

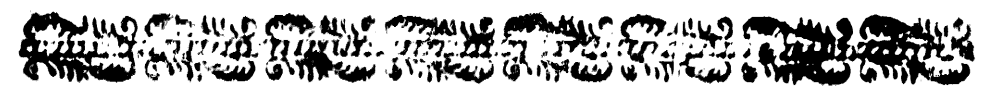
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Baptists. Maine. Bowdoinham Association, 1795.

Minutes . . . in Readfield, August 19th and 20th, 1795.

[Portland, 1795.] 8 pp.

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MINUTES

OF THE

BOWDOINHAM ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT THE BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE IN

READFIELD,

AUGUST 19th and 20th, 1795.

Wednesday, August 19th.

1. **A**T two o'clock, P. M. Elder Samuel Shephard preached the introductory sermon, from 1st Tim, 4th chap. latter part 8th ver. "But godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."

2. Proceeded to the choice of a moderator and clerk.

3. Read letters from the several churches; and took an account of the members that have been added, dismissed, died or excluded the last year; and the present number in each church.

N. B. Ordained Ministers' names in SMALL CAPITALS—Licensed preachers in *Italicks*.

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	<i>Add.</i>	<i>Wt.</i>	<i>Red.</i>	<i>Excl.</i>	<i>Num.</i>
Bowdoinham,	JOB MACOMBER, Joshua Bailey, John Dinsmore.					40
Harpwell,	SAM. WOODARD.	1				50
Thomastown,	ELISHA SNOW, John Bridges, Elisha Snow, jun.	23	1	132		90
Bowdoir,	JAMES POTTER, John Wheeler.			2	2	37
Vassalboro'	Nehemiah Gould, Jabez Lewis, Job Chadwick,	5			2	39

Churches.	Messengers.	Add.	Dis.	Disd.	Excl.	Num.
Ballston,	JOSHUA YOUNG,					53
	Solomon Potter,					
	Thomas Traff,					
	Joseph Baily.					
Sidney.	ARA WILBUR,					58
	LEMUEL JACKSON,	9				
	Samuel Ward,					
	Mephibasheth Cain.					
ad. Bowdoin,	WILLIAM STINSON,	9				54
	Thomas Morgridge,					
Hebron,	Samuel A. Flagg,					39
Buckfield,	Samuel Blake,	2				38
	Nathan Chace.					
Paris,	JAMES HOOPER,	8				84
	Benjamin Hammond.					
Lewiston,	Benjamin Merrill,					58
	Josiah Mitchel,	5	5	2		
	Abner Harris.					
Readfield,	ISAAC CASE,					80
	William Briggs,					
	John Comins,	7	3			
	Lewis Morrill,					
Fayette,	Nathaniel Stanley.					51
	ELIPHALET SMITH,	8				
	Joshua Walton,					
Miscong. Island,	Daniel Wyman.					31
	ANDREW FULLER.	5	1			
Cushing,	EPHRAIM HALL.	9	6	1	2	49
Nobleborough	Joseph Chapman.	2			1	15
	Elisha Williams,	8				60
Livermore,	Otis Robinson,			2	2	
	Benjamin Cole,					54
	Lemuel Comins,	5			1	
	Gideon Hatch,					
Amaziah Reed.						
New Sandwich	Isaac Dexter,	1				18
	Ichabod Billington.					
yd. Bowdoin,	Samuel Tebbets,	4	3	1		24
	Philip Jenkins,					
Barretstown,	Sampson Sweetland,					18
	Robert Thompson.					
New Gloucester	John Warren,					16
	John Woodman,					
Total,		118	30	9	4	1965

N. B. The two last mentioned Churches, were received into union this year.—The Church called Fayette, was called Sterling in our last minutes.

4. Read a letter and minutes from the Newhampshire association, brought by their messenger, Elder Samuel Shephard.

5. Chose Elder James Hooper and brother Flagg to prepare a corresponding letter to the Warren, and Elder Fuller to the New Hampshire associations. Adjourned till to morrow morning, 8 o'clock.

Thursday morning—Met according to adjournment.

6. Read, approved and adopted the circular letter. Likewise read and adopted the corresponding letters to sister associations.

7. Voted that brother Williams be our messenger to the Warren association, and Elders Case and Hooper, to the New Hampshire association.

8. Chose brother Harris, Treasurer to the association.

9. Chose Elder Hooper to prepare a circular letter against the next year.

The association were requested to give their opinion on *Heb. 6th Chap. 4th, 5th, & 6th Verses.*—Although the association unanimously hold the doctrine of the final perseverance of the Saints, they are not perfectly agreed in their judgment respecting the apostles meaning.—The committee who were appointed to consider of it, made the following report, viz. The characters spoken of by the Apostle, appear to be parrallel with the character of Balaam, *Numbers, 24th C. 3d V. &c.* of Saul, *Samuel, 10th C. 10th V.* of Felix, *Acts, 24th C. 25th V.* and various others, too many to enumerate. We acquiesce in the Apostles assertion in the 8th verse.—“Brethren we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.”

