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Baptists. Rhode Island. Warren Association, 1794.
Minutes ... in Templeton, September 9 and 10,
M, DCC, XCIV.

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AAS copy.

MINUTES

OF THE

WARREN ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT THE

Congregational Meeting-House

IN

TEMPLETON,

SEPTEMBER 9 and 10,

M,DCC,XCIV.



BOSTON:

Printed by MANNING and LORING.

M,DCC,XCIV.

MINUTES, &c.



TUESDAY, September 9.

1. **A**T two o'clock, P. M. Brother *Stephen Gano*, according to appointment, preached the introductory Sermon from Gal. i. 10.—*Do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*

2. After public worship, proceeded to business. Brother Isaac Backus was chosen *Moderator*, and Brother Thomas Baldwin, *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; with the present number in each church.

N. B. Ministers' names in *capitals*. Licensed preachers in *Italic*. Those to whose names this mark * is affixed were not present. From churches marked thus † we had no intelligence. Dashes — denote no settled minister.

Churches.	Ministers & Messeng.	Adm'd.	Dismiss'd.	Exclud'd.	Died.	No.
1st. Boston,	*SAMUEL STILLMAN, Daniel Wild, Micah Orcutt,	1	1	4		270
2d. Boston,	THOMAS BALDWIN, Jacob Holland,	13		1	2	166
Bellingham,	NOAH ALDEN, David Cook,	5		2	1	51
Haverhill,	*HEZEKIAH SMITH,	3	1		1	178
† Warren,	*LUTHER BAKER,					57
1st. Middleboro',	ISAAC BACKUS, Zeanus Leonard,	1	6		3	95
† 2d. Middleboro',	*EBENEZER HINDS,					30
3d. Middleboro',	SAMUEL NELSON, Nathaniel Barrows, Daniel Tickham,*	30	18		1	107

Churches.	Ministers & Messeng.	Add.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Diad.	No.
Charlton,	DAVID RATHBUN, Daniel Streeter, David Baits,	5				115
Royalston,	MOSES KENNY, Jacob Easty, Simeon Jacobs,	5	2	1	5	149
Richmond,	ISAAC KENNY, Molton Bullock, Nathaniel Bolls,	2	1	1		143
Wrentham, South Brimfield, Attleboro',	WM. WILLIAMS, *ELIJAH CODDING, William Everett,	6	2	3	1	36 155 72
Wilbraham,	*SETH CLARK, Seth Clark, jun.	13	24	1	1	228
†Woodstock, †Chelmsford, Barsttable,	*JOHN PECKEN, ENOCH ELDRIDGE, Shubael Lovell,	6				73 96 53
New Salem,	<i>Josiah Orcutt,</i>	1				45
Leicester,	NATHAN DANA, Samuel Green, Samuel Green, jun.	1			3	46
†Freetown, †Medfield, †Harwich, Harvard,	*Edward Clark, *ISAIAH PARKER, Lemuel Willard, Jacob Haskal, William Bolls,				1	70 62 59 129
Newton,	JOSEPH GRAFTON, Aaron Dana,	1			2	91
Salem, (N.H.) Northbridge, Cambridge, Ashburnham,	*SAM. FLETCHER, *JOHN COOPER, Jacob Willard, Stephea Gibson,	3	5	2	1	57 47 80 57

Churches.	Ministers & Messeng.	Add.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Diad.	No.	
Providence,	STEPHEN GANO, David Leonard,	17	1	1	3	212	
†Gloucester, Sturbridge,	*JOSEPH WINDSOR, PETER P. ROOTS, Samuel Cheever,	4			1	81 85	
Templeton,	David Leonard, Thornton Barret, Jonas Beaman,				2	85	
†New Rowley, Bridgewater, †Weston, †Randolph, Carver,	*GEO. ROBINSON, *JOEL BRIGGS, JOHN TRIFF, Foxwell Thomas,	2				99 40	
Hollis,	Joshua Davis,	11				31	
Marshfield, Hardwick,	Jacob Whipple, Robert Emmons,		1		3	25 40	
<i>N.B. This last Church was received the present year.</i>		Total	197	71	17	34	3667

4. Adjourned until eight o'clock to-morrow morning.
Sermon in the evening by Brother John Leland, from
Isaiah li. 9, 10, 11.

