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Warren Association of Baptists, 1786.

Minutes of the Warren Association ... in Newton, 1786.

Charlestown, 1786. 8 pp.

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MINUTES

OF THE

WARREN ASSOCIATION;

AT THEIR

ANNUAL CONVENTION;

HELD AT

Mr. BLOOD'S MEETING-HOUSE,

IN NEWTON, 1786.

MASSACHUSETTS:

Printed at Charlestown by JOHN W. ALLEN, at his Office near the Bridge.

M. DCC, LXXXVI.

MINUTES.

WEDSDAY, September 12, 1786.

At two o'clock, P. M. elder *Isaac Backus* preached the introductory sermon, from *Hebrews*, iv. 16 : after which,

2. A Moderator and Clerk were chosen.

3. Letters were read from the several churches, and the following account was taken of the members added, dismissed, excluded, or who have died the past year ; and of the present number in each church.

N. B. Ministers marked by an † were not present: Those churches which sent neither messengers or letters stand as they did the last year, and are distinguished by an *.

CHURCHES.	MESSENGERS.	Ad.	Dis.	Exc.	Died	No.
1st. Boston,	<i>Samuel Stillman,</i> Philip Freeman, Richard Gridley,	40		1		190
2d. Boston,	<i>Isaac Skillman,</i> John Martin, William Kendall,	15				58
Bellingham,	<i>Noah Alden,</i> Aaron Leland, Hezekiah Smith,	2			1	55
Haverhill,		6		9	1	117
* Warren,						83
1st. Middleborough,	<i>Isaac Backus,</i> Nathaniel Shaw,		2	3		116
* 2d. Middleborough,						51
3d. Middleborough,	† <i>Afa Hunt,</i> Ebenezer Nelson, Nathaniel Green,	1		3		191
Charlton,	David Brown,		2			140
Wilbraham,	† <i>Seth Clark,</i>	6			11	154
* All field,	† <i>Ebenezer Smith,</i>					90
Montague,		6				38
Royalton,	Simeon Chamberlain,	1	3	9	1	75
* Richmond,	† <i>Matteran Bellou,</i>					32
Wrentham,	<i>William Williams,</i> Joseph Millard, Obediah Allen,	2		1		39
1st. Attleborough,	<i>Job Semands,</i>				2	

CHURCHES.

MESSENGERS.

- South-Brimfield,
- Woodstock,
Chelmsford,
- Barnstable,
New-Salem,
- Grafton,
Leicester,
- Freetown,
Medfield,
- Harwich,
- Killingly,
- Dudley,
- Southington,
- Rehoboth,
Harvard,
- Newton,
- Salem, (*N. Hampsbire*)
- Colerain,
- Northbridge,
Cambridge,
- 2d. Ashford,
- Ashburnham,
Providence,
- Gloucester,
Sturbridge,
- Templeton,
- New-Rowley,
- Bridgwater,
- Newport,

- † *Elijab Coding,*
- † *Biel Ledoyt,*
Abisbai Crossman,
Nathaniel Thatcher,
Amos Fletcher,
- Samuel Bigelow,*
Philip Hathway,
- † *Elkanah Ingalls,*
Isaac Beas,
Jonathan Newhall,
John Lyons,
- Thomas Gair,*
Henry Plimpton,
Asa Mason,
- John Hicks,*
Isaiab Parker,
Nathaniel Willard,
Jonathan Lewis,
Caleb Blood,
Thomas Parker.
Jeremiah Richardson,
Samuel Fletcher,
- † *Thomas Green,*
Thomas Williams,
Gershom Cutter,
John Rathbun,
- † *James Manning,*
John Pitman,
† *Joseph Winsor,*
Jordan Dogde,
Jacob Sheppard,
Samuel Bryan,
Daniel Norcross,
William Ewing,
Moses Tenny,
George Robinson,
James Perkins,
† *Benjamin Foster,*

Add.	Dif.	Excl.	Died.	No.
9	2			233
				139
				109
				40
1	3	15	1	20
				38
7		2		75
				97
2			1	79
				47
				60
				33
				18
				100
5		4	2	109
			3	78
3		1		64
				26
				25
2				30
4	3	4		44
				37
1		1	1	104
				81
13				80
21				58
12				42
1	1			16
				69
160				171
53				26
3468				

The last church on this list was received the present year.

