

RECORDS
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

EMBRACING THE
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PRESBYTERY AND
GENERAL SYNOD
1706-1788

TOGETHER WITH AN INDEX
AND THE
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL CONVENTION FOR
RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
1766-1773

PHILADELPHIA
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1904

MINUTES

OF THE

GENERAL CONVENTION OF DELEGATES

APPOINTED BY THE

SYNOD OF NEW YORK AND
PHILADELPHIA

AND THE

GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

1766 TO 1775.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE

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PHILADELPHIA, PA.

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION
AND SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK

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INTRODUCTION

THE Minutes printed in this publication are those of a Convention appointed by the General Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the American Colonies, and the General Association of Connecticut, and meeting from 1766 to 1775.

The moving causes of the appointment of the General Convention were the preservation of the religious liberties of the Colonies, the spread of the Gospel on the American Continent, and the promotion of Christian fellowship between the respective Churches. The first step toward coöperation was taken by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the supreme judicatory of the Presbyterian Church in the Colonies. The Overture of the Synod is printed in this volume as a part of the Preliminary Proceedings.

This Overture was submitted to the General Association of Ministers in the Colony of Connecticut, at Guilford, on Tuesday, June 3, 1766. The action taken is recorded in the Preliminary Proceedings.

The places of meeting of the Convention were Elizabethtown, N. J., in the years 1766, 1768, 1770, 1772, and 1774; New Haven, Conn., in 1767 and 1769; Norwalk, Conn., in 1771; Stamford, Conn., in 1773; and Greenfield, Conn., in 1775. The outbreak of hostilities between the American Colonies and the English Government led to the termination of the Convention, the Revolutionary War having made the maintenance of religious liberty the common work of the Colonies.

The Minutes of the Convention show that the first and second meetings were mainly given to the work of framing and completing a Plan of Union, and that the subsequent Conventions earnestly engaged in the devising and executing of measures for the preservation of the religious liberties of Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists and other Christians, threatened at the time by the schemes of some Episcopalians in the Colonies, aided by their friends in Great Britain. These latter endeavored in every way possible to secure the appointment of diocesan Bishops in America. To this Episcopal movement the vast majority of American Christians were opposed. As has been well said, "To Bishops merely to superintend the concerns of Episcopal churches they did not object, if they might be duly restrained from going farther; but were apprehensive, should Bishops be appointed, that they would come clothed with all the powers of diocesans in the mother country, or that they would acquire these powers and exercise them in violation of the Charters of the Colonies, and greatly to the injury of other denominations of Christians." To nullify the efforts of the extreme party in the Episcopal Denomination, the Convention, therefore, entered into correspondence with committees in England, and some of the letters, with the replies, will be found in this volume.

The Convention also made arrangements for gathering the laws and customs of the Colonies respecting religious liberty; for collecting the statistics of non-Episcopalians, with a view to showing that the prelatical element was greatly in the minority in America; and also for a report of the number and condition of colleges and other institutions of learning.

The reports made by the subcommittees of the Convention do not appear in the Minutes, and for the most part have been lost. The extracts, how-

ever, made by the Rev. Elizur Goodrich, D.D., of Durham, of the laws of Connecticut, and the statistics which he gathered were fortunately preserved. They were printed in 1843 by a Committee of the General Association of Connecticut. The statistics show that out of a population in the Colony in 1774 of 190,487, only 9966 were Episcopalians. Estimates given for the other New England and the Middle Colonies make about the same showing.* It was only in certain of the Southern Colonies that Episcopalians were in a majority.

The Minutes in their original form in the possession of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, are in certain places illegible, but in the main are in a fair state of preservation. They were received from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, the Rev. Willard M. Rice, D.D., in whose custody they had been for many years. An edition was published in 1843 by the General Association of Connecticut, under the superintendence of a Committee, of which David D. Field was Chairman, but is now out of print. The only copy in the Library of the Hartford Theological Seminary was loaned to the editor, for which helpful courtesy due acknowledgment is hereby made. The minutes in this edition are printed *verbatim*, and are somewhat fuller than in the previous publication.

The Proceedings of the Convention are worthy of close attention from all persons interested in the history of the American Colonies, and have a marked bearing upon the trend of both political and religious movements prior to the Declaration of Independence. In a letter written to England in 1773, dealing with religious liberty, and signed by John Witherspoon, reference is made to "the great struggle we may be called to make in this glorious cause in which the happiness of thousands yet unborn is so deeply interested."†

The apprehensions that an Episcopal hierarchy might be established in the Colonies was one cause of the American Revolution. To this fact the elder President Adams bore testimony. "'Where is the man to be found,' says he, 'at this day [1815], when we see Methodistical Bishops, Bishops of the Church of England, and Bishops, Archbishops, and Jesuits of the Church of Rome with indifference, who will believe that the apprehension of Episcopacy contributed fifty years ago, as much as any other cause, to arouse the attention not only of the inquiring mind, but of the common people, and urge them to close thinking on the constitutional authority of Parliament over the Colonies?' This, nevertheless, was a fact as certain as any in the history of North America. The objection was not merely to the office of a Bishop, though even that was dreaded, as to the authority of Parliament, on which it must be founded. The reasoning was this: The Archbishops and Bishops in England can neither locate and limit dioceses in America nor ordain Bishops in any part of the dominions of Great Britain, out of the realm, by any law of the kingdom, or of any of the colonies, nor by any canon law acknowledged by either. The king cannot grant his *conge d'elire* to any people out of his realm. There is no power or pretended power, less than Parliament, that can create Bishops in America. But if Parliament can erect dioceses and appoint Bishops, they may introduce the whole hierarchy, establish tithes, forbid marriages and funerals, establish religion, forbid dissenters, make schism heresy, impose penalties extending to life and limb, as well as to liberty and property." [See Morse, *Annals of the American Revolution*, pp. 197-203.]

The second President of the United States of America realized clearly what many secular historians have failed to apprehend in an adequate manner—the power of religion in connection with great national movements.

* See pp. 38, 42.

† See p. 38.

There can be no question that in those American Colonies which were founded by evangelical Christians, one of the principal forces which brought about the Revolution of 1776 was ineradicable opposition to even the possibility of ecclesiastical tyranny in the New World. The determination was widespread among the Calvinists of every name that they would not submit to even a suggestion of the persecutions and restrictions from which their ancestors had suffered. With this position of the membership of the Protestant Churches the political leaders of the Colonies fully sympathized. Even among the Episcopal laity the opposition was strong to any proposal for an episcopate in the Colonies which should result in an establishment of religion.*

Religious liberty was not a feature of the government of a majority of the Colonies at their first settlement. In some of them, as already indicated, the religious establishment was that of the Episcopal Church. In others the Episcopalians were dominant to the degree that they were able to repress the religious opinions and practices of so-called dissenters. The imprisonment of the Rev. Francis Makemie and the Rev. John Hampton, in 1704, by Lord Cornbury, Governor of New York and New Jersey, is historic, and the former was submitted to a trial, though acquitted by a jury. Further, in several of the New England Colonies, the Congregational Establishments for a time limited the rights of conscience. Connecticut, in 1742, for instance, passed an offensive law, aimed at the ministers engaged in the great revival under George Whitefield, and Dr. Trumbull, in his second volume of *The History of Connecticut*, censures the act in very strong language. The Rev. Elizur Goodrich of that Colony, a member of the Convention whose Minutes are herein printed, well says in a paper on the Colonial laws: "It is certain that for a considerable time there was too much of a coercive uniformity in the laws of the Colony, but this by degrees disappears and an equally universal Protestant liberty is established in its room. Those laws which were inconsistent with freedom of thought and liberty of conscience are either wholly repealed and set aside, or so modeled that none can be oppressed by them. Whatever oppressive measures have been heretofore adopted, we recollect with regret and disapprobation. We rejoice that these have ceased, and that there is such freedom of religious inquiry and worship that no man need be in bondage."

In the effort to secure full religious liberty for the American Colonies the Presbyterian Church bore a leading part. In 1729 its General Synod denied to the civil magistrate what the Westminster Assembly permitted, a controlling power over Synods with respect to the exercise of their ministerial authority. The Synod also denied to the civil magistrate "the power to persecute any for their religion." These acts appear to be the first declaration by an organized Church on American soil, of the freedom of the Church from control by the State, and of absolute liberty of conscience. The Presbyterian Church was favored in its struggles for religious liberty by the Constitution of the Colony within which it was first fully organized, and where, in the providence of God, it had for years, and still has, a great number of adherents. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was established to secure for all who might settle within its borders both civil and religious liberty. Persecution for religion's sake was contrary to the principles of the founder, and absolute freedom of conscience was the law of the land. Twenty-five years before 1776, the Liberty Bell was placed in the city hall at Philadelphia with the inscription upon it, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." It was in a State free from its first

* See pp. 26, 32.

settlement that the death knell of religious intolerance was sounded, that the Presbyterian Church was organized and attained to its full development, and that the Declaration of Independence was adopted. And it is greatly to the credit of the founders of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and of those Christians of whatever Church who sympathized with their views, that these convictions became, through their efforts, at last dominant in a majority of the Colonies, and after the achievement of independence became the guiding principles of the relations of Church and State and of Christian Churches one to another in the American Republic.

Among the names of the members of the Convention appear those of several persons who became prominent in the struggle of the Colonies for independence, notably, Francis Allison, D.D., of Philadelphia; John Rodgers, D.D., of New York; and John Witherspoon, D.D., President of Princeton College and signer of the Declaration of Independence. It is appropriate here to state the fact that Dr. Witherspoon was the author of the pastoral letter sent out in 1775 by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, to all its ministers and congregations, in which the following paragraph appears:—

“Be careful to maintain the union which at present subsists through all the Colonies; nothing can be more manifest than that the success of every measure depends on its being inviolably preserved, and therefore we hope that you will leave nothing undone which can promote that end. In particular, as the Continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia, consists of delegates chosen in the most free and unbiassed manner by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect and encouraged in their difficult service—not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction in their proceedings—but adhere firmly to their resolutions; and let it be seen that they are able to bring out the whole strength of this vast country to carry them into execution. We would also advise, for the same purpose, that a spirit of candor, charity, and mutual esteem be preserved and promoted toward those of different religious denominations. Persons of probity and principle of every profession should be united together as servants of the same Master, and the experience of our happy concord hitherto in a state of liberty should engage all to unite in support of the common interest; for there is no example in history in which civil liberty was destroyed and the rights of conscience preserved entire.” (Records of Synod, 1775, p. 468.)

In connection with the Minutes of the Convention attention is drawn to certain facts connected with the history of the General Association of Connecticut. These facts will explain why the General Synod and that Association readily entered into coöperation one with another, both prior to and after the American Revolution. The General Association met first in 1709, and was organized as a result of the Church principles adopted by the Synod at Saybrook, Connecticut, held in 1708. Under the plan adopted by that Synod, commonly known as the “Saybrook Platform,” the parish churches of Connecticut were organized into Consociations for mutual counsel and help, and the ministers of the churches were organized into Associations for consultation, ministerial licensure, ordination, and recommendation. In addition, the ministerial Associations elected delegates to an annual General Association of the whole Colony. The Church government of the Connecticut Churches, therefore, was an approach to the Presbyterian Government. Further, both the Presbyterian and the Congregational Churches throughout the Colonies in the eighteenth century were supporters of the Westminster Confession. In creed and in government there was much, therefore, to bind the churches of Connecticut to the Presbyterians of the Middle Colonies.

The fellowship existing between them found expression in many ways, both before and after the Revolution of 1776. The Calvinists of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts, as Prof. Williston Walker states in his *History of the Congregational Churches in the United States*, had, for the latter half of the eighteenth century, been drawn "into closer affiliation with the Presbyterians of the Middle States, who largely sympathized with their doctrinal views. The elder Edwards, who was president of Princeton College, and nearly half the trustees of that institution at the time of Edwards' incumbency, had had their education at Yale." Further, the Churches of Connecticut increasingly inclined to the conviction that they were akin in government to the Presbyterians. The Hartford North Association in 1799 declared by formal Resolution that the constitution of the Connecticut Churches contained "the essentials of the Church of Scotland or Presbyterian Church in America." The General Association of Connecticut in 1788 spoke of the plan of union then offered as "a scheme for an union of the Presbyterians in America," and in 1805 called the Saybrook Platform "the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in Connecticut." The parish churches of that Colony were often designated, and are still in many cases known as, Presbyterian churches. All this suggests why from 1766 down to 1837 the General Association of Connecticut and the Supreme Judiciary of the Presbyterian Church, whether General Synod or General Assembly, were associated together, first for the welfare of the American Colonies and afterwards for the religious advancement of the United States of America.

The expense of the publication of these Minutes is borne by the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-school Work, upon the recommendation of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. The thanks both of the Church and of the general public are due to the Board and its officers.

WM. HENRY ROBERTS.

PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

THE proceedings preliminary to the General Convention for the preservation of the religious liberties of the Colonies began with the action of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, of the Presbyterian Church in America, at its sessions in the City of New York, in 1766. On May 30th of that year the General Synod, having given the subject careful consideration, took action which is recorded in its Minutes as follows:—

ACTION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD.

“An Overture was brought in to endeavor to obtain some correspondence between this Synod and the Consociated Churches in Connecticut. A copy of a letter from this Synod to them was also read and approved, and the Rev. Messrs. John Ewing, Patrick Allison, and the moderator, are desired to present this letter and confer with our brethren upon this affair. And in case it shall seem meet to our reverend brethren to attend to this our proposal, so far as to appoint commissioners from their body to meet with commissioners from ours, we appoint the Rev. Dr. Allison and the Rev. Messrs. Timothy Jones, William Tennent, Sr., John Rodgers, Elisha Kent, John Smith, John Blair, and Samuel Buel, to meet with them at such time and place as the reverend brethren of Connecticut shall agree. Mr. Rodgers is appointed to give the Committee notice of what the associated brethren will do relative to this matter.” (Records of Synod, pp. 363, 364.)

LETTER OF THE GENERAL SYNOD.

