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**Baptists. Rhode Island. Warren Association, 1796.
Minutes ... in Charlton, September 13 and 14, 1796.
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M I N U T E S

OF THE

Warren Association,

Held at the

BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE

IN

C H A R L T O N,

SEPTEMBER 13 and 14,

1796.



B O S T O N :

Printed by MANNING & LORING.

M, DEC, 1871.

MINUTES, &c.

TUESDAY, September 13.

1. **A**T two o'clock, P. M. Brother William Williams, as appointed, preached the introductory Sermon from Acts xx. 28.—*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

2. Collected for the Widows of deceased Ministers, which is an established practice.

3. Chose Brother Thomas Baldwin, *Moderator*, and Brother Joseph Grafton, *Clerk*.

4. Read the letters from the several churches, and took the following account of the members added, dismissed, excluded, or who have died the past year; also, the present number in each church.

N. B. The names of ordained Ministers are in *small capitals*. Licensed preachers in *Italic*. Those Ministers with this mark * were not present. Churches marked thus † we had no information from this session. Vacant churches distinguished by a dash,

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Min. ters and Messengers.</i>	<i>Added.</i>	<i>Dismiss.</i>	<i>Exclud.</i>	<i>Dead.</i>	<i>Number.</i>
1st. Boston,	* SAMUEL STILLMAN, Richard Gridley, Daniel Wild, John Wait,	5	1	1	2	268
2d. Boston,	THOMAS BALDWIN, Jacob Holland,	10	1	4		162
Bellingham,	* NOAH ALDEN, Asa Leland, Aaron Thayer,					50
Haverhill,	* HEZEKIAH SMITH,		9		5	163
† Warren,	* LUTHER BAKER,					52
1st. Middleborough,	* ISAAC BACKUS, Joseph Ames, Asel Shaw,		1		1	90
† 2d. Middleborough,	* EBENEZER HINDS,					29
† 3d. Middleborough,	* SAMUEL NELSON,					107
Charlton,	————— Daniel Streeter, Daniel Bacon, Samuel Robinson,		3	5	1	105
Royalston,	————— Jacob Esty, Simeon Jacobs, Paul Ellis,				2	142

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers and Messengers.</i>	<i>Add.</i>	<i>Dysm.</i>	<i>Exclud.</i>	<i>Dead.</i>	<i>Number.</i>
Wrentham,	WILLIAM WILLIAMS,				1	39
South Brimfield,	ELIJAH CODING,	9	5		3	155
	Daniel Munger,					
	David Fay,					
	John Munger,					
Attleborough,	* <i>Laban Thurber,</i>	3				70
	Ezra Ware,					
Wilbraham,	* SETH CLARK,	30	22		8	228
	Timothy Burr,					
	Elisha Cleaveland,					
	Seth Clark, jun.					
Woodstock,	<i>Robert Stanton,</i>		8	6	4	66
	William Corban,					
	Jacob Leonard,					
	Samuel Crawford,					
Chelmsford,	* JOHN PECKENS,	1	5		2	89
Barnstable,	ENOCH ELDRIDGE,	3			1	60
New-Salem,	JOSIAH ORCUTT,	1	1		1	44
	John Chamberlain,					
	John Peckham,					
Leicester,	NATHAN DANA,		1		4	40
	Samuel Dana,					
	James Sprague,					
† Freetown,	_____					20
† Medfield,	* <i>Edward Clark,</i>					42
Harwich,	ABNER LEWIS,	4			1	75
	Job Chase,					
Harvard,	* ISAIAH PARKER,				2	119
	William Bowles,					
Newton,	JOSEPH GRAFTON,	3	1		1	95
	Aaron Dana,					
† Salem, (N. H.)	_____					57
† Northbridge,	* JOHN COOPER,					47
Cambridge & Woburn,	_____					
	SHUBAEL LOVELL,	1	1			84
† Ashburnham,	_____					57
Providence,	* STEPHEN GANO,	2	1	4	1	206
Sturbridge,	ZENAS L. LEONARD,	19			4	111
	Jonathan Phillips,					
	Simeon Mason,					
Templeton,	_____	16	1		2	110
	Daniel Norcross,					
	Samuel Symonds,					
	Barnum Leonard,					
New-Rowley,	_____					49
Bridgewater,	* GEORGE ROBINSON,					53
	James Perkins,					
	Isaac Hartwell,					

