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Baptists. Maine. Bowdoinham Association, 1811.
Minutes of the . . . in Readfield, September 25 and
26, 1811.

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MINUTES

OF THE

BOWDOINHAM ASSOCIATION,

HELD IN

READFIELD,

SEPTEMBER 25 and 26,

1811.

HALLOWELL :

PRINTED BY N. CHEEVER.

1811.

MINUTES, &c.

WEDNESDAY, September 25.

1. AT ten o'clock, A. M. brother Thomas Francies delivered the introductory sermon, from PHILIP i. 6. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

2. Chose Brethren Robert Low, Moderator, and Thomas Francies, Clerk.

3. After prayer, read the letters from the several churches, and took the following account of members added, dismissed, excluded, or died the year past; and the present number in each church.

N. B. The names of ordained ministers are in SMALL CAPITALS; licensed preachers in *Italic*. The ministers names with this (*) were not present; churches marked thus (†) we had no information from this session; vacant churches distinguished by a ———.

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Elders and Messengers.</i>	<i>Added.</i>	<i>Dismissed.</i>	<i>Excluded.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
1st Bowdoin,	JOSEPH DENSLOW, Nathaniel Barns, Simeon Conner.	4	6	2	1	97
1st Sidney,	ASA WILBER, William Ward, William Lewis.			2		33
1st Litchfield,	HENRY KENDALL, Lemuel Walker, John Dennis, jr. Ebenezer Colby.	5	1		3	202
Lewiston,	BENJAMIN COLE, JAMES GARCELON, Josiah Mitchell, John Grafton.	1		3		61
Readfield,	ROBERT LOW, ISAAC CASE, Thomas Allen, Eliphalet Packard.	5	3	2	1	90
Fayette,	OLIVER BILLINGS, <i>Daniel Mason,</i> Joshua Walton, Enoch Watson, Jesse Tuck.	2		1	2	124
Wayne,	—————, Samuel King, Freeman Dexter.				2	22
Lisbon,	—————, Timothy Hicens, Stephen Dodd.	3	5		1	34

Churches.	Elders and Messengers.	Added.	Dism.	Ex.	Died.	Total.
Clinton,	MERRIMONETH CANE, Jonathan Steward, Joseph Spearin.	7		1		46
New Vineyard,	_____ Josiah Butler, Rowland Luce, James Davis, Tristram Daggett, Ebenezer Norton.	6			1	56
Wales,	JAMES PIERCE, Phillip Jenkins, James Labree, David Jenkins.	8	2	1		55
Mount Vernon,	PETER MOORE, William Whittier, Dudley Lyford, Jacob Jewell, John Prescott.				1	66
Leeds,	THOMAS FRANCIS, Giddins Lane, Eleazer Carver.	1				58
New Sharon,	SAMUEL SWETT, Ambrose Arnold, Levi Jewell.	5	1	3	2	61
Canaan,	JOHN WAGG, Humphrey Burrell, Thomas Steward, Joseph Emery.	4		3		85
2d Sidney,	JOSEPH PALMER, Nathaniel Reynolds, Charles Webber.			2		41
2d Bowdoin,	*ICAABOD TEMPLE, Nathaniel Smith, Moses Dennett, Isaac White, John Smith.	4	2	3		108
Belgrade,	ELIAS TAYLOR, BENJAMIN BISBE, Shadrach Rolins, Abraham Wellman.	8		2	1	47
Hallowell,	JOHN ROBINSON, James Hinkley, Peter Moor.	4	1			40
2d Lisbon,	_____ Joshua Haley, Nathaniel Spalding.	1			1	20
Cornville,	_____ Benjamin Green,		8	3	1	54
Harmony,	_____ Samuel Doore, John Doore, Ebenezer Cole.	2	1			28
Farmington,	_____ Elipahlet Bailey, Richard Ramsdell.	1	1			24

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Elders and Messengers.</i>	<i>Added.</i>	<i>Dism.</i>	<i>Ex.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Monmouth,	_____ Joshua Smith.	1	1		1	20
Palmira,	_____ -	1			1	8
Fiscataquis, †						23
New Portland,	Oliver Peabody.			3		8
2d Litchfield,	_____ WILLIAM STINSON, William Potter, Joseph Lanchester.	1				45

N. B. The last mentioned Church received this session.

Adjourned forty minutes.

