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Baptists. Vermont. Woodstock Association, 1815.

Minutes ... Held at the Baptist Meeting House,
in Windsor, Vt., September 27 & 28.

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Vermont Historical Society
Montpelier, Vermont

MINUTES

OF THE

WOODSTOCK ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT THE

Baptist Meeting House,

IN

WINDSOR, VT.

SEPTEMBER 27 & 28,

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WINDSOR, VT.

PRINTED BY JESSE COCHRAN.

1815.

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MINUTES, &c.

1. At one o'clock, P. M. the introductory sermon was delivered by Elder A. Leland, from Heb 10.35. *Cast not away therefore your confidence which bath great recompence of reward**

2. Elder Aaron Leland, was chosen Moderator, and Elder Jona. Going Clerk.

3. After prayer, proceeded to read the letters from the Churches, from which the following list was taken.

N. B. The names of ordained ministers are in small CAPITALS, and licensed preachers in *italics*.

Those ministers with this mark (*) were not present. From churches marked thus (†) we have no intelligence this year. Vacant churches are distinguished by a dash—

Churches.	Ministers & Messengers.	Added	Dismissed	Excluded	Died	Total
Newport,	<i>Elisba Hutchinson</i> Timothy Fletcher Jona. Wakefield jr.	13	6	0	0	173
Windsor,	JOSHUA BRADLEY JABEZ COTTLE Dea. Dan. Bugbee John Gill Abner Forbes John Smith	91	1	1	0	67
Westmoreland,	————— <i>Romeo Elton</i> Dea. A. Snow John Snow	21	0	0	3	115
Chester,	AARON LELAND John Jacobs 2d. Isaac Sargeant	12	5	1	0	107
Alstead	JER. HIGBEE Nathl. Vilas Sam. Borroughs	20	2	2	0	149
New-London	JOB SEAMAN	11	2	1	0	132

* A discourse was delivered at 10 A. M. by Brother Wood, from Rom. 8. 1.

		Added	Dismissed	Excluded	Died	Total
Cornish,	SAM. AMBROSE Dea. Eben. Hunting Dea. Peter Sargeant, jr. Jeremiah Pingrey, jr. ARIEL KENDRICK Phillip Spaulding Seth Deming Dan. Clemens	51	2	1		138
Plainfield, Jamaica,	JONA. CRAM *	00	00	00		36
	Marvel Howard Samuel Vial	00	03	2		74
Weathersfield & Baltimore	BEMAN BOYNTON Dea. Silas Biglow David Sherman	04	1	1		42
Grafton,	ELIJAH SHUMWAY Dea. Wm. Harris Cyrenius M. Fuller	24	0			43
Cavendish,	JONA. GOING Benjamin Peirce Dea. Moses Mayo Asaph Fletcher Reuben Chapman	38	2	00		138
Goshen,	Solomon How Whitman Jacobs Reuben Willey	03	00			49
Sutton,	WM. TAYLOR Afa Nelson Jona. Roby James Messer	81	6	1		65
Windham,	Isaac Fisher	07	00			54
Townshend,	SAM. KINGSBURY Eran Reed	30	00			43
West-Windsor,	SAM. LAMSON Dea. Jona. Hoyt George Stow	41	2	1		31
Andover,	JOEL MANNING Dea. Sam Manning Benja. Taylor Moses Dodge	40	00			66
Londonderry,	GERSHOM LANE	66	20			81

Acworth,	Dea. Jesse Baldwin	6	0	0	1	22
	Joseph Blanchard					
	Issachar Mayo					
	David Cumings					
Westminster & Rockingham	JOSEPH ELLIOT	10	0	0	0	51
	Dea. Sam Malon					
	John Tuthill					
Winhall, †	_____					22
Unity,	_____	0	0	1	2	61
	<i>Ezra Miner</i>					
	Dea. Abner Chale					
	Jona. Sleeper					
Mountholly	DANIEL PACKER	2	0	0	1	129
	Dea. Edmund Briant					
	Richard Lawrence					
	Nathl. Pingsey					
Hartland,	TIMOTHY GROW					57
	Dea. Dan Davison					
	Thos. Lawton					
		141				153

|| This Church was received this year.

4. The Circular and corresponding Letters were read and committed to Elliot, Going, and Elton.

5. Queries from several Churches were committed to Fletcher, Chapin, and Kingsbury. Adjourned until to-morrow morning, at 9 o'clock. Prayer by Br. Seaman. In the evening Brother Going preached a discourse to the Missionary Society, from Mark 16, 15, after which a collection was made for Missionary purposes.

