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Minutes of the ... Held at the Baptist Meeting
House in Nottingham-West, September 18 & 19,
1816.

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57th Anniversary

MINUTES

OF THE

Boston Baptist Association,

HELD AT THE

Baptist Meeting House

IN

NOTTINGHAM-WEST,

SEPTEMBER 18 & 19,

1816.

BOSTON:

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MINUTES, &c.

Wednesday, September 18, 1816.

1. At 10 o'clock, Brother **LUCIUS BOLLES**, according to appointment, preached the Introductory Sermon from Luke x. 2. After which there was a collection for the widows and children of deceased ministers.

Adjourned for half an hour.—Met according to adjournment. Prayer by Brother **GRAFTON**.

2. Chose Brother **THOMAS BALDWIN**, Moderator, and Brother **ELISHA WILLIAMS**, Clerk.

3. Appointed Brethren **BALDWIN**, **WILLIAMS**, and **GRAFTON**, a Committee, to count and make distribution of the money collected for the widows and children of deceased ministers.

The Messengers from sister Corresponding Associations were invited to take a seat with us.

Proceeded to read the Letters from the Churches, and took the following account of the members added, dismissed, excluded, or who have died the past year, and the present number in each church.

N. B. The names of ordained ministers are in SMALL CAPITALS; licensed preachers in *italic*. Those ministers with this mark (*) were not present. Vacant churches are distinguished by a dash ———

Churches.	Elders and Messengers.	Added		Dis.	Exclu.	Died.	Total.
		By Bap.	By Let.				
2d Boston 1743	THOMAS BALDWIN ELISHA WILLIAMS Heman Lincoln	26	6	9	7	6	410
Haverhill 1763	WM. BATCHELDER Amos George Samuel Pilsbury Benjamin Emerson	6	1	8		4	297
Harvard 1776	ABISHA SAMSON Jeremiah Dyer	9		1		3	104
Newton 1780	JOSEPH GRAFTON Elijah Corey	3	1	4	1	1	207
Woburn 1781	————— Benjamin Wood 2d					1	99
Templeton 1782	————— <i>Jeremiah F. Tolman</i> Joel Fletcher		2			4	108

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Elders and Messengers.</i>	<i>Added</i>		<i>Dism.</i>	<i>Exclu.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
		<i>By Bap.</i>	<i>By Let.</i>				
Rowley 1785	JOSIAH CONVERS Timothy Morse Jr.	2	2	1	1		47
Weston and Framingham } 1789	CHARLES TRAIN Moses Harrington		9			6	101
Danvers 1793	JEREMIAH CHAPLIN Israel Hutchinson Benjamin Kent		1				73
Charlestown 1801	WILLIAM COLLIER*		2			2	66
Beverly 1301	N. W. WILLIAMS Zachariah Cole	1		2	5	4	109
Salem 1804	LUCIUS BOLLES	1	10	20	4	6	286
South Reading 1804	————— Ephraim Emerson Lilly Eaton Amos Evans		5	1	4	3	97
Malden	EBENEZER NELSON		5	3	3	1	110
Weare, N. H. 1783	EZRA WILLMARTH* Tristram Barnard Phillip Cilley Benjamin Gooden		6			1	96
Nottingham West 1805	DANIEL MERRILL Thomas Senter Justus Dakin		5	1		1	114
New Boston, N.H.	ISAIAH STONE Jacob Bennett				1	2	57
African Church } in Boston, 1805 }	THOMAS PAUL Nestor Pendleton James Easton Caleb Easton		1		4	1	70
Ipswich	————— Aaron Treadwell Daniel B. Lord				1	3	41

