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Baptists. Rhode Island. Warren Association, 1798.

Minutes . . . in Barnstable, September 11 and 12, 1798.

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AAS copy.

MINUTES

OF THE

WARREN ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT THE

BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE

IN

BARNSTABLE,

SEPTEMBER 11 and 12,

1798.



BOSTON:

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M,DCC,XCVIII.

M I N U T E S, &c.

TUESDAY, September 11.

1. **A**T two o'clock, P. M. Brother Thomas Baldwin, by appointment, preached the introductory Sermon from Luke xii. 32. *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

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

3. Read letters from the churches.

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

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers & Messengers.</i>	Add.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Dead.	Number
1st. Boston,	†SAMUEL STILLMAN, Daniel Wild, John Carter.	1	2		4	261
2d. Boston,	THOMAS BALDWIN, Jacob Holland.	2			4	155
*Bellingham,	_____					48
Haverhill,	†HEZEKIAH SMITH.	10			1	172
*Warren,	†LUTHER BAKER.					52
1st. Middleborough,	ISAAC BACKUS, Asael Shaw.			1		87
2d. Middleborough,	EBENEZER HINDS.					29
3d. Middleborough,	SAMUEL NELSON, Elisha Clark, Nath. Barrows.	3			2	99
*Charlton,	_____					111
*Royalton,	_____					142
*Wrentham,	†WILLIAM WILLIAMS.					38
*South Brimfield,	†ELIJAH CODDING.					155
Attleborqugh,	_____				2	66
	<i>William Collier.</i>					
*Wilbraham,	†SETH CLARK.					228
*Woodstock,	_____					63
	† <i>Robert Stanton.</i>					
*Chelmsford,	†JOHN PECKENS.					88
Barnstable,	ENOCH ELDRIDGE, Benjamin Hallet, Gorham Lovell, Jonathan Lewis.				1	60

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers & Messengers.</i>	<i>Add.</i>	<i>Dismiss.</i>	<i>Exclud.</i>	<i>Deat.</i>	<i>Numb.</i>
*New-Salem,	†JOSIAH ORCUTT,					41
*Leicester,	_____					42
*Freetown,	_____					20
*Medfield,	_____					41
	†Edward Clark.					
Harwich,	ABNER LEWIS, Deacon Chace, Deacon Smith.	2		2	1	79
Harvard,	†ISAIAH PARKER.		2	1		115
Newton,	JOSEPH GRAFTON, Edward Hall.	1		1		100
*Salem (N. H.)	_____					57
*Northbridge,	†JOHN COOPER.					46
*Cambr. & Woburn,	†ELIAS SMITH.					82
*Ashburnham,	_____					57
Providence,	†STEPHEN GANO.	3			4	207
Sturbridge,	ZENAS L. LEONARD.	2			1	127
*Templeton,	_____					123
New-Rowley,	SHUBAEL LOVELL, Joseph Goodridge.	2	3	1	2	44
Bridgewater,	†GEORGE ROBINSON, James Reed, James Perkins, Ephraim Willis.		5			47
*Weston,	_____					18
*Randolph,	†JOEL BRIGGS.					58
*Carver,	_____					50
*Hollis,	_____					30
*Marshfield,	_____					26
*Hardwick,	_____					35
*Belcherton,	†SAMUEL BIGELOW.					20
*1st. Sutton,	†DAVID RATHBUN.					57
*2d. Sutton,	†WM. BATCHELDER.					53
Danvers,	_____	8				58
Total		32	13	9	22	3422

4. As the Brethren who were appointed to write the *Circular and Corresponding* Letters failed in preparing them; Voted, that Brother Grafton and Dr. Lovell be appointed to write the former, and Brother Baldwin the latter.

5. Received and read letters from the following Associations. From the Stonington, letter and minutes, by their messenger, Brother Pardon Tillinghast. From the Bowdoinham, minutes and letter; but no messenger. From the Woodstock, letter and minutes, by the hand of Brother Elisha Andrews. Brother Otis Robinson, the messenger

ger from the New-Hampshire Association, was detained on the road by an unfavourable incident, which prevented our receiving either their minutes or letter. The minutes and letter, from the Shaftsbury Association, were received; but no messenger.

Adjourned until eight o'clock to-morrow morning; concluded by prayer.

Sermon in the evening by Brother Grafton, from Eccl. xii. 12.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, *September 12.*

At eight o'clock, Brother Zenas L. Leonard preached from Rev. ii. 4. After which, prayer introductory to business was made by the Clerk, and proceeded as follows.