4. Met after adjournment. Received letters and minutes from corresponding Associations. From the Warren, brothers Williams and Leonard; from the New-Hampshire, brothers Smith and Delano; from the Lincoln, brother Snow; from Nova-Scotia and New-Brunswick, brother Harding.

5. Sermon by brother Harding from Mark xvi. 6. Adjourned till to-morrow morning at nine o'clock. Preaching in several parts of the town in the evening.

6. Met agreeable to adjournment. Voted, to receive the 2d church in Litchfield into our fellowship.

7. Voted, that brethren, Norton, Palmer and Case, be a committee, to prepare an answer to the questions from the church in Wales.

8. Read and accepted the circular and corresponding letters.

9. Voted, to correspond with Boston Association. Appointed the following brethren to corresponding Associations. To the Warren and Boston, brother Kendall; to the New-Hampshire, brethren Palmer and Daggett; to Lincoln and Cumberland, brother Low; to the New-Brunswick, brother Robinson.

10. Chose, brother William Richard, Treasurer.

11. First question from the church of Wales.—How small a number of male members may with propriety, be organized into a visible church?

12. Answer.—The number may be *better* ascertained by the *Council*, which may be called on such an occasion, having reference to the gifts found among them.

13. Second question.—Is it a breach of covenant engagement, for a member of one church, to attend public worship in another church of the same faith and order, without asking liberty of the church to which such member belongs?

14. Answer.—The church where such a circumstance does, or may exist, are the best judges.

15. Brethren, Low, Francies, Billings, Killgore, Palmer, Swett and Robinson, were appointed a committee to petition the General Court, with such as may join them from the Lincoln and Cumberland Associations.

16. Voted, to hold our next Association at Canaan, on the 4th Wednesday of September next, at 10 o'clock A. M.

17. Voted, That brother Low, prepare the circular letter for next year and brother Francies the corresponding letter.

18. Appointed brother Low, to superintend the printing of the minutes.

19. Appointed Elder Low, to preach the introductory sermon at our next session, in case of failure, Elder Kendall.

20. A sermon in the afternoon by brother Peak, from Heb. xii. 28. "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

21. After sermon a collection was made to the Missionary fund.

22. The churches belonging to this Association are requested to improve the first day of January next in fasting and prayer.

Supplies for the Church in Wayne.

Elder Stephen Dexter, 2d Lord's day in June. Elder Pierce, 1st Lord's day in Jan. Elder Taylor, 1st Lord's day in August, Elder Moor, 1st Lord's day in March.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

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

BELOVED,

We cannot comprehend, nor largely speak to you of that manner of love which the Father hath bestowed upon us and you, that we should be called the sons of God : Nor doth it yet appear what we shall be. But one thing is certain, a little while more, and we shall be like him ; that will be glory consummated. What we wish, is that you may daily be growing up into him, into his likeness, as children. This is glory advancing, and you advancing to glory. Whilst the Lord speaking in prophetic language is speaking to earth and heaven too, and breaking in sunder the strong barriers, which have long opposed the extensive spread of our Emmanuel's kingdom. you need the whole armor of God, for Satan knows his time is short, and what he doth, he must do quickly. At such a time dear brethren you will need all the christian about you. The end of the warfare will be short, yet it may be trying. The precept *watch and pray* that ye enter not into temptation, has need now to be indelibly graven on every heart. For want of this some worthies, of old time, fell ; some of modern date, are fallen ; others may. We hope better things of you. Dearly beloved, we can assure you that while we have been in our associate meeting we have eaten of the honey, and of the honey dropping from the comb. Our hearts have been so refreshed, and our minds so instructed, that we are almost emboldened to say, that we have experienced a growth in the divine life ; that we are, in our sentiments, in our affections and in our practice, a little more assimilated to God, than when we came together. What we greatly wish, brethren, is your perfection, or that you may be Godlike.

That is, that you may be in sentiment, in heart and in practice like Him ; that you may think with Him, feel with Him, and have your conversation in heaven. That the same mind and the same judgment be in you as were in Christ, and speak the same things. Brethren, " Godliness or God likeness, is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and that which is to come ;" and this is God likeness to be in an agreement with God in sentiment, in affection and in practice. To think as He thinks, to feel as He feels, and to have our words and actions correspond.