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers and Messengers.</i>	<i>Add.</i>	<i>Dismiss.</i>	<i>Exclud.</i>	<i>Dead.</i>	<i>Number.</i>
Weston,	_____					18
Randolph,	Samuel Haynes, JOEL BRIGGS, Jonathan Wales,	1				59
Carver,	* JOHN TRIPP,					52
† Hollis,	_____					31
† Marshfield,	_____					
Hardwick,	_____	1		3	3	35
	Jacob Whipple, Moses Blifs,					
Belcherton,	* SAMUEL BIGELOW, Reuben Barton,	6			1	22
1st. Sutton,	DAVID RATHBUN, Samuel Waters, Samuel King, Moses Putnam,					55
2d. Sutton,	WILLIAM BATCHELDOR, Jonah Titus, Reuben Tisdale, Wm. Batcheldor, jun.					55
<i>N. B. The two last churches were received the present session.</i>						
Total		114	57	23	47	3460

Adjourned until eight o'clock to-morrow morning.

Sermons in the evening. Brother Baldwin preached, by desire, in the Congregational Meeting-House from Psalm cii. 13; and Brother Peak in the Baptist Meeting-House from Rom. xii. 15.

WEDNESDAY, September 14.

Met according to adjournment.

A Sermon previous to entering upon business, by Brother Hooper, from Isaiah xlii. 4.

Prayer introductory to business, by Brother Coding.

5. Read the letters from Sister Associations. From the Philadelphian a letter.* A letter and minutes from the Shaftsbury, handed by Brother Moffitt. A letter and minutes from the Stonington, by their messenger John Rathbun. From the New-York, a letter and minutes by Brother Stephen S. Nelson. From the Woodstock, a letter and minutes, by their messengers, Job Seamans and Elisha Andrews. From the New-Hampshire, a letter and minutes, by their Messengers, William Hooper and John Peak. From the Vermont, minutes, together with the plan of their Association, but no letter nor messenger. From the Bowdoinham, a letter and minutes, by their messenger, Eliphalet Smith.

6.

* The minutes, though received, by accident failed of getting to the Association.

6. Appointed the following Brethren to write to the several Corresponding Associations, viz. Messrs. Williams to the Philadelphian ; Baldwin to the Charleston ; Grafton to the Shaftsbury ; Zenas L. Leonard to the Stonington ; Peak to the Bowdoinham ; Lovell to the New-Hampshire ; King to the Woodstock ; and Andrews to the Vermont.

7. The Circular Letter, prepared by Dr. Stillman, was read and approved.

8. Chose the following Brethren our Messengers to our Sister Associations. To the Philadelphian, Brother Stephen S. Nelson. To the Shaftsbury, Abner Lewis, Nathan Dana and Stephen Gano. To the Stonington, Robert Stanton and Zenas L. Leonard. To the New-York, Stephen Gano, Shubael Lovell and Stephen S. Nelson. To the New-Hampshire, Hezekiah Smith and Joseph Grafton. To the Woodstock, Isaac Backus. To the Bowdoinham, Enoch Eldridge and Zenas L. Leonard.

9. Voted, That Dr. Stillman, Mr. Backus, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Smith and Mr. Grafton, be a Committee, to whom any persons taxed to other religious Teachers, whom they do not choose to hear, may apply for advice.

10. Recommended to the Churches, that they have some time in the year, a Collection in each Church, for increasing the Education Fund.

11. Appointed Brother Baldwin to visit the Church in Harwich, and inquire into the particular circumstances of their being taxed, and their property taken from them, for the support of a Teacher of another denomination, whom they never chose nor hear. And that he assist said Church in collecting a just statement of facts.

12. As many of our Brethren in this Commonwealth from time to time have been taxed to the other denomination, and their attempts to recover the money back in the mode pointed out by the *Constitution*, has been attended with expensive law-suits, and other disagreeable circumstances, therefore, Voted; That a Committee be chosen to present a Petition to the General Court of this Commonwealth, praying, that an Act may be passed, which shall exempt the Baptists in future from being taxed to other denominations.