“Rev. and Dear Brethren:—The Synod of New York and Philadelphia at their annual meeting in May, 1766, have, among many other expedients to promote the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, concluded, upon the most mature deliberation, that a general meeting of delegates both from your Churches and our Presbyteries would answer this important purpose. Our earnest desire to accomplish so good an end has engaged us to embrace this opportunity of your next General Association, to propose the matter to your serious deliberation, and to invite you to a general consultation about such things as may have a hopeful tendency to promote and defend the common cause of religion against the attacks of its various enemies; as we are all brethren, embarked in the same interest, perfectly agreed in doctrine and worship, substantially pursuing the same method of discipline and church government, and we trust all animated with the same laudable zeal to advance the kingdom of our common Lord, we cannot but hope for your ready concurrence with our invitation. Your good sense and general acquaintance with human nature must necessarily lead you to see that a more intimate acquaintance with each others' views and designs will enable us with greater harmony and consistence, and of consequence with greater success to support the common cause, in which we are all equally engaged. A general agreement in any measures that may be adapted to preserve our religious liberties against all encroachments, and to bless the benighted heathen on our borders with the glorious light of the Gospel, must promise desirable success. From the best information we can obtain about the constitution of your churches we are persuaded that our proposal is not impracticable, and it will give us sensible pleasure to find that your extensive charity and readiness to promote the kingdom of Christ have induced you to concert such measures as will be best adapted to accomplish so important an end. We have appointed the Rev. Mr. Elihu Spencer, Mr. John Ewing, and Mr. Patrick Allison to wait upon you at your next General Association, to deliver you our letter, and to converse with you at large on the subject of this proposal.

“Signed, by order of Synod,

“ELIHU SPENCER, *Moderator.*”

The Minutes and letter of the General Synod were presented and considered by a meeting of the General Association of the Ministers in the Colony of Connecticut, at Guilford, June 17, 1766, at the house of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Ruggles. The reply of the General Association was as follows:—

REPLY OF THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

“Whereas a proposal has been made to this General Association by the Rev. Synod of New York and Philadelphia, representing that they are strictly united with us in doctrine and worship, as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and that the great and general interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom would be happily promoted, the common cause of religion and virtue strengthened and defended, whilst mutual benevolence and brotherly love would be cultivated by a general union, agreement, and correspondence with us, so far, and in such manner as is consistent and in no degree interfering with their and our respective internal state and order of government and discipline; and that it will give them great satisfaction to meet a number of our ministers at a suitable time and place, to converse with them upon a plan and articles of such desired union.

“We, therefore, having maturely considered their proposal, are unanimously agreed to use our influence to promote a compliance with it through this Colony, and we do in order thereto advise the several Associations to appoint one or more of their body to meet commissioners from the Synod before mentioned, at New York, the first Wednesday in November next [Nov. 5], to converse with them upon a plan and articles of such desired union, to be laid before the several Associations for their concurrence, and to be prepared for the consideration of the next General Association, and then to be completed. Voted in the affirmative.” [Records of Association, June, 1766.]

The foregoing reply was enclosed in a letter from the Rev. Thomas Ruggles, Moderator of the General Association, and sent to the Rev. Mr. Rodgers, of New York. The letter is as follows:—

“*Guilford, June 17, 1766.*

“With gratitude we have received the friendly proposal from your Rev. Synod relative to a general union, and our ready compliance with it comes enclosed; and we shall rejoice if the design may be happily carried into execution and answer the good and valuable ends in view. And may the glorious and blessed time approach when love and union may prevail among all denominations of Christians through the world. We are, reverend sir, your affectionate brethren.

“Signed, by order of the Association,

“THOMAS RUGGLES, *Moderator.*”

At an adjourned session of the General Association at the Chapel Hall, in New Haven, September 11, 1766, the following order was taken:—

“This Association met according to adjournment, and upon the unanimous motion and desire of the large Convention of ministers present on occasion of the commencement, the Moderator of this Association is requested by writing to desire the Rev. Mr. Rodgers that the intended interview of delegates from the Rev. Synod of New York, etc., and the several Associations of this Colony, may be at Jamaica, on Long Island, and not at New York, as was at first proposed, where it could not be attended without danger of the small-pox. Voted in the affirmative.”

EDWARD EELLS, *Scribe.*

The contemplated meeting was finally appointed to be at Elizabethtown, New Jersey.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE APPOINTING JUDICATORIES

1. SYNOD OF NEW YORK AND PHILADELPHIA.

THE proceedings taken by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia of the Presbyterian Church in America, from 1767 to 1775, in connection with the Joint Convention are as follows:—

1767.

“The consideration of the correspondence with the associate churches of Connecticut resumed.

“The Minutes of a Convention held at Elizabethtown, the fifth of November last, by delegates from the consociated churches in Connecticut and from this Synod were read, and a plan of union proposed between the Congregational, consociated, and Presbyterian Churches formed at that Convention was seriously considered and amended; and the following gentlemen, with any other ministers of this reverend body that please to attend, are appointed to meet with the delegates or commissioners from the Congregational and consociated, or any Presbyterial bodies, at New Haven, the tenth day of next September, and there finally, on the part of this body, to complete the plan of union, and transact all other business that shall be found necessary in consequence thereof.

“The gentlemen appointed are the Rev. Messrs. Lewis, Buel, Mills, McWhorter, Rodgers, Hait, Kirkpatrick, Reed, Ramsey, Beatty, Dr. Allison, Ewing, Blair, Spencer, Wilson, Miller, Duffield, Robert Smith, Graham, and Ball.” (Records of Synod, p. 373.)

1768.

“The members of this Synod, appointed to meet the Convention at New Haven last year, report that many of them did meet according to order, and the plan laid before the Synod last year was accepted; and that they have appointed another Convention the first Wednesday of October, at Elizabethtown, and the following gentlemen are now appointed by this Synod to be delegates from this body to meet at said convention, viz.; Messrs. Case, Kent, Lewis, Mills, Rodgers, Jones, Jacob Green, Caldwell, William Tennent, Kirkpatrick, Blair, Spencer, Robert Smith, Miller, Montgomery, Duffield, Hunt, Richard Treat, Hunter, Ewing, Joseph Treat, Dr. Allison, Mead, Close, Brainerd, Allison, Finley, James Kerr, and Cooper.

“The Synod does order Dr. Allison to write to the General Association of Consociated Churches in Connecticut to appoint one of their members to open with a sermon at Elizabethtown; and the Synod orders that the Minutes of said Convention be laid before this body every year.” (Records of Synod, pp. 380 and 381.)

1769.

"The delegates appointed to meet the Rev. General Convention at Elizabethtown last October, laid before the Synod the Minutes of the Convention agreeable to a standing order for that purpose.

"As the next General Convention is to meet the fourteenth of September at New Haven, the Synod appoints to attend on that occasion the following members, viz. ; the Rev. Messrs. John Strain, Richard Treat, James Sproat, John Brainerd, Joseph Montgomery, John Craighead, Jacob Kerr, Elihu Spencer, John Ewing, Patrick Allison, Dr. Witherspoon, William Tennent, Dr. Rodgers, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, John Close, Samuel Buel, Solomon Mead, and Wheeler Case ; Dr. Witherspoon is appointed to open the Convention, or, in case of his absence, Dr. Rodgers." (Records of Synod, p. 392.)

1770.

"The delegates appointed to meet the Rev. General Convention at New Haven in September last laid before the Synod the Minutes of the Convention.

"As the next General Convention is to meet at Elizabethtown the first Wednesday of October, at eleven o'clock, the Synod appoints to attend on that occasion the Rev. Messrs. Beatty, Sproat, Brainerd, Ewing, Montgomery, William Foster, Bacon, Spencer, Miller, Duffield, King, William Tennent, Dr. Witherspoon, Hait, Halsey, Jones, Horton, Dr. Rodgers, Treat, McWhorter, Blair, Caldwell, Graham, Lewis, Mills, and Tallmage." (Records of Synod, p. 406.)

1771.

"The delegates appointed to meet the Rev. General Convention at Elizabethtown, in October last, brought in the Minutes of their proceedings, which were read.

"As the next General Convention is to meet at Norwalk the first Wednesday of September next, at eleven o'clock, the Synod appoints as delegates to attend upon that occasion the Rev. Messrs. William Tennent, Jeremiah Halsey, James Sproat, John Brainerd, Dr. Francis Allison, Dr. John Rodgers, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, Azel Roe, Elihu Spencer, J. Treat, Joseph Montgomery, John Blair, John Close, Jedidiah Chapman, John Woodhull, Dr. John Witherspoon, Charles Beatty, Solomon Mead, and Samuel Mills.

"And the Rev. Mr. John Blair, or, in his absence, the Rev. Joseph Montgomery, is appointed to open the Convention by a sermon." (Records of Synod, p. 416.)

1772.

"The Minutes of the last General Convention were laid before the Synod, which were read ; and as the next General Convention is to meet at Elizabethtown the fourth Wednesday in September next, the Synod appoint as delegates to attend upon that occasion the Rev. Messrs. George Duffield, James Hunt, John Miller, Joseph Montgomery, William Foster, John Carmichael, Richard Treat, James Sproat, John Brainerd, Dr. Francis Allison, John Ewing, Dr. John Witherspoon, William Tennent, Elihu Spencer, Jeremiah Halsey, Dr. John Rodgers, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, Joseph Treat, William Mills, John Close, Samuel Mills, and Ichabod Lewis." (Records of Synod, pp. 426 and 427.)

14 PROCEEDINGS OF THE APPOINTING JUDICATORIES

1773.

"The Minutes of the last General Convention were brought by Dr. Rodgers, their stated register, and read; and as the Convention is to meet again at Stamford, in Connecticut, the first Wednesday in September next, at eleven o'clock, we appoint to attend there and to act as members from the Synod, the Rev. Dr. Francis Allison, Dr. John Witherspoon, Dr. John Rodgers, Andrew Hunter, Elihu Spencer, John Brainerd, Benjamin Hait, John Ewing, Benjamin Chesnutt, Joseph Montgomery, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, Joseph Treat, John Carmichael, William Mills, John Close, Jeremiah Halsey, Samuel Mills, and Ichabod Lewis; and Dr. Witherspoon to open the Convention with a sermon, but in case he should fail, Mr. McWhorter is appointed in his room." (Records of Synod, p. 440.)

1774.

"The Minutes of last General Convention were brought in by Dr. Rodgers, their stated register, and read; and as the next Convention is to meet at Elizabethtown, the third Wednesday of September, at three o'clock, P. M., we appoint the Rev. Messrs. Dr. Francis Allison, Dr. John Witherspoon, Dr. John Rodgers, Richard Treat, William Tennent, James Sproat, Jacob Green, Andrew Hunter, Benjamin Chesnutt, Israel Read, Elihu Spencer, John Miller, Benjamin Hait, Jeremiah Halsey, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, John Woodhull, Jedidiah Chapman, and George Duffield to attend there as members of the said Convention from this body." (Records of Synod, pp. 453 and 454.)

1775.

"The Minutes of the last General Convention were brought in by Dr. Rodgers, their stated register, and read.

"The Synod appoint as delegates for the next Convention, Messrs. Dr. Witherspoon, Dr. Allison, Dr. Rodgers, Wheeler Case, Ichabod Lewis, Samuel Mills, David Rose, John Davenport, Joseph Treat, Thomas Lewis, Benjamin Woodruff, John Close, Benjamin Hait, Jeremiah Halsey, Elihu Spencer, Israel Read, John Brainerd, James Sproat, Nathaniel Irwin, Robert Davison, Joseph Montgomery, and John Woodhull, to meet at Greenfield in Connecticut, the first Wednesday of next September. Mr. Joseph Treat to open the Convention with a sermon, and in case of Mr. Treat's absence Mr. Hait to preach the sermon." (Records of Synod, p. 464.)

1776.

"The Minutes of the last Convention were brought in and read.

"The Synod, considering the distracted situation of our public affairs, judge that an attendance on the Convention by any of their members the ensuing appointment will be impracticable, and order Dr. Rodgers to inform the General Association as early as possible thereof, together with their design of sending members to attend at the place appointed, on the third Wednesday of September, 1777." (Records of Synod, p. 473.)

1777.

"The Synod are of opinion that they cannot send any members to meet the General Convention on the third Wednesday of September next, and order Mr. Sproat to give notice thereof to the General Association of Con-

necticut ; and that the Synod will cheerfully appoint members to attend said Convention whenever the situation of public affairs will admit of it." (Records of Synod, p. 477.)

II. GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT.

The proceedings of the General Association of Connecticut as reported in the edition of the Minutes of the Convention, published in 1843, were as follows :—

1767.

"The Association being informed by the delegates that the several particular Associations in the Colony have considered and approved the design of a Convention at New Haven next September, agreeable to the motion made at the Convention in Elizabethtown last November, and have appointed delegates to attend it, desire the Moderator to signify the same to the Rev. Synod by a letter to the Rev. John Rodgers of New York, which is as follows :—

"Rev. Sir :—By order of the General Association now regularly convened at Middletown, I am desired to inform you, and by you, the Rev. Synod of New York and Philadelphia, that the proposed Convention at New Haven in September next has been considered and approved by the particular Associations through the Government, and they have appointed delegates to attend the Convention agreed to by the Rev. Convention at Elizabethtown in November last ; and to assure you that with great respect we are your brethren in the faith and fellowship of our common Lord Jesus Christ." (The Rev. Thomas Ruggles was the Moderator.)

1768.

"Voted, that Mr. Dickinson, who is appointed a delegate to the General Convention at Elizabethtown in October next, be desired to preach at the opening of the Convention ; and in case of his failing, Mr. Williams, another of our delegates, is desired to attend that service."

There are also entries of a concurrence of the General Association with the Synod about the admission of members to the Convention, and about voting, which will appear in the Minutes of the next Convention, and need not therefore be inserted in this place.

1769.

"In the brief Records of the General Association of Connecticut for 1769 nothing is said about the General Convention."

1770.

"The Rev. Mr. Lockwood of Wethersfield is appointed to preach the sermon in the public Convention at Elizabethtown, and in case of his failure, Mr. Ross."

1771.

"The Rev. Messrs. Taylor and Ross, according to the appointment of the last General Convention, laid before this body the importance of punctually attending every General Convention, particularly the next at Norwalk, and 'tis hereby earnestly recommended to the delegates now chosen that they do attend."

1772.[✓]

"Instructions to the delegates of the several Associations to attend the next General Convention to meet at Elizabethtown the last Wednesday but one in September, 1772.

