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Baptists. New Hampshire. Woodstock Association, 1802.

Minutes . . . at Grafton . . . Sept. 29 and 30, 1802.

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WOODSTOCK ASSOCIATION

HELD AT

GRAFTON, N. H. NORTH MEETING HOUSE

SEPTEMBER 29th and 30th, 1802

WITH THEIR CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING
LETTERS.

FROM THE PRESS OF THOMAS & THOMAS, WALPOLE.

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1802.

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1904

MINUTES

OF THE

WOODSTOCK ASSOCIATION, &c.

WEDNESDAY, September 29.

1. **T**HE Association met according to appointment, at 1 o'clock, P. M. Elder Aaron Lealand preached the introductory sermon, from Rev. v. 5. "*And one of the Elders said unto me, weep not: Behold the Lion, of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.*"

2. A moderator and clerk were chosen.

3. The letters from the churches were read, and the following list taken.

N. B. Ministers' names are in Italics: those marked thus () were not present. From churches marked thus (+) we received no intelligence, and vacant churches are distinguished by a dash.*

Churches.	Ministers & Messengers.	Add.	Djs.	Exc.	Died.	Total.	Con-trib.
							s. d.
Woodstock,	{ <i>Jabez Cottle.</i> Daniel Kaiph. Jacob Holt. <i>Bial Ledit.</i>	9	1	0	0	30	4 6
Newport,	{ <i>Dr. Elias Metcalf.</i> <i>Dr. Jeremiah Nettleton.</i> Thomas Whicher. Josathas Haven.	7	0	1	1	110	3 10
+Royalton,		0	0	0	0	29	0 0
Windfor,	{ * <i>William Ewing.</i> <i>Dr. Stephen Shaw.</i> Daniel Smith. Nathan Wallow.	0	2	1	0	95	6 0
+Westmoreland,	* <i>Blanche Faily.</i>	0	0	0	0	58	0 0
Marlow,	{ <i>Amos...</i> <i>Lambert...</i>	2	0	2	1	124	5 1
Dublin,	{ <i>...</i> <i>Charles...</i>	7	0	3	0	21	5 4

Churches.	Ministers & Messengers.	Add.	Dis.	Exc.	Died.	Total.	Cop- trib. s. d.
Hopkinton,	Stephen Hou. Job Kidder. <i>Aaron Lealand.</i>	3	1	1	2	70	1 6
Chester,	John Jacobs. David Boyington. William Thompson. <i>Job Seaman.</i>	18	0	4	0	253	12 0
New London,	<i>Samuel Ambrose.</i> Jonathan Shepard. Simon Kezer. Ebenzer Shepard. I-st. Dow.	7	0	1	0	112	6 9
Alstead,	<i>Jeremiah Higbee.</i> Dr. Nathaniel Shepard.	0	1	0	1	74	4 8
Cornish,	<i>Ariel Kendrick.</i> Loring Thompson.	0	0	1	0	49	2 7
Mason,	<i>*William Elliot.</i> Abjah Hudbeth. Solomon Green.	30	1	1	0	80	4 6
Temple,	_____	4	0	0	0	22	0 0
Norwich, (a)	Nathaniel Kendrick.	0	0	0	0	43	3 0
+ Thetford,	_____	0	0	0	0	10	0 0
† Sharon,	_____	0	0	0	0	30	0 0
‡ Westminster,	_____	0	0	0	0	19	0 0
Plainfield,	<i>Jonathan Cram.</i> Dr. Benjamin Kimball. Levi Cram.	0	2	2	0	68	3 9
1st. Grafton,	<i>Joseph W'beat.</i> Dr. Ekanah Phillips. Seth Martin. Jobz Barney.	10	0	1	0	90	3 9
† Wardborough,	_____	0	0	0	0	49	0 0
† Jamaica,	<i>*Simon Coom.</i>	0	0	0	0	89	0 0
Manover & Lime,	<i>Isaac Brigman.</i> Samuel Huslar. Caleb Forbes. David Conant. James Beels	38	1	1	0	91	3 0
Lebanon,	<i>*Laben Hall.</i> Wetherell Hough. Elisha Aldrich.	5	4	0	0	20	1 8
Chelsea and Tonbridge,	<i>*Samuel Howy.</i> Dr. Ezekiel Lunt.	0	0	0	0	54	0 9
Reading,	_____	1	1	0	1	33	3 0
William White,	_____						
Canaan.	Dr. John Worth, Richard Clark. Josiah Clark.	0	0	0	0	22	2 2

(a) The letter from the church in Norwich is lost by accident, therefore, their number is returned as it stood last year.

