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Baptists. Maine. Bowdoinham Association, 1798.
Minutes ... in Brunswick, August 22 and 23, 1798.
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MINUTES

OF THE

BOWDOINHAM ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT THE

BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE

IN

BRUNSWICK,

AUGUST 22 and 23,

1798.

AUGUST 22 (Wednesday)

PRINTED BY PETER EDES.

1798.

MINUTES, &c.

WEDNESDAY, August 22.

A SERMON at 10 o'clock in the morning by brother Wm. Batchelder, from Isaiah lii. last clause of 7th verse.

1. At 2 o'clock Elder Elisha Snow preached the introductory Sermon from Ephesians i. 4.

2. Chose brother Green *Moderator*, and brother Williams *Clerk*.

3. Read letters from the several churches, and took the following account of the members added, dismissed, excluded, or who have died the past year; also the present number in each church.

N. B. The names of ordained Ministers are in *small capitals*; licenced Preachers in *italics*. Those Ministers with this mark * were not present. Vacant churches are distinguished by a dash.

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Dead.	Number.
Wendell	JOB MACOURSON Samuel Stinson, Caleb Weston, Chas. Davis, Thomas Doolittle.	1	5	1	.	37
Harpwell	SAMUEL WOODMAN, Samuel Doolittle, James Purinton, John Snow.					37
Thomaston,	ELISHA SNOW.	1		3	1	87

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.	Added.	D'smiss'd.	Exclud.	Dead.	Number.
Bowdoin,	JAMES POTTER, James Alexander, Ebenezer Temple	58				93
Vassalborough,	NEHEMIAH GOULD.	1				26
Ballston,	JOSEPH BAILEY.	7				39
Sydney,	ASA WILBUR.			2		55
Litchfield,	WILLIAM STINSON; William Potter.	4	15	1		46
Hebron,	JOHN TRIPP, William Barrows, Job Cushman, James Dunham.			5		34
Buckfield,	_____					31
Paris,	JAMES HOOPER, Nathan Pierce.	7		1		46
Lewiston,	_____	1	1	4		54
	Josiah Mitchel, Benjamin Merrill, Abner Harris.					
Readfield,	ISAAC CASE, William Briggs, Joseph Johnson, Robert Witherton.	8		5		77
<i>R</i>						
Fayette,	*ELIPHALET SMITH, John Wilson, Oliver Billings,	5	1	2		58
<i>F</i>						
Miscougas Isl: (and,	*ANDREW FULLER, Simon Elliot,			6		25
Cushing,	EPHRAIM HALL, Isaac Hall.	9				67
Nobleborough,	_____					16
Green,	Joseph Chapman, LEMUEL JACKSON, Lemuel Combs, John Dagget, Amaziah Reed, Gideon Hatch.	18	1	2		84

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers,	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Dead.	Number.
Livermore,	<u>Elisba Williams.</u>	2		6		62
Wayne,	<u>Thomas Francis, Isaac Dexter.</u>	1	1	1		36
and Bowdoin,	<u>Benjamin Cole, Samuel Tibbets, Philip Jenkins.</u>	35	2	1		65
Barretstown,	<u>Joshua Collamore.</u>	13		1		35
New Gloucester,	<u>John Warren, John Woodman.</u>	1	1			20
Clinton,	<u>MEDHROSHEETHCARN.</u>	8				38
N. Yarmouth,	<u>THOMAS GREEN, Samuel York.</u>	3				17
Harlem,	<u>*JOE CHADWICK, Nathaniel Stanley, Reuben Freeman.</u>	4			1	23
New Vineyard,	<u>Ebenezer Norton.</u>					9
Farmington,	<u>William Fry.</u>					7
and Litchfield,	<u>John Neal, James Pierce.</u>					14
Total		187	29	41	5	1233

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

The church called Wayne, was called New-Sandwich in our last minutes.

Received letter and minutes from the Warren Association by their messenger, Elder Abner Lew-

is ; also letter and minutes from New-Hampshire Association, by their messengers, Elder Henry Smith and Elder William Batchelder.

4. Voted, That Elder Batchelder write the corresponding letter to the Warren Association, and Elder James Hooper to the New-Hampshire Association.

5. Read and adopted the circular letter prepared by brother Green.

Adjourned till to-morrow morning 8 o'clock.

Sermon in the evening by Elder Abner Lewis, from 1 John, iii. 2.

THURSDAY, *August 23.*

Met according to adjournment.

6. Having received information that there are difficulties existing in the church at Buckfield, voted to appoint a committee to visit the church at Buckfield and enquire into their state, to afford them counsel as may be needful, to meet at the dwelling-house of Mr. Berry, on the fourth Wednesday of October next, at 9 o'clock, in the morning.