"Rev. Brethren :—Whereas some of the clergy of the Church of England have shewed great assiduity in soliciting an American Episcopate, and petitions (as we are informed) have been preferred to his Majesty, the Archbishop of Canterbury, &c., by Messrs. Cooper and Horrax, requesting the same, we inform you that 'tis the advice of this Association that you heartily concur with the Southern gentlemen in counteracting any motions that have or shall be made for said Episcopate, in such manner as may seem most convenient in said Convention.

"Voted, That the Rev. Samuel Clark, who is appointed delegate to the next General Convention at Elizabethtown, be desired to open said Convention with a sermon ; and in case of his failing, Mr. Cotton M. Smith, another of our delegates, is desired to perform that service.

"Voted, To desire the Rev. Noah Wells, standing Register of the General Convention, annually to lay before this Board the doings of said Convention."

1773.[✓]

The Records of the General Association of Connecticut for 1773 do not notice the General Convention.

1774.

"The Rev. Samuel Lockwood is appointed to preach the sermon at the opening of the next General Convention at Elizabethtown, and in case of his failure, the Rev. Mr. Baldwin is appointed.

"The doings of the last General Convention were read before this Association, and were well accepted."

1775.[✓]

In the recorded Minutes of the General Association of Connecticut, in June, 1775, there is no notice of the doings of the General Convention the preceding year, nor reference to the then succeeding meeting the same year.

1776.

The original Minutes of the General Association of 1776 are lost, and it is not known whether any report of the General Convention of 1775 was made to the Association at that time.

NOTE.—While the General Convention did not meet after the year 1775, and while the success of the American arms made unnecessary any united effort against the establishment of a Diocesan Episcopacy in the new world, yet the coöperation of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia and the General Association of Connecticut for the spiritual welfare of the American people was continued, and is referred to in the Introduction.*

* See p. 5.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL CONVENTION

1766.

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Elizabethtown, New Jersey, Nov. 5th, 1766.

The Convention of the Rev. the Delegates from the several Associations in Connecticut, and the Rev. Committee of the Synod of New York and Philada. met according to agreement.

Present from Connecticut: the Rev. Messrs. Noah Welles, Samuel Newel, James Sproat, Eliezer Goodrich, Benjamin Boardman, and William Tennent, Jr. C
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Members of the Synod: Rev. Messrs. William Tennent, Sr., Dr. Francis Allison, John Blair, Timothy Jones, John Brainerd, Samuel Buel, Azariah Horton, Charles Beatty, William Mills, Alexander McWhorter, Benjamin Hait, Jonathan Elmer, Israel Read, John Guild, Benjamin Woodruff, Azel Roe, Joseph Treat, Patrick Allison, Jedidiah Chapman, and John Rodgers. P
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Mr. Welles opened the Convention with a sermon from Rom. iii. 31, after which Mr. Welles was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Rodgers, Scribe.

Adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. Concluded with prayer.

Nov. 6, 1766. 6th day, 9 o'clock, A. M. Post preces sederunt qui supra.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last sederunt be read.

Present also this day from Connecticut: the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Bellamy, Robert Ross, and Nathaniel Taylor; and of the Synod, the Rev. Mr. Enoch Green. C
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The Minutes of the Synod respecting this Convention, and their letter to the associated brethren of Connecticut, inviting them thereto, were read; as also the commission of the several brethren from that Colony, given them by their respective Associations.

The design of this Convention was then opened, and two papers on the subject were read. Agreed that they be taken into consideration, which was accordingly done, and after some consideration on their several articles, adjourned till three o'clock, P. M. Concluded with prayer.

3 o'clock P. M. P. P. S. Q. S.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last sederunt be read.

Mr. John Carmichael, a member of Synod, is also present. The Convention proceeded to consider the articles of the papers read the last sederunt, and the following general articles were agreed to, to be laid before our respective constituents:— P

A plan of union humbly proposed to the Commissioners from the Consociated Churches in Connecticut, and the United Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met at Elizabethtown, Nov. 5, 1766.

1st. That a General Convention be formed of the Pastors of the Congregational, Consociated, and Presbyterian Churches in North America, consisting of delegates, chosen by each of these respective bodies, to be held annually, or as often as may be thought necessary, and that the first

Convention be held at New Haven the next day after their public commencement, which will be the 10th day of Sept., 1767.

2d. That this General Convention shall not be invested with, nor shall it at any time hereafter assume any power, dominion, jurisdiction, or authority over the Churches or Pastors, or any other Church or Pastor. And it is particularly agreed that the Congregational, Consociated and Presbyterian Churches shall subsist intire and independant of each other, notwithstanding this union, retaining their peculiar usages and forms of government; nor shall ever attempts be made, nor any authority directly or indirectly used by this General Convention to change or assimilate the same.

3rdly. That the general design of this Convention be to gain information of the public state of this united cause and interest; to collect accounts relating thereto; to unite our endeavors and counsels for spreading the Gospel and preserving the religious liberties of our Churches; to diffuse harmony and keep up a correspondence throughout this united body and with our friends abroad, to recommend, cultivate, and preserve loyalty and allegiance to the King's Majesty, and also to address the King or the King's Ministers from time to time with assurances of the unshaken loyalty of the pastors comprehended in this union and the churches under their care, and to vindicate them if unjustly aspersed.

4th. That summary accounts of all the informations and transactions in this General Convention be from time to time duly transmitted to all the Associations, Presbyteries, or any other bodies that shall accede to, or be included in, this Union.

It is also agreed that letters be wrote to the Rev. the ministers of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches of the Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island governments, informing them what we have done at this General Convention, and inviting them in the warmest manner to meet us by proper deligates at New Haven on the day agreed on; as also that letters of the same nature or tenor be wrote to the Rev. brethren of the Dutch Reformed Churches in the Provinces of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; and Mr. Bellamy, Mr. Beaty, and Mr. McWhorter are desired to prepare draughts of said letters, to be brought in to-morrow morning; and inasmuch as there are three Associations in Connecticut who are not represented in this Convention, Mr. Sproat is desired to communicate a copy of this Plan to the Moderator of the two Associations in New London county, and Mr. Newel is desired to communicate one to the Moderator of the Association of Windham.

Adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. Concluded with prayer.

Nov. 7, 1766. 7th day, 9 o'clock, A. M. P. P. S. Q. S.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last sederunt be read. The Committee appointed to prepare the draught of a letter to the Brethren of the Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island governments and of the Dutch Churches, brought it in, which was read, approved, and is as follows:—

To the Reverend, the, &c., Convention of the Congregational pastors in Massachusetts Bay:—The Rev'd Delegates from the Associated Pastors in Connecticut and the Rev'd Committee of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, convened at Elizabethtown, November 5, 1766.

Rev. Brethren:—The Synod of New York and Philadelphia, at their last session in May, taking into serious consideration the many valuable purposes, both for promoting the kingdom of Christ and preserving our religious liberty, that might be answered by a general union of the Congregational, Consociated, and Presbyterian Ministers in these Colonies of North America, proposed their thoughts to the Rev. Associated Pastors of Connecticut, who appointed delegates from each of their Associations to meet with a Committee of said Synod, to concert some plan wherein they

might unite, and then lay said plan before their respective constituents, who accordingly met and drew up such a plan of union as appeared to them expedient, which, if approved by our constituents, will be confirmed at our first General Convention, which is to be at New Haven the 10th of Sept., 1767. And as we greatly desire that your union should extend through all the Colonies, we embrace this first opportunity to inform our brethren of it in the other Provinces, that, if agreeable to them, they may send delegates to this General Convention, to unite in this important design and assist in finishing and compleating the plan, of which we enclose you a copy, that you may have time to deliberate upon it, and if you think proper to unite with us, may have opportunity to make such emendations as you shall judge expedient.

Your presence with us, by such gentlemen as you shall appoint from your Rev. body, in such way and manner as appears to you most convenient, will be very acceptable to your brethren in our common Lord.

Per order of the present Convention,

NOAH WELLES, *Chairman.*

It is agreed that these letters be signed by the Chairman, in the name of the present Convention.

Adjourned till 3 o'clock, P. M. Concluded with prayer.

3 o'clock, P. M. Post preces sederunt qui supra.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last sederunt be read.

The letters to the several brethren to the eastward invited to join with us in this union were properly signed, and sent together with the plans enclosed.

The Scribe is desired to send proper copies of this letter to the pastors of the Dutch Reformed Churches, together with a plan of the proposed union. Concluded with prayer.

PROPOSED LETTER.

(The following proposed letter is annexed to the foregoing Minutes, as found in the edition of 1843. It is stated to have been written by the Register of New Haven East Association, and is here inserted as throwing light upon the general situation in 1766.)

Suppose a gentleman in the Colonies should write to his correspondent in London as follows:—

"Sir:—We understand sundry petitions have been sent home by some of the Episcopal Clergy in these Colonies in order to obtain the appointment of a Bishop here; and that it is a determined point on your side of the water to embrace the first favorable opportunity for that purpose. This affair we must confess gives us much anxiety, not that we are of intolerant principles; nor do we envy the Episcopal Churches the privileges of a Bishop for the purposes of ordination, confirmation, and inspecting the morals of their Clergy, provided they have no kind of superiority over, nor power any way to affect the civil or religious interests of other denominations. Let this be but settled by an act of Parliament, and such Bishops divested of the powers annexed to that office by the common law of England, and then we shall be more easy. Without this the introduction of a Diocesan into the Colonies would throw us into the utmost confusion and distraction. For though it is alleged that no other than the above hinted moderate Episcopacy is desired or designed; yet should it not be fixed by Parliamentary authority, we have no security that matters will be carried no farther; yea, from the restless spirit, which some here have discovered, we have reason to apprehend that there is more in view. Our forefathers, and even some of ourselves, have seen and felt the tyranny of Bishops' Courts. Many of the first inhabitants of these Colonies were obliged to seek an asylum among savages in this wilderness in order to escape the ecclesiastical tyranny of Archbishop Laud and others of his stamp. Such tyranny, if now exercised in America, would either drive us to seek new habitations among the heathen, where England could not claim a jurisdiction, or excite riots, rebellion, and wild disorder. We dread the consequences as oft as we think of this danger. Gentlemen acquainted with the law inform us that a Bishop is a public minister of state, known in the common law of England, and invested with a power of erecting courts to take cognizance of all affairs testamentary and matrimonial, and to enquire into and punish for all offences of scandal. Might he not plead, as well as any man, that the common law of England is his birth-right, and that the laws

in force before the settling of the Colonies were brought hither and took place with the first settlers. What is to hinder him to claim all the powers exercised by Archbishop Laud and his Ecclesiastical Courts? All acts made in England since that time to lessen the power of Bishops and their Courts can be of no service to us, for it is not mentioned in any of them that they are extended to the Colonies, and the reason is plain; no such exorbitant powers were claimed or exercised among us. Now can anything else than the most grievous convulsion in the Colonies be expected from such a revolution? Will it all go down with us to have the whole course of business turned into a new channel? Would it be yielded that the Register's office, the care of orphans, &c., should be transferred from the present officers to such as a Bishop might appoint? Would not the Colonies suffer the last extremities before they would submit to have the legality of marriages and matters respecting divorce tried in an Ecclesiastical Court? It is not easy to conceive what endless prosecutions under the notion of scandal may be multiplied. A covetous, a tyrannical, and domineering Prelate or his Chancellor would always have it in their power to harass our country, and make our lives bitter by fines, imprisonments, and lawless severity. Will the numerous Colonies, who came hither for the sake of freedom from ecclesiastical oppression, and by whose toil a great increase of dominion and commerce hath arisen to the mother country, bear to find themselves divested of the equality and liberty they have so long enjoyed, and brought under the power of a particular denomination? And see them monopolize all important places of trust in order to secure that power? That the Episcopal Churches should enjoy all the privileges of their own discipline and government is a matter we have nothing to object against, but let Bishops be by law confined to the care of the people and clergy of their own Church, and strip of all their formidable power over other denominations, and let us be secured against the burden of their support; but without this we shall look upon ourselves reduced to the most abject state, enslaved to the power of those whose interest or ambition may lead them to oppress us, without the advantage of being near the throne to beg relief, while they would be supported by all the power and influence of the Bishops at home. We have no more to object to a Bishop over the Episcopal Churches in America than among the Canadians and Moravians, provided they have no more to do with us. We only desire the interests of our friends, that if Bishops must be sent, which we fear will be attended with bad consequences, they may be under such restraints as are consistent with our present state of peace and liberty, and beg their influence to prevent these evils, which will inevitably disturb the peace of our Colonies without doing any real service to religion or the Episcopal Churches. Do us the justice to assert that we love our most gracious King and the British Constitution, that we are upon principle loyal as well as profitable subjects, and that our importance to Great Britain will become every day more evident, and take proper opportunities to lay these dangers before our friends with you, which will oblige thousands in America, and in particular, &c."

LETTER OF FRANCIS ALLISON.

Among the files in the hands of the Register of New Haven East Association is the following letter, relating to the same subject as the foregoing document, and which was published in 1843:—

"To Mr. Sproat,

"Rev. Sir:—You desired me to let you know why we are persuaded in this city that there is a determination or a fixed resolution to send Bishops to America.

"By a letter from Dr. Ch. [Chandler] which I have by me I was informed that the Bishop of Canterbury, in a conference with him, said with some vehemence that it was hard to deny that privilege to the Church of England in America that she allowed to all Dissenters—viz., liberty of conscience. And they were determined, as he said, in a proper time to send Bishops. The Doctor said he desired he might know before they were sent, which the Archbishop promised him. Dr. Samuel Provost of our Colony told me that it was the last thing the Archbishop gave his clergy in charge, not to tease the Bishop and others with petitions from the clergy of the Colonies, for they would watch the opportunity and make a point of sending Bishops without any further trouble. He also told a gentleman of great veracity of the — that he [Dr. Smith] had given in a plea for establishing Bishops, which would certainly take place. The Bishop of Canterbury, I was told by Mr. William S. [Smith] of New York, in his answer to Dr. Mayhew, declares that they would send Bishops as soon as it would be found agreeable to the P. and that may be easily accomplished by the Governor and Assembly of some of our Colonies, which would be taken for the voice of the people before the petition; and Doctor S. told me that the leading Quakers in this

Province offered to sign a certificate that they are willing to admit a moderate Episcopacy.

