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Warren Association of Baptists, 1783.

Minutes of the . . . Meeting at Charlton, Sept. 9 and 10,  
1783.

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# Minutes of the Warren Association,

in their Meeting at Charlton, Sept. 9 and 10, 1783.

THE Messengers of our Churches met at Charlton, Sept. 9, 1783; when a suitable sermon was delivered, by the Rev. Mr. Ga'z, from 2 Corin. vi. 1. After which, a Moderator and Clerk were chosen; and the following account was taken of the Members added, dismissed, excluded, or that have died in the year past; and of the present number in each Church. Churches with this † mark, we had no new account from; and Ministers with this \* mark, were not present.

Churches.	Messengers.	Add.	Dis.	Ex.	Did.	No.
† Boston,	* Samuel Stillman,					158
† Boston,	* Isaac Skillman,					43
Wilmington,	Noah Alden,	1			2	50
	Silas Wheelock,					
Overhill,	Hezekiah Smith,					
	Abraham Morrill,	2			2	190
Warren	* Charles Thompson,					83
† Middleborough,	Isaac Backus,					
	Nathanael Stone,	2			1	139
† Middleborough,	* Ebenezer Smith,					
	Samuel Nelson,	2			2	71
† Middleborough,	A's Hunt,					
	Joseph Pierce, junr,	4			3	195
† Charlton,	Nathaniel Green,	6			1	155
	Daniel Bacon,					
† Wilbraham,	Seth Clark,	2	1		3	159
	Joseph Butler,					
† Springfield,						30
† Ashfield,	Ebenezer Smith,	1		4		90
	James Leland,					
† Montague,						32
† Weston,	John Howard,	1		1		78
	Samuel King,					
† Royalston,	Whitman Jacobi,					
	Simons Chamberlain,	1	5		1	89
† Richmond,	* Martineau Bebeau,	18				122
† Wrentham,	* Wilton Williams,				2	39
† Middleborough,	* Job Seaman,					
	Edward Clarke,					60
† Northfield,	Elijah Codding,					
	Joseph Nectham,					1236

**Churches,**

**Messengers.**

Churches,	Messengers.	Advs.	Ex.	Did.	No.
Woodstock,	Byel Ledoyer, David Hayward,	4	1	1	143
Chelmsford, Barnstable, New-Salem,	Mark White, *Samuel Bigelow, John Sellon, Daniel Haydon, Thomas Webster,	4	1	1	87 41 35
Grafton,	Isaac Beals, Samuel Green,	10	2		38
Leicester,	Abner Lewis, Thomas Gair, Afa Mason,	5	3	1	70 95 77
Freetown, Medfield;		2	2	1	44 66
Harwich, Killingly.	George Robinson, Edward Babbit, Jeremiah Haskell, Joseph Ammidown,	2			28 100
Dudley,	*John Merriam, *John Hicks, Isaiab Parker, Lemuel Willard,				116
†Southington, †Rehoboth. Harvard,	Caleb Blood, *Samuel Fletcher,	45		1	79 60 26
Newton, Salem, N. Hamp. Colerain, Northbridge,	Nathaniel Cooper, William Bachellor, Thomas Green, *John Rathburn, Jacob Willard, James Manning, Joseph Winsor, Jonathan Eddy, Jordan Dodge, Henry Fisk, Joel Fletcher,	2 6 1 8		1	24 47 37 127 79
Cambridge, 2 Ashford, Ashburnham, Providence, Gloucester, Sturbridge,		5		3	53
Templ. ton,		4	1		23

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*This last church was freely received at this meeting.*

A letter and minutes from Shaftsbury Association, consisting of fourteen churches, in which are 574 members, were received by the hands of Deacon Stephen Carpenter, their messenger to us. Their next meeting is at Shaftsbury, the second Wednesday in June next, at 10 o'clock, A. M. And our Elders Ebenezer Smith and George Robinson, are appointed to carry a letter and our minutes to them.

Elder Ransom brought letters and minutes from an Association, which was formed at Woodstock, in Vermont, last Fe-

uary, called the Woodstock Association, consisting of five churches, and 148 members; who at their request were received into fellowship and connection with ours. And our Elders Jacobs, Green, and Blood, are appointed our messengers to them. The Woodstock church having joined in said Association, desire henceforth to be considered as dismissed from ours; which was approved of, though asking our previous advice might have been more expedient.