Churches.	Elders and Messengers.	Added		Dism.	Exch.	Died	Total.
		By Bap.	By Let.				
Newbury and Newburyport }	JOHN PEAK Stephen Bailey <i>Benjamin Lane</i>	10	1	3	3		81
3d Boston 1807	DANIEL SHARP <i>E. Lincoln</i>	31	4		2	2	173
Gloucester	—————					1	31
Marblehead	FERDINAND ELLIS*	2					38
Chelmsford	JOHN PECKENS Elhakim Hutchins Jeremiah Vose James Baldwin					1	46
Londonderry	————— Henry George William Richardson Caleb Gooden	1				1	61
Dunstable	————— Thaddeus Davis William Blodget Jr.					1	37
Goffstown	ABRAHAM GATES James Hemphill	3			2	2	21
Methuen	CHARLES O. KIMBALL Daniel Frye John Pecker	13	10				58
Westborough	————— Asahel Bellers	1		2	1		50
Milford	————— <i>George Evans</i> Samuel Taylor Joseph Burns, Jr.						59
Lynn	————— GEORGE PHIPPEN						32
2d Ipswich	WILLIAM TAYLOR Amos Jones Charles Simonds						24

151|33|62|36|40|3203

N. B. The three last mentioned churches were received the present session.

4. Two churches in Bow requested admission into the Association. Brethren Merrill, Batchelder, and Bolles, were appointed a Committee to attend to their request, inquire into their standing, and make report.

5. The Second Church in Ipswich presented a request for admission into the Association. Brethren Grafton, Nelson, and E. Lincoln, were appointed a Committee to attend to their request, and to inquire into the standing of the former church, and make report.

Adjourned until 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. Prayer by Brother W. Hooper. Sermons in different parts of the town in the evening.

Thursday, Sept. 19.

Met according to adjournment. Opened with prayer by Br. Ball.

6. Read the Circular Letter prepared by Brother Willmarth. *Voted*, to accept the same. Also, read and accepted the Corresponding Letter prepared by Brother Chaplin. *Voted*, to request the several Associations with whom we correspond, to afford particular attention to the Corresponding Letter.

7. Appointed Brother George Phippen to write the Circular Letter for the next year.

8. Appointed Brother E. Lincoln to write the Corresponding Letter.

9. Received communications from the following Associations.

<i>Associations.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	<i>Minutes.</i>
Warren,	James M. Winchell,	
N. Hampshire,	Andrew Sherburne,	Minutes.
Dublin,	John Parkhurst,	do.
Westfield,		do.
Sturbridge,	David Pease,	do.
Hartford,		do.
Philadelphia,		do.
Woodstock,		do.
Charleston,		do.
Savannah River,		do.
Stonington,		
Vermont,		do.
Lincoln,		do.

Voted, To hold correspondence with the Hudson River and Danville Associations.

10. The Committee appointed to attend to the request of the two churches in Bow reported, That it be recommended to the two churches, previously to their uniting with the Association, to meet together and unite as one church; or if needful, to call a mutual council for advice; which Report was accepted.

The Committee appointed to attend to the request of the 2d Church in Ipswich, and inquire into the standing of the old church, reported as follows; viz. "That as Elders and Messengers from six of our sister churches repaired to Ipswich at the request

of a number of aggrieved members, and were unanimously recognized as a mutual council by the church and the aggrieved members, who, after patiently hearing all the statements, gave as their result, that discipline had been culpably neglected in the old church, and advised the aggrieved members to unite in forming a new church, which has since been done, its fellowship with the neighbouring churches; and we, having also now heard the parties, recommend that the old church be dropped from our Minutes, and the new church received." It was voted that the Second Church be received into the Association; but upon mature consideration of the subject, *Voted*, That Brethren Grafton, Nelson, Lincoln, Sharp, and Batchelder, be a Committee to visit the former church in Ipswich, and endeavour to effect a reconciliation, and make report at our next meeting.

11. The interesting concerns of Missions were introduced, and the following sums received, viz.

<i>For the Bap. Miss. Society in Mass.</i>	<i>For Foreign Missions.</i>
From Salem Fem. Cent Society, 60,00	From Templeton Fem. Cent Soc.
„ Fem. Benev. Society of Newton and Vicinity, 63,53	by Mrs. Sally Woodbury, 12,12
„ Fem. Mite Soc. Middleboro' 18,76	„ Bap. Church, Chelmsford, 7,75
„ Female Society, Weare, 15,35	„ a Friend to Translations, 1,00
„ Female Mite Soc. New Boston, 4,75	„ From a Fem. Friend to Foreign Missions, .50
„ Beverly Bap. Fem. Mite Soc. 17,00	21,37
„ Fem. Soc. Nottingham West, 5,37	
„ African Church, Boston, 5,00	n. b. Many of our churches present their missionary contributions at the annual meeting of the Missionary Society.
„ Three Females, Rowley, 2,00	
191,76	

Voted, That the thanks of the Association be presented to those societies and individuals who have contributed to support the cause of Missions.