Voted, That Elders James Potter, Thomas Green, John Tripp, James Hooper, and Lemuel Jackson, brethren William Barrows, Seth Hinkley, John Warren, Josiah Mitchel and Abner Harris, be a committee for said purpose, and to make report at our next annual meeting.

It is recommended to the churches of this Association, to set apart said fourth Wednesday of October as a day of prayer, that God would grant wisdom and direction to the church and committee on their meeting at Buckfield.

7. Read and adopted the corresponding letters to sister Associations.

8. Voted, That brother Williams be our messenger to the Warren Association.

9. Voted, That brother Case and brother Green be our messengers to the New-Hampshire Association.

10. Voted, That brother Abner Harris be Treasurer to the Association.

11. Voted, That brother John Tripp write the Circular Letter for the next year.

12. Voted, That brother Williams superintend printing the minutes.

Appointed the following supplies :

Woolwich Branch of Bowdoinham Church,	{	Elder Woodward, 4th Lord's day in Sept. Elder Bailey, 2d Dec. Elder Stinson, 1st Jan. Elder Case, 1st March, Elder Hall, 4th June.
Newton,	{	Elder Woodward, 1st in Sept. Elder Case, 1st Jan. Elder Tripp, 1st May. Elder Potter, 1st July.
Miscouge Island,	{	Elder Macomber, 2d in Sept. Elder Hall, 2d in Jan. and 2d July. Elder Baily, 2d May. Elder Fuller, 2d Nov.
Nobleborough,	{	Elder Case, 2d in Sept. Elder Bailey, 2d Jan. Elder Smith, 4th May. Elder Woodward, 3d August.
Lippsmore,	{	Elder Snow, 4th Sept. Elder Stinson, 4th Nov. Elder Potter, 4th Jan. Elder Jackson, 4th March. Elder Hooper, 4th May. Elder Tripp, 4th July.

Wayne,	{	Elder Macomber, 2d Nov.
		Elder Cain, 1st Jan.
		Elder Case, 1st June.
		Elder Stinson, 1st Aug.
		Elder Stinson, 4th Sept.
New-Gloucester,	{	Elder Jackson, 4th Nov.
		Elder Gould, 4th Jan.
		Elder Case, 2d June.
		Elder Potter, 4th Sept.
2d in Litchfield,	{	Elder Case, 4th Dec.
		Elder Jackson, 4th April.
		Elder Stinson, 4th June.
		Elder Tripp, 4th Sept.
Farmington,	{	Elder Green, 2d Jan.
		Elder Case, 2d May.
		Elder Smith, 1st July.
		Elder Tripp, 3d Sept.
New-Vineyard,	{	Elder Case, 1st May.
		Elder Smith, 2d July.

13. Appointed brother Tripp to preach the introductory Sermon the next year, in case of failure brother Hooper.

Adjourned until 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Met according to adjournment.

Sermon by brother Williams, from John xviii.

36.

14. Attended to the administration of the ordinance of Baptism to two subjects.

15. Attended to the celebration of the Lord's supper, agreeable to a vote of the Association the last year, to have said ordinance administered at our annual meeting in future.

16. Voted, To hold our association the next year at the Baptist Meeting-House in Livermore, the fourth Wednesday of August, at 2 o'clock, P. M.

TAKE NOTICE..

A CERTAIN man has been travelling around this part of the country in the profession of the ministry: He assumes so many different names, that it would be difficult to trace him; he pretends to have been a prisoner in Algiers; and wherever he can find a family that has had any of its members absent for a long time, he visits them, and declares himself to be the person, by which means he has imposed on many people. Who the fugitive is, we know not; but that he is an impostor and fruitful in lying, is very evident; he is a slim man, with small eyes.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

DEAR BRETHREN,

YOU will suffer us, your pastors and brethren assembled in association, to address you in an annual epistle; the subject of which will be upon the true, but very much despised doctrine of original sin. The limits of an annual epistle, are indeed too circumscribed to do that justice to the subject which seems necessary from the unpopular light in which the doctrine is considered by multitudes of persons. Let it be observed, by the term *original sin*, we are to understand the entire depravity of human nature. The trespasses against God, the transgression of his law with which all mankind are chargeable, may be denominated *original sin*, because these have placed us in a state immediately opposed to the purity of the primeval state of man; and that righteousness which distinguished him in his *original state*, called by many *original righteousness*. It is to be observed, that the *sin of Adam* being the foundation and origin of all our propensities to transgress the divine precepts, there is propriety in using the terms, in the present discussion. For by this apostacy we are liable to sin. His rebellion against God is the occasion of all the wrong tempers, and evil habits, of which we are the subjects. But *original sin* doth not mean, as some seem to suppose, that the particular instance of transgression, of which Adam was guilty, is chargeable to us. The fruits and consequences of it are. And in consequence of his disobedience, all his posterity came into the world unclean. This brings the subject into view, and opens the way to point out the extent of human depravity. All mankind in all their powers of soul, and in all the organs of their bodies are affected with the first transgression. No nation, no period of time, no stage of life can be produced in sacred or profane history, where