WEDNESDAY, September 10.

Met according to adjournment.

5. Received and read letters from our Sister Associations. From the Philadelphian we received no accounts. From the Charleston a letter and minutes. From the Woodstock a letter and minutes by the hand of their messenger Elder Rufus Freeman. From the Shaftsbury a letter and minutes by their messengers Elder John Leland, and Elder Lemuel Powers. A letter and minutes from the Stonington. A letter and minutes from the Bowdoinham by their messenger Elder Isaac Case. Also, a letter and minutes from the New-York Association.

6. Appointed Messrs. Williams, Grafton, Baldwin, Nelson, Roots, Leonard, Backus, Tripp, and Gano, to prepare letters against the afternoon to the several corresponding Associations.

7. The circular letter prepared by Mr. Backus, was read and accepted.

8. Chose the following messengers to our Sister Associations, viz. to the Woodstock, Brethren Moses Kenny and Isaac Kenny; to the Shaftsbury, Brethren Gano, Grafton, Rathbun and Dana; to the Bowdoinham, Brethren Roots, Grafton and Tripp; to the New-Hampshire, Brethren Baldwin and Robinson; to the Stonington, Brethren Backus, Roots and Rathbun; to the New-York, Brother Gano; to the Vermont, Brother John Asplund.

Adjourned until half past two o'clock.

Met according to adjournment.

9. Read and considered a letter from a Church in Ashfield requesting to be restored to the Association, but as there was the appearance of some difficulties, *Voted*, not to receive them at the present. Chose Mr. Backus to write them more particularly the opinion of the Association in the matter.

10. *Voted*, to choose a Committee to attend the Meeting of the General Committee to convene at Sturbridge on Tuesday next. Chose Mr. Backus, Mr. Rathbun, and Mr. Dana for the above purpose.

11. Read and accepted the several corresponding letters.

12. On request, *Voted*, to dismiss the Church at Richmond to the *Leyden* Association.

13. A letter from the Secretary of the *Baptist Education Society* was read, from which we were informed of the particular state of the *Fund*. We are sorry to find that so few of our Churches have come forward practically to encourage so laudable a design. The only monies received before the present time were from a few individuals and the two Baptist Societies in Boston; but as two or three Churches more have at this time brought forward their donations, we hope the others will follow their noble example. We think it needless here to recapitulate the various motives to this good work, as they have been amply set forth in the late Address of the Trustees, signed by the Chairman, and sent to the several Societies. *Vie*

hope to have generous returns from all parts of the Association.

14. The opinion of the Association was asked by several Churches upon a question of the following import: "Is it not inconsistent with the original principles of the Baptist Churches, to apply to, and obtain Acts of Incorporation from the Civil Power?" In answer to which, *Voted*, that the Association unanimously disapprove of all such *Acts of Incorporation* for the purpose of supporting the ministry of the gospel. It is also requested, that the Churches would particularly instruct their delegates in this matter, so that their minds may be known at our next meeting.

15. It was motioned, and unanimously *Voted*, to have an annual *collection* in the Association immediately after public worship, for the purpose of assisting the Widows of those *Ministers deceased*, who have been members of this Association. The charity to be disposed of under the direction of a Committee to be appointed from this body.

16. Appointed Brother Gano to write the Circular Letter for next year.

17. *Voted*, To hold our next Association at Bridgewater, the Tuesday after the first Wednesday in September, 1795, at two o'clock, P. M.

18. Appointed Dr. Stillman to preach the Introductory Sermon; in case of failure, Brother Williams.

19. Agreed upon the following supplies:

Marshfield,	{ Mr. S. Nelson, 2d Lord's Day in Oct. Mr. Tripp, 2d in November. Mr. Eldridge, 1st and 2d in December. Mr. Backus, 1st in April. Mr. Lovell, 1st in June.
Ashburnham,	{ Mr. Leonard, 4th in September. Mr. Lovell, 3d in October.
Hardwick,	Mr. M. Kenny, 4th in October.
Framingham,	{ Mr. Lovell, 2d in October. Mr. Alden, 2d in April.