Thursday, Sept. 28.

6. Met according to adjournment. Prayer by Brother Kendrick.

7. From corresponding Associations, received the following accounts.

	Messengers.	Minutes.
Warren,	_____	minutes.
Shaftsbury,	_____	do.
Vermont,	_____	do.
Barre,	HUNTINGTON & Coburn.	do.
Leyden,	_____	_____

Meredith,	CHAPIN & WHEAT	minutes.
New-Hampshire,	—	—
Dublin,	Wood.	minutes.
Sturbridge,	—	—
Boston,	—	minutes.
Danville,	SILAS DAVISON & Dea. Grow.	do.
Fairfield,	ELIJAH HUNTINGTON,	do.

8. Appointed messengers, to corresponding Associations.

Warren,	Elliot, Going, and Bradley.
Shaftsbury,	Bradley.
Vermont,	Bradley, and Going.
Leyden,	Shumway.
Meredith,	Lamson.
New-Hampshire,	Taylor.
Dublin,	Elliot, Kendrick, and Going.
Boston.	Elliot, Bradley, and Going.

9. The committee to whom were referred the circular and corresponding Letters, reported the corresponding letter with only verbal attentions, which was accordingly adopted. They found the circular too long for the minutes. The clerk, in conjunction with Br. Leland and Fletcher, was requested to abridge it.*

10. It will be recollected that our last year's minutes contained the sentiments of Elders Higbee and Manning, respecting the Son of God, which were unacceptable to the Association. With heart-felt pleasure we insert the following retraction of Br. Higbee.

"Dear Brethren,

I have reviewed of late, with great seriousness, the ideas which I have exhibited concerning the son of God; and I now feel it my duty and privilege to state that so far as my communications have implied, or have seemed to imply, that the Son of God is *inferior* to his Father in his Divine nature, I feel to *disapprove of*, and *retract* the same, as erroneous and not to be justified. I beg leave also, further to state, that I view the doctrine of *God manifest in the flesh*, to be a *great mystery*; and to be a matter of *faith*, and not of *speculation*. And I shall endeavor in future, to regulate my conduct accordingly.

JEREMIAH HIGBEE

to the Woodstock Association.

Alstead, 25 Sept. 1815."

* The Circular, was prepared by Br. Bradley, and the corresponding, by Br. Kendrick.

11. Voted, agreeably with a suggestion of the Townshend Church, and the report of the committee thereon, that Brn. Kendrick, Bradley, Hutchinson, Going and Elliot, be a committee to visit the Church in Londonderry, on 2d Wednesday in Jan. next.

12. Voted, that the above committee also visit the Andover Church, on the Thursday after 2d Wednesday in Jan. next, and inquire of them, whether they believe the sentiments exhibited by their Pastor, Elder Manning, respecting the Son of God?

13. Brn. Kendrick, Hutchinson and Grow, at the request of some brethren in Plainfield, were appointed to visit the Church in that place, and inquire the cause of their neglect represented in Association for some time past.

14. The Westmoreland Church, was at their request dismissed, for the purpose of uniting with the Dublin Association.

15. Voted that the next Association be held at Sutton, north Meeting House, on the last Wednesday in Sept. 1815, at one o'clock, P. M.

16. Voted that Br. Elliot preach the introductory sermon; in case of failure, Br. Bradley.

17. Voted that Br. Going write the circular, and Br. Grow, the corresponding Letter for next year.

The business of the Association being completed, the Moderator gave an affectionate address to the brethren ready to depart. Prayer by Br. Grow.

It is earnestly requested that the churches in their future Letters would distinguish those members received by *letter* from those received by *baptism*; that the minutes may contain an additional column, and so conform to the minutes of other Associations.

Circular Letter.

The Ministers and Messengers of the Woodstock Baptist Association, to the Churches which they represent, send greeting.

Dear Brethren,

Through the abounding grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have been permitted to enjoy another interview.

