvation for every one of his people, which was the joy set before him.—And we rejoice in God, and would give thanks at the remembrance of his condescending love, that in the fulness of time he sent forth his Son, to be made sin for

us, by his sufferings, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—That he hath sent his spirit to convince us of the depravity of our hearts, the impotency of our nature, and the impossibility of our being saved any other way than thro' the Lord Jesus Christ, and to apply to us the blood of the everlasting covenant, to cleanse us from our sins, and prepare us for a seat at the right hand of God in Heaven.

Beloved, since God has so loved us, we have abundant reason to love him, and though clouds and darkness are round about his throne, and his government incomprehensible to us, yet he is the delight of our souls. A most permanent foundation is therefore laid for love amongst the children of God, since we possess a vital union with the divine character, have fellowship with the father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and of course one with another. And as God has called us into a sacred nearness and union with himself, the nearer we live to him, the stronger and livelier will be our fellowship and love to each other, and the greater desire we shall have of strengthening each other's hands in Christ. No one of the servants of the Lord Jesus ever expatiated more largely upon love to God and one to another, than his servant John the Apostle, and we may safely conclude, no one never lived nearer to him. This is what distinguishes the body of Christians from all other societies, which have ever been formed, destitute of divine love and union. This convinces the world, that we have been with Jesus, and that we are looking forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. This enables us to bear with christian fortitude and resignation, all the trials our heavenly father is pleased to lay upon us; and to put an unreserved trust and confidence in him as the best of all beings, and be constantly and conscientiously engaged in the work assigned us in this militant state.

Dear Brethren, when we suffer our contemplation to run upon the manifestations of the divine character and goodness, we are lost in wonder! We can say O the length, breadth, and depth of the love of God! Language is too feeble to express our feelings on this all important subject! Blessed be God! we can experience that, the worth of which, we can never communicate, nor comprehend.

We wish a continuance of the correspondence which has been commenced between us, being happily convinced that it is calculated to cultivate a delightful remembrance in our minds of you. Though we never expect to see you all this side of eternity, yet we are ever rejoiced, when we can hear how it is with you, believing we have felt a spirit to rejoice at the peace and prosperity of Zion at large, and to weep for her calamity. We desire ever to be engaged with you in the glorious work, of promoting the cause and interest of the Redeemer's kingdom in this world, until the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements melt with present heat, when the final consummation of all things shall take place. We rejoice that the time is coming, when the bride of Christ will be complete, when he will take her home to himself, in heaven, where we shall all be together and exult in the praise of the most high God, and reign with him for ever and ever.

The Sentiments and Plan

OF THE STONINGTON ASSOCIATION.

SENTIMENTS.

1. **WE** have learned by experience, that a combination of churches is both prudent and useful, yea, the word of God informs us, that, "Two are better than one, and a threefold cord is not quickly broken." The numerous errors that are propagated and prevailing in our land, at this day, afford a striking proof that such a combination is expedient, as thereby we may more effectually maintain the order and faith once delivered to the saints,—our acquaintance enlarged,—our union increased, while we mutually consult each other's welfare, and the prosperity of our brethren in general.

1. We utterly disclaim all clerical power, and superiority over the churches; acknowledging the independency and power of each particular church.

2. We conceive it necessary that an association consist of men expert in the laws of their God—knowing and judicious in the scriptures; that thereby help may be administered to the enquiring mind.

PLAN.

1. The association to consist only of messengers chosen and sent by the churches. Their expences to be borne by the churches which send them.

2. The churches by their messengers send letters addressed to the association. In the letters the names of the messengers are mentioned, also, the state of the churches—their increase—their diminution, by death, dismission to other churches; or excommunication; and the present number of members.

3. Churches are to be received into the association by a written petition; shewing their desire to be admitted—their faith—order—and willingness to conform to the rules of the association. When the necessary steps are taken, and suffrage being given in favor of the petition, the moderator, in token of fellowship, gives the messengers his right hand.

4. The association to convene annually at such time and place as they shall appoint: and first, a sermon to be preached; after which, a moderator and clerk chosen—the letters from the churches are read—letters, and minutes to be read (if any) from the associations, with whom we have opened a correspondence—letters prepared, and messengers appointed to the above-mentioned associations—ministers are appointed to supply destitute churches occasionally—all necessary business attended to, and minutes thereof made—the place appointed for our next annual convention, and (if expedient) appoint one to preach the next association sermon—a circular letter to the churches prepared, and affixed to our minutes—and a collection of monies to be made for defraying the charges of printing the minutes, and other necessary expences of the association.

5. All matters to be determined in this association by the suffrage of the messengers. All that speak are to address the moderator, who is to take care that none be interrupted when speaking, and that no other indecorum take place.

6. Should any church or churches, belonging to this association, neglect attending our annual convention, year after year, the association view themselves obligated to enquire after the cause of such neglect, and act accordingly.

7. The faith and order of this association, are expressed in a confession put forth by our fraternity, (in Great-Britain) A. D. 1689. Some of the principles in said confession are, the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity—the inability of man to recover himself—effectual calling by sovereign grace—justification by imputed righteousness—immersion for baptism, and that on profession of faith and repentance—and reception into churches upon evidence of sound conversion.