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Warren Association of Baptists, 1776.

**Minutes of the Proceedings of ... at Grafton, September 10th
and 11th, M,DCC,LXX,VI.**

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MINUTES

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

WARREN ASSOCIATION,

IN THEIR MEETING

AT

GRAFTON,

SEPTEMBER 10th and 11th, M,DCC,LXX,VI.

B O S T O N :

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MINUTES

O F T H E .

PROCEEDINGS of the WARREN ASSOCIATION, in their Meeting at GRAFTON, September 10 and 11th, 1776.

THE Elders and Brethren from our respective Churches met at Grafton according to appointment Sept. 10th, when Elder Seemans preached a suitable Sermon. After which President Marning was chosen Moderator, and Elder Backus, Clerk; and the letters from the Churches were read, and a list of their messengers was taken as follows. Ordained Ministers names are in capitals; those who were not present have this mark †. The churches with this mark * we had no account from, but their numbers stand as they did last year.

Churches.	Ministers.	Bap.	Let.	Dis.	No.
1 * Boston,	† SAMUEL STILLMAN,				147
2 Boston,	† ISAAC SKILLMAN, Nathan Plimton,				42
Bellingham,	NOAH ALDEN, Samuel Darling, Ebenezer Hulbrook, Benjamin Farrow, John Leland,			3	39
Haverhill,	† HEZEKIAH SMITH, PELETIAH TINGLEY,				140
* Warren,	† CHARLES THOMPSON,				83
1 Middleboro',	ISAAC BACKUS,	1			63
2 * Middleboro',	† EBENEZER HINDS,			3	75
3 * Middleboro',	† ASA HUNT,				90
Charlton,	† NATHANIEL GREEN, Ebenezer Larfen, Caleb Blood,	3	2	1	53

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers.</i>	<i>Bap.</i>	<i>Let.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Dis.</i>	<i>No.</i>
* Wilbraham,	† SETH CLARK,					39
* Enfield,	† JOSEPH MEEHAN,					30
Weare,						35
Ashfield,	EBENEZER SMITH, Enos Smith,	7		1		60
* Montague,						29
Sutton,	<i>Elisha Ransom,</i> David Harwood, Daniel Harwood,			1		45
Royalston,	† WHITMAN JACOBS Isaac Esty, Daniel Lamson,	35	4			74
* Richmond,	† MAT. BELAU,					79
Wrentham,	WILLIAM WILLIAMS, Nathan Mann, Abner Haskal,	4	2	1		22
Attleborough,	JOB SEAMANS, <i>George Robinson,</i>	5		2		60
So. Brimfield,	ELIJAH CODDING, Joel Rogers,	1	1			18
* Sturbridge,						24
* Woodstock,	† Biel Ledoyt,					48
Chelmsford,	ELISHA RICH, Nehemiah Bachellor,	7		1		76
Barnstable,		1				10
New-Salem,	SAMUEL BIGELOW, David Peirce,	1	1	1		21
Grafton,	Jacob Whipple, James Leland,			1		27
Leicester,	Samuel Green, Thomas Holman,			1	1	30
Freetown,	ABNER LEWIS, John Robins,					39
Medfield,	Thomas Gair, Ais Mason.					26
		65	10	16	2	1524

The Churches of Freetown and Medfield, upon good satisfaction, were added to the Association at this meeting.

Adjourned.

Wednesday.

Wednesday, met at seven in the morning; and

1. Our brethren from Attleborough having objected against sitting with those from Bellingham, because of a breach that has taken place betwixt these churches; upon mature deliberation this association, in concurrence with the parties concerned, appointed the beloved Elders, Gardner Thurston, Ebenezer Smith, James Manning, Samuel Sullman, Isaac Skillman, Elitha Rich, with Dr. Asaph Fletcher, as a committee, whom they earnestly request to meet at Elder Williams's in Wrentham, on Wednesday October 30th next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, to hear the case, and do their utmost to settle the controversy between those churches; and to make report of the effects of their labours to our next annual meeting; and the elders and brethren who were concerned in a former council upon that case, are desired to attend said meeting.

2. A printed paper was read, from the southern governments, proposing a Continental Association in Virginia, the 17th of next October, to seek for universal religious liberty; but it not appearing practicable in these difficult times for us to send delegates to that meeting, our agent is desired to write to them, to let them know that our not coming is not for want of a hearty desire and endeavour to promote that cause as far as we can.

3. For that end each Baptist Society in New-England are requested to collect an exact account of the families which belong thereto, and of the number of souls in each family; and to transmit the same to our agent or committee, by the 15th of November next: and also an account of others near them, who are desirous of having equal religious liberty established; that it may be known how many are against the ecclesiastical oppressions, which have long been practised in this country.*

4. The

* As an account of all the people was lately taken by authority, those who can have access thereto may easily collect this account for us.