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers & Messengers.</i>	<i>Ad.</i>	<i>Dis.</i>	<i>Exc.</i>	<i>Dis.</i>	<i>To-t.</i>	<i>Contri- butions, s. d.</i>
Pomfret,	{ <i>The Rev. Mr. Page.</i> <i>Dr. Frederick Burnham.</i> <i>Philemon Hayes.</i>	0	0	0	0	22	3 9
<i>Total.</i>		141	14	19	6	1888	4 0 2
<i>Money left in fund last year.</i>							0 10 2
							4 10 4

N. B. The two churches last mentioned were added this session.

Adjourned to 8 o'clock, to-morrow morning.

Thursday, September 29.—Met accordingly—meeting opened by prayer

1. Received messengers, and minutes from corresponding Associations. From Warren, minutes of last year, by Elder Jabez Cottle. From Leyden, Minutes, by Elder Jonathan Huntly. From Meridith, Elders Ezra Wilmarth, Joshua Quimby, and Dea. Ebenezer Quimby with minutes. From Newhampshire, Vert. Shaftsbury and Richmond, we had no intelligence. Received also, minutes from a number of Associations at the southward by Elder Barnabas Perkins.

2. Read, and accepted the Circular Letter, prepared by J. Higbee.

3. The Corresponding Letter having failed—appointed Elder Ariel Kendrick to prepare one; which was afterwards read, and approved.

4. Appointed messengers to Corresponding Associations. To the Warren, Elder Ariel Kendrick, and brother Nathaniel Kendrick. To Newhampshire, Elder Samuel Ambrose. To Meridith, Elders Lealand, Bridgman, Cottle and Seamans. To Vermont, Brother Samuel Smith. To Shaftsbury, Elders Ledoit, Leland, and Wheet. To Leyden, Elders Bailey, Willard and Higbee. To Richmond, Elder Samuel Hovey.

5. Question from Pomfret Church.

We wish to know the opinion of the Association, how we ought to proceed with such members as leave the church, without rendering a reason why? Answer. That it is the duty of the church, to labour with such a brother,

brother, as an offender, according to the rule of the gospel ; and if he is not reclaimed by such means, to withdraw the hand of fellowship from him. 2 Thess. iii. 6.

6. Heard the report of Elder Wheel, who had travelled as a missionary ; and appointed a committee of three, to settle with him for his services. Adjourned for one hour. Met accordingly.

7. Appointed Elder Seamans to write the circular Letter, and Elder Lealand, the corresponding letter, for next year.

8. Voted, to hold our next association at Windsor, (Vermont) on the last Wednesday in September, at one o'clock, P. M.

9. Appointed Elder Higbee to preach the introductory sermon—in case of failure, Elder Seamans.

10. Voted, That the clerk superintend the printing, and distribution of these minutes.

11. Voted, to allow the clerk three dollars for his services the year past.

12. Voted, that J. Higbee, be Treasurer to receive the money contributed by the churches, for the propagation of the gospel, in the new settlements.

The session closed with a sermon by Elder Higbee, from Heb. xiii. 17.—“ *For they watch for your souls as they that must give account.*”

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,

BELQVED BRETHREN,

WE feel ourselves deeply interested in your spiritual prosperity, and wish to contribute to your furtherance in the knowledge of the will of Christ.

Permit us, then, pursuant to our proposal last year, to address you on the nature, design, and importance of gospel discipline.

I. Gospel discipline consists in the right exercise of that authority with which Jesus Christ has vested the christian church, carefully to observe, and faithfully to execute all the laws of his kingdom as they respect the members of the visible church. Those laws are a complete model of perfection, being founded in pure benevolence: For, though they are clothed with supreme authority, yet they are fully expressive of parental affection: and those who execute them are strictly required to act from a principle of pure love. No other punishment is to be inflicted on the transgressor but exclusion from fellowship; and the greatest offender is to be restored to favour upon evidence of sincere repentance. Hence, the nature of gospel discipline, is truly, and universally benevolent.

II. The design of the gospel discipline is,

1st. To support the authority of Jesus Christ, as king and head of the church. He is supreme King in Zion, and head over all things to the church. Yea, the head of his body, the church. And for the support of his authority as such, he has enacted a code of laws peculiar to themselves, and independent of all others for the government of the subjects of his kingdom. But by the execution of these laws alone, is his authority secured. A king without authority; a kingdom

without

without laws; or laws never executed, are unmeaning words. And such is the indignity cast upon the authority of Christ, by those churches who neglect gospel discipline. Hence, says our Lord, "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?"

