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Baptists. Rhode Island. Warren Association, 1792.

Minutes ... in Harvard. M, DCC, XCII.

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# MINUTES

OF THE

WARREN ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT THE

Baptist Meeting-House

IN

HARVARD.

M,DCC,XCII.

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# MINUTES, &c.

TUESDAY, September 11.

1. **A**T two o'clock, P. M. Brother Maxcy, according to appointment, preached the introductory Sermon, from Rev. i. 16. *And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.*

2. After public worship, chose Brother Noah Alden, 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 past year, and the whole number in each church.

N. B. Churches with this mark\* we had no information from. Ministers' names in *Italicks*. Those with this mark † were not present. A Dash ——— denotes no settled minister.

Churches.	Messengers.	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Dead.	No.
1st. Boston,	† Samuel Stillman, Peter P. Roots,	24	1		3	269
2d. Boston, Bellingham,	† Thomas Baldwin, Noah Alden, David Cooke,	26	1		2	149 50
Haverhill,	† Hezekiah Smith, Jeremiah Dow,	23			1	178
* Warren,	—————					57
1st. Middleboro',	Isaac Bachus, Samuel Nelson,		2		3	107
2d. Middleboro',	Ebenezer Hinds, Peter Hoar,				3	30
3d. Middleboro', Charlton,	————— † David Rathbun, Deacon Streeter, David Brown,		1		1 3	94 110

Churches.	Messengers.	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Dead.	No.
Leverett,	<i>Simeon Combs,</i> <i>Samuel Bigelow,</i>	8			3	51
Royalton,	<i>Moses Kenny,</i> <i>Jacob Eatty,</i> <i>Peter Ripley,</i>	14	1	1	1	145
Richmond,	<i>Isaac Kenny,</i> <i>Marten Ellis,</i> <i>Elnathan Jacobs,</i> <i>William Williams,</i>	61	2	1	1	161
Wrentham,	<i>Elijah Coddington,</i>	8	19	12	1	35
South-Brimfield,	<i>Abner Lewis,</i>	5	1	2	3	161
Attleborough,	† <i>Setb Clark,</i>	62	7	5	4	75
Wilbraham,	<i>Samuel Webster,</i>	25				235
Woodstock,	<i>Jacob Leonard,</i>					73
Chelmsford,	<i>John Pecken,</i> <i>Nath. Hutchenson,</i>	1	1		2	102
Barnstable,	<i>Enoch Eldridge,</i>					47
New-Salem,	<i>John Chamberlain,</i>					44
Leicester,	<i>Nathan Dana,</i> <i>Samuel Parker,</i>				2	49
* Freetown,	—————					70
* Medfield,	<i>Edward Clark,</i>					62
Harwich,	—————	2			2	57
Harvard,	<i>Isaiab Parker,</i> <i>Josiah Willard,</i> <i>Lemuel Willard,</i>	11	3			130
Newton,	<i>Joseph Grafton,</i> <i>Nathan Dana,</i> <i>Daniel Oakes,</i>				1	93
Salem (N. H.)	† <i>Samuel Fletcher,</i> <i>Jonathan Meffy,</i> <i>Jos. Richardson,</i>	4	1			61
Northbridge,	—————					25
Cambridge,	† <i>Thomas Green,</i> <i>Deacon Davis,</i> <i>Parker Emmerson,</i>	8				56
Ashburnham,	—————	1	3			63
Providence,	<i>Jonathan Maxcy,</i>	12	3	1	2	165
* Gloucester,	† <i>Joseph Winsor,</i>					81

Churches.	Messengers.	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Dead.	No.
Sturbridge,	Deacon Fisk, Jesse Carpenter,	3	2	1	2	76
Templeton,	Joel Fletcher, Daniel Norcross,	19	3			79
New-Rowley,	Abisbai Crofman, Israel Porter, Enoch Little,	21				99
Bridgewater,	George Robinson, Nehc. Howard, Ephraim Willis,	3			1	41
Weston,	Samuel Trair,	1			1	19
Carver,	John Tripp,	2			1	26
Hollis,	Samuel Taylor,	6				20
Marshfield,	Will. Butterfield, Joseph Butterfield,					30
Total,		350	50	23	43	3556

N. B. The last mentioned church was received this session.

4. Adjourned 'till 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Sermon in the evening by Brother Pecken, from 1 Thess. i. 5.

WEDNESDAY, Sept 12.

Met according to adjournment.

5. Received minutes from the Philadelphia Association; letter and minutes from the Charleston Association; from the Woodstock Association, a letter, but no minutes; from the Vermont, letter and minutes, by the hand of Brother Bailey, their messenger; a letter from the New-Hampshire Association; a letter and minutes from the Baptist General Committee of Virginia; a letter and minutes from the Shaftsbury Association, by the hand of Brother Moffatt, their messenger; a letter from the Bowdoinham Association: also minutes from the Stonington Association.