4. Received the minutes from the Association in Philadelphia.
5. Received letters and minutes from the *Sbafsbury, Woodstock and Stowington* Associations by their messengers, viz, *Peter Warden* and *Jonatbay*

Richardson, from Shaftsbury; Thomas Baldwin and Ezekiel Powers, from Woodstock; and Pardon Tillinghast and William Hammond, from Stonington Association.

6. As we cannot ascertain at what place the *New-Hampshire Association* will meet the next year, voted, To omit sending a letter.

7. Chose mess^{rs} *Thomson* and *Williams* to draw the letter to the corresponding Associations.

8. Read the circular letter to the churches, and adjourned till tomorrow morning, 8 o'clock.

WEDNESDAY, September 13.

Met pursuant to adjournment.

9. Attended to the address from a church at *Sutton*; and, after an inquiry into the proceedings of said church, it was proposed, Whether, considering all circumstances, there is not sufficient reason to drop the *Sutton* church from this body? Voted in the affirmative.

10. Read and approved the letter to the several Associations: also, read and approved the circular letter to the churches.

11. Appointed mess^{rs} *Wilson* and *Pirman* as our messengers to the *Philadelphian Association*; mess^{rs} *Parker, Crosman* and *Fletcher* to that of *Woodstock*; mess^{rs} *Nathaniel Green* and *Dodge* to that of *Shaftsbury*; and mess^{rs} *Semands* and *Robinson* to *Stonington Association*.

12. The late sufferings of the church and society in *Cambridge* were considered; upon which it was unanimously

Resolved, That as our denomination, in this commonwealth, have been long oppressed by the Congregationalists, who have claimed the power of supporting religious ministers by tax and compulsion: and as in consequence of this, our brethren in *Cambridge*, besides their time and trouble, have lately been at the expense of thirty-three pounds fifteen shillings, we earnestly recommend, that each church in this Association raise a proportion of that sum, as soon as may be, and forward the same to Mr. *Isaac Skillman*, of *Boston*, or to Mr. *Thomas Green*, of *Cambridge*, for the relief of those sufferers. And, considering it is in the general cause of liberty these friends have stood forth—a cause which concerns the citizens of *America at large*, and particularly affects us—Considering, also, that what they have done has evidently given a check to such oppressions, and that nothing tends more to bring them to an end than a full conviction in our oppressors, that we are united in supporting each other in a determined refusal to give any countenance to their arbitrary claims of power

over us. To these reasons, for assisting the aforesaid brethren, we likewise add, that we have formerly given encouragement to stand by each other in this cause, and are bound by sacred obligations to these expressions of obedience to Christ.

13. Query, If an ordained elder of any particular church is dismissed in friendship and fellowship to another church, and by them received, shall he be considered as their *regular minister* without further *ordination*, according to the *Baptist constitution* ?

Answered, unanimously, in the affirmative.

14. It is recommended to the members of the churches to retire, every Lord's day morning, between the hours of seven and eight o'clock, for solemn prayer to God, that he will be graciously pleased, 1. To cause a general spread of the gospel among the nations of the earth. 2. That, in a particular manner, he will be pleased to revive his work in all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ in *America*. 3. That he will graciously interpose in our publick affairs, and over-rule them for his own glory, and our peace, and happiness as a people.—— It is with pleasure we inform the churches, that many pious people, in different parts of the continent, of various denominations, are thus engaged. Let us, then, unite with them, and at one time bow the knee to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who has never said, to the seed of Jacob, *Seek ye me in vain*.

15. Agreed on the following supplies :

Elder *Croftman*, at *Methuen*, the third Lord's day in October : elder *Robinson*, the last in November.

Elder *Semmes*, the fifth Lord's day in October, at *Providence* : elder *Robinson*, 2d November.

16. Elder *Skillman* is appointed to prepare the circular letter to the churches for the next year.

17. The next Association is to be held at *Chelmsford*, the Tuesday after the first Wednesday in September, at two o'clock, P. M. Elder *Skillman* is chosen to preach the introductory sermon. If he fails, elder *Robinson*.

The CIRCULAR LETTER To the Churches.

PREPARED BY MR. SMITH, OF HAVERHILL.

DEARLY BELOVED,

FROM a sense of everlasting love and effectual calling, by which we have been gathered to be a distinct and united people in the doctrines of our Saviour, we tenderly salute you, earnestly desiring that love, grace, mercy, and peace, through the knowledge of God the Father, and his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, may greatly abound among you.