Elder Manning is appointed our Messenger to Philadelphia Association.

A letter was received from Stonington Association, consisting of twelve churches, by the hands of Elder Simon Brown, and Brother Joseph Case; who at their request were received into fellowship and connection with us. And our Elders Jackson, Ledoyt and Gair, are sent to their meeting, at Exeter, the 21st of October next.

As divine Providence has granted a great deliverance to this land, and has now given us a fruitful season; and as good education is of great importance to every community, all friends hereto have now an opportunity to promote it, by affording some help towards the support of Tutors, in the College at Providence, which is much wanted. State notes or Government securities would be very serviceable in that respect; and each church is desired to appoint some suitable person, to receive what can be collected, in them or other property, for that purpose; and to convey the same to John Brown, Esq; Treasurer of the College, or his successor in that office; for which full credit will be given them.

Mr. Robert Aitkin, of Philadelphia, having at his own risk published a good edition of the holy bible, at a time when they could not be imported from Britain, we recommend it to all our friends to furnish their families therewith, it being the first of the kind that ever was printed in America; for hereby they may receive lasting benefit at home, and also relieve an hearty friend to his country, who will suffer greatly if they are not disposed of. They are to be had at Olney Winsor's, in Providence, for a dollar a piece, by the dozen.

Our Elders Stillman and Skillman, with Mr. Solomon Howe, are requested to prepare a Spelling-Book, together with a Catechism, suitable for our children's instruction in literature, and the first principles of religion, against our next Association, to be examined and approved of them.

Elder Stillman is also requested to prepare a circular letter to our churches, against our next meeting; which is to be at Elder Hunt's in Middleborough, the Tuesday after the first Wednesday in September next, at two o'clock, P. M. Elder Hezekiah Smith to preach the sermon; or in case of failure, Elder Thompson.

The following sums were received for our suffering brethren at Harvard.—From 1st church in Middleborough 20; Sutton, 15; Sturbridge, 12; Dudley, 12; Rehoboth, 7; 22 which was delivered to Harvard Messengers.

As the second volume of our History is in great forwardness, reaching down to the present time. Elder Back is requested to publish proposals for printing of it by Subscription, as soon as sufficient encouragement appears.\*

The following supplies for destitute societies were agreed on.

*Ashburham.* Mr. Smallage, the 3d Lord's day in October; Elder Parker, the 2d in December; Elder Jacobs, the 3d in January; Mr. Dodge, the 1st in June; Elder Alden, the 3d in June.

*Templeton.* Elder Jacobs, the 3d in December; Elder Le-doyt, the 3d in January, Mr. Dodge, the last in May.

*Grafton.* Elder Alden, the 3d in October; Elder Lewis, the 2d in November; Mr. Beals, the 2d in December; Mr. Green, the 2d in January; Mr. Grosman, the 2d in June; Elder Parker, the 1st in July; Mr. Dodge, the 1st in Aug.

*Barnstable.* Elder Lewis, the 3d in November.

*Harwich.* Elder Hunt, the last in October; Elder Lewis, the last in November.

*Methuen.* Mr. Green, the 1st in October; Mr. Grosman, the 3d in October; Elder Blood, the 2d in January; Elder Lewis, the 3d in June.

*Weston.* Mr. Cooper, the 1st in November; Elder Alden, the 2d in November; Mr. Green, the 3d in November; Elder Robinson, the last in November.

An ADDRESS from the Elders and Brethren, now met in Association, to their Friends and Countrymen, concerning these Times.

DEARLY BELOVED,

*AFTER a long and very distressing war, we rejoice at the opportunity we have to congratulate you upon the re-*

*\* As he proposes to insert an exact list of all the Baptist Churches in New England, in the end of it, he hopes for help from his distant brethren. Indeed some have scrupled whether it is lawful to collect and publish the number of the members of our churches, because of the divine judgments which fell upon Israel, for David's numbering of the people. But tho' he thro' pride, numbered them without any just occasion, which Heaven frowned upon; yet how often were they before numbered with approbation, when there was occasion therefor? And to display the glory of the gospel, in the first planting of christianity, the numbers added to the churches were frequently given. And now to discover the true state of our churches, may not only discover the excellency of the gospel, above human laws, but also restrain others from oppressing them, as they have often done.*

ern of peace to the nations, and so to our land in particular, with a prospect of unspeakable advantage to the present and future generations.