12. The subject of the Baptist Education Society was introduced,—and we learned with pleasure, that the subject continued to excite a lively interest in the Churches. The following sums were received, viz :—

From 2d Bap. Church, Boston 135,22	From African Church, Boston 5,00
do. 3d do. do. do. 100,00	do. Baptist do. Ipswich 3,56
do. Bap. Church, Haverhill 22,50	do. do. Newburyport 2,50
do. - - Harvard 5,89	do. do. Dunstable 8,50
do. - - Newton 5,00	do. do. Methuen 5,00
do. - - Woburn 7,31	do. Female Education Society in Salem - - 61,40
do. - - Rowley 11,60	do. Bap. Church, Danvers 40,00
do. - - Framingham 22,70	Dea. Joel Fletcher, Templeton 1,00
do. - - Danvers 7,37	A Friend, by Mr. Tolman 1,00
do. - - Beverly 35,00	Fem. Miss. Society at Harvard 9,50
do. - - Salem 86,57	Rev. Mr. Pease of Belchertown 1,00
do. - South Reading 14,58	Miss Asenath Hyde, Boston, by
do. - - Weare 5,00	Rev. Elisha Williams, 1,00
do. - Nottingham West 4,00	602,20
	101,39
Balance in the hands of the Treasurer	703,59

Voted, That our thanks be presented to the Societies and individuals, who have aided the Education Society.

13. The Churches are requested to appoint Trustees annually, agreeably to the 4th Article in the Constitution of the Baptist Education Society.

Voted, To recommend that in the month of August, annually, collections be made in the Churches of this Association for the benefit of the Education Society. Adjourned for half an hour.

Met and resumed business.

14. Appointed the following Messengers to corresponding Associations. To the

Warren,	Baldwin and Sharp.
N. Hampshire,	Batchelder, Sharp, Nelson and Merrill.
Dublin,	Stone and Samson.
Sturbridge,	Baldwin, Winchell, Williams & Merrill.
Hartford,	Winchell.
Woodstock,	Merrill, Peak and Taylor.
Hudson River,	Winchell, Sharp and H. Lincoln.

Voted, That our Messengers to sister Associations be requested to use their influence in promoting the formation of Education Societies.

15. Heard the Report of the Executive Committee of the Baptist Education Society, by their Secretary. *Voted*, That the Report be accepted.

16. A Committee of three was appointed to confer with the committees of other Associations relative to uniting their energy in support of the Baptist Education Society. Brethren Baldwin, Sharp and Bolles, were appointed for that purpose.

17. *Voted*, That it be recommended to the several churches to afford assistance in collecting a Library, for the use of the Baptist Education Society. Books to be lodged with the Executive Committee.

18. A letter was read from "The Baptist Board of Foreign Missions," giving a concise view of their proceedings in relation to the Mission in the Burman Empire.

On motion, it was unanimously resolved, That the Secretary be instructed to write the Board, and assure them, that we feel a deep interest in the prosperity of the Baptist Foreign Missionary Society; that we stand pledged to support so good and glorious a cause; and that we have heard with lively gratitude, of the liberal beneficence of Edward Thompson, Esq. in allowing a gratuitous passage to Calcutta, to three persons under the patronage of the Board.

19. The Committee appointed the last year, on the queries from the Church in Nottingham-West, were prepared to report an answer; but the church consented to withdraw their request.

20. *Voted*, To recommend to the churches of this Association, and to Corresponding Associations, to meet on the evening of the first Monday of every month for the special purpose of praying that the influences of the Divine Spirit may be poured out in rich effusions; that the Lord of the harvest would raise up and send

forth many labourers into his harvest, and that christian Missions may be prospered.

