

31656

Baptists. Vermont. Woodstock Association, 1796.

Minutes ... at Woodstock ... September 28th and 29th,
1796.

[Norwich, Ct., 1796.] 8 pp.

AAS copy.

O F T H E

Woodstock Association,

HELD AT WOODSTOCK,

I N T H E

S T A T E O F V E R M O N T,

SEPTEMBER 28th and 29th, 1796.

WEDNESDAY, *September 28.*

THE Association met according to appointment, at 1 o'clock, P. M. Brother *Jeremiah Higbee* preached the introductory sermon, from Gal. ii. 21. *For if righteousness came by the law; then Christ is dead in vain.*

After public worship, chose Elder *Aaron Leland*, Moderator, and Elder *Robert Low*, Clerk.

Read the Letters from the Churches, and took the following accounts of the members who have been added, dismissed, excluded, and died, the year past, and the whole number in each Church.

M. B. Ministers' names in capitals; Those marked thus () were absent, dashes denote no settled minister.*

Churches.	Messengers.	Adm.	Dis.	Exc.	Died	Total
Woodstock,	{ ELISHA RANSOM, Deacon Joseph Cottle, Sylvester Edson.	1	1			148
Canaan,						
Newport,	{ *ABIEL LEDOIT, Asaph Slow, Ralph Chamberlain, Elisha Mercalf.		4		1	92
Sutton, Wendal,	{ *SAMUEL AMBROSE. NEHEM WOODWARD.	3	2			87
Royalton,	{ *JOHN HEBBARD, jun. John Hebbard, Joseph Wheat.	9	1	2		57
Windsor,	{ ROSWEL SMITH, Deacon N. Kendal, Frederick Barnham, Joseph Tompson.	3		1	1	73
1st Westmoreland, Westminster, Marlow,	{ EBENEZER BAILEY. *ELEAZER BECKWITH.				1	73
Dublin,	{ ELISHA WILLARD, Samuel Sergeant, Daniel Cummings	6	2	1		32
Hopkinton,	{ ELIJAH ANDREWS, Benjamin B. Darling.	30	1	1		131
Chester,	{ AARON LELAND, Deacon Edmund Brant. Solomon Snell, Benjamin Boynton.	5		1		26
New London,	{ *JOB SEAMANS, Zebadiah Hayse, John Adams, jun. John H. Maffer.			1	1	103
Ajzed, Woodstock & Bridgewater,	{ JEREMIAH HIGBEE, Joseph Hale.	2				71
Cornish,	{ *JEDEDIAH HEBBARD, Samuel Cummings, John Weld.					116
2d Westmoreland, Mason,	{ WILLIAM ELLIOT, Deacon Jonathan Webber.	1	2		1	56
Temple. Thetford,		3	7	1		101
Norwich,	{ ROBERT LOW, Deacon Samuel Bartlett, Thomas Whipple.	6	1	3	1	28
Plainfield,	{ JONATHAN CRAM, Joseph Blanchard, John F. Thorne.	2				18
Sharon,	John Wedge.		1			33
Grafton,	{ Seth Martin, Elkanah Phillips.					41
Woodborough,	{ SIMEON COMBS, Jacob Batchelor.				1	13
Reading,						45
Jamaica,	{ John Dyer, Benjamin How.	5		3		36
Hanover,	{ Deacon Thomas Ross, Isaac Bridgman, David Eaton.					14
Total.		75	22	16	7	1617

*The last mentioned Church, was received this Session.
Adjourned till to-morrow morning, 8 o'clock.*

THURSDAY, September 29.

Met according to adjournment.

Messengers, and Letters, from the Corresponding Associations.

From Warren association, Elder Isaac Backus.

From New-Hampshire, a letter.

From Meredith, Elder Isaiah Stone, with a letter.

From Vermont, Elders Isaac Beall and Green, and Deacon Joseph Randel, with a letter and minutes.

From Leyden, Elders Afa Hebbard and Isaac Kenney, with a letter and minutes.

From Richmond, Elder Joseph Call.