"I saw two petitions from the Clergy of the Episcopal Church in New York and Jersey governments, petitioning for a Bishop or Bishops, complaining that more than a million (in the other near a million) of petitioners or parishioners of Episcopalians (of persons of the — of Epis.) are without Bishops, while all other religious denominations had their forms of government full and complete. These were written the 2d October, 1765, and sent home, and with them five others—viz., two to the Archbishops of York and Canterbury; two to the two Universities; one to the Bishop of London, one to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, and one to the King—seven in all. And in them or these they reflect on other denominations as disaffected to monarchical government, and allege that the King's power (or privilege) and theirs is inseparably connected. In that city it is the subject of conversation in the coffee-house and in the most public companies as an affair that must take place; and as an affair that it would be disloyal and intolerant to oppose. One of their petitions above mentioned was found among Dr. Chandler's papers, as Mr. Stockton informed Mr. William Smith of New York, by a letter which I heard him read.

"In the Annual Register for the year 1765 Mr. Allen of that city showed me the plea proposed by Dr. Boulter (who was a Bishop) for sending Bishops to America. And Dr. S. told me that they would have Bishops settled in America in spite of all the Presbyterian opposition, and added that the Quakers and Baptists would join with them against us. They say that their Bishops are only to have the power of ordaining, confirming, and taking care of the morals of their Episcopal Clergy. To such few would make objections. That is the Archbishop's proposal and Bishop Boulter (or Butler's) scheme. As a Bishop is a state affair, known in the common law of England, by that law he has a right to establish courts, to take cognizance of all affairs matrimonial, testamentary, and relating to scandals; and no denomination is free from his jurisdiction. That power they have a right by common law to exercise; as we are informed by gentlemen as well skilled in the law as any on the Continent; and under one of these three heads we must feel the severity of a spiritual court. The friends of Episcopacy say that their power in England cannot take place in America, for it is local and confined. We know that in New England governments, tabellions or notaries public are appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which shows that he claims this power by the common law. In New York we are told that all the marriage licenses granted by the Governor are stamped with the mitre, which shows that the Bishops claim the power there in affairs matrimonial; and I am told that the Governor of New Jersey holds a commission from the Archbishop to act for him in some things relating to affairs testamentary or matrimonial, or both. Hence it is evident from the conduct of the Archbishop that they claim this power, and that they will erect such courts to ruin and oppress us unless they be restrained by an act of Parliament; and that every friend of liberty should plead for, if Bishops must be sent among us. Thus have I briefly laid before you what I know in that affair, and wishing you safe to your family and connections, I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend and humble servant,

Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1766.

1767.

"FRA. ALLISON."

New Haven, Sept. 10, 1767.

The General Convention met. Ubi post preces sedet. Of the Rev'd Synod of New York and Philadelphia: the Rev. Dr. Francis Allison, Messrs. William Ramsey, William Kirkpatrick, Benjamin Hait, Alexander McWhorter, Azel Roe, John Ewing, Patrick Allison, Thomas Lewis, Nehemiah Bacher, Chauncey Graham, Eliphalet Ball, Solomon Mead, John Rodgers, and Jedediah Chapman.

Of the Rev'd the Presbytery of Boston: Messrs. Jonathan Parsons and David McGregor.

Of the Rev'd the Associated Pastors of Connecticut: Messrs. Nathaniel Eells, Joseph Fish, Philemon Robbins, Ebenezer Devotion, Benj'n Throope, Benj'n Pomroy, James Cogswell, Timothy Pitkin, Edward Dorr, James Lockwood, William Russel, James Sproat, Noah Welles, Daniel Farrand, Nathaniel Bartlett, John Devotion, Robert Ross, Hezekiah Gold, and Enoch Huntington.

The Convention was opened with a sermon by Dr. Francis Allison from 1 Cor. xii. 27. Dr. Allison was chosen Chairman and Mr. Welles, Scribe. After prayer the Convention adjourned to 3 o'clock, P. M.

3 o'clock, P.M., met according to adjournment, and opened with prayer.

Voted, That the thanks of the Convention be returned to the Rev. Dr. Francis Allison for his sermon delivered at the opening of it, and that he be desired to give a copy of it that it may be printed.

The Minutes of the Convention at Elizabethtown, in Nov. last were read in Convention; as also the Resolves* of the Convention in Boston, the Associated Pastors of Rhode Island and Providence, and of one Association in New Hampshire, in answer to the letters of invitation sent them from the Convention in November last. After some conversation and debate upon the above Resolves;

Voted, That Messrs. Ebenezer Devotion, Parsons, McGregory, Ewing, McWhorter, Sproat, and Dorr be appointed a Committee to bring in a plan for continuing the Convention.

Adjourned to 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. Concluded with prayer.

[Sept. 11, 1767.]

11th day. Met according to adjournment, and opened with prayer.

Moved that the Resolves of the Convention in Boston, in answer to the letter of invitation, be considered; the same were accordingly read, and a free conference had upon the contents of them.

A Plan for continuing this Convention, prepared by the Committee appointed for that purpose, was brought in and read in the Convention, and after some debate and consultations upon the contents of it, the Convention adjourned to 3 o'clock, P. M. Concluded with prayer.

3 o'clock P. M.: met according to adjournment, and opened with prayer.

After some particular conference upon the plan of union drawn up in Nov. last, it was agreed by this Board that the following addition be made to the 2d Article, viz.: immediately after the words "or any other Church

* The Resolves here referred to are supposed to be the votes in the following Extract from the Records of the Convention of Congregational Ministers in Massachusetts.

Boston, May 27, 1767. "A letter from the Rev. Delegates from the Associated Pastors in Connecticut, and the Rev. Committee of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, convened at Elizabethtown, Nov. 5th, 1766, to the Rev. Convention of the Congregational Pastors in Massachusetts Bay, inviting them to send their Delegates to the proposed General Convention at New Haven, on September 10th, 1767, was communicated to the Convention, together with a Plan of Union, drawn up by the Delegates aforesaid; to take place among the Pastors of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in North America."

May 28. "Voted, &c. Whereas we have received a letter from the Rev. Delegates [aforesaid], &c., &c. That although we are not prepared to send Delegates to the proposed Convention, yet we take this occasion to declare our sincere affection to our Brethren and fellowship with them in the Gospel, and our readiness at all times to unite our counsels and endeavors with them for the spreading of the Gospel, defending the liberties of these Churches, for cultivating love and harmony among ourselves, and with our friends abroad, and for promoting the kingdom of our common Redeemer."

"Voted, That the aforesaid Pastors of the town of Boston with," &c., "be a Committee to make a respectful answer to the aforesaid letter, and also to maintain a friendly correspondence with our Brethren aforesaid; said Committee to make a report at our next meeting."

Voted, "That [the aforesaid Committee] be desired in the name of the Convention, to write to the Committee of Deputation of Dissenters in England, to thank them for the concern they have expressed for our religious liberties; and to desire that they would give us their assistance, and use their influence for the preservation of the same, and in particular, that a Bishop may not be sent among us."

or Pastor,"—these words, "nor shall any counsel or advice be asked or given, in this General Convention, relative to any internal debates subsisting, or that may subsist, in any of those bodies."

Voted, That letters be wrote in the name of this Convention, to the several Rev'd Bodies in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, in answer to those received from them: And that Dr. Allison and Mr. Ewing be appointed to prepare and send a letter to the Convention in Boston; Messrs. Elles and Fish, to our Brethren in Rhode Island; and Messrs. Gregory and Parsons, to our Brethren in New Hampshire.

Voted, That the following gentlemen be appointed as Committees to carry on an epistolary correspondence with our friends in Great Britain, particularly Dennis Dubert, Esq., and Mr. Samuel Smith, merchant in London; with our Brethren in the Massachusetts, &c., and with each other, viz.: in Pennsylvania—the Rev. Dr. Francis Allison, Messrs. Richard Treat, and John Ewing; in New York and New Jersey—Messrs. John Rodgers, Joseph Treat, Alexander McWhorter, and Benjamin Hait; in Connecticut—Messrs. Noah Hobart, James Lockwood, Naphtali Daggett, Edward Dorr, and Noah Welles.

Ordered that the next meeting of the General Convention be at Elizabethtown, on the first Tuesday of October, which will be in the year 1768, unless the Chairman, with the advice of the Committee of correspondence, shall see it necessary to order a meeting sooner.

The Convention concluded with prayer by the Chairman.

The above are the doings of the Convention.

Test,

NOAH WELLES, *Scribe.*

LETTER FROM THE CONVENTION IN BOSTON.

Boston, June 21, 1767.

R. D. B.:—Your Plan of Union among the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in North America, was laid before the Convention at their general meeting at Boston, May 28. The Convention with Pleasure embrace the opportunity of declaring their sincere affection to our Brethren engaged in this extensive Design and assure them of our readiness to unite our counsels and endeavor with them in every method which may have a tendency to promote the Honour of Religion, extend the Kingdom of our Divine Master, establish Harmony among the Churches of Christ and defend them in the full enjoyment of their religious liberties.

With this view we shall at all times employ our Interest with our friends at home and abroad and upon every occasion manifest our fellowship with you in the Faith and hope of the Gospel.

But upon mature deliberation we cannot but fear the inconveniences which may probably arise from the proposed Plan of Union, will counter ballance the advantages which are expected from it. You are all sensible that the Congress at New York last year tho' assembled upon an important occasion, was viewed in a very disadvantageous light on the other side of the Atlantic, and represented as a design to force the Colonys into an independent State. It seems as if the British Parliament considered that transaction as a greater insult upon their authority than any other measures which were taken to oppose the Stamp Act.

It is not improbable that the Ecclesiastical authority in our Mother Country will look upon so extensive a Confederacy as now proposed in something of a similar light. You well remember the Episcopal Clergy in their late Petition for a Bishop made a piteous lamentation over their own distressed situation, that while all the dissenters from the Church of England in North America enjoy their religious establishments, they are deprived of an essential part of their Constitution; we fear that the intended General Convention will furnish them with a more plausible argument to enforce their petition than they would otherwise have had. Our wise and judicious friends in London assure us that there is no danger at present, that an American Bishop will be appointed. If any project of this nature should be revived and meet with encouragement we shall doubtless have seasonable notice from a Committee of the Deputation in London, with whom we keep a correspondence; and we shall unite with our brethren

ren in the most vigorous methods to render the attempt abortive. Till danger appears it is best not to give an alarm; it is wise not to awaken jealousy lest we feel its unhappy consequences. This was a caution given us by Doc'r Avery some years ago—a gentleman of the first distinction among the dissenters, and for many years Chairman of the Committee of Deputation. These are his words: "Hitherto the affair of the American Bishop lies dormant and seems not likely to be revived unless we awaken it by an indiscreet and intemperately zealous opposition; this it is to be hoped our friends in New England will cautiously avoid. We will watch it here as carefully as we can, and will continue to take the most prudent methods we can to ward off the blow that has been so long threatened.

About the year 1725 in the gentle reign of George I. under the pacific administration of Sr Robert Walpole, the Convention of the Massachusetts, proposed calling a Synod to consult the most proper methods to revive religion in this land. The Ministers of the Church of England feared where no occasion of fear was, and used every art and address to prevent this pious and inoffensive design. The Consequence was Gov'r Dummer received a severe reproof for giving his assent to the calling the Synod, and had positive orders to prevent their meeting in any time to come. Whether anything of the like nature is to be feared in the present case may deserve consideration. If at any time the liberties of our Churches should be assailed we are persuaded relief may be obtained in more silent methods. In these we shall always with pleasure unite with you. We account it our honour and duty upon all occasions to give you the sincerest evidences that we are

Your affectionate brethren and humble servants,

To the Rev'd Mr. Noah Welles, to be communicated to the Convention which is to meet at New Haven, Sept. 10th, 1767. } JOSEPH SEWALL, in the name of the Committee.

1768.

Elizabethtown, New Jersey, Oct. 5, 1768.

The Rev. General Convention of Delegates from the Associated Churches of Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met according to adjournment. U. P. P. S.

Rev'd William Tennent, sen'r, Wheeler Case, William Mills, John Rodgers, Thomas Lewis, Timothy Jones, Joseph Treat, James Caldwell, William Kirkpatrick, John Blair, Robert Smith, Joseph Montgomery, Richard Treat, Andrew Hunter, John Ewing, Solomon Mead, John Close, John Brainerd, Jacob Green.

From Connecticut, Rev. Messrs. Elnathan Whitman, Eliphalet Williams, Nathaniel Whitaker, Mark Leavenworth, Warham Williams, Enoch Huntington, John Smalley, Joseph Bellamy, and Moses Mather.

The Rev. Mr. Elnathan Whitman was chosen Chairman, and the Rev. Messrs. Enoch Huntington and John Ewing were chosen Scribes.

The Convention was opened by the Rev. Mr. Eliphalet Williams by a sermon from Psalm 122: the four last verses.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last General Convention be read.

A Minute of the General Association was brought in and read, which is as follows:—

"At a General Association of the pastors of the Consociated Churches in the Colony of Connecticut convened by delegation at Coventry, June 21, 1768,

"Whereas some dispute arose in the last General Convention concerning the admission of members to vote in said Convention; and whereas we understand that the Rev. Synod of New York and Philadelphia in order to put an end to that dispute for time to come, did at their last meeting agree that though any gentlemen who should think proper may be freely permitted to be present in Convention, yet none but the Delegates shall be allowed to vote: this Association heartily concurs with the above limitation, and moreover give it as our opinion and advice that none but the Delegates shall be admitted publicly to debate any case before the Convention, unless partic-

ularly requested so to do. And it is further declared as the opinion and advice of this body, that it is not expedient for the future, that any of our Associations delegate more than two members to the General Convention.

“ Finally, we think it may be advisable that in a future General Convention, nothing be an act of said Convention, considered as the voice of the united body, but what has the major vote of the respective members that shall be present, both from the Synod and from the Consociated Pastors in Connecticut.”

A letter from the Association of the Western District in the County of New London, giving reasons for their declining to send delegates, and moving that an annual correspondence by letters between the Synod of New York and Philadelphia and the General Association be substituted, instead of the Annual Convention, was brought in and read. After considering these affairs the Convention resolved to continue in their present form and acquiesce in the advices received from the General Association.

Ordered, That the Rev. Messrs. Ewing, Smalley, and Blair be a Committee to prepare a draught of a letter to the Deputies for managing the affairs of Dissenters in England, in order to open a correspondence with them; and lay it before the Convention to-morrow morning.

Adjourned till 8 o'clock to-morrow morning. Concluded with prayer.

Oct. 6, 1768.

6th day, at 8 o'clock A. M., the Convention met. U. P. P. S. Q. S.