21. *Voted*, To hold our Association the next year, at the Baptist Meeting-house in Danvers.

Appointed Brother Sharp to preach the introductory sermon, and in case of failure Brother Train.

At 3 o'clock, the business of the Association being agreeably finished, the Moderator addressed the Assembly in an affectionate and solemn manner, and then concluded with imploring the divine benediction on the Association, and on Zion at large.

Elder William Hooper then preached to the Assembly, from Heb. xii. 28.

Circular Letter.

The Elders and Messengers of the "Boston Baptist Association" to the Churches which they represent, wish grace, mercy and peace to be multiplied, through the knowledge of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,

WHEN we consider that our children have commenced an existence which will be eternal—that they are in a state of moral depravity, and that in the present momentary life their characters are formed with which their eternal destinies are connected, our solicitude for their welfare *must* be greatly excited, and our enquiries *should* be, What duties we owe them, the performance of which may tend, under Divine Influence, to promote their everlasting welfare, and by what considerations they are enforced?

That we ought to bring them to Christ, in the arms of prayer and supplication, is most evident from reason and Revelation, Matt. xix. 13. This duty will daily be impressed on the pious mind; nor will it be a burthensome task, if our minds are rightly exercised towards God. Who that realizes the value of the souls of his children, but must be constrained to bear them upon his heart to a Throne of Grace?

But while we are constrained to wrestle with God for their salvation, we cannot reasonably expect a favourable answer to our supplications unless we diligently use those means which God has appointed, and which he usually blesses as instruments in the accomplishment of so great a good. Hence,

Instruction in the great and important truths of Revelation is highly necessary, Deut. vi. 6, 7. "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." And though we would ever insist that the holy Scriptures are the only source

from whence we can derive that instruction, we would urge the utility of books, judiciously composed, as helps to facilitate the communication of that instruction to the minds of the youth. The mode of teaching by means of Catechisms appears to us exceedingly well adapted to infant and youthful minds; and we believe that no reasonable objections can be urged against it.

It is very desirable that instructors in the rudiments of literature would mingle religious catechetical, with literary instruction. It would rather facilitate their literary acquirements, and in the mean time lead their minds into truths the most important. Ministers of the gospel, whose local circumstances permit, might do essential service by inviting the youth to meet periodically, and instructing them in this method. And parents would find it convenient to assign some stated times, especially on the Lord's day, to perform this important duty.

Important, however, as we deem religious instruction, we cannot but suggest the improbability of the most correct and instructive precepts having any commanding influence upon the minds of those who are under our care, if not enforced by example. It is therefore highly necessary, that, while we endeavour to instil into their minds the principles of our holy religion, we should, by our daily walk, demonstrate that we believe them to be eternal realities. Nor can it be doubted but that it is our indispensable duty to restrain our children from those evil courses to which their depravity inclines them, and constrain them to the observance of those things which God hath enjoined; and especially to attend, when practicable, on public worship, and a preached gospel. And, painful as it is, when other methods fail, the rod of correction should be discreetly used. Prov. xxiii. 13, 14. Not in anger, but in judgment; not to revenge, but to reclaim; not from caprice, but a sense of duty. Eli was greatly blamed for not enforcing his precepts upon his children. 1 Sam. iii. 13.

But when we have done all, the only source from whence we can hope for success, is in God. What is said, 1 Cor. iii. 6. with respect to preaching the gospel is equally applicable to parental duty: "I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase." This, however, would not have excused them in neglecting to plant and water, nor will it excuse us in the neglect of our duty to our children: but it furnishes us with an encouraging motive to perform it.

And are there no weighty considerations to *enforce* these duties upon us? We have been instrumental of the actual existence of our children.—They are the offspring of our bodies.—They have immortal souls.—We *must* feel interested in their eternal welfare. God requires the performance of our duty to their souls; and his divine authority must not be slighted. As christians, the vows of God are upon us; having promised to obey Him, whose requirements are "*the words of a King,*" and clothed with *power*.