2d. Another design of gospel discipline is; to divest the church of false professors or unworthy members. That false professors do sometimes obtain admittance into the visible church, is too evident to need confirmation: and that it is the design of gospel discipline to divest the church of such members, the scriptures abundantly demonstrate. 2 Cor. vi. 14 to the end. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness.— Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate &c." The church of Ephesus is commended, for trying those who said they were apostles, and were not. Rev. ii. 2. And the church of Pergamus is severely reprov'd, for suffering those to remain in her fellowship, who held the licentious doctrines of Balaam, and the Nicolaitans: by which they proved that they were strangers to the doctrine of Christ, and unworthy of a name and a place in the christian church. Hence saith the Apostle, "He that is an heretic, after the first, and second admonition, reject." Tit. iii. 10.

Those are also to be rejected by the christian church, whose immoral conduct renders them scandalous. 1st Cor. Chap. v. Who trespass against a neighbor, or a brother. Mat. xviii. 15, 16, 17. Who possess a contentious spirit, and cause divisions, contrary to the doctrine of Christ, Rom. xvi. 17. and who wilfully neglect to observe the ordinances of Christ, and the traditions of the Apostles: To labour (if able) for the support of themselves and families; and to contribute, according to their abilities, for the support of the worship of God. 2 Thess. iii. 6. 1 Cor. v. 11. Those who persist in these things, have denied the faith, and are worse than infidels: and, therefore, must be excluded from the christian church.

3d. Gospel discipline is further designed, to reclaim backsliders

backsliders. "If thy brother trespass against thee, re-buke him: and if he repent, forgive him. Luke xviii. 3." See also, James v. 19, 20. Gal. vi. 1. Gospel discipline hath a wonderful tendency to reclaim: "For a reproof," saith Solomon, "entereth more into a wise man, than an hundred stripes, into a fool."

We proceed

III. To consider the importance of maintaining gospel discipline, in the christian church.

1. If gospel discipline is neglected, iniquity will prevail in the church. "It must be that offences will come." And such is the relation in which the members of the christian church stand to each other, that if one member transgresses publicly, and is not reprov'd, it will affect the whole body: Like leaven, it diffuseth through, and leaveneth the whole lump. For he who indulgeth his brother in a known transgression, becomes a transgressor himself. And thus the church, instead of being a holy temple, or a spiritual house, becomes a receptacle of all iniquity: and is like a garden uncultivated, a child left to himself, or a city broken down, and without walls. Such a church has a name only to live, while she is dead: And she may justly expect the execution of that awful sentence denounced against the church of Laodicea, "I will spew thee out of my mouth."

2. If gospel discipline is neglected, it will eventually destroy the communion of the church. Gospel communion consists in the sensation of that spiritual union which exists between Christ the head, and believers as the members of his body; whereby life, strength, and comfort are derived from Christ, to their souls; and their hearts are knit together in love to each other. Thus, like the members of the natural body, when every joint supplieth its place, it maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love. But, where sin is indulged, the course of this union is obstructed. Hence, there remains, at best, the shadow of communion, without the substance, or, a body, without the spirit.

3. God will withdraw his presence from those churches, where gospel discipline is neglected. The presence
of

of God, as the God of providence, is in every place ; but his spiritual presence is granted, by way of speciality to his church.

“ What people, saith Moses, hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is unto us, in all that we call upon him for.” Wüere two, or three are gathered together, in my name, saith Christ, there am I in the midst of them. Ye are the temples of the living God, saith St. Paul, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

The continuance of God’s gracious presence with his church, is of the utmost consequence. On this the prosperity of the church depends. While God is with his church, the gates of hell cannot prevail against her ; she will grow like the corn, and revive like the lilly, her branches will shoot forth as Lebanon ; the effusions of the divine spirit will distil like the rain on the new mown grafs ; and her converts will surpass the drops of the morning dew. But if the Lord withdraws his presence from his church, she becomes like Sampson when his locks were shorn ; weak like another man. She falls an easy prey to her enemies ; her root famisheth with drought ; and like the heath in the desert, she knoweth not when good cometh. Wo ! unto them, saith the Lord, when I depart from them.

