

S168:

Baptists . Vermont . Woodstock Association, 1801.

Minutes ... at Cornish ... September ... 1801.

n. p., n. d. 8 pp.

MWA copy.

MINUTES

OF THE

WOODSTOCK ASSOCIATION,

HOLDEN AT CORNISH CENTRE MEETINGHOUSE,

September 30th, and October 1st, 1801.

WITH THEIR CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING LETTERS.

AT one o'clock, P. M. Elder Elijah Willard, agreeably to appointment, preached the introductory sermon, from Psalm cxxxii. 15.—“I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread.”

A Moderator and Clerk were chosen. Letters from the churches were read, and the following list taken.

N. B. Ministers' names are in *Italick* Those Ministers with this mark * were not present. From churches marked thus, † we had no intelligence. The churches distinguished by a dash — have no settled Ministers.

Churches.	Ministers & Messengers.	Add.	Dis.	Exc.	Died.	Tot.	Contr.
							s. d.
Woodstock,	{ <i>Elisha Ransom.</i> Jacob Holt.	16	1		4	72	4 0
Newport,	{ <i>Rial Ledoit.</i> Deac. Elias Metcalf. Abel Wheeler. Ralf Chamberlain.	6				105	4 6
Royalton,	{ ————— Deac. John Billings. <i>William Ewing.</i>	11			2	29	1 6
Windsor,	{ Deac. Joseph Thompson. Deac. Nath. Kendal. Jerahmeel Cummings. <i>Ebenzer Bailey.</i>	2	4	3	2	93	6 0
Westmoreland,	{ ————— Deac. Abner Chace. Isaac Foster. <i>Elijah Willard.</i>	2	8	6	2	135	6 4½
Dublin,	{ Dea. John Knowlton. Josiah Flint.	4	1			87	4 11
Hopkinton,	{ Deac. John Currier. David Bursel. <i>Aaron Lealand.</i> Deac. Samuel White. Deac. Wm. M'Culler.				1	71	1 6½
Chafter,	{ Deac. Joel Maning. Benjamin Taylor. John Kibling. David Boyington.	27		3		239	15 0

Churches.	Ministers & Messengers.	Add.	Dis.	Exc.	Died.	Total.	Contr. s. d.		
Newwindsor,	Job Seaman.								
	Samuel Ambrose.								
	Deac. Ebenezer Hunting.	2			1	107	6 0		
Alstead,	Deac. Zebedee Hayle.								
	Jeremiah Higbee.	2	1		1	76	3 9		
Corryton,	Reuben Wood.	3			1	50	1 6		
	William Elliot.								
Mason,	Isaac Bartlet.	20		2		52	4 6		
	Josiah Brown.	2			2	18	3 0		
Norwich,	Nathaniel Kendrick.								
	Thomas Whipple.			2		46	3 0		
†Tibetford,						10			
Sharon,	Amos Parker.		2	1		30	2 3		
						29			
Plainfield,	*Jonathan Gram.								
	Deac. Benjamin Kimball.	11			1	73	3 0		
	Daniel True.								
Grafton,	Joseph Wheat.								
	Seth Martin.	19		1	1	81	4 6		
	Sayer Bullock.								
	Ephriam Kinsman.								
Wardborough,	Deac. Lemuel Braley.								
	Paul Davise.	17				49	2 5½		
	Aaron Draper.								
Jamaica,	Simeon Combs.								
	Abial Whitman.	49				89	2 8		
	John Rugg.								
Hanover,	Isaac Bridgman.	27	5	3	2	54	2 6		
	James Beels.								
Lebanon,	Laban Hall.								
	Deac. Barnabas Perkins.	5	5			30	3 6		
	Weisherell Hough.								
Chelsea and Tunbridge,	Samuel Hovey.								
	Deac. Ezekiel Lunt.	6		4	1	54	3 2		
	— Lthrop.								
	— Otis.								
Reading,	Samuel White.					32	2 4		
	Ephriam Hubbert.								
	John Moors.								
Money contributed,		4	13	0	232	29	25	25	1744
Left in Fund last year,			11	8					
		5	4	8					

N. B. The last mentioned church was added this session.

Adjourned to 8 o'clock to morrow morning.

Thursday, Oct. 1st. Met accordingly—meeting opened by prayer—Heard the report of the Committee, appointed at our last to enquire into the faith of the

Church in Reading. The Church having amended their articles to the satisfaction of the Association, was received to fellowship.

The Circular Letter, prepared by Elder Kendrick, was read and approved.

The Corresponding Letter, written by Deac. Joseph Thompson, not being fully satisfactory, appointed Brother Nathaniel Kendrick to prepare one as a substitute.

Messengers and Minutes from the Corresponding Associations.

From the Warren and Newhampshire Associations we have received neither Messengers nor Minutes; but have had the most agreeable information by our Messengers to them, Elders Seamans and Wheet.