6. Read,

6. Read, and approved the circular letter, prepared by Brother Baldwin. Also,

7. The corresponding letter, prepared by Brother Grafton, was read, and approved.

8. The church in Colerain, finding it more convenient to meet with the Shaftsbury Association, requested to be dismissed for that purpose ; Voted, to grant their request.

9. The church in Rehoboth, and Southington, having, for a number of years, neglected sending either letter or messengers to the Association ; Voted, that we consider them as not belonging to this body.

10. The first Baptist church in Newport, at their request, is left out of the minutes.

11. A Quere. Whether the judgment, or result of an ecclesiastical council, is more than advisory ? Answered unanimously in the negative.

12. After conversation upon the difficulties which subsist between the first and second church in Middleborough, advised them to a mutual conference.

13. Entred upon business relative to the *education fund*. The VIIth. article, " Which confines the education of all those who shall receive assistance from this institution, to Rhode-Island College," was objected to, by the church at Newton. After a candid and deliberate conversation upon the point,

Voted, that the VIIth. article of the *Baptist education fund* be erased.

14. Proceeded to the choice of Trustees : agreeable to the plan introduced the last year, " So many of the Baptist Fellows of Rhode-Island College, who are members of churches, shall be Trustees of this charity ; the remaining number shall be elected (by ballot) by the Warren Association." Of this description were five, viz. Doctor Stillman, Messrs. Hezekiah Smith, William Williams, Jonathan Maxcy, and Robert Rogers. The remaining seven were chosen by the Association, and are as follows :

follows : Messrs. Isaac Backus, Joseph Grafton, Noah Alden, Thomas Baldwin, Thomas Green, George Robinson, and Isaiah Parker.

15. Voted, that Dr. Stillman, Mr. Backus, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Green, and Mr. Grafton, be a committee to whom any persons, or churches, aggrieved, by being taxed to other denominations, may apply for advice.

16. Received and read a letter, signed by seven respectable Ministers, belonging to the Shaftsbury and Vermont Associations, containing " A proposal for a *General Committee*, to be composed of delegates sent from each Baptist Association in New-England ; and if this Association should approve the proposition, they may appoint the time and place for their first meeting. It is supposed that such a *committee* would save much riding and expense to all the Associations ; for it would supersede the necessity of sending messengers from one Association to another ; and would be a place of general information and communication." Especially, it would be a great mean of collecting materials for the *Baptist Annual Register*, publishing by Dr. Rippon. From these considerations, and others that might be mentioned, which we view as tending greatly to promote religious knowledge ; Voted, that this Association approve the proposal for a *General Committee* : And that the Town of Adams, in this Commonwealth, be the place, and the last Wednesday in June, 1793, the time of their first meeting. Also Voted, That our Brethren Isaac Backus and Joseph Grafton be our delegates to the *General Committee*.

17. Appointed our Brother Peter P. Roots messenger to the Philadelphia Association ; Moses Kenny and Abel Wood to the Woodstock Association ; Hezekiah Smith, Abishai Crofman, and Samuel Fletcher, to the New-Hampshire Association : Abner Lewis and Joseph Grafton to the Stonington. Isaac Kenny and Nathan Dana to the Shaftsbury : To the Vermont, Samuel Webster and Nathan Dana.

**SUPPLIES.**

**Framingham,** { Mr. Alden, 2d. Lord's-day in April.  
Mr. Dana, last in May.  
Mr. Nelson, 2d. in June.

**Hollis,** { Mr. Kenny, 2d. November.  
Mr. Crossman, last do.  
Mr. Combs, 1st. in May.  
Mr. Butterfield, last do.

**Weston,** { Mr. Eben. Nelson, 1st. in October.  
Mr. Lewis, 1st. in November.  
Mr. Robinson, 2d. in April.  
Mr. Alden, 1st. in May.  
Mr. Snow, 3d. in June.

**Shrewsbury,** Mr. Snow, 1st. in May.

18. Appointed Brother Maxcy to write the circular letter for next year.

19. Voted to hold our next Association at Attleboro', the Tuesday after the first Wednesday in September, 1793, Brother Green to preach; and if he fails, Brother Baldwin.

Concluded by prayer.

Sermon in the afternoon by Brother Robinson; and one in the evening by Brother Roots.





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## CIRCULAR LETTER.