Together with the Rev. Mr. Robert Ross, of Stratfield, in Connecticut.

Ordered that the minutes of the last sed't be read.

The Committee appointed last night to prepare a draught of a letter to the Dissenting Committee in England, brought in one, which, being read and corrected, was approved, and is as follows:—

Gentlemen,

The pastors of the Consociated Churches of Connecticut have agreed with the Synod of New York and Philadelphia to meet annually by Delegates in General Convention on the most catholic foundation; to give information of the public state of our united interests; to join our counsels and endeavors together for spreading and preserving the religious liberties of our Churches; to recommend, cultivate and preserve loyalty and allegiance to the King's Majesty, and to keep up a correspondence through this united body and with our friends abroad. This we have apprehended to be our duty, especially in our present circumstances, not only that we might strengthen our influence in suppressing and discouraging any measures that might be fallen upon by the people committed to our care; that would be inconsistent with our character as peaceable and loyal subjects, or detrimental to the public peace and tranquillity, but also that we might as faithful officers in the Church of Christ, watch over her rights and privileges to endeavor more effectually to prevent any attempts of any other denomination of Christians to oppress us. The late attempts of the Episcopalian Missionaries among us to introduce an American Episcopate have given a very general alarm to our Churches, who fled from the unmerciful rigor and persecution of Diocesan Bishops in our mother country to settle in an uncultivated wilderness; the recollection of the cruelties and hardships which our fathers suffered before this peaceful retreat was opened for us, fills our minds with an utter abhorrence of every species of ecclesiastical tyranny and persecution. And therefore we would guard with special care against admitting any just suspicion that we would suffer that to take place among ourselves which we so much condemn in others. We oppose not, therefore, the introduction of Diocesan Bishops into America from any apprehension that we have any exclusive privilege above others, or from any right we have to endeavor to prevent them from enjoying the same liberties with any other denomination of Christians in the Colonies. We oppose the scheme from very different motives and principles. Our fears would not be so much alarmed could any rational method be devised for sending over Bishops among us stripped of every degree of civil power, and confined in the exercise of their ecclesiastical function to their own societies: and could we have sufficient security that the British Parliament, that could send them

over to us thus limited, to gain a peaceable settlement here, would never be induced by their complaints for the want of power to enlarge it at any future period. But it is very evident it is not that harmless and inoffensive Bishop which is designed for us, or the missionaries among us request; and therefore, we cannot but be apprehensive of danger from the proposed Episcopate, however plausible the scheme may be represented. We well know the jealousy of the Bishops in England concerning their own power and dignity, suffering by the example of such a limited Bishop in America, and we also know the force of a British act of Parliament; and have reason to dread the establishment of Bishop's courts among us. Should they claim the rights of holding these courts, and of exercising the power belonging to their office, by the common law of England, [which is esteemed the birth-right of a British subject,] we could have no counterbalance to this enormous power in our Colonies where we have no nobility, or proper courts, to check the dangerous exertions of their authority; and where our governors and judges may be the needy dependents of a prime minister, and therefore afraid to disoblige a person who is sure of being supported by the whole Bench of Bishops in England; so that our civil liberties appear to us to be in imminent danger from such an establishment. Besides, nothing seems to have such a direct tendency to weaken the dependence of the Colonies upon Great Britain and to separate them from her; an event which would be ruinous and destructive to both, and which we, therefore, pray God long to avert. And we have abundant reason to believe that such would be the jealousies and uneasiness of all other denominations of Christians among us that we cannot but tremble at the prospect of the dreadful consequences that could not be prevented from taking place upon the establishment of an American Episcopate. We have so long tasted the sweets of civil and religious liberty, that we cannot be easily prevailed upon to submit to a yoke of bondage which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

Besides all this we can assure you that the Episcopal Provinces of Maryland and Virginia do not appear to desire Bishops among them; it is only the request of a few discontented missionaries in the Middle Colonies; the laity of their communion, [a few high flyers excepted,] dread the power of a Bishop's court as much as any other denomination, and have a high sense of liberty, civil and religious. It, therefore, appears to us highly unreasonable to gratify these persons in a matter that is evidently dangerous to the rights and privileges of so many of his Majesty's most dutiful loyal subjects. These are some of the many reasons which we have for our opposition to the proposed Episcopate, and the views by which we are actuated in this matter.

We have reason to believe from the best intelligence we can collect, both on your and our side of the Atlantic, that although the design of sending over Bishops to America may be laid aside for the present, yet the Bishops in England have the matter much at heart, and are daily watching for a favorable opportunity of carrying it into execution, which is further confirmed by the large appropriations of land and money both here and elsewhere, for the support of them in all their pomp and splendor. It therefore appears to us our duty to be constantly on our guard; but as our distance from the throne and Parliament renders us unable to do any thing to prevent it, until it be too late, we are obliged to depend upon the interest and vigilance of our friends in Great Britain who are engaged in the same common cause with ourselves. Permit us, therefore, Gentlemen, to request the favour of you to unite your vigilance and endeavors with ours: and to open and continue a correspondence with us; and to transmit to us from time to time the earliest intelligence you can get relative to this or any other matter which you may judge either necessary or advantageous to us; and direct your letters to the Rev. Dr. Allison and Rev. Mr. Ewing in Philadelphia, to the Rev. Dr. Rodgers and Rev. Mr. Treat in New York, and to the Rev. Mr. Whitman and Rev. Mr. Welles in Connecticut.

To the Dissenting Committee.

Mr. Rodgers is requested to transmit a copy of this letter to our Brethren in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

Adjourned till 3 o'clock P. M. Concluded with prayer.

3 o'clock P. M., the Convention met according to adjournment, and P. P. S. Q. S.

The Rev. Messrs. Ross, Welles, Whitman, Smalley, and James Lockwood are appointed a Committee in Connecticut to carry on epistolary correspondence with our friends in London, with our Brethren in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, the Presbytery of Boston. etc.; the Rev. Messrs. Rodgers, Joseph Treat, and Caldwell a similar Com-

mittee in the Province of New York and the Jerseys, and the Rev. Dr. Allison, with the Rev. Messrs. Treat and Ewing, another Committee in Pennsylvania for the same purpose.

Adjourned till Thursday, the 14th day of Sept. next, which will be in the year 1769, to meet at New Haven, Connecticut. Concluded with prayer.

1769.

New Haven, Connecticut, Sept. 14, 1769.

The Rev'd General Convention of Delegates from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met according to adjournment. *Ubi post preces sed't.*

From the Churches in Connecticut, the Rev. Mr. Nathaniel Taylor, the Rev. Mr. Edward Dorr, the Rev. Mr. Joseph Perry, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Lockwood, the Rev. Mr. Elijah Lathrop, the Rev. Mr. Jedidiah Mills, the Rev. Mr. Noah Whetmore, the Rev. Mr. Benjamin Woodbridge, the Rev. Mr. Nicholas Street, the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Ingersol, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Sherwood.

From the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the Rev. Mr. Richard Treat, the Rev. Mr. John Craighead, the Rev. Mr. James Sproat, the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, the Rev. Mr. James Caldwell, the Rev. Mr. Solomon Mead.

Dr. Rodgers opened the Convention by a sermon from Acts 11 : 24.

Mr. Richard Treat was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Dorr and Mr. Caldwell, Scribes.

Voted, That the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, of New York, and the Rev. Noah Welles, of Stamford, be standing Registers, appointed by this Convention, to receive all papers belonging to them, and to transmit to all future Conventions the Minutes of the preceding ones.

On looking over the Minutes of the last Convention, it appears that there was a letter agreed upon to be sent to the Committee of Dissenters in London, requesting their kind interposition in favour of these Churches, and this Convention, apprehending their letter has unhappily miscarried, desire the Rev. Dr. Rodgers to take a copy of the same and sign it as our Register, and transmit it to the Committee of Dissenters in London according to the desire of the last Convention.

Voted, That the Rev. James Sproat be added to the Committee of correspondence in Philadelphia, and the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, and the Rev. Joseph Treat be a Committee in New York, that the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, and the Rev. William Tennent be a Committee in New Jersey, and that the Rev. Messrs. Noah Welles and Moses Mather be a Committee in Connecticut, and that the Committee in Connecticut correspond with the ministers of Boston and New Hampshire; the Committee at New York with the ministers of Rhode Island and South Carolina; the Committee in New Jersey with the ministers of Scotland; and the Committee at Philadelphia with the ministers in England and Ireland.

Adjourned till the first Wednesday in October, at 11 o'clock, which will be in the year 1770, to meet at Elizabeth Town in New Jersey.

Concluded with prayer.

1770.

Elizabethtown, Oct. 3, 1770.

The Rev. General Convention of Delegates from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met according to adjournment. *Post preces sederunt.* From Connecticut, the

Rev. Messrs. Nathaniel Taylor, Noah Benedict, Stephen Hawley; from the Synod, the Rev. Messrs. John Blair, Charles Beaty, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, Azariah Horton.

The General Convention was opened with a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Taylor, from Ezek. 47: 9-11.

The Rev.d Gent.n from Connecticut produced certificates testifying they were delegates by their respective Associations to be members of the General Convention.

The Rev.d Gent.n from the Synod of New York and Philada. through the neglect of their clerk, on whom they depended for the certificate of their delegation, could not procure it, but the General Convention received satisfactory evidence that those whose names have been mentioned were delegated by the Synod.

Mr. Taylor was chosen Chairman, and Mr. McWhorter and Mr. Hawley were chosen Scribes. Adjourned till to-morrow morning 9 o'clock. Concluded with prayer.

Oct. 4, 1770.

Oct. 4. Met according to adjournment. P. P. S. Q. S.

The Rev. Mr. Robert Ross and the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, Jun., from Connecticut, and the Rev. Mr. John Ewing, Dr. Witherspoon, William Tennent, Sen'r, the Rev. Mr. Halsey, and the Rev. Mr. Beaty, from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, are now come.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last sederunt be read.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last Convention be read.

It was inquired whether Dr. Rodgers had complied with the appointment of the last General Convention at New Haven: to transmit a letter from them to the Committee of Dissenters in London. And we are informed that he complied with the said appointment; and has in answer a letter from said Committee, signed by Thomas Cotton, Secretary, which was produced and read, and is as follows,

Rev.d Sir:

"The favor of your letter, signed as Register, in the name and by order of the Reverend General Convention of Delegates from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met at New Haven, 14th September, 1769, did not come to the hands of Jasper Mauduit, Esq. [Chairman of the Committee for managing civil affairs of the Dissenters] for upwards of nine months, and he having summoned a meeting of the said Committee they took your letter into consideration, and have ordered me [who have the honor of being their Secretary] to acquaint you that the Committee is fully sensible of the many civil and religious inconveniences that would arise from the introduction of Diocesan Bishops into America; and therefore beg leave to assure you of their most vigilant attention to oppose and frustrate any such design; at the same time they have the pleasure of informing you that they have made the strictest inquiries, and are able from the very best authorities to assure you that there is no such design on foot, at present: and that they hope government are so sensible of the confusion such a step would make among our American brethren, that however warmly some of our Bishops may wish for it, and express their desires in their sermons on public occasions, yet the Committee verily believe they will never be able to accomplish them. But that however as you and they are engaged in one common cause, the defence of civil and religious liberty, you may depend upon it, that if any attempts are made to revive this design, the Committee will carefully watch and exert their utmost endeavors to prevent the carrying it into execution.

I am, Sir, further directed by the Committee to acquaint you that they shall be very ready and willing to continue a correspondence with you, and from time to time to transmit to you the earliest intelligence they can get relative to this matter. And if hereafter you have occasion to communicate anything to them, you will please to direct your letters to Jasper Mauduit, Esq., in Hackney near London, or to Mr. Thomas Cotton, Attorney at Law, in Hackney.

Signed in the name and by the order of the said Committee,
Thomas Cotton, Secretary.

4th August, 1770.

I have sent letters of the same tenor and date to the Rev. Dr. Allison, and Mr. Whiteman.

A letter of same tenor and date from said Committee, was received by the Committee of the General Convention in Philada.

Mr. Beaty, Mr. Ewing, and Mr. Benedict are appointed a Committee to prepare an answer to the Committee of Dissenters in London, and bring it in, in the afternoon. After the General Convention had maturely considered the expediency of having an agent in London, concluded that it was useful and important. And it is recommended to all the members of the General Convention, and in particular to Dr. Witherspoon, Dr. Rodgers, Mr. Welles, Mr. Ewing, Dr. Allison, and Mr. Beaty to endeavor to find out a proper person in London, for that purpose to propose to the next General Convention.

The General Convention upon reading the Minutes are informed that the Committee in Connecticut, viz., Mr. Welles and Mr. Mather have wrote to the ministers in Boston and New Hampshire, but their answers, if there be any, are not come to hand.

It being represented to the General Convention, that the design and importance of it are not understood by many ministers at a distance, by which means, it is not so extensive as it might be, and as is necessary to its greater usefulness; wherefore the General Convention request the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, as he is now on his journey to the eastward, that he take all proper opportunities to represent to our Brethren in the Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, the utility of the Convention, and the importance of their uniting with us. And it is ordered that he be furnished with a copy of the plan of the General Convention by the Scribes. Mr. Blair, Mr. Ross, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Caldwell, are appointed by the General Convention, to wait upon the General Association of Connecticut, which is to meet at Reading on the 3d Tuesday in June next—to converse with said Association and endeavor to impress upon them the utility of continuing the General Convention, and the importance of a punctual attendance upon it. And also Mr. Beaty and Mr. Hawley wait upon the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, [which is to meet at Philadelphia, the third Tuesday of May next.] for the same purpose. And Dr. Bellamy and Mr. Trumbull, of North Haven, are requested to join these gentlemen for the same purpose. Adjourned to 3 o'clock, P.M. Concluded with prayer.

3 o'clock P. M. met according to adjournment. P. P. S. Q. S. Ordered that the Minutes of the last sederunt be read.

