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Baptists. Maine. Bowdoinham Association, 1796.

Minutes . . . in Green, August 24th and 25th, 1796.

[Portland, 1796.] 6 pp.

AAS copy.

MINUTES

OF THE

BOWDOINHAM ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT THE BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE IN

GREEN, *August 24th and 25th, 1796.*

Wednesday, August 24th.

1. **A**T two o'clock, P. M. Brother Shubeal Lovell preached the introductory sermon, from Col. 1st chap. 28th verse.

2. Chose elder Isaac Case moderator and brother Elisha Williams 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*—Those to whom this mark * is affixed were not present—This mark † denotes no settled Minister.

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Messengers.</i>	<i>Add.</i>	<i>Dis.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Excl.</i>	<i>Num.</i>
Bowdoinham,	{ JOB MACOMBER, Samuel Stinson, William Hathorn.	2				42
Harpswell,	{ SAMUEL WOODWARD, John Williams.	3		1	3	
Thomastown,	{ * ELISHA SNOW, Tristram Jordan.	5		1	3	91
Bowdoin,	{ JAMES POTTER, <i>Humphry Purrington,</i> James Alexander.	1				33
Vassalborough,	NEHEMIAH GOULD.	4	2	1		41

Churches.	Messengers.	Ad.	Dis.	Died.	Excl.	Num.
Ballston,	{ JOSEPH BAILEY, Jonathan Heath.	3				26
Sidney,	ASA WILBUR.	3				57
2d. Bowdoin,	{ WILLIAM STINSON, John Brown, Thomas Morgridge, John Neal jun.	3				57
Hebron,	{ † Job Cushman, William Barrows.	1		1		39
Buckfield,	{ † Nathaniel Chace, Richard Phillips.					31
Paris,	{ JAMES HOPER, John Willis, Josiah Smith.	8			1	41
Lewiston,	{ † Benjamin Merrill, Josiah Mitchel, James Joslin.	7				65
Readfield,	{ ISAAC CASE, William Briggs, Nathaniel Standley.	3	5	1		77
Fayette,	{ ELIPHALET SMITH, Joshua Walton, Jesse Smith, Zephaniah Bumpus.	11	2	1	1	58
Misconagus Hl.	ANDREW FULLER.				1	30
Cushing,	EPHRAIM HALL.	4			2	51
Nobleborough,	† Jesse Flint.					15
Livermore,	{ † Elisha Williams, Otis Robinson.	7		1	1	65
Green,	{ † Lemuel Comins, Gideon Hatch, Benjamin Cole.	2		1		53
N. Sandwich,	{ † LEMUEL JACKSON, Thomas Francis, Isaac Dexter, David Perry.	14				32
3d. Bowdoin,	{ † Samuel Tebbets, Samuel Simmons.	12	1			35
Barretstown,	† Thomas Robinson.	5			1	22
N. Gloucester,	† John Warren.	1				17
Clinton,	MERRIBOSITH CAIN					26
	Total	92	12	7	15	1009

N. B. The last mentioned church was received into union this year.

4. Read a letter and minutes from the Warren association, brought by their messenger, brother Shubael Lovell.

5. Read a letter and minutes from the New Hampshire association, brought by their messenger, elder Simon Lock.

6. Chose brother Purrington to write the corresponding letter to the Warren, and elder Fuller to the New Hampshire associations.

7. Read the circular letter, prepared by Brother Hooper.

Adjourned till tomorrow morning, 9 o'clock.

Thursday morning, met according to adjournment.

After again attending to the Circular Letter, revising and amending the same, it was adopted.

8. Read and adopted the corresponding letters to Sister associations.

9. Voted Elder Eliphalet Smith our messenger to the Warren association, and Brethren James Hooper, Isaac Case and Eliha Williams to the New Hampshire association.