From Shaftsbury, Brother Asplund and minutes.

Messengers to the Associations.

To Warren, Elders Combs and Leland.

New-Hampshire, Elder Seamans.

Meredith, Elder Higbee, Brothers Asplund and Wheat.

Vermont, Elders Leland and Kindrick, and Brother Asplund.

Shaftsbury, Elder Low, and Brother Asplund.

Leyden, Elders Bailey and Combs.

Richmond, Elders Drew.

Question from the Church in New-London.

Question—Suppose a Brother withdraws himself from the Communion of the church, for a number of months, doth not come to inform the church of the reason, nor enter into any labor with them. At length the church calls upon him to render his reason for such withdraw, he comes and renders his reason, which is by no means satisfactory to the church. After which, he continues his withdraw for a number of months, and in other respects he appears to scatter rather than to gather with the church. What further steps should the church take to satisfy gospel rule?

Answer—As our local distance from you is such that we cannot ascertain your difficulty, yet, if it is as you have stated in your letter, it is the opinion of this association, that the church labor with him in love.

and if he continues obstinate after such labor, it is the duty of the church to exclude him.

Question from the Church in Temple.

Question—Is it scriptural to hold fellowship with a Brother or Sister who hold to the plan of restoration?

It by restoration, you mean, the restoration of all men, and devils, to the favor of God through Christ, we answer, no.

Question 2d from Temple Church.

Question—Is it scriptural under the present dispensation to bring musical instruments into the worship of God?

Answer—God says, be filled with the spirit, speaking to yourselves in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, Eph. v. 18, 19. And we know not of any hint of any use of musical instruments in the apostolic age; therefore, to introduce them into the worship of God, we think unwarrantable, especially, if it be a grief to any pious minds.

Question from Sharon Church.

Question—Is it the duty of a church to discipline a member for saying he could commune with a member of a Presbyterian church, if it did not grieve his own covenant brethren? Answer—No.

Chose Elder Higbee, to inquire of Marlow church, the reason why they have neglected sending to the association the two last sessions, and to make return to the association, at our next session.

Appointed Elder Ebenezer Bailey, to write the circular letter, and Elder Jeremiah Higbee, to write the corresponding letter, for our next session.

The circular letter, brought in, read, and after some amendments, accepted. The corresponding letter brought in, read, and accepted.

Appointed Elder Robert Low, to superintend the printing of the Woodstock association minutes.

Our next association, to meet at Chester, the last Wednesday in September, A. D. 1797.

Elder Ebenezer Bailey, to preach the introductory sermon; in case of failure, Elder John Drew.

Closed the session with a sermon from Elder Isaac

Backus, from Acts xx. 32. *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

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

DEARLY BELOVED,

WHEN we contemplate with wonder the mysterious plan of salvation by Jesus Christ, whereby the guilty sons of Adam are again restored to favor with God through faith in the Redeemer, whereby the Church of the Living God is raised by his Mighty arm, and defended against all her enemies, for (saith he) I loved Zion with an Everlasting love, and no weapon formed against her shall prosper: well may the Redeemer who is appointed head over all things to the Church, be called Wonderful Counsellor, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Again, Christ is the anointed Prophet, none can be compared to him in point of Teaching, the Anointed Priest, the Anointed King, none to him in point of Government; yea, he is set King upon God's holy hill of Zion, that is the Church, whereby she is called the Pillar and Ground of truth: yea, he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, he is also the Everlasting Word, by which God created all things, the same word which holds all things in being, the word which became Flesh and dwelt among us, and said in the day of my flesh, the word, which I speak, shall judge you. John saw him when Heaven opened, and he was clothed with a vesture dipt in Blood, and his name is called the **WORD** of **GOD**, and though Heaven and Earth pass away, his word shall not pass away, nor a tittle of the Law fail, until all be fulfilled. Therefore, beloved Brethren, to the Law and Testimony, and by Faith take hold of this soul-humbling, soul-saving, sin-killing, and God-exalting Word. Let this word dwell in us Richly in our lives and conversation; thus doing, our conversation

will be as becometh the Gospel. It will bring us carefully to watch over ourselves : Watch and pray against being taken by the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil ; And to a readiness to meet death, judgment, and the untried scenes of Eternity.