DEARLY BELOVED,

**T**HE great Head of the Church is constantly opening his kind designs of love to his chosen people : and although he may some times seem to frown, and hide his face from them, it may be with a design to try the strength of their faith, and prove the loyalty of their affection to him. This promise will always remain as a pledge of divine love, that " All things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." This we ought firmly to believe, whatever difficulties may appear in the way of its accomplishment. But we are exceeding apt to misconstrue the divine conduct, not clearly discerning the various methods, by which God will accomplish those purposes, which respect his own glory, and the best good of his people.

When we indulge our reflections upon the present state of our churches, they cannot fail of affording a rational ground of joy ; this joy will issue in a proper humility.

You will permit us to remind you of the importance of our being *agreed in doctrine and practice*. This was one chief object in our first forming associations ; and we have reason to believe that these annual conferences have been greatly blessed to that purpose : but we must be watchful and diligent, or our glory will depart from us. We are taught, by the word of God, that there will be a departure from the faith ; and that many will give heed to seducing spirits ; and that the way of truth will be evil spoken of. Error in different ways will make its appearance, and attack the church of God.

The time has been, when those who were unfriendly to our churches have endeavoured to represent us as heterodox in our principles, and vicious in our practice. But blessed be God, through divine grace, we have been enabled,

abled; by a steady perseverance in the doctrine of Christ, to put to silence those gainsayers, and in some degree to stop the mouth of slander and detraction. But, brethren, we must not put off our armour, and forget that we are in an enemy's land. We are by no means out of danger; we have to "Wrestle against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We are called to "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" and if we adhere closely to the discriminating doctrine of the *Cross*, and the peculiar ordinances of the Gospel, as they were first instituted and delivered to the church, we may expose ourselves to the censure of some as being superstitious.

The spirit of the times, in which we live, is a tolerant, accommodating spirit; and complains but little of what men believe, in case they lead inoffensive lives. But are the principles of our holy Religion to be trifled with? surely no. If a man believes in the *Koran* of *Mahomet*, and is a good member of civil society, you will treat him as such; but are you to consider or treat him as a christian? It cannot be supposed. If another believes in *Natural religion*, and denies the Christian revelation, the exercise of the most profuse charity does not require you to receive him as a christian, let his life be as it may. These are plain cases; but there are others which are more difficult: there are many who profess to be the friends of Christianity, and yet strip Christ of his *eternal Deity*, and rob him of the brightest gem in his Crown! "But we have not so learned Christ;" we cannot, we dare not give this point up; to us it is important! We have rested our salvation on Christ, not as a man, nor a created being, though of the highest order; but as being very God, and co-eternal with the Father! It would be robbery, and even blasphemy, for the first Archangel to claim equality with God. And if the blessed Jesus was not possessed of real and proper Deity, the Jews were right in saying that he blasphemed, in that he, being a man, made himself God. This sentiment lies at the foundation of the Christian scheme, and incorporates itself with the whole of the system.

We

We are happy to find that our brethren in *this* and our *sister Associations*, throughout this vast Continent, appear to be found in this very important article of our faith. Let us watch against all corruption in doctrine, and not give up a little here, and a little there, until we have not enough left to be worth contending for. Let us be careful that every sentiment that we believe, corresponds with the genuine spirit of the Bible ; this we have adopted as our only rule of faith and practice.

You will permit us further to observe, that the *positive institutions* of Christ are few, plain, and significant ; and saint Paul commended his brethren for keeping the ordinances as they were delivered unto them ; but when they mutilated one of them, he asks, what shall I say to you ? shall I praise you in this ? I praise you not ; \* and he immediately had recourse to the original institution, to establish his reproof. This was a direct way to convict their consciences, and no doubt served a much better purpose than many consequences drawn from human arguments.

But, Brethren, we must not stop here ; we must add to our faith virtue, if our sentiments be sound, and our external conformity to the rituals of Religion be exact. If supreme love to God does not rule in our hearts, glow in our affections, and have a commanding influence upon our lives and tempers, our religion will appear to all around us to be no more than an empty name. May we then cultivate every moral and social virtue, and endeavour to be uniform in our profession and practice : If this be not the case, we shall reproach that cause which ought to be dearer to us than life.

*By Order of the Association.*

NOAH ALDEN, *Moderator.*

JOSEPH GRAFTON, *Clerk.*

\* 1 Cor. xi. 22.



*N. B. To be had of S. HALL, No. 53, Cornhill, Mr. Backus's Piece concerning Election and final Perseverance—his History of the Baptists, and his other Works.*

*✶ The Churches who have received Mr. Asplund's Subscription Papers for his Annual Register, will oblige the Author by sending them, according to direction: And as he intends to print one every year, query, Will it not be proper to preserve them; and when there is a considerable number of them, to have them bound together, as they will contain much useful information relative to the Baptist Interest in the United States.*