4. The thanks of this association are returned to our agent and committee for their past services, and they are re-chosen for the same purposes, for the year ensuing; and they are empowered to send one or more delegates to meet with our southern brethren, if they shall see occasion.

5. Our agent having given an account of his and the committee's proceedings in the year past, in presenting our memorial to the Assembly, &c. and having read a state of the difference betwixt our churches and those who oppress us, to be inserted in our history, it was voted unanimously, "That the account Elder Backus has drawn up, of the sentiments and practice of the Baptist Societies, is intirely agreeable to the minds of this association. JAMES MANNING, moderator."

6. Ordered, that the monies that have been received from our brethren at Philadelphia and elsewhere (the whole of which is £ 12. 4. 4) for sufferers among us, be distributed by the agent and committee, according to their best discretion.

7. Ordered, that 12 copies of our minutes be sent to the Philadelphia association (with thanks for theirs of last year which we have received) and 6 to that of Swanzey, and others to our brethren further southward.

Agreed upon the following supplies for destitute societies, viz

Framingham, Mr. Leland, the last Lord's-day in September; Elder Smith, the first in November; Elder Alden, the 2d in December; Elder Rich, the 2d in January and 2d in April; Elder Lewis, the 2d in May; Elder Williams, 2d in June; Mr. Jones, 4th in June.

Grafton, Mr. Jones, 4th in September and 2d in April; Elder Alden, 2d in October; Elder Seamans, 2d in February; Elder Lewis, 2d in June.

Haverhill, Elder Backus, 3d in October; Elder Alden, 1st in November; Elder Seamans, 1st in April; Elder Williams, 2d in May.

Barnstable, Mr. Jones, 4th in October; Elder Seamans, 2d in November; Elder Lewis, 3d in November.

The

The association next year is to be at Elder Backus's in Middleborough, the Tuesday after the first Wednesday in September, at two o'clock afternoon; Elder Thompson to preach the sermon, or in case of failure, Elder Rich.

And now brethren suffer a word of advice and exhortation.

WE live in a day of as great changes and events as perhaps were ever known in this nation. A time when the principles and nature of LIBERTY and GOVERNMENT have been very closely examined into, and wherein there appears the greatest encouragement of obtaining full and universal LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE, that ever has since the first rise of the man of sin. And how can we answer it, either to posterity, or to our great and impartial JUDGE, if we neglect a right and faithful improvement of this important season! Through divine goodness, these things have considerably impressed our minds in our present meeting; in which our debates have been conducted with temper, our votes have passed without a negative voice, and our business has been finished with uncommon dispatch. Very agreeable accounts have been received from sundry churches; and, with the addition of two new ones, we have the increase of 131 members added to our last account. May each of them always view the importance of filling their places with duty and usefulness! *For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the SERVANTS OF GOD. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. This is the liberty which Heaven commands us to stand fast in.* The evident design of civil government is to unite the force of the whole community in particular hands, to keep the peace, and to guard the rights of each member
against

against those who would *work ill to their neighbours*.
 Rom xiii 1—10. But how contrary is it to this
 great end of government, for the majority of the in-
 habitants in any place, to be impowered to judge for
 the whole, as to who shall be the guide of their souls,
 and to force their neighbours to support such as they
 do not chuse, and are not benefitted by ! Is not this a
 going as much out of the jurisdiction of civil rulers, as
 it can be for Britain to tax America ! And can we yield
 so much as an implicit assent to such a power, without
 transgressing the above command ! Fasting and prayer
 is a great duty in times of distress and calamity ; but
 JEHOVAH says, “ Is not this the fast that I have
 “ chosen, to *loose the bands of wickedness*, to undo the
 “ *heavy burdens*, and to let the *oppressed go free*, and
 “ that ye *break every yoke* ? Is it not to deal thy bread
 “ to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are
 “ cast out to thy house ? when thou seest the naked, that
 “ thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from
 “ thine own flesh ? Then shall thy light break forth as
 “ the morning, and thine health shall spring forth spee-
 “ dily ; and thy righteousness shall go before thee ; the
 “ glory of the Lord shall be thy re-re-ward. Then
 “ shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer ; thou shalt
 “ cry, and he shall say, *Here I am* ; if thou take away
 “ from the midst of thee, *the yoke*, the putting forth of
 “ the finger, and speaking vanity ” Isai. lviii 6—9.
 O that this word might take due effect in all our hearts,
 and spread through this land, and to the ends of the
 world ! Amen.

By Order of the Association,

ISAAC BACKUS, Clerk.