From Leyden, Minutes by their Messenger, Brother Ezra Kendal.

From Merideth, Letter and Minutes by Elder Ezra Willmarth.

From Vermont, Minutes by Brother Clark Kendrick.

From Shaftsbury, no intelligence.

Messengers to Corresponding Associations.

To the Warren, Elders Willard and Higbee. To the Newhampshire, Elder William Elliot. To the Leyden, Elder Cooms and Brother Kendal. To the Richmond, Elders Hovey and I. Bridgman. To the Shaftsbury, Elders Ledoit, Seamans and Lealand. To the Vermont, Elders E. Ransom, E. Hunting, and Brother Wetherell Hough. To the Merideth, Elder J. Wheet, and Brother Seth Martin.

Appointed Elder J. Higbee to write the Circular Letter for next year, on Church Discipline; Elder Bailey the Corresponding Letter.

Voted, That the Association meet at Grafton, N. H. on the last Wednesday of September next, at the north meeting-house, at 1 o'clock P. M.

Appointed Elder Aaron Lealand to preach the introductory sermon; but in case of failure, Elder William Elliot.

The Corresponding Letter, written by Brother N. Kendrick, was read and approved.

Appointed Elders Ariel Kendrick and Joseph Wheet, as Missionaries to visit the new settlements, and preach

the Gospel to them. A very liberal contribution was raised in the house for that purpose. Voted, that four dollars and 75 cents be appropriated out of the fund for the same purpose. It is also recommended to the Churches which belong to this Association, to contribute for the above purpose, and bring it forward at our next meeting, or before, to Elder Job Seamans who is appointed Treasurer.

By the report of the Committee appointed last year to enquire into the state of the Church in Canaan, and 2d in Westmoreland, it appears that their visibility is lost, and therefore their names are dropped out of the Minutes.

Voted to allow the Clerk two dollars and fifty cents for services last year.

Voted, that Elder Higbee superintend the printing and distribution of these Minutes.

Voted the thanks of the Association to the proprietors of the Congregational meeting-house, for the favour of meeting in the same the present session.

The session was closed by a sermon by Elder A. Lealand, from 2 Tim. i. 12. "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day;" which was truly refreshing, and the people appeared to part under the sensible impressions of Divine Truth.

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

The Elders and Brethren of the Woodstock Association, to the Churches represented by them.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

CHOSSEN of God and called to be saints through faith in the truth, suffer an address by us upon the all important doctrine of Election.

There is evidently such a relation and connexion of one doctrine of truth to another, that in order to show the certainty and beauty of one, those to which it is immediately related must be brought into view. This is peculiarly the case with the doctrine now to be considered.

The doctrine of election, as revealed in the Bible, but more clearly in the New Testament, implies an eternal and immutable purpose in God, to renew, justify, sanctify and save eternally a number of Adam's posterity.— This election is wholly unconditional—*i. e.* God did not foresee any goodness in the subjects of it as a cause why he chose them, but contrariwise, he saw them dead in trespasses and sins, and deserving of eternal pain; and to discover to an intelligent universe the wonders of his goodness, he gave them to his Son before the world was, in the covenant of grace; which covenant received witness before the eyes of rational beings, in the order of time, by the weighty sufferings of the Son of God, who clothed himself in flesh and dwelt amongst men.

This doctrine is abundantly asserted in the word of God, for the consolation and joy of Christians. Our Lord said, "All those whom the Father giveth me shall come to me." The Psalmist said, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," &c. An Apostle said, that believers were saved and called, agreeably to God's purpose and grace given them in Christ before the world; and also that they were elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the spirit, and the belief of the truth. We might crowd our sheet with passages of the same import, were it necessary, but we forbear. The doctrine of regeneration by the power of God, and election, like David and Jonathan, are knit together, and stand or fall alike. To renew, sanctify and save a fallen man, is emphatically the work of an infinite God, and consequently a part of his eternal plan of operation, and of course a work wrought pursuant to his eternal design.

To say that God does any thing, or performs any work which is not a part of his eternal, wise, and glorious plan, would be dishonourary, and as has been observed that regeneration is the work of God, and a part of his plan, and as election means nothing more than that it was in the plan of God to save a number of sinful beings; therefore election must be true.

