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MINUTES

OF THE

Danbury Baptist Association,

HELD AT HUNTINGTON,

OCTOBER THE 2d & 3d, A. D. 1805.

TOGETHER WITH THEIR CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING LETTERS.

WEDNESDAY, October 2d.

1. ASSOCIATION met according to appointment. Introductory Sermon delivered by Elder Daniel Wildman, founded on John iii. 30. first clause, "*He must increase.*"—Intermission one hour. Sermon delivered by Elder Justus Hull, from 1st Peter, ii. 7—"Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious."

2. Proceeded to business. Elder Daniel Wildman, Moderator; and Elder Asahel Morse, Clerk.

3. Letters from the churches in our connection were presented and read, and the following list taken.

N. B.—In the list, Ministers' names are in capitals; Those to which an (*) is affixed, were not present; Dashes (—) denote no settled Ministers; From churches marked thus (+) we received no letters.

Churches.	Messengers.	Added.	Dismiss.	Excom.	Died.	No.
Suffield,	{ *JOHN HASTINGS, *JACOB WINCHEL, DANIEL WILDMAN, Daniel Bester,	69	5	1	1	197
1st Wallingford,	{ John Hall, NATHAN BULKLEY, Thaddeus Morehouse,	3	0	1	0	56
1st Danbury,	{ Joseph Hamilton, Benjamin Bearse,	4	1	0	0	39
2d Wallingford,	{ Ward Johnson, Daniel Chatterton,	0	1	1	1	21
2d Danbury,	{ Bennet Pepper, Peter Ambler,	5	1	5	2	22

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	<i>Adds.</i>	<i>Dismiss.</i>	<i>Excom.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Southington & Farmington,	{	0	1	0	1	81
Litchfield,	{ Levi Moss, John Todd,	0	1	0	0	30
Stratfield,	{ ASAHEL MORSE, Robert Willson, David Silliman, Jesse Silliman,	0	0	1	3	138
Roxbury,	{ ISAAC FULLER, Abijah Fairchild, Andrew Erwin,	2	0	0	0	53
Wolcott & Bristol,	{ Eliada Blakesley, Oliver Tuttle,	5	3	0	1	102
Warren,	{ Timothy Parmelee, David Smith,	1	0	1	0	53
Colebrook,	{ RUFUS BAECOCK, John Stevens,	2	1	0	1	84
2d Sandisfield,	{ * BENJ. BALDWIN, Jaddimer Hubbard, Jarius Barker, Jonathan Smith, 2d.	0	4	0	1	169
2d Paulington,		0	0	0	0	47
+ East-Hartford,	* ALAS BRUMLEY,	0	0	0	0	40
Simsbury,		0	0	0	0	13
Newtown,	{ JOHN SHERMAN, Elijah Sherman, Richard Bennett,	1	1	0	1	27
1st Paulington,	{ ANAN's DERTHICK, Eli Dayton,	0	0	0	1	48
1st Middletown,	{ Enoch Green, James Hart,	0	1	2	1	53
Winchester, Hartford,	* ISAAC BELLOWS,	2	0	0	0	31
		2	2	1	1	69
New-Hartford,	{ Samuel Benham,	0	0	0	0	19
Granville,	* CHRIST'r MINER,	4	1	1	1	47
+ Sharon & Cornwall,	{	0	0	0	0	35
+ Amenia-Town,	* ELIJAH WOOD,	0	0	0	0	24
North-Stamford,	{ Elijah Scofield,	0	0	0	0	22

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This last church received at this meeting of the Association.

4. Elders and Brethren from corresponding Associations, were desired to take a seat with us.

5. Adjourned till eight o'clock to-morrow morning. Worship in several places in the vicinity this evening.

6. *Thursday, October 3d.* Met according to appointment.— Meeting opened by prayer.

7. From the Shaftsbury Association received minutes and their messenger Elder Asa Spencer. From New-York Association minutes, by their messenger Elder Nathaniel Finch. From Stonington Association a copy of their minutes, presented by Brother Morse. From the Sturbridge Association minutes containing their letter.

8. The Corresponding and Circular Letters not being presented as was expected, the Association desired Brother Morse to bring forward a Circular and a Corresponding Letter—he having a manuscript by him containing remarks upon the sacred writings, some of them collected from some of the former minutes of a sister Association, with some similar observations; was read and accepted, and ordered to be printed with our minutes. The Corresponding Letter brought forward by Brother Morse, was read and accepted.

9. Heard the report of Brother Daniel Bester, respecting his not carrying forward our Petition, last spring, to the General Assembly, and voted unanimously that Brother Bester shall be our Agent, in connection with the Agent from the Stonington Association, to present our Petition to the general Assembly of the State of Connecticut at their session in May next.

10. Appointed the following Brethren Delegates to sister Associations. To the Osego, Brother Babcock. To the Shaftsbury, Brother Morse. To the New-York, Brethren Wildman and Morse. To the Stonington, Brethren Morse, Green & Blakelle.

11. Brethren Fountain and Sturdefont presented a request from the Warwick Association, to open a correspondence with us, which was cordially received, and Brother Bulkley appointed our Messenger to them.