The day of accounts is approaching, when we must answer for every neglect; and can we think of meeting our children at the divine tribunal to bear their reproaches for our awful neglect of their souls! What bitter reflections must rend the heart of a par-

ent who has been essentially negligent toward the souls of his children, in view of another world ! When following the remains of a child to the grave, how cutting to the heart it must be to reflect, that though the child was capable of receiving instruction, I have not endeavoured to communicate it—and now it is gone beyond the possibility of receiving it from me !

Is there no *encouragement* to exite to the performance of these important duties ? Has not God wrought by means ? And has he not given us reason to hope he will command his blessing on our labour of love to the souls of our children ? What else can be meant by such inspired declarations as the following ? **Deut. xxxi. 12, 13**—“ Gather the people together, men, women and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law : and that their children which have not known any thing may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God. **Ps. lxxviii. 5, 6, 7**—For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children ; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. **Isa. lxi. 9**.—And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people ; all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.” **Matt. x. 13, 14. Acts ii. 39.**

While we see no evidence from reason or revelation in favour of applying the ordinance of baptism to our unregenerate offspring, we still believe that we are commanded and encouraged to be faithful to their souls.

“ Our children’s wants we mean to plead,
Their need of grace we *feel* ;
But dare not call them Abraham’s seed,
Nor seal them with his seal.”

And what a cheering consideration will it be, that our feeble endeavours have, by the blessing of Sovereign Grace, been instrumental in their salvation ! How delightful to behold our “ children coming to Christ,” since “ of such” as come to him “ is the kingdom of heaven.”

Permit us seriously to ask, whether there is not an awful degree of negligence among professing christians with regard to their children, not in omitting to baptize them, (for where there is no law, there is no transgression—**Rom. iv. 15.**) but in that we do not more diligently attend to those moral and religious duties to them which *are* enjoined by reason and revelation.

While, therefore, we acknowledge our fault, let us resolutely undertake, by the grace of God, a thorough reformation. How anxious are parents to train up their children for respectability, and the acquirement of wealth, which will perish in the using ! Is it not of infinitely more importance that they should “ seek first the kingdom of God,” and a treasure which will endure eternally, and that they should be qualified to appear and dwell in the presence of God, and among saints and angels in glory ? Who can

tell but that should we, by divine grace, set about the performance of our duty to the souls of our children, with resolution, we may have the unspeakable pleasure of seeing more frequent instances of whole households converted to Christ, and joyfully submitting to the ordinances of the gospel? The glory of God, the interests of religion, the salvation of souls, and our own peace and comfort, all conspire to stimulate us to our duty.—Let us not be insensible of these weighty considerations.

How much less occasion have we reason to think we should have to lament the prevalence of error, were our children well fortified with correct instruction in the principles of revelation in early life. Go, then, and under the influence of such emotions, be faithful to your God, to your own souls, **AND TO YOUR CHILDREN!**

Our present meeting has been favoured with some tokens of divine approbation; and especially have we experienced, *how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.* May the God of love and peace dwell with us all. Amen.

Corresponding Letter.

DEAR BRETHREN,

THE sacred Scriptures inform us that, when our Redeemer “ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, he received gifts for men.” These he bestowed on the primitive Church in rich abundance. “He gave apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” And though the extraordinary gifts which distinguished and ennobled the apostolic age have long ceased to be imparted to the Church, she has always had some of her sons to take her by the hand and lead her in the right way. This is especially true of the times in which we live. In these last days, the Lord in remembrance of his covenant, has raised up many of different nations to bear his name, and publish the good news of salvation through the blood of Jesus. And perhaps no nation has, in this respect, been favoured of God more signally than ours. We are blest with many faithful and able ministers of the New Testament; men who, in imitation of the great apostle of the Gentiles, are “willing to spend and be spent” for the salvation of souls, and whose pious labours have contributed much to the increase of pure and undefiled religion.