10. Chose Brother Harris, Treasurer to the association.

11. Chose Brother William Stinson to prepare a circular letter for next year. Voted the following supplies.

Hebron—Elder Smith, 1st Lord's day in Nov. Elder Macomber, 2d in January, Elder Woodward 1st in March.—

Buckfield—Elder Smith 2d Lord's day of Nov. Elder Baily 2d in January, Elder Woodward, 4th in February, Elder Jackson, 2d in June.—

Lewiston—Elder Jackson 1st Lord's day in October, Elder Woodward, 1st in January, Elder Potter 1st in May, Elder Smith, 1st in July.—

Livermore—Elder Case, 4th Lord's day in October, Elder Stinson 4th in December, Elder Macomber 4th in February.—

Greene—Elder Jackson 2d Lord's day in October, Elder Woodward 2d in January, Elder Case, 2d in July, Elder Potter 2d in May.—

Nobleborough—Elder Fuller 2d Lord's day in September, Elder Smith, 2d in February, Elder Stinson, 2d in June, Elder Baily, 1st in Aug.—

3d Bowdoin—Elder Hall, 3d Lord's day in February, Elder Macomber 3d in December.—

Barretstown—Elder Fuller, 3d Lord's day in Sept. and 8d in April, Elder Hall, 3d in January, Elder Jackson, 3d in June.—

New Gloucester—Elder Smith, 3d Lord's day in November, Elder Stinson, 4th in January, Elder Case, 1st in June, Elder Woodward, 1st in August.—

By request from North Yarmouth—Elder Potter, 4th Lord's day in Sept. Elder Stinson, 4th in October, Elder Smith

4th in January, Elder Woodward, 1st in October.

12th. Chose Brother Williams to superintend the printing of the Minutes.

13th. Voted to hold our association the next year at Thomastown, the 4th Wednesday in August, at 1 o'clock, P. M.

CIRCULAR LETTER

To them who are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Christ Jesus, and called, Grace, Mercy and Peace be multiplied unto you, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dear Brethren,

HOWEVER, men may differ in their minds about truth, we have this for our comfort, that truth remains the same; and as the great enemy of souls uses great assiduity, to propagate error and sow the seeds of discord among Brethren, we ought to use all possible means to eradicate those pernicious seeds, lest they should come to maturity, and spread their factitious contagion through the Mystical Body. And as the nature of conviction and a preparatory work to regeneration are matters which have occasioned some dispute among professors of Religion, we will offer some thoughts on the subject. We read of some who were convicted by their own conscience in the 5th Chapter of John and 9th verse, from these words it is evident, that there is a conviction which does not proceed from the spirit of God; but from the conscience of man. But some say, that man has no conscience, but that whatever makes him apprehensive of punishment is the spirit of God; And what we call conscience, they call a measure of the spirit of God, and if we obey its dictates will finally lead us to the Mansions above. It is evident that man had not this conscience until he fell from his original rectitude, then the horrors of a guilty conscience seized him and he like a criminal ran from justice, and made a garment to cover his own nakedness, and ever since the fall, the conscience of man has been altogether regulated by education; For if we look into the different nations of the Earth, we find they have different Gods & different manners of worship and are all conscientious in their worship, the Egyptians and Carthaginians were conscientious in sacrificing their children to their supposed Deities, the Roman Catholic would sacrifice his life, before his religion, and a man who is educated in a Christian land, is taught the precepts of Morality, and when he violates them, he is accused by conscience, and as conscience has its root in nature, its branches cannot ascend any higher than nature. Spiritual things transcend human nature, therefore the conscience of man cannot reach spiritual things, the highest Encomium that can be given. Conscience is, that it convicts of actual sins but not of the pernicious source from whence the corrupt stream flows: For the wisest Philosophers never dreamt of original sin. Therefore let a man's outward conduct be what it may while he acts from this principle, his highest aim is to aggrandize himself, he may be in the road which seemeth right to man, but the end thereof is death. But when the still small voice of Jehovah speaks life into the soul the man sees the principle from which he acted, then the sin of his nature appears in such lively colours, that his actual sins are lost in a comparative view, he then sees the justice of God shine bright in his condemnation, he now approves of the

conduct of the Divine Being, and takes guilt and shame to himself, he now acts from a principle above self and to the honor and Glory of God.

With respect to a preparatory work to regeneration, we find the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians says, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and Sins." Man is represented as mortally Dead or spiritually Dead: therefore regeneration is effected solely by the agency of the Holy Ghost without the assistance of Man. Was there any preparatory work in the first creation? when God said let there be light, there was light, who said, let the waters be collected together, the waters obeyed, and Notwithstanding the impetuosity of their waves still keep their appointed bounds: Even so, the Almighty says let there be light in the benighted soul and immediately the nocturnal gloom is dissipated, and light is diffused through the faculties of the Soul: Was there any preparatory work to bring Lazarus from his grave? The Lord Jesus spake the word, and the spirit of life re-entered the breathless corps, and Lazarus came forth, even so when Christ speaks life into the Dead soul he comes forth and when sealed with the holy spirit of promise, glorifies God with all his heart. It is evident from the scriptures, that Man is naturally dead in trespasses and sins, and that no agent short of the holy ghost can give him life, and if we can make any half way place between life & Death, then we may believe in a preparatory work to regeneration, but as we cannot, we must believe that regeneration is an instantaneous work, and that when old things are done away and all things become new, the man is regenerated.