12. Appointed Elder Wildman to prepare a Circular Letter, and Elder Sherman the Corresponding Letter, for the ensuing year.

13. Our next Association to be held with the 2d Church of Sandisfield, at the free meeting-house in Bethlehem, on the first Wednesday in October next, at 10 o'clock A. M. Elder Sherman to preach the introductory Sermon, and in case of failure, Elder Fuller.

14. Appointed Elder Morse to superintend the printing of our Minutes.

Supplies for the Church of North-Stamford.

Brother Bulkley, 2d Sunday in November.

Brother Pepper, 1st Sunday in December.

The business of the Association being finished, Elder Babcock preached to the people from Psalm l. 5.

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

The ELDERS and MESSENGERS of the DANBURY ASSOCIATION to the Churches they represent, send Christian salutation.

Beloved Brethren,

THAT the power and majesty of God is revealed in the works of creation ; that his wisdom is manifested in the dispensation of his providence, is evident to every observing intelligent ; but his boundless love and matchless grace are particularly revealed in that sacred book we call the Bible.

That Book we consider as the sacred depository of that truth which God hath revealed concerning himself, respecting his creatures and his dealings with them.

It being such a rich gift from heaven, it cannot be searched too closely, nor admired too much.

The various opinions which men have embraced concerning the Bible, flow not from any different aspects which they may suppose the scriptures exhibit ; but from the prejudices of depraved minds.

Were men divested of prejudice in favor of particular opinions, and would search the Bible candidly and impartially, they would be led to discover the same truths ; and were their hearts disposed, they would mutually embrace the same doctrine.

The principal reason why men harmonize no better in their belief of the doctrine of the Bible, is this, they first set up a standard in their own minds, and then ransack the sacred volume from Genesis to Jude in order to find props to support it ; as if, as the Jewish Rabbies have said, that the scriptures hath seventy-two faces.

But in order that our principles may be supported by the scripture, it is necessary that *they* should be drawn from the Bible ; and then our principles and the support for them will harmonize together.

To assist your minds more diligently to search the word of God and meditate thereon, the following observations are submitted for your consideration.

The antiquity of a part of the sacred writings, is an argument in favor of their divine authority.

The writings of Moses are several hundred years earlier than any profane writings now extant ; which proves that he did not collect them from any records, but wrote by inspiration of God. *The honesty of the penman affords an argument in favor of the truth of the Bible.* Moses, for instance, gives an account of his own sin and of the sins of his brother and sister ; and was plain in pointing out, and reproving his nation for their sins.

He declined the offer of being made great, and of having his family advanced. He prayed for his enemies, and strove to reclaim them. He boasted not of his learning, wisdom, and the honor he had enjoyed in Egypt ; all of which look as if he did not write to aggrandize himself, but to reveal the will of God and do good to mankind. The

same may be said of other sacred writers; they not only confess their sins, but left the same on record that others might fear.

The harmony of the scriptures is an evidence of their being given by inspiration of God

Notwithstanding the Bible was about sixteen hundred years in writing, by men in different ages and circumstances, yet they all convey similar ideas concerning the divine Being, his character and government; and the apostasy and sinfulness of fallen man; and the necessity of a divine Mediator for his recovery and salvation.

The majesty and sublimity of style in which the scriptures are written, bespeak its author to be God.

How flat and insipid are the writings of Homer, Virgil, Xenophon and Cicero, when compared with the Bible.

Some of the most lofty strokes were delivered by rustic men. Amos was not a prophet by birth, nor trained in the schools of the prophets, but was an herd-man and a gatherer of sycamore fruit; and yet some of his tropes are as lofty as the heavens; and the same is true of the writing of David, Isaiah, Zechariah and others. Longinus and Cyrus both acknowledged the sublimity of the style.

The prophetic essays in scripture and their exact accomplishment, harmonize together. Josiah and Cyrus were prophesied of a long time before they were born; and the deeds they should perform. The destruction of various kingdoms was foretold, and afterwards effected.

The coming of John Baptist; the advent of Christ, his ministry, passion and resurrection, the spread of the gospel, and gathering of the gentiles, the destruction of Jerusalem and dispersion of the Jews, were expressly predicted and fully accomplished.

Whatever may be said against the Bible by deists and others, yet it has the pre-eminence of all other books in that it speaks to the heart.

The blessed effect the Bible has had upon the minds and the lives of thousands, in bringing them to love the Divine character and government; and in supporting them under their afflictions and trials of life; and in enabling them to triumph in the hour of death, is not only incontestable evidence of its truth, but a manifestation of its superior excellence and worth.

Some parts of the Bible were written historically, which only narrated facts, and the sense extends no farther.

Others were written parabollically, by which one thing was used to express another: here we should attend to the introduction;—the general scope;—and labor for the obvious meaning——Some were written prophetically, which were to receive their completion in some future day. Here we should observe where, when, and what is the fulfilment of the prophecy. A considerable part of the Bible was written typically, alluding in its fulfilment to its antitype; probably there has no part of the book been more abused, and, consequently, among christians, has occasioned more error, than a misunderstanding of this. A part was written proverbially, in short

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sentences, but serious and expressive; the sense not to be gathered from the preceding, or succeeding verses.