Indeed we are not insensible that many are sorrowful and complaining instead of rejoicing at these times; several causes thereof are obvious. For ever since our first parents revolted from heaven, in order to please their eyes and their taste, their children have been chiefly influenced by carnal sense, instead of reason and truth. And the burden of taxes, the great scarcity of cash, with the pressing calls for money from every quarter, have drawn a terrible gloom over many minds; which is greatly increased by a view of the wretched scene of political existence which we have entered into, where none can tell what is before us; and we have no such arm of flesh to trust in as formerly. — Added to which are a great variety of disappointments and losses, with the use of corrupt schemes to repair them, and to get more power and gain, among all orders of men in the land, which make a number think our case almost desperate. But the gospel gives light, and opens the most glorious prospects, where none can see nothing but darkness. It assures us that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, and forbids anxiety about to-morrow, because a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, nor an hair from our heads without the providence of our Heavenly Father. And what confirmations of this truth have we had? Tea, and which now surround us. A main hope of our enemies was built upon the prospect of starving us into submission; but, behold! showers and thines of Heaven were not at their command; no, nor the hearts of the people neither. The events of this war are unparrelled.

For a people scattered through a country of fifteen hundred miles extent, divided into thirteen governments, and not two constituted just alike; almost without arms, ammunition, or military discipline, to unite against the arbitrary claims of the most powerful kingdom upon earth, for eight tedious years against the utmost efforts of craft and violence, until those claims are fully given up: And for the man who was raised up as their leader, to be ennobled to unite reason and resolution, authority and mildness, in such a manner as to obtain complete victory, and then to be willing to retire into a private station, equally beloved by town and country, by soldiers and citizens, without requesting any future command over either; these are events that were never before seen among fallen men, and loudly call upon every one to acknowledge him from whom they came. And these are far from being all that he has now done for this land. Deceitful reasonings from the power given to the members and rulers of the Jewish church, have persuaded people for many ages, that some men are born with a right to govern others, and that they are not accountable to the people for what they receive and do; which has been the grand source of oppression and tyranny thro'

the world. But how has God rent away this veil of darkness!

The American revolution is wholly built upon this doctrine, that all men are born with an equal right to what Providence gives them, and that all righteous government is founded in compact or covenant, which is equally binding upon the officers and members of each community. And tho' many pleaded for this doctrine, who were averse to having the same reduced to practice among us, especially in religious affairs; yet God has taken the wise in their own craftiness, in such a manner, as not only to disappoint their expectations, but also to exceed our hopes. For so much was said in the third article of our bill of rights, about the exercise of civil power in religious matters, as raised their expectations, and appeared very threatening to us. But it now appears upon trial, that the last clause of that article overthrew the superstructure which was intended to have been built thereon. And if any designed to call in some foreign aid to crush opposition to their schemes, they are herein also defeated. For though, after much debate, the word Protestant was excluded from being a part of our legislators, yet a much better name is placed in its stead; and to persuade the people to receive it, it was said to them, "Your delegates did not conceive themselves to be vested with power to set up one denomination of christians above another; for religion must at all times be a matter between God and individuals."\*

Where then are all their complaints against the Baptists? It is well known that their complaints are all reduced to these two heads, viz. You will not commune in our churches; and will not give certificates to our officers. And do not all know that communing in their churches, practically says, that they are baptized! And that giving said certificates implicitly says that rulers have a right to draw parish lines, and to empower the majority of the inhabitants to covenant for the rest with religious teachers, and to compel all to fulfil the same! And does not every one know that infant sprinkling is between ministers and parents, and not any voluntary act of the subject, to answer a good conscience to wards God! 1 Peter, iii. 21. As surely as religion is ever a matter between God and individuals, no person can be incorporated into any religious society without his own consent. And all know that practice speaks louder than words. What therefore is all the clamour that is raised against the Baptists, but because they choose sufferings rather than to sin against God, in practically calling that religion which they believe is of a contrary nature!