The countenances of your messengers ; the good tidings they bring ; the sentiments expressed in your letters, and the rich blessings of peace restored to our nation, fill our hearts with sensations too deep, too refined, and too heavenly for language to communicate. *Is not the Lord our God with us ? and hath he not given us rest on every side ?*

With these impressions, we would inquire, by what means we may render ourselves useful in society and become successful in our religious profession. These means are many, and lie around all who are disposed to use them for their own salvation, and the happiness of their fellowmen. To be useful and successful in our religious profession, we must watch over our thoughts, words and actions. *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts.* These must be destroyed or the soul will be injured. If these are admitted freely and find a residence in the heart, the soul will soon be covered with darkness and sink down into stupidity, or burn with jealousy and put forth volitions detrimental to its own peace and advancement in the knowledge of God. In this situation of mind we shall not feel affectionately towards our brethren, or be zealously engaged in the cause of our God.— Religious duties will not be attended with satisfaction. We would, therefore, *beseech every man that is among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; Be not wise in your own conceits.*

When the soul wills wrong; actions if not prevented, will as inevitably manifest the propensities of the mind, 'as rain descends from the clouds, or rivers roll away from their sources.' *For a fountain cannot send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter.*

If we would be useful ; if we would shine as lights in the world, we must examine with unabating assiduity & criticism, all the operations of our minds by the volume of inspiration. If in this examination, we find ourselves involved in guilt ; either by thought, volition or action, it becomes us immediately to repent and turn to our God who will abundantly pardon. *For he that covereth his sins shall not prosper. Keep thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch.*

We must be prayerful. We cannot easily refrain from this plain and important duty, if we suitably examine our own hearts. In these we shall behold a fountain of

impurities, which must be cleaned; strong propensities to selfishness which must be eradicated; and infirmities which none but the Spirit can help.

In approaching God thro' the merits of Jesus, we shall obtain strength, peace, and unspeakable enjoyment. None ever sought him with all their heart, and perished at his feet. *Pray always. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens. Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. Ask, and ye shall receive, Seek, and ye shall find.* This duty must be done not only in secret, but before our families, at such seasons as wisdom and prudence may make it, the most consistent and impressive. The parts of time which have generally been chosen, are morning and evening. Morning, because we have been preserved in our most defenseless hours and raised from emblematical death, to enjoy life refreshed by sleep. Before we engage in business, let us beseech our God to guard, guide and influence us in all our transactions, that we may overcome every temptation, be supported under every trial and *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.* He has led the way. He calls us to follow him. He arose sometimes before day and prayed. He did not always pray and give thanks alone. He took his disciples as a little family with him. Have not some of you families? Do you call them to come with you to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need? Can you answer these questions in the affirmative? If you do not? How can you be useful members in Society and faithful members in the Church while you daily neglect your duty? We presume that your neglect of this duty is attended with many embarrassing consequences, and cannot be justified by you, when you enjoy a refreshing from God's presence and think of appearing before the Judgment seat of Christ. The limits of this letter and some more remarks which we wish to make unto you necessitate us to leave this part of our subject with the addition of a few short prayers. *When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. O visit me with thy salvation. God be merciful to me a sinner. Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

Prayer should be performed at evening ; because we have been preserved thro' all the labours and transactions of the day, from the regions and shadow of death, and are about to rest under the curtains of night, where none but the arm of the Lord can refresh, defend from danger and bring us to the opening eyelids of another morning.

To render ourselves useful, we must read and meditate in the scriptures. . . These are as a *lamp to our feet, and a light to our paths.* Without the true knowledge of these, we shall wander in darkness, err in judgment, be attended with confusion and labour in vain. *Search the scriptures. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* In these you will behold all your wants and duties described ; all your way to heaven laid open ; all things, past, present and to come, relative to the salvation of men, encircled with a line of infinite wisdom and filled with the riches of free grace, flowing thro' the merits of Emmanuel.— In the scriptures the bosom of God is opened ; the glories of immortality brought to light ; and the happiness of the whole ransomed family of Jesus secured. If the Psalmist could say, *Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word,* What may we not say ; since that word has been explained, confirmed and enlarged by the advent, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ ; the acts and writings, of his apostles !

We must attend punctually all our stated meetings,— These are calculated to strengthen and encourage us in our progress. If any difficulty arise among members, it can easily be settled, when the whole Church assemble with devotional hearts, having a single eye, placed on the glory of God and the good of mankind. Should any be providentially detained, let them learn to acquiesce in the decisions of the Church, who have been together, and not strive to involve the body in perplexity and render their acts of none effect. As the first day of the week is distinguished above all others, by opening with its spreading beams, the day of redemption, replete with life and immortality ; it becomes every one to keep it holy unto the Lord. On this day Jesus arose and confirmed the souls of his disciples and gave

new unction to them, with their commission to preach his everlasting gospel. On this day female eloquence announced the doctrine of the resurrection, and roused from slumbering stupidity the followers of the Lamb. They received the glad tidings, and ever after assembled on this day to keep alive those sentiments which unfolded the wisdom, power and divinity of our Lord. God has shed a lustre on this day by clothing his ministers with salvation, by edifying his saints and converting sinners. By attending strickly to our duty on this day, and presenting ourselves and families before the Lord in his sanctuary, we may expect a blessing and render ourselves useful. *Neglect not the assembling of yourselves together.*

We must be very careful whom we appoint to fill the offices of deacons and ministers in the church. If we give our suffrages and are instrumental of placing as leaders in Zion, men who were never constitutionally formed and by suitable experience qualified to fill these important places with scriptural propriety, we shall impede the progress of the gospel, and cause many to err and multitudes to thicken the ranks of infidels.