Dear Brethren in the Ministry, we wish you to obtain Mercy of the Lord to be faithful even until the cords of life are unloosed and you lie down in death, that in the morning of the Resurrection you may awake to life everlasting, and be reckoned with the happy number who turn many to righteousness, and shine as stars in the firmament for ever and ever:— May you ever remember that humility is one important characteristic of a Minister of Jesus; Consider, the work to which you are called, is great, and demands every faculty of your souls, and each moment of your time, had you the care of earthly kingdoms devolved on you, it would be nothing to the lead of immortal souls, where eternal life or eternal death is pending; Therefore gird on the whole armour of God, and bring forth from the rich treasure of his word, those important doctrines and truths that are therein contained, however they may be opposed by carnal reason. When you attempt to preach the Gospel you may sometimes find some particular friend composing one of your Audience, who is an enemy to those truths, which ought to be dearer unto you than life; in which case you will be exposed to that fear of man, which brings a snare; and your carnal reasoning will incline you to suppress the truth or deliver it in such a way and manner that it shall not be understood, for fear of offending this friend, you will do well to recollect at such a time, that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, and that you are not called, to seek to please men, but him that has called you to be a soldier: Therefore be faithful to your God, to your fellow creatures and your own soul, and preach the truth in its native dress, deny self and stand bold in the cause of God, and never preach in Enigmatical terms, for fear of the Calumny which is entailed to plain explicit Language, which is most desirable to have a good name among men, or a good conscience toward God? Remember you are set as watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, and if you don't blow the alarm, you will enroll the blood of souls in the Skirts of your garments —The Doctrine of election and free justification by the in-

puted Righteousness of Jesus Christ, which was by him, and his apostles preached, is in this day of discipation, loaded with reproaches, by some who profess to be great Zealots for the Honor of God and promotion of Religion: But let the appearance be what it may, when a man substitutes the Righteousness of man, instead of the righteousness of Christ, he is an impostor, leading the sons of delusion in the road which seemeth right unto man, the end of which is Death, and others who acknowledge it to be true, say it ought not to be preached, what is this but to be wise above what is written, can we suppose that he in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge would reveal a Doctrine which ought not to be preached by his ministers?

Dear Brethren, it has pleased the Lord of late years to pour out his holy Spirit, and caused the wilderness to blossom as the rose; there is scarcely now a town or plantation in this Eastern world in which are not some real worshipers of the true God, where but a few years ago, there was not even the form, much less the power of religion. But the present time appears to be a time of trial to see who is for Baal, and who for the God of Jacob; Yet we have this to console us at all times—The Government rests on the shoulders of him who was called **WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR** &c. and that he will over rule all things for his own Glory and the good of his church. Be exhorted Brethren to gird up the loins of your mind and watch unto prayer; seek not the honors of this world, they are like Jaels, Lordly Dish; which made way for the nail of destruction, or like Absalom's Mule, which carried him to the fatal oak. Remember at all times that you profess the self denying religion of Jesus Christ, and if you gratify self, who will believe your profession, when your conduct gives it the lye, therefore be faithful and vigilant, and use the same dexterity in the cause of Jesus, that you do when employed in the common affairs of life, for it is high time to awake out of sleep, and sin not, for now is your salvation nearer, than when ye believed. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. If we were chosen in eternity, it was that we should be Holy and without blame before him in love. Are we called from darkness to light, it is that we might shew forth the praises of him who called us, were we predestinated by God the Father, it was that we might be conformed to the image of his son. Let us remember that we have self to deny, the cross daily to take up, and our own salvation to work out by God's working in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Leave off fruitless disputes which gender strife rather than godly edifying and let us turn all our wars against Sin, and live soberly, righteously and godly in this evil world, and the God of peace be with you and build you up on your most Holy Faith.—We conclude with the words of the Beloved Disciple—"Little Children keep yourselves from idols. **AMEN.**

Signed in behalf of the Association.

ISAAC CASE, Moderator.

ELISHA WILLIAMS, Clerk.