6. Received and read a letter signed by Daniel Hicks, and Joseph Pierce, in behalf of a number of Baptist Churches called the *Groton Conference*, wishing to open a correspondence with us:

7. Voted, To send messengers to the Groton Conference agreeably to their request, hoping it may be a mean of promoting Christian candour, and of mutual advantage.

8. Appointed Brother Zenas L. Leonard to write the Circular Letter for next year.

9. Appointed Brother William Collier to prepare the corresponding Letter.

10. Appointed Messengers to corresponding Associations. On account of the fever at Philadelphia, omitted sending any messengers to that Association. To the Shaftsbury, appointed Elder Samuel Bigelow. To the Stonington, Brethren Joseph Grafton, and Zenas L. Leonard. To the New-York, William Collier. To the New-Hampshire, Messrs. Andrews, E. Smith, and Lovell. Bowdoinham, Elias Smith. To the Groton Conference, Messrs. Hinds, Baldwin, and Gano.

11. Appointed Dr. Stillman, Dr. Smith, Mr. Backus, Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Grafton, a committee, to whom any persons taxed to religious teachers of other denominations, whom they do not choose to hear, may apply for advice.

12. Voted, That it be earnestly recommended to the several Churches, that they have a contribution for assisting the society in Harwich, who have lost several hundreds of dollars in property taken from them, and in attempting to recover it by law have expended several hundreds more. It is hoped the Churches will not be inattentive to this request, and that they forward their collections to the next Association.

13. Recommended to the Churches, that they collect for the Education Fund.

14. Chose Mr. James Harrison, and Deacon Daniel Wild, Trustees of the *Baptist Education Society*, in the room of Rev. Thomas Green, resigned, and Deacon Richard Gridley, deceased.

15. Appointed Messrs. Grafton, Holland, and Wild, a committee, to receive and distribute the money collected for the widows of ministers deceased.

Adjourned

Adjourned until two o'clock; prayer by brother Tillinghast.

WEDNESDAY, TWO O'CLOCK.

Met according to adjournment.

16. Read and accepted the Circular Letter, prepared by Messrs. Grafton and Lovell.

17. Read and accepted the Corresponding Letter, prepared by Brother Baldwin.

18. Agreed to the following supplies.

Danvers,	{	Mr. Lovell, 4th. Lord's Day in October.
		Mr. Andrews, 2d. in January.
		Mr. Samuel Nelson, last in May.
Attleborough,	{	Mr. Read, 1st. in October.
		Mr. Samuel Nelson, 1st. in November.
		Mr. Daniel Hicks, 3d. in February.
Framingham Society,	{	Mr. Read, 2d. in October.
		Mr. Lovell, 1st. in May.

19. Voted, to hold our next Association at the second Baptist Meeting-house in Middleborough, the Tuesday after the first Wednesday in September, 1799, at two o'clock, P. M.

20. Appointed Brother Joseph Grafton to preach the introductory Sermon, and in case of failure, Brother George Robinson. The business being finished at four o'clock, the Moderator concluded by prayer. Immediately after, Brother Andrews preached from Acts xiv. 22; and in the evening Brother Collier, from Ephesians ii. 1.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The ELDERS and MESSENGERS to the several CHURCHES met in ASSOCIATION at Barnstable, September 11th and 12th, 1798, send Christian Salutation.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

THROUGH the tender mercy of God, we have been indulged with another of our anniversary seasons; and it would have afforded us peculiar pleasure, had we seen more of our *ministering brethren*, and to have obtained particular information from the Churches.

Suffer us, Brethren, to call your attention to the importance of holding fast the profession of our faith. We live at a period in which infidelity prevails; when iniquity abounds; when loose principles in matters of religion greatly increase, and the judgments of Heaven impend over our country. Are not these important considerations to stimulate the Christian to hold fast his profession; to stand firm in the belief of the important *truths* of revealed religion; to maintain the glorious doctrines of *grace*; to imbibe and exhibit the tempers of the great Redeemer, and to live in uniform obedience to all his commands?

True

True *religion* is uniform ; it is ever the same. So is human nature. Therefore, the objections against, and the difficulties attending it, will be ever the same. Though circumstances may vary, and the enemy may attack under new, and different forms ; yet from the same source, viz. the depravity of the human heart, will the Gospel be opposed ; and man, while under the influence of his native temper, will endeavour, by all his wit and invention, to invalidate the authenticity of Divine Revelation, to substitute some system, which would rob God of his glory, and indulge man in pride.