20. *Voted*, That the thanks of this Association be given to the Rev. Mr. Sparhawk's Society, for their politeness in obliging us with their Meeting-House upon the present occasion.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

IN our last address to you, the perfection and immutability of the law of God was considered; and we shall now endeavour to explain to you the nature of salvation by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this is the most glorious subject that ever was made known to man, and it is what the angels desire to look into.

The first proclamation of the gospel to guilty man, was in the seed of the woman who should bruise the head of the serpent, while the serpent should bruise his heel. The person intended is the Son of God, who was born of a woman, without the knowledge of man. For as by one man's disobedience many were made *sinners*, so by the obedience of one shall many be made *righteous*. Rom. v. 19. Adam and Christ are the only two public heads of all mankind, as to the great affairs of the soul and eternity. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. 1 Cor. xv. 47. Every child of Adam naturally loves this world above God, and so death is our just *wages*, while salvation from sin and death is the free *gift* of God. Neither could his justice be possibly vindicated in the death of infants, if they were not sinners in Adam. Yet many will have it, that infants *suffer* in consequence of Adam's sin, while they deny that in him all have *sinned*. But it is impossible for innocent persons to suffer, from infinite justice and righteousness, unless they suffer for the iniquity of others; and as no creature can atone for others who have sinned against their Creator, infants cannot suffer without being *sinners* themselves.

Many have tried to evade the force of this argument, by pleading that afflictions and death work for the good of the children of God; but he assures us, that all the fruit of afflictions to them is to *purge away iniquity*. Isai. xxvii. 9. And this cannot be done for any who have no sin. Neither could infants have any part in Jesus Christ, who died to save *sinners*, if they were not *sinners* in the sight of God who is infinitely just. That he hath sanctified infants in the womb, and from the womb, is most certain. Luke i. 44. Jer. i. 5. Therefore it is in vain for men to dispute about the case of all who die in infancy, when God has not revealed his designs concerning them; for all the reason of men or angels could never have discovered the salvation of one sinner, if God had not revealed salvation through his Son. For without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Angels never saw so much of God before, as they did when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, according to the

prophecy which says, This man shall be *the peace*. Then they sang, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth *peace*, good will towards men. Luke ii. 14. Micah v. 1—5. How vain then are all the attempts of men to set up reason above the revealed will of God? And yet how full is the world of this conduct?

Because God made a covenant with Abraham, and constituted a part of his posterity as a national church, and exalted them above all other nations, in the days of David and Solomon; many nations who have professed the Christian name have imagined, that they had a right to lay bands upon their children before they could choose for themselves, and to support their worship with the sword all their days. Yea, that they had a right to seize upon the lands of the heathen, and to force all to submit to their power, as far as they could extend their sword by sea or land. And they have now carried their folly so far, that, in Europe and America, they commonly begin the names, Christian and Christianity, with small letters, while they begin their sectarian distinctions with capitals. And the ministerial lands in every government are claimed by the ruling sect therein, to *bribe* ministers to exert all their influence with the people, to keep them under the ruling powers. Yea, even in America, the powers of the world are sought to by many, to incorporate bodies of men for to hold estates for religious purposes, while those bodies are not governed by the laws and Spirit of Christ. Yet God says, If any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his. Rom. viii. 9. No man can be a *Christian*, without a change of heart by the *Spirit of Christ*. Yet how many are there in our land, who hold to an external succession of Christianity from Rome and England? But let us hear what the gospel says about salvation.