Their opinion was also requested on *Mathew, 11th C. 12th V.*—*Answer*—It is evident the kingdom of Heaven consisted of Christ and his church, then present in the land of Judea. They suffered violence from the persecuting jews, and those violent persecuting Jews took them, by force; carried them to prison, and put some to death, notwithstanding they suffered it patiently, blessing them that cursed, and praying for their persecutors, as Christ their King had taught them. This we give as the literal meaning of the passage.

As it was thought expedient to contract our articles of faith, more concisely than they are now expressed in our confession of faith, already printed, for the convenience of Churches on admission of members, not designing any alteration therein, reference to be had to said confession of faith for exposition and proofs; we present the following articles of faith and covenant, for the use of our Churches;

Having been enabled by divine grace to give up ourselves to the Lord, we account it a duty incumbent upon us, to make a declaration of our faith, to the honor of Christ and glory of his name; knowing that as with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation,

We believe that the scriptures of the old and new Testaments are the word of God; we believe there is but one only living and true God; we believe the important doctrines of three equal persons in the God head; eternal and personal election; original sin; particular redemption; free justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; efficacious grace in Regeneration; the final perseverance of real believers; the resurrection of the dead; the future judgment; the eternal happiness of the righteous; and everlasting misery of the impenitent. We also believe that baptism and the Lords supper are ordinances of Christ, to be continued until his second coming, and the former is requisite to the latter, that is to say, that those are to be admitted into the communion of the church and so to partake of its ordinances, who upon profession of their faith have been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

THE COVENANT.

WE do now, in the presence of the all seeing and most gracious God, and before Angels and men, give up ourselves to the Lord Jehovah, Father Son and Holy Spirit, and avouch him this day to be our Father, Saviour, Leader, and Teacher, and receive him as our only portion for ever. Also we receive Jesus Christ as the Supreme head of the Church; and mediator of the new covenant: and our Prophet, Priest and King to govern and teach us in the way to, and appear as our advocate with the Father for our admittance. We acknowledge it is our indispensable duty to

glorify our covenant God, by living holy lives in this present world, in all our several places and relations. And we engage by divine assistance to improve our time, strength, talents and advantages for the glory of God, and the good of our fellow men. Promising that by divine help we will walk in our houses in the fear of God: training up those committed to our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We also give up ourselves to one another, covenanting and promising to act towards each other as brethren in Christ: Watching not only against those that are called **more** gross evils, but also against all foolish talking and jesting, which is not convenient; also disputing about words and things that lead to strife, or disregarding promises, and not fulfilling engagements, tattling and backbiting, spending time idly at taverns or elsewhere, and all vain and unnecessary conversation on the Lord's day; or whatsoever is contrary to God's word. Promising to hold communion together, in the worship of God, ordinances of Christ and discipline of his Church, according as we are or shall be guided thereto by the word and spirit of God: Believing that he will further and more gloriously open his word and the mysteries of his kingdom. Mean while flying to the blood of the everlasting covenant for the pardon of our many errors, and praying that the Almighty would prepare and strengthen us for every good work; working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

S U P P L I E S.

Vassalborough—Elder Macomber, 3d Lord's day in October; Elder Wilbur, 3d in January; Elder Jackson, 3d in April; Elder Snow, 3d in July.—*Ballston*—Elder Potter, 4th Lord's day in September; Elder Hall, 4th in December; Elder Fuller, 4th in March; Elder Snow, 4th in July.—*Nehleborough*—Elder Spow, 3d Lord's day in September; Elder Hall, 3d in January; Elder Fuller, 3d in April; Elder Woodward, 3d in July.—*Buckfield*—Elder Woodward, 1st Lord's day in October; Elder Case, 2d in January; Elder Wilbur, 2d in March.—*Hebron*—Elder Woodward, 2d Lord's day in October; Elder Case, 1st in January; Elder Wilbur, 3d in March.—*Lewiston*—Elder Case, 4th in November; Elder Smith, 4th in February; Elder Stinson, 4th in May; Elder Potter, 4th in July.—*Greene*—Elder Jackson, 2d Lord's day in October; Elder Stinson, 2d in January; Elder Smith, 2d in April; Elder Potter, 3d in July.—*Livermore*—Elder Case, 4th Lord's day in October; Elder Smith, 4th in December; Elder Stinson, 4th in

February.—*New Sandwich*—Elder Jackson, 1st Lord's day in September; Elder Wilbur, 1st in December; Elder Case, 1st in March; Elder Smith, 1st in June.—*Barrestown*—Elder Jackson, 4th in October; Elder Macomber, 2d in February; Elder Hall, 2d in May; Elder Snow, 2d in August.—*New Gloucester*—Elder Macomber, 2d Lord's day in November; Elder Stinton, 1st in February; Elder Case, 1st in June.—By request from *Turner*—brother Flagg, 1st Lord's day in September; brother Cain, 1st in December; brother Robinson, 3d in February.—By request from *Canaan*—Elder Jackson, 2d Lord's day in September; brother Ward, 2d in November; brother Cain, 2d in March.

