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Baptists. Rhode Island. Warren Association, 1790.

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MINUTES

OF THE

Warren Association,

HELD AT THE

BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE

HARVARD,

M. DCC. XC.

B O S T O N :

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1790.

*Warren Association
Minutes
1790*

MINUTES, &c.

TUESDAY, September 7.

1. **A**T two o'clock, P. M. brother Clark, according to appointment, preached the introductory Sermon, from Acts v. 32. *And we are his witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

2. After publick worship, chose Dr. Stillman, Moderator, and brother Joseph Grafton, Clerk.

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

N. B. We have received no information from Churches marked thus *. Ministers' names in *Italicks*. Those with this mark † were not present. Dashes denote no settled minister.

CHURCHES.	MESSENGERS.	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Died.	No.
1st. Boston,	<i>Samuel Stillman,</i> <i>Dea. Richard Gridley</i> <i>Micah Orcutt,</i>	11			1	215
2d. Boston,	————— <i>Thomas Baldwin,</i> <i>Deacon Holland,</i>	5	0	1	2	91
Bellingham,	<i>Noah Alden,</i> <i>Daniel Wedge,</i>	3	1			53
Haverhill,	<i>Hezekiah Smith,</i>	1	4	7	4	161
* Warren,	—————					57
1st. Middleboro',	<i>Isaac Backus,</i> <i>Samuel Nelson,</i>	2	2	1	2	110
2d. * Middleboro',	—————					170
3d. Middleboro',	————— <i>John Tripp,</i>		5	2	2	167

Charlton,

CHURCHES.	MESSENGERS.	Add.	Dismiss.	Exch.	Dioc.	No.
Charlton,	<i>Nathaniel Green,</i> <i>Jonathan Curtis,</i>	0	3	10	1	116
Montague,	—————	6	0	1	0	45
Royalstone,	<i>Moses Kenny,</i> Deacon Easty,	49	1	1	2	126
* Richmond,	† <i>Matterean Bellou,</i>					79
Wrentham,	<i>William Williams,</i> Benjamin Heaton,	1	0	0	4	36
* South-Brimfield,	† <i>Elijah Coddington,</i>					187
Attleborough,	<i>Abner Lewis,</i> <i>Edward Clark,</i>	10	0	0	0	66
* Wilbraham,	† <i>Seth Clark,</i>					149
* Woodstock,	—————					123
Chelmsford,	————— Deacon Prescott, Thomas Hutchins,	2	0	0	2	115
Barnstable,	<i>Enoch Aldridge,</i>	2	0	0	0	46
* New-Salem,	† <i>Samuel Bigelow,</i>					39
* Leicester,	—————					65
* Freetown,	—————					70
* Medfield,	<i>Edward Clark,</i>					62
Harwich,	—————	10	0	0	0	59
Dudley,	—————	0	0	0	0	22
* Southington,	—————					18
* Rehoboth,	† <i>John Hicks,</i>					100
Harvard,	<i>Isaiab Parker,</i> Deacon Jos. Stone,	4	3	0	1	123
Newton,	<i>Joseph Willard,</i> <i>Joseph Grafton,</i> Nathan Dana,	2	0	0	2	94
* Salem, (N H.)	† <i>Samuel Fletcher,</i>					61
Colerain,	<i>Obad Warren,</i>	27	0	4	0	52
* Northbridge,	—————					25
Cambridge,	<i>Thomas Green,</i> <i>John Williams,</i>	3	0	1	0	41
Ashburnham,	————— <i>Elijah Willard,</i> <i>Jacob Kiblinger,</i>	7	1	1	0	65
Providence,	————— <i>Jonathan Maxy,</i>	20	0	0	0	129

* Gloucester,

CHURCHES.	MESSENGERS.	Addl.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Died	No.
• Gloucester, Sturbridge,	† Joseph Winsor,					81
	— — — — —	1	0	1	3	81
Templeton,	Deacon H. Fisk, Simcon Fisk,					
	† Joel Butler, Apellus Slocum, Nathan Bryant,	1	0	1	0	66
New-Rowley,	Abijah Crofman, Deacon Jackman,	12	1	0	1	70
	† George Robinson, † Michael Eddy,	2	0	0	0	71
Bridgewater, • Newport, Weston,	— — — — — Samuel Train, jun.					69 19
Total,		181	21	31	27	3570

The last mentioned Church was received into our fellowship the present year.