A disagreement with God, in these particulars, is the fruitful source of all discord amongst his children. God is forever the same. God is truth, God is love, God is perfect. So far as any have agreed with God in sentiment, or in judging of what is truth, so far all, who have thus done, have agreed among themselves. The same is true as to love and practice. So far as men have agreed with God, so far they have harmonized with each other. We mention these things to you, brethren, for the following reasons.

1. That you may be encouraged to endeavor, as much as lieth in you, a perfect oneness among all the children of God. All which is necessary, is only this, each one be at an agreement with God.

2. That you may be cautioned against one of the most subtle devices of Satan ; that it is no matter what a man thinks, if his heart be good. This sentiment once adopted will justify men for believing the doctrines of devils, and put all sentimental truth and error upon a level.

3. That you may pay due attention to your sentiments, relative to what God is, and to what he requires you to be and do. For every honest man is influenced by his sentiments. If he be sentimentally erroneous he will be so in practice.

4. That you may be encouraged to hold forth every just sentiment, for you have God with you, and all must, either with pain or pleasure, assent to the same sentimental truths in this world or in that which is to come.

5. That the only way, in which we can rationally hope for an agreement in sentiment and practice among the children of God, is for those who are with Him to continue steadfast : thus shall they be as a rallying point to the erroneous.

We conclude brethren, praying the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to establish, strengthen and comfort you, that you may be steadfast, immoveable always, abounding in faith, in hope and charity. A little while more and your warfare will close. Your tears wiped away and your souls at rest. In the mean time, let your loins be girt about with truth, the lamps of your profession trimmed and burning, so shall you have peace at the coming of the Bridegroom, and enter into the joy of your Lord.

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The Bowdoinham Association, convened at Readfield, Sept. 25 and 26, 1811, to corresponding Associations—sendeth greeting.

DEARLY BELOVED,

Through the goodness of God we have been indulged with another annual meeting, and trust we have not been without the enjoyment of the Divine presence. The information from our churches has been gen-

erally pleasing ; especially from some of them, which have had considerable additions to their numbers.

The great things God has done for us in this late dreary wilderness, call for our grateful acknowledgements, which we wish to recount with humility, and with praise to his name. Less than thirty years ago we think there was not a genuine Baptist church eastward of the county of York ; but by the *rich grace* of God, such has been the victory of truth that the number of churches in these parts cannot now easily be ascertained.

This association was formed in the year 1787, and three years after it contained only 6 churches, with 317 members ; but by the year 1804 fourteen years later, it had increased to 48 churches containing 2121 communicants ; it was then thought expedient to divide and form *two bands*. This division left us 32 churches with 1710 members. But so great has been the divine goodness toward us since that time, that last year our number of churches amounted to 51, containing 2848 souls professing to be translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The Association was then so enlarged that another division was thought necessary ; and accordingly it was voted at that meeting, that the churches belonging to this connection situated on the west side of Andriscoggin River, have liberty to form themselves into a distinct body which reduces our number to 27 churches.

Great have been the displays of divine power and grace on the people in these settlements ! Many sinners with aking hearts have been induced to cry for mercy, while the songs of the redeemed, we trust, have reached the ear of Jehovah, and will echo in the heavens to eternity.

The errors of the wicked are very prevalent in this part of the land, yet, blessed be God, truth prevails, and brethren generally stand fast in the faith. Indeed it is grievous to witness the blasphemy of the enemy, and the strange things passing under the name of religion ; yet we conceive that truth contrasted with these will shine the brighter ; and the apostacy of some and the oppression of others, will serve for the establishment of those who are built on the Rock of Ages, against whom even the gates of hell shall never prevail.

Then while, with suitable regard to the glory of God, and the good of souls, we deny self and take up the cross, may our trust be in God and not in ourselves ; and our united prayers reach his throne mingled with the incense from the angels' hand. Fighting with spiritual weapons under the banner of Jesus, though earth and hell oppose, we shall ere long be conquerors and more than conquerors through Him who hath loved us.

Brethren, your messengers and letters, were to us like the coming of Titus to Paul and his companions ; and we request the continuance of your correspondence.

Now may the great God, who rules the universe, and especially in Zion, bless you indeed ; and asking your prayers for us, we rest your brethren in the precious bonds of the gospel.

ROBERT LOW, *Moderator.*

THOMAS FRANCIES, *Clerk.*