It is, however, a lamentable truth, that the number of men among us, who are engaged in the sacred ministry, is far from being proportionate to the wants of those whom we are bound to furnish, if possible, with the preached Gospel. In every part of this land, a considerable portion of our Churches are destitute of pastors. Some of these Churches are in a disordered and languishing state. Their discipline is neglected or badly conducted. They are in danger of being imposed on by idle vagrants, and seduced by

unning impostors. And unless they are supplied with the regular administration of the Word and ordinances, they will shortly cease, it is to be feared, to have even a name among the Churches of Christ. Besides; in many places where Baptist Churches do not exist, there is great need of Baptist preachers. In some of these places, there are no religious teachers of any description. In others, there are, it is true, teachers sufficiently numerous. But, alas! they are not such as the Lord has sent. They do not preach the truth as it is in Jesus. They are blind leaders of the blind. And you cannot, Brethren, have forgotten that weighty and awful saying of our Lord, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." It is undeniably true, that a very large number of preachers are necessary at the present time, to supply the vacant churches, and other pressing calls, in the five New-England States. Probably other parts of our country are equally destitute.

Nor is it for this country alone that an increase of the number of Gospel ministers is to be desired. It becomes us to extend our views to distant lands. Hundreds of millions of our species are there to be found who, while they have souls as precious as ours, are enveloped in pagan darkness and covered with the shadow of death. The Church of Christ is bound to afford them the light of the glorious Gospel. She has undertaken to do it. Awed by the command of her Sovereign King who has said, "Go, preach the Gospel to every creature," and inspired with a deep compassion towards the perishing heathen, she has sent her messengers of salvation to Greenland, to India, to China, to various parts of the African continent, and to the Islands of the Pacific Ocean. These holy men have engaged in the arduous work assigned them with a zeal and devotion of soul which does them the highest honour; and, amidst all the difficulties and dangers by which they have been surrounded, have steadily pursued their course, and, by the help of God, have done great things. But their number is immensely disproportioned to the magnitude of the undertaking in which they are engaged. And should success continue to attend it, thousands of new missionaries will soon be needed to aid in its accomplishment. Shall not America furnish her proportion of these missionaries? And shall not the churches of our denomination manifest as much zeal in this holy enterprise as those of any other? But while so many more preachers are needed for our own country, how can we send an adequate number to the heathen world?

In these circumstances, it is natural to ask, What measures should be adopted to increase the number of able and faithful ministers? The question is, undoubtedly, an important one, and deserves our most serious consideration.

The first duty, we conceive, which now devolves upon us, is that of *prayer*. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." To him we ought to look for a supply of Gospel ministers. This he has expressly commanded us to do. "The harvest truly is plenteous, and the labourers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." Nor has he commanded only: he has graciously promised to hear and answer

our requests. His language is, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And when we address the Lord for a supply of spiritual labourers, let us always remember that the cause which we are seeking to promote is most eminently *his own*—a cause which has employed his infinite mind from all eternity, and in the advancement of which his glory is deeply involved. But let us remember too, that our prayers will not succeed unless they are indited by the Spirit of grace and supplication, and prompted by that holy ardour which true faith inspires. If we would prevail with God, we must *wrestle* with him as the venerable patriarch of old did. We may pray in a listless, formal manner all our days without obtaining one answer of peace. It is "the effectual, *fervent* prayer" that "availeth much." Nor is it enough that we perform the duty, here recommended, as individuals. It is incumbent on us to engage in it as Churches and Associations.

But important as the duty of prayer is, it is not the only duty to which our attention should now be directed. We should all consider the husbandman as presuming on the divine goodness, if he prayed for a harvest without taking any pains to prepare his ground and sow his seed. And how can we acquit ourselves of the like presumption, if, while we pray that the number of those who are qualified to preach the Gospel may be increased, we provide no means for the education of such as the Lord may call to the important work?