We have renewed cause humbly to acknowledge the gracious condescension of an indulgent God, manifested to us in our annual meeting, by which our souls have been quickened and refreshed, our hope strengthened, and the bond of true friendship again confirmed. We have been enabled, through grace, to transact the affairs which have come before us, in brotherly love and unanimity, and strengthened to pursue the great object of the church's good, and the much-deserted, neglected cause of Christ in the world.

With pleasure we can inform you, that God hath done great things for many of the churches. To several of them, there have been large additions, we trust, of such as shall be saved.

Amongst the various orders of beings known in the vast and extensive empire of the Great Jehovah, there are certain rules established, and a due subordination among the whole. Whenever this subordination is destroyed, and the rules violated, the beauty, order and harmony of that rank of beings are, to a great degree, lost.

In civil government, good laws, well executed, are the strength and support thereof.

By noticing the divine constitution amongst the Jews, under the former dispensation, we find the most exact order instituted; the violation of which was attended with the most severe punishments. Their rewards and punishments were proportioned, without the least variation, according to their obedience or disobedience to the divine institutions, which evidences the purity and propriety of their laws, the dignity of their le-

Governor, and the moral obligations they were under to the Supreme Governour of the universe. States, kingdoms and empires rise or fall in their strength, glory and power, according to the spirit and execution of their laws. This was the case with the Jewish church; and may we not with propriety conclude, it is, and ever will be so with the Christian church, which is superiour to any incorporate body formed on earth? What we mean by the Christian church is, Christ's church, which consists of many distinct bodies of believers; each is called a particular church; which is, a number of professed disciples of Jesus Christ, formed into a distinct body, by mutual compact; solemnly engaging to each other, to walk agreeably to the laws, precepts and examples of Christ, made known to us in the scriptures of truth; acknowledging Christ to be the only head of the same. Hence pastors, teachers, elders, deacons and members, as different parts of this mystical body, are obliged, by the laws of Christ's kingdom, to be faithful in the discharge of their respective duties; the neglect of which introduces a train of pernicious evils, which disturb the peace, prosperity and happiness of the church. The seeds of declension, animosities and divisions being thus sowed, the church will languish, her officers be disheartened, her members alienated from each other, and scattered; and, instead of her answering to that character, of being "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," she will be clothed with shame, become enfeebled, and, like to a broken constitution attacked with stubborn disorders, decline, waste away, and die. To prevent such a threatening catastrophe, let each one attend to his duty, and the whole be united in the proper exercise of gospel discipline. Common experience teaches the necessity of paying proper attention to a disordered member of our body, and to endeavour its restoration. Similar should be the case of the church—If one member is disordered it affects the whole body. Hence it is the duty and business of the whole to take the most speedy care of the one disordered; which care discovers that *union* which should ever subsist amongst them. Church discipline should be wisely, tenderly and strictly maintained—which tends to the health of the body—and should never be left to only one or a few, when it is the duty and business of the whole. Subordinate characters should highly esteem those who are placed over them in the Lord, and are to know and obey them as such. 1 Thess. v. 13. Heb. xiii. 17. Contracts and agreements amongst them should ever be held sacred. The hands of pastors should be strengthened, by the churches acting up to the Christian character, and contributing liberally to their support; by which means they might give themselves wholly to the work of

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the ministry. The sin of covetousness, when discovered in any member, respecting the unanimous support of the ministry, should be noticed as a breeding evil, which ought to be speedily removed by the good and wholesome rod of church discipline, that an equality might take place.

The support of gospel ministers is so clearly and fully established by Jesus Christ, that it is generally acknowledged by our churches. But, alas! how few there are who faithfully and honestly discharge this known duty—which must be a crying sin in the sight of Heaven! Is not the neglect of this duty, joined with a departure from church discipline, one great cause of the present langour which prevails in many of our churches?

Brethren, receive from us the following exhortation :

Attend to the covenant and solemn obligations into which you have mutually entered ; and wherein you have been deficient in the discharge of your covenant obligations, seek earnestly to God by prayer for pardon ; and be incessant in your supplications for renewed strength and grace, that you might be faithful in future. Watch against all kinds of evil. Be ever ready to do good. As members of Christ's church, be ready to contribute your assistance in every branch of duty, especially in discipline. Let covetousness not be indulged amongst you. Remember, he who withholdeth more than is meet tendeth to poverty. May you receive fresh anointings from the Holy Ghost ; be filled with his gifts and grace, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

We conclude with the warmest recommendation of the inspired psalmist's address to the primitive believers—Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

Signed by order of the Association.

**HEZEKIAH SMITH, Moderator,
THOMAS GAIR, Clerk.**