The Committee appointed to prepare an answer to the Committee of Dissenters in London, accordingly brought in a draught of a letter, which being read, corrected, and approved, is as follows:

Sir:

Your favors of the 4th of August, 1770, in answer to ours of the 14th Sept. 1769, came safe to the hands of Dr. Allison and Dr. Rodgers, and were laid before the General Convention of Delegates from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. It gives us particular satisfaction to find you embarked in the same cause with us, and that you are so sensible of the many inconveniences that would attend the introduction of Diocesan Bishops into America as to engage your most vigilant attention to oppose and frustrate such a design. It is no less pleasing to us to be assured from so good authority that such a scheme is laid aside for the present. Yet we have sufficient reason to believe that the measure is so desirable to the Bishops in England and the Episcopal clergy with us that they will lose no opportunity of carrying it into execution, and therefore will privately as well as publicly countenance every measure and improve every advantage that has even a remote and distant tendency to subjugate the colonies to Episcopal domination, as this

will easily pave the way for the destruction of our civil liberties. We have but too much reason to know that Diocesan Bishops with their inferior clergy have always been the tools of arbitrary power, and ready to fall in with and promote the views of a minister of state, however detrimental they may be to other denominations of Christians. In this point of light we view the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in procuring grants of land vested in them for the purpose of supporting the Episcopal clergy in the townships laid out in New Hampshire of late years although few or no Episcopalians reside in them, and in granting considerable salaries to missionaries in the most populous parts of our colonies, even where there are faithful ministers of other denominations settled and but a few families of their religious persuasion, while at the same time they are neglecting to supply great numbers of their clergy not only in Scotland but even in England. The reason is plain; the form of church government is fixed in those places, but here they have hopes by their bounties to be able to form and fix the government to their own minds, and in time subject us to Episcopal jurisdiction. Their partiality also appears very flagrant in neglecting to send missionaries among the poor benighted Indians on our borders, although their money was partly designed for their relief, and the many distressed inhabitants on our frontiers who are perishing for want of knowledge, having few to break the bread of life among them. The peculiar care of the Episcopalians among ourselves where they have any influence, to fill all the places of power and trust in our various governments with those of their own denomination, or at least those who are in their interest, seems to us evidently calculated to promote their grand design, and therefore fills us with uneasy apprehensions. Upon the whole, these considerations make it evident to us that their views are not so much to promote Christianity as the establishment of Episcopal church government in the colonies, and therefore engage our constant watchfulness lest they should take advantage of our being off our guard to accomplish a design, which, however pleasing to them, will be attended with the most lamentable consequences to the interests of true religion and liberty among us.

As we shall always look upon ourselves greatly obliged by your continued correspondence, please to direct any intelligence or advice you may think proper to transmit to us, to the Rev. Dr. Allison in Philadelphia, Dr. John Rodgers in New York, and Mr. Whiteman in Hartford, Connecticut.

Signed by order of the General Convention
Nathaniel Taylor, Chairman

Elizabethtown, October 3d, 1770.

P. S. We also herewith send you an account of only one instance of Episcopal oppression in the colony of Georgia, which may show what we are to expect in case their wished for plan should be carried into execution, and that Mr. Zubly whose congregation has been thus treated, is a gentleman of an established reputation for learning, prudence and piety. [See Appendix, No. 2.*]

Ordered, that the letter be transcribed and signed by the Chairman, and sent to Dr. Rodgers and a duplicate to Dr. Allison, to be transmitted to Jasper Mauduit, Esq., in Hackney, near London; or to Mr. Thomas Cotton, attorney at Law in Hackney. Appointed that Mr. Halsey, Mr. Caldwell, and Mr. McWhorter, be a Committee, to write to gentlemen in Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas, in order that they may obtain all the instances of Episcopal oppression in said Colonies they can, and prepare them to be laid before our next General Convention. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ross, and Mr. Hubbard are desired to collect the instances of the lenity of their government with regard to the Episcopal Dissenters therein. And the Committee in Connecticut, viz., Mr. Welles and Mr. Mather, are desired to write to such ministers in the eastern governments, as they may think proper, to obtain instances of the same nature.

Adjourned till the first Wednesday in Sept., at 10 o'clock, which will be in the year 1771, to meet at Norwalk. Concluded with prayer.

* This record has not been found in the Appendix to the Minutes.

P. 3
1771. C 9

Norwalk, Sept. 4, 1771.

The Rev. the General Convention of the Delegates from the several Associations in Connecticut, and of the Rev. Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met according to adjournment. Ubi P. P. Sedt.: From the Association of the Western District of Fairfield, the Rev. Mr. Moses Dickinson and the Rev. Mr. William Tennent; from the Eastern District of Fairfield, the Rev. Mr. Robert Ross and the Rev. Mr. Nathaniel Bartlett; from the Association of Litchfield County, the Rev. Mr. Nathaniel Taylor and the Rev. Judah Champion; from the North Association of Hartford County, the Rev. Mr. Theodore Hinsdale; from the Association of New Haven County, the Rev. Mr. Elizur Goodrich and the Rev. Mr. Amos Fowler.

From the Synod, the Rev. Dr. Francis Allison, the Rev. Dr. John Rodgers, Rev. Mr. Joseph Montgomery, Rev. Mr. John Close, Rev. Mr. Jedediah Chapman, Rev. Mr. John Woodhull, Rev. Mr. Charles Beaty, Rev. Mr. James Sproat, Rev. Mr. James Caldwell, Rev. Mr. Solomon Mead, Rev. Mr. William Mills.

The Convention was opened with a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Joseph Montgomery, from Ps. 2. 6.

The Rev. Dr. Rodgers was chosen Chairman.

The Rev. Messrs. Caldwell and Champion were chosen Scribes.

Dr. Allison reports, that he had received a letter from Mr. Thomas Cotton, Secretary to the Committee of Dissenters in London, in answer to the letter sent by the Convention last year, which is not present, but that the substance of it was,—that the Committee did not know of any particular attempts making on their side of the water to introduce an American Episcopate, at present; they would however carefully observe the motions of the friends of that scheme, and they desired us to do the same on this side, and communicate to them whatever attempts are making here.

The appointment of an agent in London, which was referred from the last Convention, was now considered, and after mature deliberation it was unanimously determined for the present not to appoint an agent, but to continue our correspondence with the Committee of Dissenters as before.

And Dr. Allison and Mr. Dickinson are desired to bring in the draught of a letter to the said Committee.

Adjourned till to-morrow morning, 8 o'clock. Concluded with prayer.

Sept. 5, 1771.

5th day: 8 o'clock, the Convention met according to adjournment. P. P. S. Q. S. Also the Rev. Mr. John Brainerd and the Rev. Mr. Jeremiah Halsey from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia are now come.

Ordered to read the minutes of the last sederunt.

It is now reported to this Convention that Dr. Witherspoon complied with the appointment of last year in representing to the ministers in Boston the necessity of extending this Convention, but we are not yet fully informed what success he met with.

Mr. Ross and Mr. Taylor report that they waited upon the General Association, agreeable to the appointment of last year, and were favorably received.

Mr. Beaty also fulfilled his appointment to the Synod, and was also received in like manner.

Mr. Welles, one of the standing Registers for this Convention is desired to lay the Minutes of the several meetings of this General Convention

before the General Association of this Colony of Connecticut at their next meeting, and afterward from year to year, if desired.

Consider for religious liberty

The Committee appointed last year to collect instances of oppression or lenity with respect to religious denominations in the several governments, appear to have taken considerable pains to answer the ends of their appointment, and related many instances and facts to this purpose. But as the good intention of the Convention in this affair is not yet completed, and inasmuch as it would be of great advantage to this Convention, and the common interest of mankind to be acquainted with the religious constitutions of the several governments on this continent—we do appoint for that purpose, for the colony of Nova Scotia, the Rev. Dr. Allison; for the colony of New Hampshire, the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, of Norwalk; for the colony of Massachusetts, the Rev. Mr. Noah Welles; for the colony of Rhode Island, the Rev. Mr. Robert Ross; for the colony of Connecticut, the Rev. Mr. Elizur Goodrich; for the province of New York, the Rev. Dr. Rodgers; for the province of New Jersey, the Rev. Mr. John Brainerd; for the province of Pennsylvania, the Rev. Mr. James Sproat; for the government of New Castle and province of Maryland, the Rev. Mr. Joseph Montgomery; for the dominion of Virginia, the Rev. Mr. James Caldwell; for the province of North Carolina, the Rev. Mr. Jeremiah Halsey; for the province of Georgia, the Rev. Mr. Alexander McWhorter: who are desired respectively to obtain the Charters, Laws, and Statutes of those Colonies, and to extract from them whatever respects ecclesiastical affairs; also the usages and customs of those Colonies, by which the religious liberties of any denomination have been, or now are, either enlarged or abridged, and lay the result of their inquiry before our next Convention.

And the Rev. Mr. John Maltby, of South Carolina, who is present is desired to collect materials agreeable to the above resolution, from the Charter, Laws, and usages of that province, and transmit the same to Dr. Allison in Philadelphia, by him to be prepared for, and laid before the next Convention.

Dr. Allison brought in the draught of a letter to the Committee of Dissenters in London, which being read, was approved, and the Chairman is desired to sign two copies, of which he is to send one and Dr. Allison the other, to Jasper Mauduit, Esq., near London. The letter is as follows:

Norwalk, in Connecticut, 5 Sept., 1771.

“Sir,

We are informed that a letter in answer to ours of the 3d of Oct. 1770, by favor of Mr. Cotton, came to Dr. Allison, who entrusted the care of it to a person who has neglected to lay it before this Convention, and that you therein promised to have a watchful care of our liberties, and to give us timely notice if attempts were still continued to establish Diocesan Episcopacy in the Colonies; and as you desired us to give you the earliest intelligence of any attempts that might be made in the Colonies for this purpose, with the sincerest gratitude we acknowledge your friendship, and beg leave to inform you that we are still greatly alarmed. The whole Bench of Bishops, and many bigots with you are constantly tied by our missionaries to procure an American Episcopate.

The late Arch-Bishop Secker, if we remember right, promised that if any province petitioned for a Bishop, it would be granted; and great pains have been taken to engage the clergy in Virginia and Maryland to petition for this favour. That some of the clergy in Virginia formed petitions for a Bishop, and that four out of twelve, that were convened at that time protested against the measure, must be facts now well known in London, as the debates on this subject among the Episcopal clergy themselves run high, and are printed in the public papers in Williamsburgh and Philadelphia;* two of the protestors are professors in the College of William and Mary,†

* Philadelphia Gazette, August 8. 1771.

† These professors were the Rev. Messrs. Gwatkin and Henly. They both protested against an American Episcopate in the Ecclesiastical Convention of Virginia in 1771.

and the house of Burgesses in that colony, *nemine contradicente*, publicly voted their thanks to the protesters for making this seasonable stand for liberty. What the issue of this affair may be in the province is hard to determine, but we are informed that Mr. HORRAX, a clergyman, is sent to England with these petitions, and the people of the colony are greatly alarmed lest he be sent back to them as their Bishop.

The petitioning clergy affirm in the course of their public debates with their brethren, that all opposition among the Dissenters has ceased, and that the people of New England, of all others are now most anxious to have a Bishop established among them, than which assertion nothing can be more false, unless they mean by the people of New England, the missionaries and a few of their warm adherents. So far from this, that from the best information we can collect, the colonies of Massachusetts and Connecticut have given instructions to their agents to oppose an American Episcopate, the certainty of which you may easily learn.

A petition was likewise presented by eight of the clergy of Maryland to their Governor, requesting his interest, both in England and his own colony for establishing an Episcopate; and they inform his Excellency that they have prepared petitions for the throne, the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, Lord Baltimore, and the Bishop of London for the same purpose. The petition to the Governor is something extraordinary; a copy of which we will send you, and copies of the other petitions, if we can procure them. The Governor refused to admit the petition as an act of the whole clergy of Maryland, and told them that as an American Episcopate must be attended with many and very important consequences he would lay it before the House of Representatives, which greatly mortified them, as they had mentioned that body in it with some disrespect. A circular letter was sent by the petitioners to the other clergy of the province to obtain their permission to put their names to the petitions to be sent to England, which was obtained from a great number without knowing all that was in the petitions; but ten of them laid a remonstrance before the Governor complaining of this conduct. But notwithstanding that neither the Governor nor Assembly have given their approbation, it is said the petitions are sent home. From this account you may clearly see the great industry of these gentlemen, and much more we have reason to suspect is done by them, in the other provinces, which has not so fully come to our knowledge; but from a disagreement among themselves, what we now write you has become matter of public notoriety. We now stand in need, if ever, of the assistance of all our friends to use their utmost skill and interest to avert this impending blow that so surely threatens our civil and religious liberties, and which if not prevented, must again inflame all our colonies, that have so lately regained the blessings of peace.

We would by no means be understood as if we would endeavor to prevent an American Bishop or Arch-Bishop or Patriarch, or whatever else they would see fit to send, provided other denominations could be safe from their severity and encroachments; but this we think impossible: for no act of Parliament can secure us from the tyranny of their jurisdiction, as an act of Parliament may, and no doubt will be repealed at the importunate solicitations of the Bishops and others, nor can we have any security against being obliged, in time, to support their dignity, and to pay taxes to relieve the Society in paying their missionaries; and the Governors of our several colonies must either be submissive in all things to their will and pleasure, or be harassed and persecuted with continual complaints to all in power on your side of the water. In a word, we think Ecclesiastics vested with such powers dangerous to our civil and religious liberties; and it seems highly probable that it will in time break that strong connection which now happily subsists between Great Britain and her colonies, who are never like to shake off their dependence on the mother country until they have Bishops established among them.

As we shall always acknowledge that we are under the greatest obligations to you for your friendship in this important affair, and earnestly desire the continuance of your correspondence, please direct any intelligence you may think proper to transmit to us, to the Rev. Dr. Francis Allison in Philadelphia, or to the Rev. Dr. John Rodgers in New York, or to the Rev. Mr. Elnathan Whiteman, Connecticut.

Signed in the name and by order of the General Convention, by

JOHN RODGERS, *Chairman*.

P. S.—We have with pleasure observed that some of our friends on your side of the water have made some just remarks, in the London Chronicle, on the Bishop of

and afterwards the former published a pamphlet with the same view, under the following title: 'A Letter to the Clergy of New York and Philadelphia, occasioned by an Address to the Episcopalians in Virginia. By the Rev. Thomas Gwatkin, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in William and Mary College, Williamsburgh, 1772, pp. 28.'—Miller's Memoirs of the Rev. John Rodgers, D. D.

Oxford's sermon before the Society last February. They highly merit the thanks of the American colonies, and as we esteem ourselves indebted to your friendship for this favor we beg you will be pleased to present our thanks to the person or persons that did so much justice to our cause.