It is a mistaken idea, that nothing more is requisite to fit a pious man for discharging the great duties of the Gospel ministry than the possession of natural gifts. These, it is true, are indispensable. Without them, no man, however pious, can ever become an acceptable preacher. But natural gifts, even of the highest rank, never appear to the best advantage, unless cultivated and matured by a good education. Such an education is of immense service to a Christian minister. No position is more groundless than that which represents knowledge as unfriendly to religion. Ignorance has always been the prolific source of enthusiasm, superstition and vice. It is pernicious in a private man; much more so in a public character; and most of all in those who are regarded as the spiritual guides of mankind. It is indispensably necessary that every preacher have more knowledge of *divine truth*, than the people whom he undertakes to instruct. And it is very desirable that preachers in general should study it with critical accuracy, and be able to show the harmony and relations of its several parts. They should know how to explain the difficulties which attend it, to obviate the objections which are raised against it, and to detect the sophistry of acute and learned adversaries. But to qualify a man for doing this to the best advantage, he must be acquainted with *those languages* in which the Bible was originally written. And as no inconsiderable portion of the Bible is *prophetic*, an extensive acquaintance with *history* is highly important. For no man can demonstrate the fulfilment of a prophecy, nor, in many cases, illustrate its meaning, without comparing it with the events to which it relates. And for a knowledge of these, we must generally be indebted to

history, either ancient or modern. Besides ; there are many passages of Holy Writ, *not* prophetic, of which a clear idea can hardly be obtained without a knowledge of the *customs* which anciently prevailed, and which still prevail, among the inhabitants of the eastern world. Indeed, there is scarcely a single branch of classical learning, an acquaintance with which is not in some way beneficial to a Christian minister. Geography shows him the vast extent of the field in which he is called to labour ; Rhetoric enables him to communicate his ideas in an agreeable and persuasive manner ; Logic and Mathematics assist his reasoning powers ; while Philosophy and Astronomy enlarge his mind, and fill him with admiring thoughts of the wisdom, goodness, and majesty of God.

It will, indeed, be readily granted that many preachers, whose stock of human learning was comparatively small, have, nevertheless, been very useful men. Possessing a clear and sound understanding, associated with ardent piety, and improved by a diligent study of the Bible in their own language, they have been instrumental of doing much good both to the Church and to the world. Such was the celebrated Bunyan, whose praise has long been in all the Churches, and whose name will descend with honour to the latest posterity. Nor do we hesitate to add, that many men of the above description are now labouring in the vineyard of the Lord. To all such, we most heartily say, *Go on, and prosper ; and the Lord be with you.*

It is, however, exceedingly important that a large proportion of those who officiate as Christian ministers be learned men. Extensive erudition not only assists a preacher greatly in the ways above enumerated, but invests him with a *commanding influence* over the minds of others—an influence which men, grossly illiterate, very seldom acquire. And how important this influence is to a Gospel minister we need not tell you. Nor ought we to omit, that those ministers who have received a learned education are usually far more studious, through life, than others are. Hence they are continually increasing their stock of useful knowledge ; and, being scribes well instructed in the kingdom of God, are prepared to “bring forth out of their treasures things new and old.” This is, no doubt, one reason why men of the above description preach to good acceptance in the same congregation for many successive years, while men of inferior attainments are under a necessity of frequently removing from place to place.

But if it be important that those young men whom the Lord has called to preach the Gospel receive a good education, it is incumbent on us to provide the means. Most of them are unable to defray the expense which must be incurred by a regular course of study. Hence they cannot enjoy the benefit of such a course, unless *we* undertake to support them. This we are, undoubtedly, able to do. Nor can we refuse to do it, without betraying gross ignorance, or strong prejudices ; or, what is still worse, a criminal inattention to the interests of Zion and the welfare of immortal souls. We are under the most sacred obligations, Brethren, to “come up to the help of the Lord,” on this occa-

sion, and to contribute liberally of our worldly substance for the promotion of the all-important object here contemplated. The rich must give according to the abundance with which the Lord has blessed them. Nor should the poor neglect to cast in their two mites. And if we act in concert, and all give as much as we are able, the burden will not be heavy.