Some, who feel pinched by such reasoning, will endeavour to evade election by denying the divine efficiency in regeneration; and so will say that God foreknew who would come to Christ. This is only an evasion.—

For the divine foreknowledge, in this case, was founded on his determination to draw them to Christ by his almighty power. As well might we contend that dead Lazarus did, by his own agency in part or in whole, burst the doors of the grave, and leap from the cold hand of death, as that any God-hating sinner will ever arise from spiritual death to saving faith, without special divine agency. The death under which Lazarus lay, was a state directly opposite to natural life or animation.— He was inactive, motionless and without the power of motion. This death is not in itself sinful, although caused by sin. The death of a sinner consists in active opposition against God; he is dead in trespasses and sins, without the least spark of true holiness; this death implies criminality, because its very consistence is sin.— In each of these cases it is alike easy to see, that if life is ever again enjoyed, it must be produced by the immediate agency of him who can in an instant, by a sovereign act of his will, collect the scattered atoms of the dead, and clothe them with all the beauties of original organization and life; and can still the raging of a sinner's heart, with as much ease as he did the tempestuous waters. The doctrine of election, and the saints' perseverance, are very intimately connected. If God has chosen a number of sinners without good works, as requisite to the enjoyment of eternal happiness, then it is evident that in this case the gifts and calling of God will be without repentance; or, that having begun a good work, he will carry it on until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if on the other hand sinners make themselves to differ without special divine agency, in consequence of which difference, God elects them and treats them as differing, then they may fall from that goodness for which God chose them, and perish eternally; prior to which they may be in a state of election and non-election more than ten thousand times according to their alternately good and bad conduct or exercises.— From these observations we see the propriety of the scripture doctrine of perseverance, and as really of election. The doctrine of election does not imply that God has decreed, that some men shall not come to Christ, but contrariwise, that notwithstanding the awful rejec-

tion of all, some shall come to the marriage supper of the Lamb. This doctrine does not stand in the way of gospel preaching, but is an excellent motive to it. How encouraging was it to the great Apostle, when God told him, "I have much people in this city." Were it not for election, preachers might shut their mouths, despairing of the conversion of another soul to God. This doctrine opens no door for licentiousness; for souls are chosen through sanctification of the spirit, and the belief of truth; consequently, he who walks in those lusts which God hates, has no evidence of his election. This principle does not stand in the way of urging sinners to repentance, it being evident that our duty to repent does not originate in election or non-election, but in the nature and fitness of things. Election was never exhibited as the rule of our conduct; this is displayed in the moral precepts of the gospel; these declare what we ought to do, but election declares what God will do, independent of any goodness in creatures, seeing we all are disposed to reject the gospel.

This doctrine exhibits God to our view as an infinite sovereign, a being of self action, doing all things for his own glory; for which cause it is peculiarly disgusting to ungodly men, who have done all in their power to dress it in the most horrid manner, that it might be rejected by the church, and driven out of the world: but it does, notwithstanding, shine like the first luminary of heaven, and will to eternity, as a constant eye-sore to the wicked; and source of gratitude, thanksgiving and praise, as it respects the saints.

Dear Brethren, we exhort you to continue in this all-important doctrine, and contend for it as a part of that faith which was once delivered to the saints. The war between saints and sinners, truth and error, right and wrong, has been terrible in its progress: the siege yet continues, the war is hot, and we have constant need to be clothed with the whole armour of light, that we might stand in this evil day, and having done all, to stand. Brethren, we trust that faith and justification are yours; we wish you the additional blessings of complete sanctification and entire redemption.

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The Elders and Brethren of the Woodstock Association, to the Associations who correspond with us.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

REJOICING under the glorious administration of grace, and experiencing the great utility of that correspondence with you, which we think is the result of holy affections, we are happy to adduce further testimonies of our unaltered friendship, by another annual address.

And how can we expect to refresh you more, than by giving you assurances that the Spirit of the Lord yet presides with us; and that great grace is poured forth upon many branches of our association? Perhaps not so visible in the accession of numbers as in strengthening the holy union which makes many of us look like brethren.

Notwithstanding this is a great portrait in this part of Zion, yet there are some instances of a solemn reverse. Trials and afflictions, and the excluding of brethren have been experienced by some of us the year past. But shall this discourage us while the Lord reigns? How many efforts has the prince of this world made, to sap the foundation of the saints of God, and all have been unsuccessful? How many almost Christians appear at this day, to subvert the great doctrines of the gospel, and substitute sincerity for faith, and error for truth? Let us not be curious about their questions, lest we be injured by their philosophy, while we are found striving for the mastery. But may we let our light shine before them, and shew a profound reverence to the gospel scheme, which will give us intrepidity of heart, when inquisition shall be made for that retinue of false prophets, and teachers, and all those who submitted themselves to their righteousness, to receive the just retribution of all their works.—While those, who are rooted and grounded in the truth, shall meet the plaudit of their Judge, and enjoy a glorious association in the full fruition of God.

Finally, brethren, that thus it may be done unto us, let us labour to cultivate the graces of the spirit, that we be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord. Believe us, brethren, to wish you all this, yea, more than we are able to ask, and to solicit a continued correspondence with you, since it is a great source of comfort to us. And according to the great law of love, we wish you all that participation of happiness which is necessary to comfort your hearts under all trials, that you may choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

AARON LEALAND, *Moderator.*
Attest, JEREMIAH HIGBEE, *Clerk.*