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Baptists . Connecticut . Stonington Association, 1815.
Minutes . . . Held with the First Baptist Church in
Colchester (Connecticut) October 15th and 16th,
1816.

n.p., [1815]. 8 pp.

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MINUTES

OF THE

STONINGTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD WITH THE

*First Baptist Church in COLCHESTER (Connecticut) Oc-
tober 15th and 16th, 1816.*

MINUTES, &c.

A. M. 10 o'CLOCK, TUESDAY, OCT. 15-

1. **T**HE Elders and Brethren being assembled, brother Simeon Dickenson preached the introductory sermon, from Mat. 24. 14. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, and then shall the end come.*

2. Chose brother Samuel West, Moderator, and brother Daniel Putnam, Clerk.

3. Adjourned to meet at 10 o'clock.

4. Met according to adjournment.

5. Prayer by the Moderator.

6. 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 the (*) is affixed, were not present; from the churches marked thus (†) we had no information; vacant churches are distinguished by a dash (—); licentiates are in *italics*.

Churches.	Messengers.	bapt	et	dis	ex	dd	total.
1st. N. Stonington,	JONATHAN MINER, Deac. Samuel Peabody. Elias S. Palmer, Nathan Chapman, jun.	3		1	1		190
2d N. Stonington,	*ASHER MINER, Matthew Brown,	4	1	4	3	6	337
Groton,	JOHN G. WHITMAN, Samuel Lamb, James Woodmansee, Charles A. Turner.				3		246
1st Saybrook,	SAMUEL WEST, Reynold Webb, David Warner, Stephen Utter.	11	1		3		96

Churches.	Messengers.	baptized	dis	ex	dd	total.
Exeter,	GERSHUM PALMER, Rufus Josin, Robert Brown, Moses Barber.	200	2	1	7	588
1st Richmond,† W. Greenwich,	—————, STAFFORD GREEN, Dea. Pardon Tillinghast Samuel Peckham, Nathaniel Sheffield.	4	1		4	87 116
1st Colchester,	WILLIAM PALMER, Dea. Asa Randal, Dea. Thomas Smith, Dea. Jabez Hough, jun.		6	1	1	113
2d Richmond,	EPHRAIM SAWYER, Lawton Gardner .	10	1	3		66
2d Colchester,	WILLIAM WITTER, Dea. Alpheus Rogers, Dea. Eliphalet Hillyard, Abel Gates.	3	1	3	2	130
Hampton,	—————, John Payne, Dea. Gurdon Robinson, Stephen Webb.	2	1	2	2	98
Montville,	REUBEN PALMER, Reuben Palmer, jun. Calvin Bolles.	6	3	1	2	142
Chatham & Haddam,	—————, Dea. Constant Welch, Simon Shaylor, Samuel Arnold, George Gates.	6	1		2	93
Waterford,	*ZADOCK DARROW, FRANCIS DARROW, Jason Beckwith, jun. Laton Beckwith,	8	1	2		189
E. Haddam,	SIMEON DICKINSON, Oliver Atwood.	1			2	54
Plainfield,	NATHANIEL COLE, Alexander Dorrance, James Henry, John Stranahan,	5				76
S. Kingston,†	*ENOCH STEADMAN,					101
Stonington Borough,	*ELIHU CHEEBROUGH,				2	72
N. London,	NEHEMIAH DODGE, Samuel Chapel.			2		69
Lebanon,	DANIEL PUTNAM, Elisha Hutchinson, John Dewey.	14	1	1	2	93

Churches.	Messengers.	bapti	let	dis	ex	da	total.
Mansfield,	JONATHAN GOODWIN, Dea. William Bennet, Asa Bennet.	36	1	1	1	1	129
2d Saybrook,	—————, Calvin Williams, Sala Post, George Harrington.	1	1	1	1	1	63
3d Colchester,	—————, Daniel Williams, Jeremiah Bridges, John Bigalow.		1	1	1		21
Sterling & Coventry,	AMOS WELLS. Caleb Waterman, Joshua Webb.	2				3	46
Total,		316	6,27	19	42	3	215

7. Received communications from Corresponding Associations—

Associations.	Messengers.	Let.	Min.
Warren,	Rev. David Curtis,	Letter.	Minutes.
Hartford,	Elisha Cushman, Eliada Blakesly, William Bently,	do.	do.
G. U. Conference	Asa Wilcox, G. F. Davis,	do.	do.
Rensselaerville,	—————,	do.	do.
Sturbridge,	James Grow,	do.	do.
Otsego,	—————,	do.	do.
New-York,	—————,	do.	do.
Westfield,	—————,	do.	do.
Boston,	—————,		
Shaftsbury,	—————,		

8. Appointed Elders West, Goodwin, and Whitman, with the authors, to examine the Circular and Corresponding Letters.

9. Appointed Elders West, Wells, Whitman, Goodwin and Putman, to unite and consult with a committee from the Groton Union Conference, on the expediency and manner of dividing the two Associations, for mutual convenience.—Wilcox, Burrows, Davis, and Smith, Committee from the G. U. Conference.