4. Received and read the letters and minutes from our sister associations, as follows:—A letter and the minutes from Philadelphia Association: A letter and minutes from the Charleston association; A letter from the General Committee of the United Baptist Churches in the State of Virginia: A letter and the minutes from the New-Hampshire Association, received by brother Walter Powers: A letter and the minutes from the Woodstock Association, by brother Isaac Kenny: A letter and the minutes from the Stonington Association, by Messrs. Robert Champlin and Benjamin Barber, jun.

5. Messrs. brother Backus, brother Thomas Green, and brother Maxy, were appointed to draw a letter to the corresponding Associations.

Adjourned till 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.
Sermon in the evening by Dr. Stillman.

WEDNESDAY, September 8.

Met according to adjournment.

Dr. Stillman communicated a letter to the Association, which he had received from the * Committee of the Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts, informing him, that they had presented a petition to Congress, requesting their "attention to the several impressions of the Bible now making; representing the importance of accuracy in these impressions; and earnestly praying that they would take such measures, as the Constitution may permit, that no edition of the Bible, or its translation, be published in America, without its being carefully inspected, and certified to be free from error; and requesting the concurrence of the Baptist interest, throughout the United States, in this matter, which is of the highest importance to all denominations of Christians, as they all appeal to the Holy Bible as the standard of truth." Upon due consideration of this matter,

Voted, That we the members of this Association, feel ourselves under very great obligations to our reverend brethren, for their early attention to the preservation of the purity of the Holy Scriptures.

Voted, That Dr. Stillman, Mr. Backus, Mr. Smith, Mr. Baldwin, and Mr. Green, be appointed a Committee, in behalf of this Association, to prepare and transmit a petition to Congress on this important subject.

Voted, That the same Committee transmit an answer to the letter now before us, assuring those gentlemen, that we heartily concur in the measure proposed, and are equally desirous of cultivating a friendly and Christian intercourse with them, and the whole body of Christians; "believing that such

* Rev. Dr. Willard, Dr. Howard, Rev. Messrs. Phillips Payson, Peter Thacher, and Jedidiah Morse.

such an intercourse between Christians of different denominations and sentiments, especially the ministers of the gospel, will have a happy tendency to harmonize them—remove unreasonable prejudices—to promote a spirit of love and candor, and thus essentially serve the interests of our holy religion : and that it also might have a beneficial influence on the civil affairs of our country.”

Voted, That this matter be recommended to the attention of the several Baptist Associations throughout the United States ; earnestly requesting them to unite with us, and the several denominations of Christians, in a measure truly interesting.

7. The Church at Cambridge desired the opinion of the Association, upon the following queries—

1st. Is it warrantable from the word of God, for a regular Candidate in the Ministry, to administer the ordinance of Baptism before he has received ordination? We answer. It is our opinion, that preaching the gospel, and administering the ordinance of Baptism, are distinct from each other ; and that no person hath a right to baptize except ordained agreeable to 1st. Peter, v. 5.

2d. Quere. Shall the evidence which arises from those who are not in the Church, be admitted before the Church, against any of her members ? We answer. It is our opinion that credible evidence from persons not of the Church, in many cases may and ought to be received ; but each Church must judge of the credibility of evidence ; and also that it is of great importance that the rule in Matt. xviii. 15—18. be attended to in admitting complaints into the Church.

3d. The Church at Royalstone query : If an admonished member make application to another Church,

Church, and complains of unchristian treatment, and desires communion with that Church, what is the duty of the Church to which he applies; shall they inquire into the conduct of the other Church concerning this matter, or shall they not? Answer. It is our opinion, that Churches in fellowship may inquire into the conduct of each other in the *friendly* way; and offer their advice and assistance in removing difficulties among brethren.

9. The Church at Barnstable informed the Association, that they were taxed to the other denomination, and had made several attempts to reclaim their property, but in vain. They also desired the advice of the Association.—

Voted, That Dr. Stillman, Mr. Backus, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Green and Mr. Grafton, be a Committee to advise the Church at Barnstable, and all others in like circumstances, what steps to take in order to obtain a redress of such grievances; which ought not to be named among us as citizens of a free republic.

10. Read and approved the Circular Letter prepared by Mr. Grafton.

11. Read and approved the Letter to the Corresponding Associations, prepared by Messrs. Backus, Green and Maxy.

12. Chose Dr. Manning our Messenger to the Philadelphia Association, to meet in the city of New-York the first Tuesday in October.

Messrs. brethren Smith, Green and Crossman to the New-Hampshire Association, to convene at Brentwood the second Wednesday in June, 1791.

Brethren Thomas Baldwin and Nathan Dana, to the Woodstock Association, to meet at Canaan the last Wednesday in September.

Obed

Brother Obed Warren and brother Nathan Dana, to the Shaftsbury Association.