To JASPER MAUDUIT, Esq., Chairman of the Dissenting Committee—to be communicated."

Adjourned to meet at Elizabethtown, the last Wednesday but one in September, 1772, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

Concluded with prayer.

1772.

Elizabethtown, Sept. 23, 1772.

The General Convention met according to adjournment. U. P. P., present from Connecticut, the Rev. Messrs. Noah Welles, Samuel Clark, Cotton Mather Smith, Noah Williston, Thomas W. Bray, Hezekiah Ripley, Asahel Hart, Ebenezer Baldwin; from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the Rev. Mr. Joseph Montgomery, Rev. Mr. William Foster, Rev. Mr. James Sproat, Rev. Mr. John Brainerd, Rev. Mr. William Tennent, Rev. Doctr. Allison, Rev. Doctr. Witherspoon, Rev. Mr. John Ewing, Rev. Mr. Jeremiah Halsey, Rev. Doctr. Rodgers, Rev. Mr. Alexander McWhorter, Rev. Mr. James Caldwell, Rev. Mr. Joseph Treat, Rev. Mr. William Mills, Rev. Mr. John Close. Mr. Clark opened the Convention with a sermon, from 2 Cor. 4. 1.

The Rev. Mr. Cotton Mather Smith was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Ewing and Mr. Baldwin were chosen Scribes.

The Rev. Mr. Welles informed the Convention, that agreeable to the instructions of the last session, he sent to the General Association of the colony of Connecticut, the Records of this General Convention, which was well approved by the General Association, who also desired that the proceedings of this Convention be from year to year laid before them.

Dr. Allison produced the letter from the Deputation of the Dissenters in England, which was referred to in the Minutes of the last sessions; which letter is ordered to be recorded in the Appendix to the Minutes of the Convention. [The letter is as follows:]

Rev. Sir:—

Your favor to our Secretary, Mr. Cotton, dated October 10th last, he produced and read to our Committee who referred to us to give an answer thereto. We beg you will depend upon it that the Committee will ever carefully watch against any attempts that may be made to introduce Diocesan Bishops into America. We are sensible indeed the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts and the Episcopal clergy are very desirous of it, but at the same time, are fully persuaded that administration have no such intention at present, and that no steps relating thereto have been taken by them since our last. If any petition for that purpose should be agitated in your or in any other of the colonies, we desire you will endeavor to counterwork it, and if such a one should come over here, the Committee will be sure to oppose it.

With regard to the affair you desired our thoughts of, as to your having an agent here, it is the opinion of the Committee that a proper person qualified to be your agent in the manner specified in your letter, would be very difficult to be found; and if such a one could be found, would not answer your end, as he would not have the weight with administration as this Committee would; for whatever he might at any time say, they would look upon him as an agent for the colonies and under their influence, whereas no such bias could be imputed to this Committee.

We hope you will rest assured that we will always exert ourselves for your benefit, in defence of your religious liberties:

And are, Rev. Sir,

Your most humble servants,

Richard Cooke,
Robert Lewin

Edward Hunt,
Jas. Bay French

Jasper Mauduit
Wm. Bowden
Thomas Lucas

The Rev. Dr. Allison
January 22, 1771.

Dr. Allison laid before the Convention another letter from the Committee of Deputation of Dissenters in England, in answer to the letter of this Convention, dated Sept. 5, 1771, to Jasper Mauduit, Esq., which is as follows:

Rev. Sirs,

Your letter of the 15th of Nov. last, directed to our late worthy Chairman, Jasper Mauduit, Esq., now deceased, and therein enclosing one from the General Convention, dated 5th of Sept. last, was delivered to our Secretary Mr. Cotton; who laid it before our Committee, and they have referred it to us to return you an answer thereto, which we embrace the first opportunity of doing.

We are not ignorant, and are sorry that you have any reason to be alarmed from the restlessness of the missionaries and their bigoted adherents, but hope you will depend upon the constant attention of our Committee to your interest to prevent, as much as in us lies, a Bishop from being sent over to you. And we do verily believe, that if Mr. Horrax comes over with such a view, he will go over without his errand, for we can with pleasure inform you, that since the receipt of your last, we have again made the strictest inquiry, and are able from undoubted authority to assure you, that though petitions have been presented, yet we do not believe they will meet with any success; that however the Bishops and clergy may labor the point, the persons in power do not seem to be at all for it at present, and we hope never will. And we must remind you, that in our last we desired you, if you found any petitions were handed about to be signed, you would send over counter petitions, signed by as many respectable persons as you could, which we think you should do as soon as possible, that they may be made use of, if needful. And we beg you would rest assured of our continued endeavors to oppose the carrying such a design into execution. We have sent a letter, to the same purport as this, to the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, that they may be communicated by you or him, to the General Convention. And whenever you are disposed to correspond with us, be pleased to direct your letters to our present Chairman, Thomas Lucas, Esq., at Gray's Hospital, London.

We are, with great esteem, Rev. Sir, your most obedient servants,
1st March, 1772.

THOMAS LUCAS	WM. BOWDEN
JAS. BOGLE FRENCH	ROBERT MAITLAND
RICHARD COOKE	BENJAMIN BOND, JR.
R. LEWIN	EDWARD HUNT

Dr. Allison produced extracts from the laws of Nova Scotia, relative to religious liberty, agreeable to the order of the last Convention.

Mr. Welles also laid before the Convention similar extracts from the laws of the Province of Massachusetts Bay.

The Scribes with the Rev. Mr. Halsey, are appointed to prepare a draught of a letter to the Committee of Deputation of the Dissenters in London, and to bring it in to-morrow morning.

Adjourned to 8 o'clock to-morrow morning. Concluded with prayer.

Sept. 24: 8 o'clock, met according to adjournment; post preces sederunt *qui supra*, except Dr. Witherspoon. The Minutes of the last sederunt were read. Dr. Rodgers then produced extracts from the laws of New York; Mr. Brainerd from the laws of New Jersey; Mr. Sproat from the laws of Pennsylvania; and Mr. Caldwell from the laws of Virginia, respecting religious liberty, all which were read.

As the Convention have not received any extracts from the Charters, laws, etc., of the province of New Hampshire, the colonies of Rhode Island and Connecticut, the provinces of North and South Carolina, Maryland and Georgia, the gentlemen appointed for that purpose the last sessions are still desired to prosecute that business, excepting that by reason of Mr. Tennent's removal, Mr. Baldwin is appointed for New Hampshire, and by reason of the death of Mr. Maltby, Mr. Halsey is desired to make extracts for South Carolina. As it is apprehended that the accounts of the state of religious liberty in the various colonies, may be made more complete, if longer time was allowed to the ministers who have drawn them up, it is therefore

agreed, that they review, and make such alterations and additions as they shall judge necessary to answer the design of this Convention, and have them in readiness for their inspection at their next sessions. And it is particularly recommended to them, to ascertain the number of the inhabitants in each of the colonies, with the proportion of the Episcopalians to the Non-Episcopalians.

The draught of a letter to the Committee of Dissenters in England was read, and after amendments, was approved by the Convention and is as follows:

Gentlemen:—

Your letter of 1st March last, directed to the Rev. Dr. Francis Allison, [a duplicate of which was also directed to the Rev. Dr. Rodgers,] was communicated by him to the General Convention, now sitting at Elizabethtown, New Jersey.

The assurances you give us that the Episcopalians are not likely to succeed for the present, in their applications for an American Episcopate, afford us great satisfaction. We shall depend upon the constant attention of your Committee, to prevent as far as lies in your power, the establishment of Diocesan Episcopacy among us; and we shall always acknowledge with gratitude, your zeal for the cause of religious liberty on this extensive continent. We have abundant reason to believe, that the bigoted Episcopalians on this side the water, have by no means dropt the project, but will ever be restless in their attempts to accomplish their purpose, till they either obtain their design, or repeated disappointments oblige them to abandon it: though it has not come to our knowledge, that anything new of this kind has been attempted in America the year past.

In your last you advise that if any petitions should be handed about to be signed, we should send over counter petitions, by as many respectable persons as we can, which you think ought to be done as soon as possible. But the late rejection and miscarriage of their petition to the throne, [of which we have lately been assured,] happily relieves us from the necessity of this measure for the present. We must beg leave to suggest to you that we cannot but think that if the numbers of the Non-Episcopalians in the several colonies on this continent, and their vast superiority to the Episcopalians in this respect were better known in Great Britain, than perhaps they now are, it might be of very considerable service to the cause of religious liberty among us. We are sorry that it is not in our power to state this matter accurately at present; but we determine as soon as possible, to furnish ourselves with such materials as shall enable us to do it with sufficient exactness, which we hope to accomplish by our next Convention, and we shall take care to communicate to you the result of our inquiries; from which you will easily see what credit is to be given to the magnified accounts the missionaries frequently send home of the numbers of their adherents.

And we cannot but think it would be greatly advantageous to the common cause, to hold up to the view of the public our numbers and importance as often as there shall be a convenient opportunity.

If the intelligence we propose to send you should be communicated to the public through the channel of some of your newspapers or magazines, which circulate farthest through the kingdom, we presume it might give more just ideas of the true state of things on this continent, that it is probable many at present have.

You have writers of abilities among you, and we cannot doubt their readiness to serve so important a cause as that of religious liberty.

If some of them would undertake to lay this matter before the public on your side of the water, they will merit our grateful acknowledgments, and we shall take care to furnish them with materials that may be depended upon.

Please to direct your letter to the Rev. Dr. F. Allison, in Philadelphia, or the Rev. Dr. John Rodgers in New York.

Signed in the name and by order of the General Convention
COTTON MATHER SMITH, *Chairman.*

Mr. Welles is desired to obtain intelligence concerning the number of the Episcopalians and Non-Episcopalians in the province of Nova Scotia.

Adjourned to meet at Fairfield, in Connecticut, on the first Wednesday in Sept. 1773, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon.

Concluded with prayer.

1773.[*Stamford, Sept. 1, 1773.*]

The General Convention of Delegates from the Rev. Associations in Connecticut, and from the Rev. Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met according to the time of adjournment, Sept. 1, 1773, at Stamford it being found inconvenient to meet at Fairfield, as appointed.

Post preces sederunt, from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon, Dr. John Rodgers, Messrs. Elihu Spencer, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, Benjamin Hait, John Close, Ichabod Lewis, Jeremiah Halsey, Samuel Mills. From Connecticut, the Rev. Messrs. Moses Dickinson, Jonathan Lee, Cotton Mather Smith, Samuel Lockwood, Robert Robbins, Robert Ross, Nathaniel Bartlett Elizur Goodrich, William Russel, Joseph Strong, and Noah Welles.

Dr. Witherspoon opened the General Convention with a sermon, from 2 Cor. 4. 13.

Dr. Witherspoon was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Russel and Mr. McWhorter, Scribes.

The Registers reported that the proceedings of last year's General Convention at Elizabethtown, were laid before the General Association of Connecticut, and before the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, and were well accepted.

Dr. Rodgers and the two Scribes are appointed a Committee to prepare a draught of a letter to the Committee of Deputation of Dissenters in England, to be brought in next sederunt.

Proceeded to inquire of the gentlemen appointed to make extracts from the Charters, Laws, &c., of the several colonies respecting the state of religious liberty in them, and finding some progress is made in this matter, it is ordered that these extracts be laid before the General Convention to-morrow morning.

Adjourned to 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Concluded with prayer.

[*Sept. 2, 1773.*]

Sept. 2, 1773: 8 o'clock A. M. P. P. S. Q. S. Ordered that the Minutes of the last sederunt be read.

Messrs. James Cogswell and Joseph Huntington, of Connecticut are now come.

According to the agreement of last year, that the gentlemen who had made extracts from the Charters, &c., should review them, render them more complete, and ascertain the proportion of Episcopalians to Non-Episcopalians, Dr. Rodgers laid before us extracts from the laws of the province of New York; Mr. Goodrich from the laws of Connecticut; Mr. Welles from the laws of Massachusetts Bay—and with respect to the number of Episcopalians in proportion to Non-Episcopalians, Mr. Welles, who was appointed to this matter in Nova Scotia, has not been able to accomplish it, and requests that some other gentleman be appointed to this business in his room: accordingly Mr. Huntington is desired to obtain an account of this matter, and lay it before the next General Convention.

Mr. Baldwin, who was appointed to make the extracts from the laws of New Hampshire, has not yet accomplished it, but proposes to do it, and therefore his appointment is continued, and he is requested to lay his extracts before our next Convention.

Mr. Ross, who was appointed for Rhode Island, has not yet obtained proper materials for the history desired, wherefore his appointment is continued.

Mr. Sproat and Mr. Montgomery, who were appointed for the provinces of Pennsylvania and Maryland, not being here, we are not favored with the extracts, and their appointments are continued.

Mr. Caldwell's appointment is continued to make additional extracts from Virginia.

Mr. Halsey, who was appointed for North and South Carolina, has not yet accomplished it, and his appointment is continued with respect to North Carolina; and the Rev. Mr. William Tennent of Charlestown, being here present, is desired to make extracts from the laws of South Carolina, and give us an history of the progress and state of religious liberty in that colony, and send them to our next General Convention.

Mr. Brainerd sent extracts which he had made from the laws of the colony of New Jersey; and Mr. Spencer is desired to complete that matter according to the design of the Convention.

Mr. McWhorter laid before us extracts from the laws of Georgia.

Dr. Rodgers is requested to obtain what information he can respecting the state of religious liberty in West Florida.

Dr. Witherspoon is desired to obtain like information from Canada.

The several gentlemen who are appointed to this business are desired to proceed and render the respective extracts and histories as perfect as possible, to be laid before our next General Convention.

The Committee appointed to bring in a draught of a letter to the Committee of Deputation of Dissenters in England, brought one in which was read, corrected, and approved,—and is as follows:

Gentlemen:—

We have not been favored with an answer to our last to you of Sept. 27th, 1772, from whence we conclude that it may probably have miscarried, though it was followed some time after by a duplicate. We have the firmest confidence in your friendship and attachment to the cause of religious liberty on this extensive continent, and that you will carefully watch the motions of its Episcopal adversaries on your and our side of the water, who we have the greatest reason to think have their grand object of an American Episcopate still in view, notwithstanding the discouragements they have met with respecting its immediate accomplishment. They wait only a favorable opportunity of renewing their attempts, and, if possible effecting their design, big with the most fatal mischiefs to this growing country.