10. Adjourned to meet at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. Preaching in the evening by brother Sawyer.

WEDNESDAY, 9 o'clock A. M.

11. Met according to adjournment. Prayer by Rev. James Grow.

12. Circular Letter prepared by brother Putnam, and Corresponding Letter prepared by brother West, read and accepted.

13. The Committee referred to in the 9th article, jointly report,—That we think it advisable, that there should be an union of the two bodies, and that a division of the whole take place, by the river

Thames, beginning at its mouth, and thence northerly, as the river runs, following the Quinebaug branch as far up as any of our churches are situated.

Said Committee further recommend, that should the above report be accepted by the Association, that the representatives of the churches composing the Western body, meet next year on the usual time of the former meeting of the Stonington Association, at such place as they appoint ; and that the churches of the Stonington Association, which are situated in the Eastern body, meet by their messengers with the Groton Union Conference, at their next meeting, in order that if said Conference agree in the above report, that they may be ready to unite and transact business. Accepted by the Association, and the Churches are requested to notice this article in particular.

14. Appointed Messengers to Corresponding Associations.

To the Warren—Elder Jonathan Goodwin, and Daniel Putnam, Hartford, Elder J. G. Whitman, and J. Goodwin.

Groton U. Conference, Reuben Palmer, jun. Elder Daniel Putnam, and brother Asa Bennet.

Sturbridge, Elder Putnam, and brother J. Payne.

Shaftsbury, Dea. John Newton, forward minutes.

New-York, Elder Dodge, and brother Martin.

Philadelphia, Elder Dodge, forward minutes.

Warwick, do. do. do.

Leyden, do. do. do.

Rensselaerville, Reuben Palmer, jun. do. do.

Otsego, do. do. do.

Westfield, Elder J. Goodwin, and J. G. Whitman.

15. Appointed Elder Jonathan Goodwin, to write the Circular Letter, and Nehemiah Dodge, the Corresponding Letter for the next year.

16. Appointed our next meeting with the Baptist Church in Waterford, on the 3d Tuesday of October, 1817, at 10 o'clock A. M.

17. Appointed Elder Nathaniel Cole, to preach the introductory Sermon, and Elder Amos Wells, in case of failure.

18. Appointed Elder Daniel Putnam to superintend the printing of the minutes, and distribute them.

19. Received communications from the General Board for Foreign Missions in America, through the medium of our Corresponding Secretary Rev. Jonathan Goodwin.

20. Received money for Foreign Missions, viz.

Church at Waterford,	\$ 7.55	Calvin Williams,	\$ 2.00
2d Church N. Stonington,	3.03	Ephraim Sawyer,	50
1st Church Saybrook,	5.00	Collection after Sermon,	} 7.09
2d Church Colchester,	3.50	delivered by Rev. Elihu	
James Davis,	10.00	Cushman, Hartford,	} \$ 39.32
		Total,	

CIRCULAR LETTER.

*The Stonington Baptist Association, to the Churches which it represents,
sendeth Christian salutation.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

CHRI^ST is not divided ; but professed christians are. A doleful cry is heard in christendom about what is termed close communion, like Rachel mourning for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not. It is truly a desirable thing that the followers of the Lamb should eat and drink together around the Lord's table. The great and important question is, What is the reason all christians cannot commune together, and together partake of the emblems of Christ's body and blood ? If we admit only one idea, this is accomplished at once : that is, that nothing is requisite to communion, but conversion of soul to God. That something more is requisite, is acknowledged by almost all denominations of professed christians. While all admit that christianity is necessary, precisely what, and how much more is necessary, has been, and still is a subject of controversy. If all christians can find what and how much is required, and all fall in with that practice, they will be united.

We humbly conceive, brethren, that the following things are prerequisites to communion :—

1. That we are really converted to God in heart and life. Without this we have no communion nor fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, nor one with another. Without this we cannot discern the Lord's body and are in danger of eating and drinking damnation to ourselves. To partake of the communion without christianity, is nothing less than mockery, which will make our bands strong.

2. That such converted believing persons be baptized. This is evident from a number of considerations. John the Baptist preached, that the people should repent and believe on Him that was to come ; and when they gave evidence of this, he baptized them in Jordan and other places where there was much water. After Jesus called and sent forth the apostles and preachers, they baptized ; and this all took place before the ordinance of the Lord's supper was instituted. After the institution of the sacrament, our blessed Lord commanded his apostles to go and teach all nations, baptizing them. The first baptizing season we have on record, is in the 2d chapter of Acts, where it is said that they that gladly received the word were baptized, and the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls. Being baptized and added, they continued steadfast in the apostle's doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread and prayers. And wherever we have any account of baptizings, it was immediately on their becoming believers, and no account of their communing is given previous to baptism ; but baptism is always mentioned previous to communion.