Brother Lewis and brother Grafton, to the Stonington Association, to meet at Stonington on the third Tuesday in October.

Brother Sylvanus Haynes to convey our letter to the Vermont Association, and open a correspondence with them.

Agreed to the following supplies :—

Chelmsford, { Brother Dana 3d Lord's day in Septem.
 { Brother Willard 3d in November.
 { Brother Clark 2d in October.

Framingham, { Brother Alden 3d Lord's day in Sept.
 { Brother Tripp 2d in April.
 { Brother Crosman 3d in May.
 { Brother Alden 3d in June.

Dunstable, { Brother Powers one Lord's day.

N. H. { Brother Kenny 2d Lord's day in Jan.

Brother Smith was appointed to write the Circular Letter to the Churches the next year.

The next Association to be held at New-Rowley, the Tuesday after the first Wednesday in September, 1791, at 2 o'clock, P. M. Dr. Stillman to preach the introductory Sermon ; and in case of failure, brother Green, of Cambridge.

Brother Backus concluded by prayer.

Sermon in the afternoon by brother Baldwin ; and one in the evening by brother Backus.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

DIVINE Providence hath indulged us with another anniversary interview, by which, we not only obtain knowledge of the circumstances of the Churches that compose this *Convention*; but acquire information of the *Redeemer's kingdom* through this extensive Continent.

It must give peculiar pleasure to every pious soul, to hear of the effusion of *divine grace*, which is made in many places; and that our ascended Lord is making a willing people in the day of his power.

Several Churches in this Association have occasion to praise God, for the gracious influence of *his spirit* granted them; and the Churches in general, for that degree of harmony which they enjoy. Yet we have cause to mourn, and in the deepest humiliation before God, to acknowledge our ingratitude and unfruitfulness, under these special favours.

Certain it is, the Church of Christ, in no preceding age, was indulged with greater privileges, *civil* and *religious*, than in this; yet how far inferior in faith and love, are we to those saints who have lived before us! Blush, and be ashamed, Oh professor, at this!

To profess religion is one thing, but to be truly pious is another. By the former, we may obtain the friendship of the godly; but by the latter, we secure the protection of Heaven.

It is to be feared, there are too many who place the whole of religion in certain feelings, and have their goodness by fits and starts; who are inattentive to the fruits of the *Spirit*. The Christian is misrepresented in God's word, as one who evidences his
faith

faith by his works, which not only intends his conformity to the ordinances of the gospel, and now and then an act of kindness to his suffering brother ; but they involve the temper and spirit of Jesus Christ. *“ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”*

By possessing these things, we obtain evidence to ourselves, that we are the children of light ; we have the enjoyment of that religion we profess ; we maintain the fellowship and confidence of our brethren, and convince those who are around us, that religion is not mere imagination, or an empty name. *“ But he who lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”*

It should be the study of the Christian, to be useful in the Church of Christ, to promote the welfare and happiness of society ; by which he will glorify God, honour and recommend religion.

Candour and Catholicism are tempers much to be cultivated in all our conduct and intercourse with Christians of different sentiment from us. A censorious, a bigotted temper we abhor ; yet we cannot dispense with what we believe to be *truth* and *duty* to gratify their feelings, or to accommodate ourselves to their opinions.

Much, very much depends upon a uniformity of conduct in those who profess religion. The glory of God—the honour of Christ—the interest and excellence of religion, and our present happiness, are connected, closely connected, with the conduct of those who profess. Be the friends of Jesus Christ.

We might produce many important arguments to enforce the preceding remarks ; but the limits of a Circular Letter forbid us. Suffice it to say,

The

The purity of the Divine Being—his everlasting love to his people—the holy nature of *his* law—the grace and example of our Lord Jesus Christ—the examples of saints, as recorded in the holy scriptures, are arguments, convincing arguments, to excite us to *walk worthy the holy vocation wherewith we are called.*

Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

We cannot but notice the frown of Divine Providence upon this Association, since our last meeting, in the death of our worthy, much lamented, and very useful brother, *Thomas Gair*; whose gifts and exertions have been of singular advantage to this Association. It is worthy our grateful observation, that this Association has been incorporated twenty-three years, and brother *Gair* is only the *second* minister who has died, belonging to it, since it was formed.† May this instance be a monitor to his surviving *Brethren* in the ministry, to be faithful unto death, that they may receive a crown of life.

“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits. Amen.”

Signed in behalf of the Association,

SAMUEL STILLMAN, Moderator.

JOSEPH GRAFTON, Clerk.

† The other was brother John Davis, A. M. who was pastor of the 2d. Baptist Church in Boston, and died December 13th, 1773, at the Ohio, while on a visit for his health.