13. Voted, That Dr. Stillman, Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Grafton, be a Committee to prepare and sign the above named Petition, and to present the same to the General Court, in behalf of the Churches in this Association.

14. Appointed Deacon Bacon, Deacon Gridley and Brother Peak, a Committee to apportion and distribute the money collected yesterday to the several Widows of deceased Ministers.

15. The several corresponding letters were read and approved.

16. Appointed

16. Appointed the following supplies :

Bellingham,	{	Mr. Titus, the 3d Lord's Day in October.
		Mr. Waters, 2d in November.
		Mr. Lovell, 1st in December.
		Mr. Coding, 2d in May.
Weston,	{	Mr. Price, 1st in November.
		Mr. S. Nelson, 2d in December.
		Mr. Titus, 2d in April.
Rowley,	{	Mr. Lovell, 2d in November.
		Mr. Andrews, the two last in January.
Framingham,	{	Mr. David Rathbun, 2d in October.
		Mr. Lovell, 1st in November.
		Mr. Coding, 3d in May.

17. Appointed Mr. Baldwin to write the Circular Letter for the next year.

18. By mutual request of the Churches in Boston, Voted, To hold our next Association at Dr. Stillmar's Meeting-House, the Tuesday after the first Wednesday in September, 1797, at two o'clock, P. M.

19. Appointed Brother George Robinson to preach the introductory Sermon ; if he fails, Brother Elijah Coding. Business being finished, the Moderator concluded by Prayer.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The ELDERS *and* MESSENGERS *of the several* CHURCHES
met in ASSOCIATION at Charlton, September 13th and 14th, 1796—
To the CHURCHES *whom they represent, send Christian salutation.*

DEAR BRETHREN,

WE addressed you the last year on THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST AS GOD : a subject of the last importance to mankind. On this occasion, permit us to call up your attention to THE CHARACTER AND OFFICE OF THE HOLY GHOST ; without whom, we are assured, no man can call Jesus, Lord. 1 Cor. xii. 3. That is, understand, love and exalt his character : because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, being spiritually discerned. The transition from the first of these subjects to the other, is natural and easy : they are closely connected, and infinitely important.

As all our knowledge of this DIVINE AGENT is derived from the sacred scriptures, to them alone we shall now appeal. In them he is distinguished by different names, as, SPIRIT OF GOD, HOLY SPIRIT,
HOLY

HOLY GHOST, COMFORTER, &c. The most common appellation is, **HOLY GHOST**. He is repeatedly spoken of in the Old Testament. When the Lord Jehovah was displeased with the children of men, he said, *My Spirit shall not always strive with man.* Gen. vi. 3. David prays, *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.* By him the prophets were inspired: *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* 2 Pet. i. 21. In the New Testament he is very frequently mentioned.

Personality and Divinity are ascribed to him. Of many passages of scripture that might be quoted, we shall particularly refer you to what our adorable Redeemer says relative to this subject. John xiv. 16, 17. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever: even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth HIM not, neither knoweth HIM: but ye know HIM, for HE dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* John xvi. 7, 8. *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the COMFORTER will not come unto you: But if I depart, I will send HIM unto you. And when HE is come, HE will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. See also verse 13. Howbeit, when HE the Spirit of truth is come, HE will guide you into all truth; for HE shall not speak of HIMSELF. HE shall glorify me, for HE shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

In these passages, Jesus Christ, who is infinite in knowledge, repeatedly asserts the *personality* of the Holy Ghost. The personal pronouns, *He* and *Him*, are applied to him, and personal acts are likewise ascribed to him.

His *office* is also described in these verses; Christ says, *He shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, &c.* This office may be comprehended in the following particulars. He inspired the prophets. He convinces sinners of their depravity and just condemnation, as under the curse of the broken law of God. He reveals Christ to them as the end of that law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He applies the promises of the gospel to believers, according to their various conditions. He helps the faithful ministers of Christ to study and preach; and he only makes the gospel successful. He revives religion in the world, and teaches believers to pray according to the mind of God. He enables them to mortify the deeds of the body; to maintain a close walk with their heavenly Father; and at last, to die in peace. By him the noble army of martyrs were enabled to triumph at the stake. In a word, he is the life and soul of all real religion.