there is not undeniable evidence that "all have gone out of the way, there is none *righteous*, no, not one." It would be apart from the present design to produce only a summary of the arguments upon the subject, otherwise numbers might be pertinently brought forward in evidence that "all have gone out of the way, and *every one* turned to his own course," &c. The same remark holds good as to the proof deducible from the sacred oracles of God, which assert that all our *faculties are affected*, so that depravity is total. The will is *enmity* against God; for this reason the understanding is *beclouded with prejudice*, is darkened, yea is darkness itself, and we are "in the kingdom and under the power of darkness," the judgment is perverted, and erroneous, and the affections of course are irregular and naturally attached to wrong objects. That an entire depravity hath overspread human nature and affects us all, is not only apparent in every part of inspiration, but the reason and fitness of things declares it. Who can imagine that the all-perfect Jehovah hath made man less fit for the place in which he is fixed, than any other creature, yea than all other of God's works? Man is the highest representation of his Maker in this lower creation. Shall he who bears the nearest image of the Creator, as he is an *intelligent agent*, be more disqualified to honour him than the inanimate and brutal creation? Reason forbids the thought. We must conclude then that our original state was in conformity to the station assigned us, but that according to constant facts of observation, man is fallen from God. It surely was not natural to man to be at enmity against the Author and Preserver of his being. Can we think that Jehovah formed us with disobedient tempers, with dispositions which darken and pervert the understanding? In fine, can it be imagined that the various animals, and the irrational parts of creation should be so well fitted to answer the ends of their existence, and that in such reference to the happiness of man, while we were formed with reigning lusts, and appetites destructive to God's government, our own real felicity, and the felicity of all holy beings? As we are obliged to believe to the contrary, it may safely be inferred that man is in a state of total apostacy from God, and affected from the "crown of the head to the sole of the foot" with *original sin*. Besides what hath been remarked upon the subject under consideration, another important question presents for notice, viz. in *what way* hath this sinful nature extended itself to the human family? Answer, through the relation in which man stands to the first parent. The uniform representations in the lively oracles point out that Adam was the seminal head, or the root of all mankind. Among many others we may,

turn to the Mosaic history of creation; the reasoning of St. Paul in the 5th of Rom. and that in 1st Corinth. 15th Chap. in all which it is obvious that Adam is viewed in this light, and at the same time, these passages treat of him as a *covenant head*: Or, that he did not act in a mere single capacity; for his behaviour hath affected his descendants. The apostle, in the 5th of Romans, boldly asserts, that mankind were *constituted sinners** by one man, viz. by Adam. As Revelation so plainly points the connection between Adam and his posterity, it amounts to a sufficient reason why we should receive it as an article of belief, though there should be difficulties attending it. For should we discredit the doctrine because it is beyond our feeble comprehension, to obviate every seeming difficulty which may attend it, we shall be obliged to discredit the truth of the existence of an innumerable variety of *beings* and *things*, tho' obvious to the eye, which nevertheless have seeming difficulties, attending them. True it is, that some of those seeming difficulties, which attend this doctrine, are not of that weight which many have conceived. Even those who deny the doctrine of *original sin* as it is now asserted, "allow that we *suffer by the sin of Adam*." But why should we suffer by it if we had no share in any sense at all, in his sin? Can we suppose a righteous God to inflict sufferings upon any of his creatures without a *cause*? Or if the *sin of Adam* be the *cause* of any of the sufferings inflicted on his descendants, does not this imply in the strongest manner, that his descendants are upon some account or other considered as partakers of his sin? It is, it may be granted reasonable to suppose, that a righteous God involves them in the several effects of this sin, without their being concerned in the sin itself, which is the acknowledged *cause* of these effects! Now all that is pleaded for by those who maintain the doctrine of *original sin* is, that as all mankind must evidently *suffer by the sin of Adam*, there must have been some original constitution settled by God, in consequence of which it is *right and just* that they should so suffer. But that it should be right for mankind to *suffer judicially* for the sin of Adam, as it is certainly they do, without, at least, the imputation of that sin to them, cannot be conceived with honour to the *Divine Character*, and the infinite holiness and amiableness of his divine