But in order to carry our design into complete execution, a few *seminaries* must be erected and endowed. We have, it is true, a University, which holds a respectable rank among the literary institutions of our country, and which we are bound to patronize as far as we are able. But it is not well adapted, in all respects, to the object which we have now in view. If we except the excellent library with which it is enriched, and the opportunities occasionally enjoyed of hearing the instructors preach, it affords but few advantages to those who are immediately engaged in the study of divinity. Besides; in this, as in almost every other literary institution, a large proportion of the students are destitute of the grace of God. Some of them are *immoral*, and, of course, very unfit to be the constant and intimate associates of pious youth, especially of such as are intended for the Gospel ministry. Experience, as well as the Bible, assures us that "evil communications corrupt good manners." A pious young man, residing in any of our Colleges, is surrounded by temptations of every kind, and is in danger of suffering much both in his principles and morals. But if he sustains no injury in these respects, he can hardly be expected to maintain the life and power of godliness in his soul. This last remark is abundantly confirmed by facts and experience. How many have we known who, on leaving College, appeared to have lost that devotional spirit and that holy ardour in the service of God which characterised them at the time of their admission!

To prevent these evils in future, it is, we apprehend, incumbent on us to erect a few seminaries on a different plan—seminaries which shall afford at once the means of instruction both in literature and theology, and which shall admit no students but those who, in a judgment of charity, are real Christians. These seminaries need not be numerous. Four, we imagine, will be sufficient for all the United States. One should be established in some part of New-England, another in the Middle, a third in the Southern, and a fourth in the Western, States. If we erect more than the number above mentioned, we shall not be able to endow them in a suitable manner. If we erect fewer, the distance which many of the students will have to travel will be too great, and, besides other inconveniences, create unnecessary expense. To these seminaries, when erected, we should send all the youth of our denomination who appear to be called of God to preach the Gospel, and whose inclination prompts them to engage in a course of preparatory studies. Such of them as have property of their own should be required to support themselves. But those who are indigent, and who cannot obtain assistance from their friends, should be gratuitously supported by funds connected with the seminary to which they are sent.

In accomplishing this important undertaking, Brethren, we must do something more than afford that pecuniary aid which our

circumstances permit. We must earnestly endeavour to engage the co-operation of all around us. Private Christians may do much in this way. But the duty in question especially devolves on the pastors of our Churches. These have usually considerable influence over their respective flocks. Let them exert that influence both in private circles and publick assemblies. Let them state the object here recommended, refute the objections which are raised against it, and urge its importance with all the pathos of sacred eloquence. And, besides bringing it frequently into view in their ordinary sermons, let each of them annually deliver a discourse and make a collection with an especial and exclusive reference to it. Nor should we stop here. The Baptist Associations throughout the country should promote the undertaking by recommending it to the Churches, and, especially, by organizing Societies to aid in its accomplishment. In addition to these Societies, one general Society should be organized in each of the four sections of the United States above mentioned, to whose treasury, all monies raised by the Churches and by the other Societies should be annually transmitted. This general Society should be composed of delegates from each of the other Societies in a section; and should have the charge of erecting a seminary in some convenient place, of appointing instructors to officiate in it, and of examining such young men as may, from time to time, solicit admission. Besides; at each of its sessions, the Society should appoint a standing Committee to manage its concerns. And as a considerable time must necessarily elapse before a seminary, equal to the object here contemplated, can be provided, the Committee should, in the mean while, be authorised to expend on such indigent young men as are deserving of patronage, and need to be put to study immediately, a part of the money annually raised. These young men should be committed to the care of such private instructors as are best qualified to aid them in their literary and theological pursuits, and should be examined by the Committee with respect to their proficiency in knowledge as often, at least, as twice in a year.

Such, Brethren, is the outline of the plan which we wish to see adopted, and which we respectfully submit to your consideration. And we cannot but cherish the hope that you will readily assist us in the execution of it. The object we have in view is so important, and our expectation of its ultimate success, so sanguine, that we are resolved to go forward in the attempt to promote it, *if we go alone*. But as the undertaking is arduous, we need, and we earnestly solicit, your co-operation. By affording it, you will not only accelerate the execution of our design, but will strengthen those bonds of Christian love which unite us to you and to all the friends of God. Nor is this all: you will have a share in that holy satisfaction which we expect to enjoy when our efforts for increasing the number of faithful and able ministers shall have been crowned with the desired success.

By order of the Association,

THOMAS BALDWIN, *Moderator:*
ELISHA WILLIAMS, *Clerk:*