To his personality and office, we add, that he is *truly divine*. In the form of words used at the administration of the ordinance of baptism, he is placed in perfect equality with the Father and the Son. See Matt. xxviii. 19. The benediction of Paul places him in the same condition of equality: *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with you all. Amen.* 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Paul had no blessings of his own to bestow; we are therefore to view this verse, as his wish or prayer, addressed to the sacred Three, that the Christians at Corinth might receive their benediction. A proof this of their equal Godhead, or Divinity.

John says, *There are Three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One.* One in essence and design. 2 John v. 7. In addition to the above, we remind you of what Christ says, Matt. xii. 31. *But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven unto men.* We conceive that language cannot more fully express the true and proper Deity of the Holy Ghost, than this: which you will please to compare with the following words of Paul: *But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.* 1 Cor. ii. 10. He who searcheth the deep things of God, we conclude, must be God. We will finish this part of our Letter with the words of Peter to Ananias: *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? thou hast not lied unto man, but unto God.* Acts v. 3; 4. THE HOLY GHOST, in one verse, is said to be God in the next.

Such then is the *Character and Office* of the Holy Ghost: Concerning whom we may farther say, that he will continue with the Churches until all the designs of grace, as they respect this world, shall be accomplished. *He shall abide with you forever,* said Christ to his disciples. Blessed be God for this promise, because his influence is as necessary now as it ever was; which will appear from the following considerations.

1. *The sameness of human nature in every age of the world since the first apostacy.* If the depraved condition of mankind, and the violent opposition that was made to the gospel in the apostolic age, rendered divine influence necessary then, they will render it equally necessary at every period of time. The truth of this observation must be admitted, provided mankind are as much depraved as ever, and the gospel still violently opposed; which we think no man will deny who candidly observes the present state of the world, in which the depravity of the human heart is acted out in a most awful manner; and Infidelity is more bold than ever.

The great proficiency that has been made in the various branches of polite and useful learning, has not changed the disposition of the heart of man, as it has respect to God and religion. We see many persons among the learned, as well as among the unlearned, who, with all their knowledge and talents, are enemies to the cross of Christ.

2. *The prevalence of wickedness in the world,* is a certain proof of the necessity of the influence of the Holy Ghost to change the hearts of sinners, and thus reform mankind: For a real reformation of the world, we believe, must begin with the renovation of the heart, because that is the fountain of all moral evil. *Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c.* If the fountain be dried up, the streams will cease to flow.

3. To which we add, *The god of this world blinds the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.* It follows that the agency of the Holy Ghost is necessary to counteract his horrid influence, and reconcile sinners to God.

4. This necessity results also from *the power of corruption in the human heart*; yea, in the heart of the believer himself. It is called a law, because, said Dr. Owen, it has the force of a law. It is likewise styled *the*

old man, the body of this death. To subdue this power, to obtain a complete victory over this principle of indwelling corruption, divine influence is absolutely necessary. *If ye through the Spirit, says Paul, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* The great business of mortification of sin is to be carried on *through the Spirit.*

That the Spirit of God does remain in the Churches, is evident in the effects produced by him; which are the same with those that marked the age of the apostles, miraculous gifts excepted. He now convinces of sin, and leads the sinner to Christ for pardon and eternal life. He inspires the souls of the regenerate with love to God, hatred of sin, ardent longings after perfect sanctification, love to the brethren, deep self-abasement, and animating prospects of the glory to be revealed. Such were, such *are* the effects of his secret, but powerful influence in the minds of believing sinners.

Thus we have given you a sketch of the all-important subject of **THE CHARACTER AND OFFICE OF THE HOLY GHOST**; the limits of a Circular Letter forbid us to enlarge.

Let us, Dear Brethren, entertain adoring thoughts of the **HOLY GHOST**, and become importunate that he may be poured out upon us, and upon all flesh, that true religion may be revived in the churches, and the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Signed in behalf of the Association.

THOMAS BALDWIN, Moderator.
JOSEPH GRAFTON, Clerk.