From the first proclamation of grace to Adam, unto the death of Christ, believers looked through the *bloody* ordinances which God appointed, to the *blood* of his Son for justification. And when Abraham received the sign of circumcision, it was a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he before had in Christ, in whom believers are *justified by his blood*. Gen. xv. 6. xvii. 24. Rom. iv. 11, 23. v. 9. And circumcision, which was the shedding of *human blood*, was not only a type of the death of Christ, but also of the crucifying of believers in him, so as to live unto God by the power of his Spirit. Therefore an inspired apostle says, I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the *grace* of God; for if righteousness come by the *law*, then Christ is dead in vain. Gal. ii. 19—21. The believing Jews were suffered to go on for some years in circumcision, and then God said, If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.—Whosoever of you are justified by the *law*, ye are fallen from *grace*. Gal. v. 2—4. So far was

the covenant of circumcision from being the covenant of *grace*. Circumcision, that bloody sign, was the name which God gave to his covenant with Abraham. Acts vii. 8. And it is as much impossible for any man to be now in the covenant of circumcision which God made with Abraham, as it would be for Christ to come again and shed his blood for sinners. And of all bloody sacrifices, after the death of Christ, God said, He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood: he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. *Isai. lvi. 3.* Which passage is applied to the Jews who rejected Jesus, and resisted the Holy Ghost. Acts vii. 48—51. And the idol of self-righteousness, with covetousness which is *idolatry*, have been the great source of murder and confusion ever since. It is loving the creature above the Creator, which is also *adultery* in the sight of God; and no soul can be married to Christ without being slain by the law. Rom. vii. 1—6. Hence the three thousand, who were converted on the day of Pentecost, were *pricked in their heart*. Acts ii. 37. And it was said before, These arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.—Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. *Psal. xlv. 5—9.* Which is said of the Son of God, who by himself *purged our sins*, and is sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. *Heb. i. 3—9.* And how great is the love of the Son of God, in dying for his enemies, and making them his queen!

The change of heart which is necessary thereto, is what God justly requires of men, though he only can effect the change, by the power of his Spirit. Hence he said to Israel, Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. And after they were scattered among the nations, he said to them, The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.—The word is nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. *Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6—14.* And an inspired apostle says, That is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. *Rom. x. 8—10.* And what can be more reasonable, than for us to believe the record which God hath given of his Son, and to love and obey him with all our souls? For if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is infinitely greater. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. *I John v. 9—11.* And what is freer than a gift? or where can our life be safe but in the Son of God? for we have destroyed ourselves, but in him is our help, for time and eternity.

But as the regenerate and unregenerate were bound together in the Hebrew church, the world will try to hold believers by the bands of their neck to the last extremity. And as Abraham and his seed had a right to buy servants with money, Christians have been drawn into a dead sleep thereby. But God says, Awake, awake, put on strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought, and ye shall be redeemed without money.—How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! *Isai. lii. 1—3, 7.* This is the *gospel of peace*. Though they who preach it have often occasion to say, Lord, who hath believed our report? *Rom. x. 15, 16.* *Isai. liii. 1.* How few believe that our Lord reigneth in such a manner, that no men can use any force about religious ministers, without invading the authority of the Son of God, who has made it a matter of *conscience* for us to be subject to civil rulers? But an inspired apostle says to the church, It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. *Rom. xiii. 1—5, 11—14.* And how full is the world now of these evils? Yea, of strife and envying in particular? But God says to his children, Ye know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an *idolater*, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.—But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. *Eph. v. 5—7, 13, 14.* And if Christians were not sunk down into an amazing sleep, how could they yield to have any lawgivers for the church but the Son of God! For he hath purchased his church with his own blood; and he says to her, There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. *Eph. iv. 4—6.* How then can we obey any Lord but Jesus Christ, in the government of his church, or in the support of his ministers? For he says, As ye would that men should do

to you, do ye also to them likewise.—And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Luke vi. 31, 46. And he says, Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Gal. vi. 6, 7. Every one is bound, by the law of Christ, to communicate unto his ministers in all good things, according to their ability, as they can answer it to God in the last day. —And all his ministers are to watch for their souls, as they that must give account. Heb. xiii. 17. And how happy should we be, if ministers and people acted daily towards each other, as they believed God would approve of in the day of judgment! And his church will never rise above all the powers of iniquity, without this obedience of faith; but in this way, the church will look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. And the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.

Our present interview has been harmonious, and the accounts received from some places have been refreshing. And now may the God of peace, who brought from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, be with your spirits. Amen.

Signed in behalf of the Association,

ISAAC BACKUS, Moderator.

THOMAS BALDWIN, Clerk.