We are taking all possible pains to ascertain the number of Episcopalians and their proportion to the Non-Episcopalians of different denominations in the several colonies, and have made some progress in it; but we find it a work of no small labor and difficulty to do it with proper precision.

We find by a paper read before us at our present meeting, that the Episcopalians in the colony of New York bear the proportion of about one to twenty of its present inhabitants. By another of the same kind respecting the colony of Connecticut it appears they do not bear a greater proportion; and in the provinces of New Jersey and Pennsylvania their proportionable numbers are less; and in the Massachusetts government, Rhode Island, and province of New Hampshire, they are much less still; and in the Southern colonies where Episcopacy is established, viz.: Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, the Non-Episcopalians are in some of them a majority, and in the rest a large and growing proportion.

We are pursuing this important design, and promise ourselves the pleasure of effecting it with a greater degree of accuracy before our next meeting, where you may expect to hear farther from us on this subject.

We beg leave also to inform you that we are collecting the state of religious liberty in the several colonies on this continent, and its progress in each of them from their first settlement, which may be capable of important uses in the grand struggle we or posterity may be called to make in this glorious cause, in which the happiness of thousands yet unborn is so deeply interested.

Your known zeal against the unjust encroachments of Episcopal domination, supersedes the necessity of our repeating our requests that you will continue your wonted care on this head.

A line from you will be esteemed an additional favor; and which be pleased to

direct to the Rev. Dr. Allison in Philadelphia, or the Rev. Dr. Rodgers in New York.

Signed in the name and by order of the General Convention, by
JOHN WITHERSPOON, *Chairman.*

The next meeting of the General Convention is appointed to be at Elizabethtown, the third Wednesday of September, 1774, at 3 o'clock, P. M.
Concluded with prayer.

1774.

[Elizabethtown, Sept. 21, 1774.]

The General Convention of the delegates from the Consociated Churches in Connecticut, and from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met at Elizabethtown, Sept. 21, 1774, as appointed P. P. S.

From Connecticut the Rev. Messrs. Ebenezer Baldwin, Thomas Weld Bray, Samuel Eells, Nathaniel Taylor, Jeremiah Day, Samuel Sherwood, William Mackey Tennent, Theodore Hinsdale. From the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, Rev. Drs. Francis Allison & John Rodgers, Rev. Messrs. William Tennent, James Sproat, Israel Read, Benjamin Hait, Jeremiah Halsey, Alexander McWhorter, James Caldwell, Jedediah Chapman, Joseph Montgomery, Patrick Allison.

The General Convention was opened by Mr. Ebenezer Baldwin, with a sermon from Matt. 23.8.

The Rev. Mr. Sherwood was chosen Chairman, and Mr. Day and Mr. Allison were chosen Scribes.

Ordered that the Minutes of the last Convention be read. The proceedings of the last Convention were laid before the General Association and Synod, and were well accepted.

Adjourned till 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Concluded with prayer.

Sept. 22, 1774.

Thursday, 8 o'clock A. M.

The Convention met according to adjournment. P. P. S. Q. S., except Mr. Hait. Ordered that the Minutes of the last session be read.

The Convention proceeded to review the appointments made last year to obtain the knowledge of religious liberty in the several American colonies, and received some satisfactory reports in consequence thereof, particularly from Mr. Huntington, respecting Nova Scotia, and Mr. Welles, respecting Massachusetts Bay, whose diligence and accurate investigation are highly commendable. Mr. Baldwin is requested to pursue his inquiries relating to the province of New Hampshire. And Mr. Halsey is desired to write Mr. McClintock, soliciting his endeavors to furnish and obtain full information on the same subject, and transmit it to the next Convention. The respective appointments of Mr. Ross and Mr. Sproat are renewed. Mr. Montgomery reports that he has made some progress in collecting materials concerning the rise and progress of religious liberty, and ascertaining the proportion of dissenters to the members of the established Church in Maryland. His appointment is continued, only Mr. Allison is desired to fix the proportion between the classes of people on the western shore of that province. Mr. Caldwell's appointment is continued. Mr. Halsey delivered a valuable detail concerning the first settlement of North Carolina, and of the ecclesiastical circumstances of the province, in its different periods until this time. Messrs. Caldwell and Allison are requested to write to such acquaintance as they may judge proper in the maritime counties of North Carolina, for a more accurate account of the condition of those counties according to the view of the Convention. Dr. Rodgers is desired to write Mr. Tennent of Charlestown concerning the business

committed to him, and quickening his performance of it. The Doctor is further to beg Mr. Tennent will address some capable persons in Georgia, to acquaint him concerning the state of that province, and transmit the result of his inquiries to us. Dr. Rodgers reports that from certain information, it appears there is yet no ecclesiastical constitution fixed there, nor any laws enacted affecting religious liberty in West Florida.

The gentlemen appointed last year to furnish materials respecting the Jerseys having made no report to the Convention, Mr. McWhorter is desired to undertake and accomplish the matter.

Dr. Rodgers reports that he has been prosecuting his investigations relating to the province of New York, and expects to have them completed for the inspection of the next Convention.

Adjourned till 3 o'clock, P. M. Concluded with prayer.

The Convention met at 3 o'clock, P. M., according to adjournment. U. P. P. S. Q. S. Ordered that the Minutes of the last session be read. Mr. Goodrich having complied in part with his appointment, it is continued, and Mr. Bray is desired to inform him, that the Convention hope he will be able to finish the business committed to him before the next meeting. Dr. Rodgers brought in a paper handed to him by a friend, containing an abstract of the ecclesiastical laws of Barbadoes with some remarks thereon.

It is agreed that a particular history of the several Colleges on the continent, should accompany the accounts drawn up respecting the provinces in which those institutions are erected.

The Convention having received no answer from the Committee of Dissenters in England, to the letters sent there the two preceding years, it is judged inexpedient to write them at this time.

Adjourned to meet at Greenfield, in Connecticut, on the first Wednesday in Sept. 1775.

Concluded with prayer.

1775.

[Greenfield, Sept. 6, 1775.]

The Convention of delegates from the Consociated Churches of Connecticut, and the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, met at Greenfield, in Connecticut, Sept. 6, 1775, according to adjournment Present.

From the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, Rev. Messrs. Samuel Mills, Ichabod Lewis.

From Connecticut, Rev. Dr. Welles, Messrs. William Mackey Tennent, Samuel Lockwood, Daniel Brinsmade, Joseph Huntington, Joseph Strong, Robert Ross, Theodore Hinsdale, Ebenezer Baldwin.

The Convention was opened by the Rev. Mr. Lockwood, with a sermon from Jer. 13.16.

The Rev. Mr. Mills was chosen Chairman, and Messrs. Baldwin and Lewis, Scribes.

The session was opened with prayer by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the last Convention were ordered to be read.

The Convention proceeded to make inquiry concerning the appointments made and continued, the last Convention, to gain information respecting the progress and present state of religious liberty in the several colonies.

A full and accurate account respecting the colony of Connecticut was received from the Rev. Mr. Goodrich; also an account of the numbers of Episcopalians and Non-Episcopalians in that colony, sufficiently exact to answer the purposes of this Convention. The body are well pleased with,

and thankfully notice the accuracy and diligence of Mr. Goodrich in this matter: however, if Mr. Goodrich should ever be able to complete his account of the numbers for the remaining towns, with the same accuracy he has those of which he has sent a particular account, it is desired he would send them to be added to the amount already received.

Adjourned to 8 o'clock to-morrow morning, to meet at Mr. Tennent's. Concluded with prayer.

Sept. 7, 1775.

Sept. 7: met according to adjournment. U. P. P. S. Q. S. The Minutes of the last session were read. The appointment of Mr. Halsey and Mr. Baldwin for the province of New Hampshire is continued, and Mr. Huntington is joined with them.

Mr. Ross acquainted this body that he had applied to Dr. Stiles, of Newport, for materials respecting Rhode Island—that he had received intelligence from the Doctor, that he had made considerable progress in his collection, but by reason of sickness and other difficulties, had been unable to complete it.

Mr. Ross' appointment is continued, and he is desired to acquaint Dr. Stiles, that this body thankfully notice his assiduity in this matter, and desire he would perfect as soon as he conveniently can, the collection he has begun. Mr. Sproat's appointment for Pennsylvania is continued, and Dr. Duffield is joined with him.

Whereas no returns have been made from the Rev. Messrs. Montgomery, Caldwell, Allison, Rodgers and McWhorter, their respective appointments are continued; and they are desired to render their accounts as complete as possible by the next Convention. The Rev. Dr. Welles is desired to acquaint the above mentioned gentlemen, who are absent, of the continuance of their appointments, also by reason of the critical situation New York is in at present, to request of Dr. Rodgers, that he would transmit to Dr. Welles the several papers in his hands belonging to this Convention. *Sept. 11*

The Convention are of opinion that it would be conducive to their general design, to obtain, in addition to their history of the rise and progress of religious liberty in the several colonies, accounts of the rise, progress and present state of the several religious sects in the different provinces and colonies.

Accordingly the Rev. Dr. Welles is appointed to furnish such an account of the Episcopalians in New England; the Rev. Mr. Huntington of the Separatists and Separate Baptists also, so far as their histories are connected together; the Rev. Mr. Ross of the Baptists through the several colonies; Mr. Baldwin of the Glassites or Sandemanians; the Rev. Mr. Johnson of Lyme, of the Rogereens; the Rev. Mr. Hinsdale of the Quakers in New England; the Rev. Mr. Halsey of the Quakers to the southward of New England; the Rev. Mr. Duffield of the Moravians; the Rev. Mr. Cooper of the Menists or Menonists; the Rev. Mr. Robert Smith, of Pequea, of the Mountainmen, Covenanters and Seceders; the Rev. Dr. Rodgers of the Jews. Appointments for the other sects are deferred to the next Convention.

The Chairman is desired to notify the several gentlemen above mentioned, who are not present, of their appointments.

The gentlemen appointed to furnish accounts of the rise, &c., of religious liberty in the several colonies, are desired to add to their accounts the state of the several Colleges or seminaries of learning, in the respective colonies, as in the Minutes of the last Convention.

The next meeting of the General Convention is appointed to be at Elizabethtown, on Wednesday, the 19th of Sept., 1776.

Concluded with prayer.

NOTE.—See for the termination of the Convention, pp. 14, 16.

RELIGIOUS EXHIBIT OF THE POPULATION OF CONNECTICUT IN 1774.

BY REV. ELIZUR GOODRICH, D. D.

An Account of the number of Inhabitants in the Colony of Connecticut, Jan. 1, 1774; and an Estimate of the Proportion of Episcopalians to Non-Episcopalians in the same.

COUNTY OF HARTFORD.

Towns.	Epis.	Non-Epis.	Total.
Bolton,		994	994
Chatham,	80	2289	2369
East Haddam,	88	2655	2743
Enfield,		1353	1353
Farmington,	244	5719	5963
Glastenbury,		1992	1992
Haddam,	23	1690	1713
Hartford,	111	4770	4881
Simsbury,	914	2757	3671
Somers,		1024	1024
Suffield,		1980	1980
Tolland,	5	1242	1247
Wethersfield,	6	3341	3347
Willington,		1000	1000
Colchester,			3057
East Windsor,			2961
Hebron,			2285
Middletown,			4680
Stafford,			1333
Windsor,			2082
1 to 22	Total	1471	32806
			50675

COUNTY OF NEW HAVEN.

Towns.	Epis.	Non-Epis.	Total.
New Haven,	942	7080	8022
Branford,	86	1852	1938
Derby,	725	1094	1819
Durham,	6	1025	1031
Guilford,	213	2633	2846
Milford,	153	1812	1965
Wallingford,	626	4151	4777
Waterbury,			3498
1 to 7	Total	2751	19647
			25896

COUNTY OF NEW LONDON.

Towns.	Epis.	Non-Epis.	Total.
Preston,	221	2034	2255
Groton,	222	3266	3488
Killingworth,	68	1889	1957
Stonington,	32	4924	4956
Saybrook,	33	2595	2628
New London,			5366
Norwich,			7032
Lyme,			3860
1 to 25	Total	596	14708
			31542

COUNTY OF FAIRFIELD.

Towns.	Epis.	Non-Epis.	Total.
Danbury,	420	2053	2473
Greenwich,	443	2211	2654
New Fairfield,	87	1201	1288
Newtown,	1084	1084	2168
Norwalk,	792	3451	4243
Redding,	478	711	1189
Ridgefield,	329	1344	1673
Stamford,	710	2793	3503
— Fairfield,			4544
— Stratford,			5201
10 to 34	Total	4343	14848
			28936

COUNTY OF WINDHAM.

Towns.	Epis.	Non-Epis.	Total.
Coventry,	11	2021	2032
Pomfret,	55	2186	2241
Killingly,	30	3409	3439
Lebanon,	36	3805	3841
Mansfield,	12	2431	2443
— Plainfield,		1479	1479
Voluntown,	6	1470	1476
Union,		512	512
— Canterbury,			2392
Ashford,			2228
Windham,			3437
Woodstock,			1974
1 to 115	Total	150	17313
			27494

COUNTY OF LITCHFIELD.

Towns.	Epis.	Non-Epis.	Total.
Litchfield,	191	1318	1509
Canaan,	91	1482	1573
Cornwall,	53	904	957
Hartland,	49	451	500
New Hartford,	25	960	985
Norfolk,	38	928	966
Salisbury,	91	1845	1936
Sharon,	83	1903	1986
Torrington,	31	812	843
Barkhamsted,			250
Colebrook,			150
Goshen,			1098
Harwinton,			1015
— Kent,			1922
— New Milford,			2742
Westmoreland,			1922
Winchester,			327
— Woodbury,			5224
1 to 16	Total	655	10600
			25944

As far as the accounts have been sent, the estimate of Episcopalians, &c., stands thus:

Counties.	Epis.	Non-Epis.	Total.
Hartford County	1471	32806	50675
New Haven do	2751	19647	25896
New London do	596	14708	31542
Fairfield do	4343	14848	28936
Windham do	150	17313	27494
Litchfield do	655	10542	25944
Total	9966	119922	190487

which gives 1 Episcopalian to 12 Non-Episcopalians nearly, or makes the Episcopalians about 1 in 13 of the whole number of inhabitants; and probably there would be no great difference from this proportion were the account of all the towns come in, which I hope soon to gain.

Elizur Goodrich

L Durham, Sept. 5, A. D. 1774