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Baptists. Massachusetts. Sturbridge Association, 1803.

Minutes ... in Ashford, September ... 1803.

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MINUTES

OF THE

STURBRIDGE

ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT THE

STURBRIDGE SOCIETY OF THE FIRST Baptist Church

September 28 and 29,

1803.

NORWICH:

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1803.

MINUTES, &c.

WEDNESDAY Sept. 28.

At two o'clock, brother Elijah Montague preached an introductory sermon from Mark xii. 29. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

2. Chose brother Elijah Codino moderator; and Zenas L. Leonard clerk.

3. Read the letters from the Churches and took the following account.

N. B. The names of ordained Ministers are in small capitals. Ministers with this mark * not present. Vacant Churches distinguished by a dash.

Churches. Ministers & Messengers.

Churches.	Ministers & Messengers.	Add.	Dit.	Excl.	Dead.	Number
Sutton.	SAMUEL WATERS Moses Putnam James M'allen Jonah Golden.	2	1	2	3	50
Leicester.	*PETER ROGERS.	3	0	0	1	50
Charlton.	Daniel Bacon Daniel Streeter Daniel Bacon jr. David Bates.	1	0	1	1	91
N. Woodstock.	ROBERT STANTON Samuel Crawford David Woward Joel Gage.	1	0	0	2	92
S. Brimfield.	ELIJAH CODINO Elijah Wales John Munger David Fay.	1	6	0	2	136
Belchertown.	SAMUEL BIGELOW JEREMIAH HASKEL Kuben Barton.	1	0	0	0	39
Sturbridge.	ZENAS L. LEONARD Henry Fisk Samuel Maser David Fisk	0	1	1	1	98

Churches. Ministers & Messengers.

		Add.	Diff.	Excl.	Deat.	Num.
	Joshua Fisk.					
3. Ashford.	DANIEL BOLTON	20	•	•	•	25
	Isiah Bugbee					
	Ephraim Howard					
	Jonathan Carpenter.					
Shutesbury.	JOSEPH SALLEGE	0	1	2	0	116
	Lyscom Brigham					
	Luther Spear.					
Wilbraham.	• SETH CLARK	•	•	•	•	228
	Elisha Cleaveland.					
2. Ashford.	JOHN RATHBUN	2	0	0	0	55
	Abner Richmond					
	Roswell Brown					
	Stephen Chapman.					
Hardwick.	EBENEZER BURTT	•	•	•	•	41
	Seth Pierce					
	John Raymond					
	Henry Higgens.					
Thompson.	PARSON CROSBY	7	•	•	2	107
	Thomas Day					
	Silas Smith					
	Benjamin Fowles.					
		Total.	18	9	6	1169

*The three last Churches were added this session.

4. With joy, we received brother V. W. Rathbun a messenger from the Warren Association; brother Montague from the Leyden; and brethren Wells, V. W. Rathbun and Palmer from the Stonington; and also, minutes of the Leyden Association, containing their corresponding letter.

5. The circular letter, being prepared by brother Stanton, and the corresponding by brother Bolton, they with brethren J. Rathbun, Bigelow and V. W. Rathbun, were appointed a committee to examine said letters, and correct them if necessary.

6. Voted, to adjourn till to morrow 8 o'clock A. M. Preaching in the evening in various parts of the vicinity.

THURSDAY Sept. 29.

Met according to adjournment. Brother V. W. Rathbun

preached from Zechariah iii. 9. " Upon one stone shall be seven eyes."

1. The circular and corresponding letters were read and approved.

2. Chose brethren Samuel Waters, and V. W. Rathbun, messengers to the Warren, Brethren Smallage and Burr, to the Leyden, and brethren Crosby, V. W. Rathbun and Stanton, to the Stonington Associations.

2. Chose brother Burr to write the circular letter, and brother Leonard the corresponding, for the next year.

4. Our Association is to meet next year at brother Coding's Meeting-House in South Plainfield, on the last Wednesday in September, at two o'clock P. M.

5. Voted, that brother Leonard superintend the printing of the minutes. The business being finished, at 12 o'clock, the meeting was concluded by singing and solemn prayer.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The ELDERS and MESSENGERS of the Sturbridge Association, to the Churches they represent, send christian salutations.

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

UNDER the smiles of divine Providence, agreeable to appointment, we have met in Association; and have enjoyed a pleasurable interview. The marvellous works of Jehovah's administration, when manifested, peculiarly demand the devout attention of his people. To disregard the works of God, and the operation of his hand, is the character of the wicked. For this they are threatened with destruction. But with what pleasure and devotion, did the pious Israelites recount the wonderful works of God, in their preservation and various signal deliverances? Would not such a mode of conduct become the Churches of Christ at the present day?

Brethren, you believe the Lord Jehovah reigns. You rejoice that he has exalted Jesus far above all principalities and powers, and above every name that is named in this world and that which is to come. That Christ is made head over all

ings to the Church, is your faith, your support in
and your joy in prosperity.