Thus, viewing the word of God, we shall be zealous to obey the divine authority of it, contending earnestly for this faith once delivered to the saints. Surely, we live in a trying day ; does not that same spirit which did once whip, hang, and banish the fathers, now flatter ? and the same say, no matter which way we go, if we get to heaven at last, no matter what our outward conduct is, if our hearts are right ; for God looks at the heart. Does not such things declare our hearts are not right with God, and our lives at enmity with holiness ? Are Holy souls so concerned to escape Hell, and get to Heaven, as to maintain a holy life in honor to the word, which is our Law ; but is it not apparent watching over ourselves, admonishing our brethren, keeping up faithful discipline in our Churches, becomes the only testimony of our real friendship to the Word that liveth and abideth forever, our only guide and support ?

Dear Brethren, we have to Record the goodness of the Lord which blessed our coming together with peace and harmony ; we may say, the Lord has not forsaken us, blessed be his Holy name.

Be of good Courage, the Lord fights for Zion.

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

To our Sister Associations ; Sendeth Greeting.

Wishing Grace and Peace thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

WE rejoice to inform you of our establishments in the word of God, holding fast the doctrine of total moral depravity, the unalterable nature of God's pure Law, the atonement by Christ, the sovereignty of divine

grace which renews the heart, the certainty of perseverance in order to eternal life : Holding also, the doctrine respecting the independency of churches, and ourselves as a body combined to form christian acquaintance, and promote christian fellowship, and to strengthen each others hands in God. Acting in conformity to these sentiments we send this friendly letter, and pray, receive it as an unfeigned testimony of our sincere regard to your present peace and eternal felicity. We earnestly pray to God that you may walk, unto all well pleasing, holding fast the faithful word, that the workers of iniquity may be reprov'd, and that we by you may be refresh'd, and rejoice with you in the pure fellowship of the gospel. Beloved, it is a time, when the friends of God are loudly called upon to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and may our souls be armed for the blessed war. Was there ever a day when there was more thick and palpably black clouds arose to darken the moral Heavens, than this ? surely no, for false doctrine and abominable practices are pouring in on every side, one says there is no God, and another says, there is no Lord Jesus, and another holds up Heaven as a reward of creature-merit by works, some throw out all good works scarcely allowing, that they are included in the gospel scheme, of salvation, another comes preaching hope for devils and damned men ; however, they preach it here and not where it belongs, and how it will ever be conveyed them we know not, unless that awful gulph can be ^{to} ed up by the power of false doctrine ; notwithstanding ^{lo-} this flood of false doctrine has arisen like the smothering ^{ing} the bottomless pit to hide the light of the sun, yet ^{ke of} ed be God, the saints can see the pillar of fire, and ^{dor-} most holy, yet loves his cause and cares for his children. ^{he} Dear Brethren, stand fast and labor in faith, that you may be counted worthy to stand before the son of man. Let us rejoice believing that He who manifested his scheme of government in grace in Eden's Garden, and has since gloriously carried it on, and will continue so to do until blood and carnage cease, and all Europe are hushed to peace, until the gospel has a more glorious spread, and the Jews brought in to the christian

faith and own their blessed Lord. And also, the kingdom of Heaven shaken until the church is brought into pristine purity, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This God will rule until all his elect are gathered in, and the spiritual house finished, and the mystery of God completed. It is a trying time with the churches, a day neither clear nor dark, but a mixture of both, and we expect it will not close as other days, viz. in night; but end in one clear and eternal day. Brethren we still desire a correspondence with you, and shall always be glad to hear of your affairs, and know how you do.

Brethren we commend you to God, and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified. We would inform you that our present session has been attended with some tokens of God's presence. Beloved, we remain yours in gospel bonds. Fare-well.

AARON LELAND, *Moderator.*

ROBERT LOW, *Clerk.*