If indeed we admit that baptism is not necessary to communion, we easily infer, that a person may become a member of a church without it, and exercise the different offices in the church, and preach the gospel, and administer the ordinances without it ; and thus baptism may be attended to or not, and eventually may be in reality a nonessential thing, and ruled out of the church.

3d. It is also requisite that such believing baptized persons should become members of a gospel church. Baptism is considered expressive of many things, and particularly designed for believers, thereby to be inducted into some visible church. Not to immediately become a member of a church on baptism, one design of the ordinance, is lost. It is said, that the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls. Now this adding could not be to the Lord, nor the mystical church ; because when they gladly received the word, before baptism, they were added in this point of view ; but they were added by baptism to the visible church, and become members in particular, of the church. Thus the apostle says, we are baptized into Jesus Christ, that is, into his visible body. Unless a person is a member of a church, he is not liable to be called to an account by the church for either his faith or practice. And to receive members to communion, that the church have no right to discipline, can neither be reason nor gospel. It is true, that we have no particular account that the Eunuch, Lydia and her household became members of any particular churches ; but this is not certain that it was not so. We have no account of the baptism of some of the churches, but we have no reason to dispute it. It is very natural and very easy to conclude that the apostles had authority to receive members into churches, on baptism, be the distance what it might. And if *this* was not their practice, suppose the Eunuch afterward should find a church, and wish to commune with them, it is not at all probable he would be admitted, except he first became a member. So *that* would be no argument against the position. If we can be admitted to communion without churchmembership, we shall soon find that believers have done joining the church, for they can enjoy all the privileges of a church member without it. The discipline is gone, and the church will be without visibility.

In a word, it is requisite that a person should believe, be baptized, and join some gospel church, and live according to the rules of the gospel, that he should become a subject of communion.

Doubtless some, who admit these rules in general, think that to them there ought to be some exceptions. If the above stated rules be gospelwise, they are to be adhered to, and to them there cannot be any exceptions. Exceptions to plain scripture truths, are inadmissible. Although the gospel is *easy*, and Christ's yoke is *easy*, and his burden *light*, yet by no means admits of indulgencies.

Perhaps some will say our pedobaptist brethren have embraced a baptism which satisfies their minds, and if they are satisfied in it,

and are truly sincere in that way, why should we be dissatisfied with it, and consequently refuse communion with them ?

There is quite an impropriety in fellowshipping others in that in which we cannot fellowship ourselves. The question is not whether their baptism answers their minds, and they are satisfied with it, but whether it answers the mind of the Lord, and the requirements of his infallible word. Because they are satisfied with it, it does not assure us that they have the mind of the Lord ? We have nothing but God's word to decide this point, and that admits of no such thing as sprinkling for baptism. Our minds being satisfied, and we being sincere in any practice, does not apologize for it, being an error ; if it does, it is no matter what we believe, or practice, if we are sincere, and satisfied, and others may fall under our censure for not fellowshipping us. The worshippers of Mahomet, of Juggernaut, and the papal images, feel satisfied, and doubtless are sincere ; but we have no reason to believe that they are accepted of God in their service.

Brethren, if there appears to be reason, gospel, and scripture in the above statements, we exhort you to firmness in them. You may exercise all the forbearance required, and not deviate from truth ; at the same time you may be firm, and stand fast in the faith, and yet not be bigoted. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Let the spirit of meekness and love ever mark your characters. And now unto God and the word of his grace, we commend you, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.



CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The Stonington Baptist Association, convened at Colchester, October 15th and 16th, 1816—To all the Associations with whom we correspond,—Greeting.

BELoved IN THE LORD,

ALTHO errors abound, and evil workers are multiplied, and the hearts of many are beguiled ; yet we believe that the foundation of God standeth sure. Having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are *his*—*His by choice*, and being *chosen*, he hath redeemed *them* by his own blood. The good Shepherd gave his life for *his* sheep ; therefore we believe that all those whom the Father hath chosen and given to the Son, and for whom the Son hath *died*, shall come unto him, and that he will raise them *all* up at the last day, and that they shall be glorified together with him who loved them and gave himself for them. With this testimony of our Fa-

ther, we assure you, brethren, that we feel undismayed at all the assaults of earth and hell ; but with patience we desire to be running the race which is set before us, ever looking to Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith—And unto whom be glory with the Father, the Holy Ghost, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Our meeting has been harmonious and comforting ; while our souls have been made to rejoice in God our Saviour. We solicit a continuance of your correspondence, and subscribe ourselves your's, in the Lord.

SAMUEL WEST, Moderator.
DANIEL PUTNAM, Clerk.

N. B. We mourn the loss of brother SIMON BROWN, a father in the church, a beloved brother, and labourer in the gospel kingdom. He was a member of the 2d Baptist Church in North-Stoughton. *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.*