This, Brethren, is the radical cause of all the corrupt, vile, and oppressive systems of religion, which have been, or are now in our world. The religion of Jesus Christ is so calculated to stain the pride of man, that he makes every objection that un sanctified reason can invent ; and ever will, until, by the irresistible power of divine grace, his heart is renewed, and he cordially accepts and admires the doctrine of the cross. Who, Brethren, will vindicate the cause of the dear Redeemer, will maintain his visible kingdom, and shew their attachment to, and zeal for him, if those who have professed his name do not ? Was there ever a day since the first settlement of our country when the friends of revealed religion have had greater occasion to exert their strength and influence, to support the cause of Christianity, and to appear more decided on the behalf of truth ?

The saints of God, in every age, and under every dispensation, have had their peculiar trials, have been opposed by the spirit of the world. Witness Noah, Lot, Abraham, Moses, and all the Prophets, down to the Christian era. No sooner was the Saviour born than Herod sought his life. For near three hundred years after Christianity appeared, it was uniformly opposed by earth and hell ; yet to the praise of God's grace, it was triumphant. The bush has been on fire, but not consumed ; and glory to God, it never shall be. If we reflect upon the everlasting love of God to his people ; *his* almighty power ; *his* universal dominion ; the great and precious promises of *his* grace, and the tender care *he* has ever manifested for *his* Church, we shall find support and comfort, under all the evils of this life. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. Let us trust in the Lord. Let us persevere in well doing. Remember, Brethren, the cause is God's. The government is in the hands of our Almighty REDEEMER. A few more trials—a few more conflicts, and our warfare will be accomplished :—Then all to come, will be glory, immortality, eternal life.

Some of our dear Brethren,* who often met in Association with us, have recently left these mortal shores, and we trust, through grace,
have

* The Rev. BENJAMIN FOSTER, D. D. of the City of New-York. He was several years Pastor of the Church in Leicester, and was a member of this Association. We have been informed from good authority, that he died in the triumphs of faith. The other person referred to, was our much esteemed Brother, Deacon RICHARD GRIDLEY, member of the first Baptist Church in Boston. He was a judicious, upright and uniform Christian. For near half a century, was a useful member in the Church of Christ. He came to his grave in a full age, like a shock of corn coming in, in his season. He died *Æt.* 70.

have arrived to the peaceful haven of eternal rest. May we be followers of them, who are now inheriting the promises! May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

The WARREN ASSOCIATION, met in Barnstable, September 11 and 12, 1798, to the several ASSOCIATIONS in our Correspondence, sendeth Christian Salutation.

DEARLY BELOVED,

WE live in a period distinguished by the most remarkable and interesting events. Near half of Europe is in a state of revolution, and the same sentiments are extending to other quarters of the globe. The *prophecies* relating to the overthrow of the Papal tyranny are rapidly fulfilling. Superstition and idolatry are superseded by *infidelity* and *atheism*. Men are seldom free from prepossession and bias; and very commonly vibrate from one extreme to another. Thus while they are trying to disengage themselves from the shackles of bigotry and superstition, they insensibly fall into those demoralizing sentiments which tend to lessen their esteem for the *truth*, if not wholly to espouse the cause of error.

Beloved, we have need to watch on the right hand and left, and abstain from all appearance of evil, both in principle and practice. Let us not adopt any thing for truth merely because our fathers believed it, nor reject any truth which they believed and practised, for the sake of showing ourselves wiser than they. Every part of sacred truth is precious, and we are by no means at liberty to give a single article in favour of the most popular error.

We are happy, dear Brethren, to find by our correspondence with you, that on these points you entertain the same sentiments with ourselves. It is with pleasure that we observe an increasing union of sentiment, both in doctrine and practice, among the different Associations. We hope the time is not far distant, when we shall all be perfectly joined in one judgment, and shall all speak the same things.

We ask a continuance of your friendly correspondence, and wish it were in our power to communicate to you a more interesting account of our churches. But alas! we have great reason for mourning, lamentation and self-abasement. The uncentral situation of our present meeting has prevented many of our churches from attending at this time.

Brethren, pray for us, and God forbid that we should neglect to pray for you and all the other branches of Zion. Wishing you an increase of light, knowledge, love and holiness, with a continued accession of numbers of such as shall be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, we subscribe ourselves yours in the faith and fellowship of the gospel,

Signed in behalf of the Association,

THOMAS BALDWIN, *Moderator.*
JOSEPH GRAFTON, *Clerk.*