Sometimes the sacred penman used an allegorical mode, by which a continued run of metaphors were used to express some doctrinal truth. Here we should be careful to ascertain the truths to which the metaphors naturally refer.

A small part was written ironically, by which the reader is naturally led to the false, as being brought to view by, and yet opposed to what is expressed. There are some strokes in the hieroglyphical order, in which the characters of certain creatures, letters, or things are borrowed, to point out and bring to view the idea of the writer. But the great and most essential doctrinal part of the Bible, is put in language unequivocal, plain and simple; yet majestic, and exalted above criticism:—solemn as death, and important as eternity; a style becoming the dignity of Him who gave it.

In searching the scriptures, we ought to be very careful not to spiritualize that part which should be understood only literally; nor to mysticallise that part which is plain and simple, to make it speak any thing, and every thing, just as our fancies wish; nor yet to naturalize the spiritual part, and reduce it merely to a literal composition; for this would be derogatory to the dignity both of the book and its Author: But endeavor if possible to gain the genuine meaning of its different parts, as either expressed or implied according to the general analogy of revelation, comparing scripture with scripture, with diligence and perseverance as lovers of the truth: for "It is he who doeth the will of God, that is to know of the doctrine whether it be of God!"

If those who are acquainted with religion by the operation of God's spirit, and a practical experience of the truth in their own hearts, would read, meditate, treasure up and exemplify in their lives the word of God, they would become authordox in the faith; they would be of one judgment and one mind. They would soon become wiser than many of our teachers now are.

Gospel ministers would be like Timothy, who was acquainted with the scriptures from his youth. They would bring forth things new and old, out of the treasure of God's word: And preach as if, truth, the souls of men, and heaven and hell were realities.

Those who have a taste for reading (though unacquainted with the spirituality of the Bible by their own experience) would *search the scriptures and see if these things are so*; they would find more excellent learning, and more solid instruction than is to be found elsewhere; they would leave novels, romances and books of no importance, for that *Book* which is too much neglected.

And now brethren, that we may receive this word in our hearts, practise it in our lives—trust in its promises, and witness to the world that we are Bible christians, may God grant, for the Redeemer's sake.—AMEN.

CORRESPONDING LETTER,

The DANBURY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION to all Corresponding Associations, sendeth Christian love and respect.

Beloved Brethren,

IT is with pleasure unaffected, that we receive your Minutes, Letters and Messengers; and the agreeable intelligence communicated by them; and with pleasure we would make like returns.

While we are called to mourning by the severity of the Divine discipline upon our country in general, and upon some of our commercial towns in particular, we have cause to rejoice in the manifestations of the Divine favor, in continuing to us the privilege of christian correspondence; in the out pouring of God's spirit upon various parts of our sinful land, in particular in the town of Suffield, where it hath pleased the Lord to revive the contrite in heart, and to comfort them that mourn; where the Lord by his grace hath brought a goodly number out of darkness into his marvellous light; where a number of the best characters, who with many of the dear youth, and some of the most inveterate enemies of the religion of Christ, have been brought to bow to his sceptre, and to follow him in the blessed humble way.

One hundred and six have been baptized since our last Association, and added to the churches in that place.

May the Lord grant that the little cloud which has arisen there, may overspread our land, that it may become Emanuel's indeed, a mountain of holiness and a habitation of righteousness.

Since our last, the Lord, by the bereaving stroke of death, has called our beloved father in the gospel, Elder Seth Higbey, from the church militant, as we trust, to the church triumphant; who has left the chariot of Israel and ascended in a chariot of fire, to join the general shout of Angels, and in praises with the spirits of just men made perfect.

Our minutes will shew the state of our churches in general: there is nothing very flattering, nor any thing peculiarly discouraging. We think, however, that light is increasing; and hope that through "The tender mercy of our God, that the day spring from on high will visit our land."

We still feel the burden of ecclesiastical oppression in this State, and do not enjoy that liberty which is the happy lot of many of our sister Associations with whom we correspond.

But while we see our brethren who are in covenant-relation with us, distressed by having their property taken by force of law, and sold at the post to pay preachers whom they do not hear, and whose profession and practice they cannot fellowship; we would desire to be humble under the dispensation of divine Providence, and use every laudable and christian exertion to be freed from the tyrannical yoke.

May God grant that we may continually trust in him, who hath said, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;—And in the world ye shall have tribulation."

Brethren, though we are absent in body, we rejoice that we may be present in spirit, that our prayers may meet before the throne of Him whose eye is upon the righteous, and whose ear is open to their cry.

Our minds have been composed—our meeting joyfu—and our hearts refreshed with the good news we have received from various parts of the Zion of God; for which we thank God, and take courage. Finally, Brethren, farewell.

Signed by order and in behalf of the Association.

DANIEL WILDMAN, *Moderator,*
ASAHEL MORSE, *Clerk.*