10. Chose brother Williams to superintend the printing of the minutes,

11. Voted to hold our Association the next year at *Greene*, the fourth Wednesday in August, at 1 o'clock, P. M.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

Dearlly Beloved,

THE present age seems pregnant with great events. The nations of the earth appear in commotion, and whatever may be the views of contending parties, God our Savior has a good and benevolent end to answer, to which even the efforts of his enemies shall be subservient; but how great the honor of being numbered with his sincere and zealous friends. If the days we hope for are at hand, the question concerning the present race of professors is this: Shall we be among those who will be employed in bringing forward the glorious period, or among those that must be removed out of the world before the happy time can begin. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now; and certainly if we have the first fruits of the spirit, we also shall long and labor for the redemption of the whole mystical body of Christ. Let us not cease crying mightily unto the Lord until the spirit be poured upon us from on high; then the wilderness shall become as a fruitful field, and the desert like the garden of God. Yes, beloved, the scriptures shall be fulfilled. Jesus must reign universally; all nations shall own him; all people shall serve him. His kingdom shall be extended, not by human might or power, but by the effusion of his holy spirit. He will be exalted in his own strength; whatever dark scenes we may see first, his brightness is as the light. He cannot err. His whole plan is clear before him; and he hath power absolutely infinite to

execute it. And as he loves to make his strength perfect in weakness, our own insufficiency and imbecility is no objection to his using us in the advancement of his blessed cause. The weaker we are in ourselves, the more will the excellency of the power appear to be of God. Wherefore beloved, be ye zealous, steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. We are taught, "That it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." And if our ardour of soul be from the Spirit of God, according to the revealed will of God, it is the noblest, most desirable, most heavenly and most beneficial exertion of the human mind. In every thing but religion, an ardour described by the term enthusiasm or zeal, is allowed and commended by the world: A military, a patriotic enthusiasm, even when it carries men beyond the strict bounds of cool reasoning, and exact prudence, fails not to meet with admirers. Our zeal may be fervent in every thing without censure, save when we are zealous for the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls. But however it may be opposed, there is an enthusiasm or zeal of this sort, which forms the highest elevation and the noblest effort of the human soul. Such a zeal animated the great apostle Paul in all his self-denying labors and sufferings, and filled (under the guidance of the Holy Ghost) his writings with such ardent zeal for the honor of his dear Savior, and affection for the souls of men. Such a zeal he expresses, when he says, "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us." But on the other hand, there is danger of a counterfeit, pernicious enthusiasm or zeal, which ought to be very carefully guarded against by every religious professor and zealous preacher. In order to constitute this culpable zeal or enthusiasm, either the ardour of the soul which is excited must proceed from a heated imagination, or from a delusion of Satan, instead of being produced by a divine influence; or the cause in which this ardor is employed must be the cause of self and error, instead of the cause of God and truth; or it must exert itself in unjustifiable measures and practices. True zeal is that pure and heavenly flame, which is supplied by the fire of love, while that which frequently bears the name, is nothing but self in disguise. True zeal is mild and merciful. It exercises pity and forbearance. False zeal is head-strong and fierce, and breathes a revengful spirit. Zeal for truth warms the christian; but self contends for names and forms—

*"But self however well employ'd
Has selfish ends in view;
And says, as boasting Jehu cry'd
'Come see what I can do.'*

8

*Self may its poor reward obtain
And be applauded here ;
But zeal the best applause will gain
When Jesus shall appear."*

But Brethren, if our zeal be warranted by the word of God, if it do not tend to the dishonor of God, and if it be confined, in its exercises to the rules and precept of the word of God, how intense soever it may be, there is no just reason for censuring it ; unless men can be too zealous for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls.

We are here in a state of imperfection, but the time is coming when the saints will be perfected, all difference in sentiment or practice, all disagreement from imperfect knowledge and discordant passions, will forever cease.—Love, joy, peace and harmony will reign triumphant, and pervade the whole society of heaven. The powers of the soul will be expanded, to comprehend much of the glory of immanuel. It will enjoy the open vision of his face ; see the beauties of his sacred person, and discern the wonders of his grace. Mysteries which now appear dark and intricate, concerning the nature, decrees and providences of God, will then be unfolded with light and glory, to its view. The splendor and glories of the heavenly world will stand disclosed to its astonished mind. The saints of Christ will bring his taints into a state of holy conformity to him ; or they will be fully confirmed to that state of moral excellency, glory and happiness, to which he as their forerunner and Savior is advanced. Press on with earnest and constant diligence, "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ;" always considering, that those, all those, and none but those "who endure to the end shall be saved." E'er long, if found the humble followers of Jesus, you will be freed from all the sorrows and trials of this mortal state ; your weary souls now tossed in the tempest of life, will be landed safe on the shores of an happy immortality, and mingled with the society of the blessed ; your lips be tuned, to join in the hallelujahs of heaven, chanting forth the wonders of redeeming love, and adoring "Him who sitteth upon the Throne, and the Lamb, forever and ever."

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

AMEN.

Signed in behalf of the Association.

SAMUEL SHEPHERD. *Moderator.*
ELISHA WILLIAMS *Clerk.*