When the church at Jerusalem was enraptured at the astonishing displays of grace and their daily increase of members; they found, by a sharp reproof from the Grecians, that they had neglected the appointment of deacons, to manage in a prudent and righteous manner their temporal concerns. Wherefore, the apostles called the multitude of the disciples together, and said, *Brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.* When these seven were brought into office and discharged their duty with fidelity *the word of God increased and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.* Concerning ministers of the gospel; they must be good men; sound in the faith; apt to teach. Such men being internally called of God to receive a dispensation of the gospel, and sent by him to preach, will be known by their brethren, as possessing in some good degree gifts which will make room for them. It will be manifest even to those who are without, that these men understand their work, and cannot easily be wrested from their course. Though every true minister

of Jesus is influenced by the Spirit to preach ; yet every one does not possess an equality of talents and literary information. In the first Christian Church there was a diversity of gifts; yet *all by the same Spirit*. When Christ ordained his apostles, *he surnamed them Boanerges* which is, *the Sons of thunder*. Their work proved that they were named by him, who knew what would attend their ministrations. He spake and made them feel and understand as instantaneously as lightnings spread their effulgence before the thunder roars. They commenced their tremendous work among sinners. The heavens opened ; the rain of grace descended ; the Sanhedrim trembled ; the priests of the temple bowed and the whole world lying in wickedness were struck with amazement. Souls were established *and continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*.

We must hold in suitable esteem the officers of the Church. When brethren respect their ministers as they do themselves, they will wait on their ministry, encourage them in the good work, by a constant attention to their necessities, character and usefulness. They will do every thing which lies within their power to render the work of their ministers, agreeable, entertaining and of the first importance among mankind : that they may be *workmen needing not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word and giving to every one a portion in due season*. They will teach their children and all under their care to revere these servants of the living God. They will pray for them in secret and in publick and not be ashamed to speak in vindication of their characters when they are aspersed by the tongue of slander. Can any good man sit silent in company and hear his faithful servant traduced, ridiculed and set at nought by his enemies ? Certainly not. The ministers are your servants ; not bought with money, not hired as common men ; but sent unto you by Christ, as a rich present arising out of his blood shed and death, and coming to you clothed in his merits and pointing out unto you the *way of salvation*. Do men turn away those who have been for years in their service and treat their families with neglect and contempt, when infirmities encompass them, and old age bows them towards the earth ? They do not. Even the sabbath servants in the South and East,

who have wrought but moderately in the fields or plantations of the proud sons of vanity, are decently supported in health, watched over and visited in sickness by able physicians; supplied with the good things of life, when debilitated and loaded with years; and when death marches them from their toils, their families are not turned out to graze like *Nebuchadnezzar until seven times shall have passed over them*.

If you would be useful and instrumental in extending the kingdom of our Lord; you must not only attend publick worship, show every mark of respect to your officers; do your proportional part in supporting them; pray for their souls and beseech God to bring them to your assemblies in the fulness of the Gospel; but you must visit and converse with them frequently upon the doctrine and principles of Christ: Not in a dictatorial manner to them what they must preach, but in a pleasing, familiar simplicity to obtain knowledge from them and to *know those who are over you in the Lord and admonish you*. This mode of conduct and conversation will open fresh fields in which your ministers will labour and bring things new and old, for your entertainment. They will know better how to speak a word in season to your precious souls, and to carry your variety of trials before God; and intercede day and night for your salvation. You must remember that they are earthen vessels, containing a rich treasure from heaven. These vessels may be easily marred; easily cast down and broken. They are imperfect and therefore may amidst the spreading flood of error, imbibe some, which will cloud their minds, ward off the sun beams of righteousness and render their performances cold, dry, hard and fruitless.— If they are naturally vivid in their imaginations; yet being tenacious of inconsistencies, they may blaze like Mount Etna; not with the purifying flames of gospel love, which warm and cheer the cold traveller to eternity; but which devour his strength and sink him in eternal death. To extract these noxious and destructive errors from your preachers, requires great wisdom, prudence, prayfulness, tenderness and persevering godliness. Can you cast these servants from your bosom into a world of strangers to be trodden under foot by the enemies of God? Or will you give up your independence, your judgment and your all to others? Not until

you have tried to the uttermost of your power to reclaim and hold them in reputation. When you have done all, and they still continue their progress in false doctrine, you must be under the painful necessity of withdrawing your fellowship and leaving them without the gates of your Zion.