* Katesutheson may, with the greatest propriety, in the 19th verse, be rendered constituted: and the sentence read thus. For by one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners. And in the last part of the verse read, so by the obedience of one shall many be constituted righteous.

perfections and attributes. By the imputation of Adam's sin they do not mean that the great God views the posterity of Adam to have *actually* committed that sin, which every person of sound sense must know is impossible; but that Adam, who was necessarily the natural head, and root of his posterity, was also for wise and good reasons, (for Jehovah cannot conduct in any other way) constituted their *federal head*, and that therefore the sin that he committed in that capacity became chargeable on his posterity. "The sufferings of children in consequence of the sins of their *immediate* parents, appear to be a remote operation of the original constitution relative to the first parent, and all who should descend from him: nor is it possible to account for this obvious fact in any tolerable manner upon any other supposition. It is, indeed, one of the greatest intricacies in the subject of Providence, that not only the happiness, but the *moral conduct* of most rational beings, should depend so much as it evidently does, in ten thousand instances, in the good or bad behaviour of others." We may add, that as mankind partake of Adam's sin, by his being their public head and representative, so they come into the world with a *wicked and Christless disposition of heart*, because he had fallen into a sinful state, before any of the human family descended from him. It is no more than reasonable to conclude, that if he had have had an offspring in primeval state of holiness, those would have been of the same virtuous temper, and propensity with himself. But as a reverse is the case, it is natural, as indeed fact shews, that the children should be a representation of the general temper of mind, as they resemble the parent in the features of the body. This seems to be in perfect consistency with a divine constitution. So it is in the natural world in respect to plants, trees, &c. "What a man soweth that shall he also reap." We expect to *reap the same kind of grain* which is sown. We expect an *acorn* will produce an *oak*, not a fruit tree, or a walnut. So it is that a depraved parent hath a sinful child. "Who can bring a *clean* thing out of an *unclean*?" That which is born of the *flesh* is *flesh*." There are various speculations which have been made use of, in attending to the doctrine of *original sin*, such as, the time and manner of becoming polluted, which imply the idea of the soul's being polluted by being united to the body. Whether the Creator makes us impure at first—Whether the soul is generated as, and when the body is, or at what stage the soul of the infant is united to its body, &c. all which appear foreign from the subject in hand, and wear the appearance of carnal reasoning, and is unworthy of serious notice. From the preceding manner in which the doctrine of original sin hath been explained and vindicated, it

will appear that the children of *apostate Adam* come into the world destitute of any *holy principles*, and wholly under the influence of a *selfish heart*; for this was Adam's temper before any descended from him. In his original and innocent state, he doubtless had the principles of *self-love*, and natural appetites. These were always governed by holy principles, and were never indulged only in an entire subordination to God.* But upon his transgressing the law of Jehovah, self-love, with all the passions of a depraved mind, were gratified, whether agreeable to God's direction or not. These reigned. He became a *natural man* and discerned not the beauty of the things of the spirit. From this instant he became *sensual*, and had not the spirit which before dictated him, in doing the things which were for the *divine honor*. Some come into being, and are affected with his sin, as we are born into the world with no higher principles than mere *carnal self-love* natural appetites: without any virtuous or good dispositions to check them and govern us. The indulgence of sense and passion is therefore natural. And amidst all the warnings and arguments to the contrary we go *astray from the womb*. For the carnal, the mere sensual, natural and selfish mind is *enmity against God*, is not subject to his law, nor can it be, as influenced by such tempers. In this way we may account for the nature and progress of sin in our apostate world, without laying to the charge of infinite Holiness, the origin and awful effects of sin, as is the practice of many: for hence we see that Adam's not continuing virtuous or good, that of necessity a contrary temper and disposition took place, agreeable to St. Paul's account of the matter. Rom. v. xii. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." Dear brethren, labor to acquaint yourselves with the scripture account of the preceding doctrine, and furnish yourselves with rational arguments in vindication of its truth against the ungodly cavils of carnal professors, who have pleasure in unrighteousness, and love not the truth. And may you grow up in the knowledge of this, and all the doctrines of the Cross, until you shall obtain the complete stature of men in Christ Jesus.

By order of the Association,

THOMAS GREEN, *Moderator.*

ELISHA WILLIAMS, *Clerk.*

* It is evident that Adam was made a social being in his primitive state, capable of rational appetites, particularly, capacitated for domestic happiness in connection with a companion. He was created with a genius to agriculture, and this consistent with supreme love to God. See Genesis ii, 15, to the end.