Indeed we have cause to confess with shame our former fellowship with those works of darkness, and the reluctancy we had to an entire withdraw therefrom; as well as our leanness in other respects, and want of living more agreeable to our profession. But God is good, tho' we are vile; and we must invite your

\* Address before the Massachusetts. Const. p. 16.

attention to what he has further done for us. For now no Governor, Councillor, Senator or Representative, can take a seat in our government, till he solemnly declares, "I believe the Christian religion, and have a firm persuasion of its truth." And as surely as it is true, Christ is the only lawgiver and head of his church; and he will save her from the power both of gallys and gallies, these modern engines of tyranny, Isa. xxxiii. 16—24. — Men who refuse to be governed by him, and look to their own belly, every one for his gain from his quarter, God says they shall never have enough, Isa. lvi. 11. the truth of which all have experienced. But now all the power given to our rulers in this respect, is to make "suitable provision" for respectable teachers; and the laws of Christ are to determine what is suitable; and they determine that his ministers shall neither be servants nor slaves — shall neither be suppoised by forcing away any man's property without his personal consent, nor go a warfare of their own charges, Mat. x. 7—10. Luke x. 3—12. Cor. ix. 7—14. Opposite extremes about this matter have served to uphold each other. The terms hire or reward, on one hand, have been taken to drag the affair into secular parts; and the word freely, on the other, to excuse people from doing any thing to support their ministers; as if freedom belonged to ministers only, while the people are slaves to their lusts. However it is as clear as the day light, that the obligations between pastors and people are mutual; and that their union and strength greatly depend upon a free and faithful discharge of each, out of supreme love to God; viewing themselves to be stewards of all their gifts and treasures, who must soon give account to him of their stewardship; yea, and that he only can bestow them success or enjoyment in any undertaking whatever. These laws naturally tend to keep his flock from being devour'd by such teachers as feed themselves and not the flock, as well to exclude all members therefrom who refuse to be governed by him; and likewise to guard against all sinful divisions. — Corrupt men will not then have such advantages as they have hitherto had, to deceive the hearts of the simple, with artful addresses to their passions, either about the licentiousness or tyranny of others. The cry of persecution will be stopped, while those who love the truth will endeavour to unite with societies who walk most clearly therein, and be in earnest to fill their places with duty and usefulness; knowing that mutual esteem and confidence are most favourably promoted thereby, without which societies are unhappy, if not broken and dissolved. And our national experience in late years abundantly demonstrates, that the unfaithfulness or treachery of any one, may produce greater mischief than he can possibly imagine; and also that no one knows how much good he may do, by a faithful and heavenly behaviour. At least it is



certain, that each one is forming his character for eternity, and that tho' he may deceive himself or others, for a few moments, yet that he cannot deceive God now nor any where in the judgment day; when the Judge will reject with disdain, the cries of all those who refused to hearken to the calls of his grace here. Prov. i 20—31

Permit us to add a word concerning education and what shall have done. In Gen xvii God made a covenant with Abraham, which constituted a church in his household, and had a large grant of choice lands, that in due time they were to take possession of by destroying the heathen inhabitants, and as long as that state continued they were to make a sensible difference in commerce and government as well as worship, between the circumcised and all other people in the world. In the same church the priests were to have the whole government in worship; and were also to decide what the sentence of the law was in capital cases; and the judges were to carry the same into execution. Deut. xxi 8—12 When Christ came he fulfilled the law, and abolished those distinctions among men; and constituted a church upon a better covenant—established upon better promises. His word calls forth covenant with Abraham in covenant of circumcision, Acts, vii. 8. but in after ages, deceitful men took away that name, and called it the covenant of grace; into which they offered to bring children before they believed, and would abuse for themselves. And as colleges and superior places for learning were entirely under the command of such men for many centuries; by which means natural affection, the love of education temporal interest and self-righteousness; all conspired together to bind people in that way; whereas the orthodox have claimed a right to treat all others as others have not a right to treat them. But a college is now erected at Providence upon a plan of equal liberty, where education is to be had without any sectarian or party taint. Other colleges have been erected, and much of their expence borne by governments; but they have been done without the personal generosity; and some men of influence have been found to crush it; there are it calls loudly to all lovers of knowledge and liberty, to contribute their mite towards its necessary support.

NOAH ALDEN, Moderator.

By Order of the Association.

ISAAC BAGKUS, Clerk