Your deacons as officers by your appointment must share largely in your affections. They should be encouraged in the good work which you have assigned them. They are to attend carefully to the temporal concerns of the Church and see that their ministers are suitably supported. The poor must be regarded and exhorted to diligence. The deacons are not to bear the expenses of the Church from their own resources, but are to receive their funds from the Church and be faithful in all things. Such will be very useful and instrumental of aiding the dispensation of the gospel.

We must fulfil our promises and be ready to communicate. By making suitable arrangements to meet with promptitude our engagements, we shall not be entangled with the cares and perplexities of this life which very often greatly injure the souls of men, and bind many professors in chains of darkness and ruin their influence among mankind. *Owe no man. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.* By attending to the various avocations of life with fidelity and watching the events of Providence we may generally keep our souls from a multiplicity of difficulties and be able to assist those who are needy. *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord. Jesus said, it is more blessed to give than to receive. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things, are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* God is now reviving his work in many of our states. Schools, academies and colleges are visited by the Spirit of the living God. Youths are forsaking their vain amusements for the never ending pleasures of religion. The heralds of salvation like angels begin to penetrate the benighted kingdoms of men and *proclaim liberty to captives.* O brethren lift up your eyes and behold your God who is moving the heavens and the

earth to accomplish his purposes and bring *all flesh* to see his glory. *Come Lord Jesus come quickly. Amen.*

The ELDERS and MESSENGERS composing the Woodstock Association, to the Associations with which they correspond, send Christian salutation.

DEAR BRETHREN,

All the works of God, are worthy of such an author, and should excite sentiments of gratitude and praise; but of all his works that in which a lost sinner finds his hope and the Church her real glory, is most illustrious and must fill heaven and earth with praise.

When sin, like some fell contagion, seized the human mind, it blasted the union of man with man, of man with God, and of earth with heaven; entered selfishness reigned in the human heart, and scenes of madness and indiscriminate woe, its terrific offspring, threatened an eternal empire.

But in divine revelation, we hear the Almighty early saying that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. God is fulfilling this first and glorious promise; and as one effect of such fulfilment, multitudes have been renewed in the spirit of their minds. They have been made to love God with all their hearts, and each other with a pure heart fervently;—while the chain of fellowship between heaven and earth is displayed to the abundant joy of men and angels.

In the progress of the work of grace, a Church has arisen from the ruins of the fall, whose branches are spreading over the world. These branches are combined in *Associations* for the purpose of promoting christian acquaintance and gospel fellowship, and for the dissemination of those truths which bruise the head of the serpent, and heal those who have drunken of his deadly waters.

For several years past, the different denominations, composing the christian world have seemed to be electrified with a missionary spirit; and, rising above narrow prejudices, and a mercenary temper, they have poured forth their treasures to aid the liberal design of evangelizing the heathen. Joint prayers have ascended the hill of God, for a divine blessing on their benevolent endeavours. In answer to spiritual wrestling, God has done great things in the regions of moral darkness,

whereof we are glad. We congratulate our christian brethren, that the Baptist interest in America, under the apostolick and persevering labours of our beloved brether *Rice*, marshalled on the side of the India Mission, where our bruther, *Cary*, *Marshman*, and *Ward*, have performed, and are still performing acts of benevolence, in comparison of which, all the efforts of men, whose views are limited by this momentary world, dwindle to an imperceptible point.

During the late war, a cloud seemed to rest on the cause of missions, foreign and domestick; -but thanks be given to God, who has graciously restored to us the blessings of peace; a favour desirable, on every account, and especially in relation to missions. May God hasten the day when the sweet favour of the knowledge of Christ shall cover the earth.

God has smiled on our present interview; on some of our Churches the spirit has been poured out and they remain steadfast in the doctrine of grace.

Beloved in the Lord, in a correspondence with you we have been delighted; the presence of your messengers has been to us like the presence of Titus to St. Paul; and your letters like cold water to a thirsty soul.

AARON LELAND, *Moderator.*
 JONATHAN GOING, *Clerk.*