But the continuance of God’s presence with his people, depends much upon their obedience. “ If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love. John xv. 10.” “ If a man love me, saith Christ, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. John xiv. 23.” Hence, nothing can be of greater importance to the christian church, than the faithful execution of gospel discipline.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. From the above observations we infer, that those entertain very wrong ideas of gospel discipline, who think

think themselves injured, when they are faithfully re-
proved. The command of Christ is "If thy brother
trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault." But, it
too often happens, that when a brother is reprov'd for his
fault, he resents it as an injury, and perhaps retaliates
upon his reprov'er in the language of the proverb "Phy-
sician, heal thyself." Or, accule him of partiality in ne-
glecting to reprove others, whom he judges equally guilty
with himself: or, at least, to indulge a hard feeling a-
gainst him, esteeming him to be his enemy, rather than
his friend. Thus, feeling himself injured, he will nei-
ther humble himself for his wickedness, nor acknowledge
the kindness of his brother in reprov'ing him. Very dif-
ferent from this were the feelings of the holy psalmist
when he said, "Let the righteous reprove me, it shall be
a kindness; let him smite me, it shall be an excellent oil
which shall not break my head; for yet my prayer also
shall be in his calamity—And truly, we ought to rejoice
to be reprov'd for our faults, though it should be by an
enemy; how much more so, when we are reprov'd by a
brother, in love, and in the spirit of meekness. Not less
does he deviate from the spirit of gospel discipline who
reprov'es, or complains of his brother with a hard and
cruel spirit, designing to punish, rather than to reclaim
him. The language of which is, "I will do to him, as
he hath done to me." This is smiting with the fist of
wickedness; and the executing of vengeance, which be-
longs only to God. Than which, nothing can be more
contrary to the spirit of the gospel.

2. We hence learn also, why the apparent difference is
so small, betwixt visible professors of religion, and the
men of this world. If it is the design of gospel disci-
pline to divest the christian church of unqualified mem-
bers; then, if the laws of Christ were faithfully execut-
ed, the difference would be very apparent; for then,
none would continue members of the visible church
whose visible conduct did not correspond, in a good de-
gree, with the precepts of the gospel. Then wou'd
the church appear, "Beautiful as Tizah, comely,
as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners;" or,

as "The light of the world, a city on an hill which can not be hid."

3. Let, us dear brethren, in view of the subject before us, reflect on the present state of our churches. We profess to be the people of God, to have come out from the tradition of men, to be the followers of Christ. But how do we ornament our profession? Are we governed by the laws of Christ in our daily conduct? Do we faithfully reprove our brethren, for every known violation of those laws, and that in love, and the spirit of meekness? Do we persevere in reprovng, until we either reclaim, or reject the transgressor? Are we strictly impartial in our discipline, not regarding the rich, more than the poor? Do we feel the cause of Christ, continually at heart; and do we prefer Jerusalem above our chief joy? If so, then we may be sure that the Lord is, and will be with us, and we may lift up our heads, and rejoice that our redemption draweth nigh.—But if we find ourselves neglectful in these things, let us apply to ourselves, those solemn words, addressed to the church of Ephesus: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else, I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candle, slick out of its place, except thou repent."

CORRESPONDING LETTER,

THE WOODSTOCK ASSOCIATION, CONVENEED AT GRAFTON, N. H.
TO SISTER ASSOCIATIONS—WISHING HEAVENLY LIGHT AND
PEACE MIGHT BE MULTIPLIED.

DEAR BRETHREN,

THROUGH the auspicious smiles of our common Lord we enjoy another interview, and have the privilege of hearing from our churches, some of whom are partaking of divine influence in copious measures.—Sinners are humbled and saints adore. Others, like Gideon's fleece of wool, remain dry. With us you will join in imploring the God of all mercy, that he would pour out blessings on them, and on the whole church of God. They shall prosper who love Zion, and to whom her prosperity is an object infinitely desirable. It must, and will, we think, rejoice all sanctified souls, when they consider the uncommon efforts which are now making by Christians of several denominations, both in the eastern and western part of this our world, to spread the glories of Jesus, and the wonders of his grace, to the utmost parts of the earth. We rejoice that Christians, who at present disagree in some things, are pleased, notwithstanding, to unite their holy endeavors in a cause so glorious and sublime. Our ability to contribute in this cause is small, when compared with some others; but every child of God can do something: he can, at least, solicit the Father of Mercies, to grant the cogent influence of his Holy Spirit to accompany the sacred labours of our benevolent friends.

Shall we slumber, while in many places a desire that the heathens should be converted to God runs like electrical fire! May we all arise and contend before the mountains of infidelity, and do valiantly for the truth. Those who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever.

Dear

Dear friends, our meeting has been pacific and comfortable. Thanks be to God, we have been, and still are, happy in a correspondence with you. We always rejoice to see your messengers, and to read your letters; and we pray you to read this, not as an empty compliment, but as the offspring of hearts deeply penetrated with a desire for your growth in grace and in the knowledge of God.—In a word, for your present peace and eternal health. Farewell.

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