Shall we not then notice, with gratitude and admiration, some of the glorious acts of the administration of our God, relative to the Church in this quarter of the world? The settlement of America is among the prodigies of divine Providence. Our ancestors emigrated, to escape the evils of persecution and to enjoy the rights of conscience. Under the nurturing hand of Providence, they were as a pleasant vine in a fruitful land. As time advanced, this rising family became, in some degree, like the Israelites in Goshen. Means however were devised to oppress us. Chains were forged to enslave us. But we appealed to heaven, and won the day. With what gratitude, therefore, ought we to acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of God in our emancipation from the shackles of tyranny? An asylum for the oppressed of all nations was established, in this highly favoured clime. Thousands have fled hither, and are happy. Our National Constitution has given no unhallowed touch to the ark of God.

The revival of religion in various parts of America demand our most grateful acknowledgments. Perhaps every State, in the Union, has shared in this inestimable blessing. The churches of Christ have been watered from on high, and their increase has been considerable. These, brethren, are some of the marvellous operations of the hand of God. "O! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and his wonderful works to the children of men." Yet while we rejoice, we have great cause to lament the decay of religion, and the triumphs of infidelity, in some parts of our land.

How marvellous has been the forbearance of God toward the wicked and abominable of the earth! Even to us, who have oppressed his redeemed, persecuted his saints, rejected his gospel, and who have so long trodden under foot the holy city! What a long and severe trial of faith and patience, have the saints endured? But soon will God hear and avenge his saints who cry unto him day and night.

Happy for Zion, Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. When he shall arise in judgment for the deliverance of his Church; when he shall come forth out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquities, there shall be mountains, they shall tuck, and the hills, they shall tremble. What powers, terrores or dominions, can stand before his

mighty King of Zion in the day of his wrath? What preparations are making in the mysterious economy of divine Providence to bring down every high thing, that exalteth itself against the truth? Great revolutions, however, must take place in the world, before the gospel of Christ will have an universal spread. When the witnesses shall arise, and the abundant influence of the Spirit shall be given, then shall Zion shout for joy, her foes shall all be confounded and the world astonished.

But while the Lord is visiting the earth, will he not search Jerusalem as with candles and sift his own Churches? Hath he not declared, "all the Churches shall know that I am he, who searcheth the reins and hearts, and will give to every one according to his works?"

Brethren, suffer the word of exhortation. Does it not become us solemnly to pause, and examine ourselves? O! let us rouse from our sloth, be fervent in prayer, and faithful unto death. Let us "be followers of those, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises." Let us stand fast in one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel: "For he, that must come, will come, and will not tarry: To Him be glory forever and ever, Amen.

The ELDERS and MESSENGERS of the Sturbridge Association, to the several Associations with whom they correspond, send christian salutation.

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,

SINCE you have seen fit to receive us into sister relation, we wish to contribute our mite, to promote the general good. One of the particular duties of Zion's watchmen, is to comfort the people of God. It is furthermore enjoined on all the flock to comfort one another. What can afford greater consolation, than these words of the Apostle; "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Especially it we consider the redemption of the Church bears the same date, with the coming of the Lord. The saints will then be free from all their troubles, and have their immortal thirst satisfied, in the eternal world of joy. Yes, brethren, the day is hastening, when Jesus, who came from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, will again appear glorious in his apparel, trav-

elling in the greatness of his strength. He will also speak in righteousness, and prove himself mighty to save.

When God delivered his ancient people from Egypt, their salvation, and the destruction of their enemies took place at the same time. Even so will it be, at the coming of Christ.

As we generally believe, that Christ's second coming is at the door, let us lift up our heads, and put a cheertul courage on. Our great High Priest will safely conduct all his followers over the Jordan of death. Our spiritual Joshua will then lead amid the chosen tribes. The tabernacle will then be set up in Shiloh, and the temple will be dedicated. Then shall come the marriage of the Lamb, and his bride shall go in with him, and the door shall be shut.

As the end of all things is at hand, let us purify ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Let us remember we are not our own, but are bought with a price.

While God is performing wonders in the earth, it becomes his people to exert themselves. When the set time came for the deliverance of ancient Israel, the people had a mind to rebel. Brethren, if we are truly disposed to be workers together with God, the Lord will surely help us. God once called his Church to be strong and active, and for their encouragement, said, "I am with you."

If we consider the relation we bear to Christ, and to one another, we shall be sensible, we are bound to cultivate union of soul, and uniformity in doctrine. This would lead us to preach sound doctrine, viz. the doctrine of the cross, and encourage others to do the same. Let much of the same mind be in us, that was also in Christ Jesus. If we wish to know what will make us, as wise, holy and happy, as we can possibly be in this imperfect militant state, let us attend closely to the Bible, our only rule of faith. Here Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, all combine to instruct us. Says Jesus, "search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they, which testify of me."

Let us hold fast in the profession of our faith, gird up the loins of our minds, and hope to the end, for that grace which will appear at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Says scripture

"It is not weary in well doing, for in due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not."

When Christ appears the second time, it will be without sin unto salvation. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear then shall we also appear with him in glory. We shall be glorified when we awake in his likeness, for we shall see him as he is. Then, dear Brethren, we shall not be under the necessity of corresponding by letters and messengers; for we shall meet in one great Association, where there will be no barrier to an eternal happy intercourse. Wherefore, let us be comforted with this glorious prospect, being assured the happy period is nearly drawing nigh.

Signed in behalf of the Association,

ELIJAH CODING, *Superintendent.*

ZENAS L. LEONARD, *Clerk.*