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MINUTES

OF THE

Warren Association,

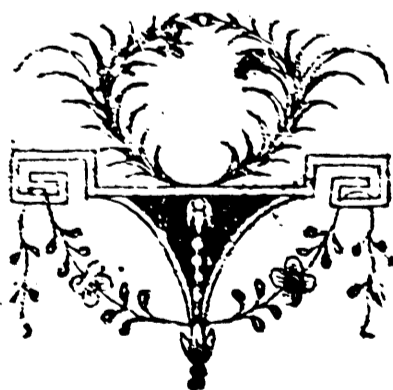
HELD AT THE

MEETING-HOUSE

BELONGING TO THE

First Baptist Church in Sutton,

September 8 & 9, 1801.



Boston :

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1801.

MINUTES, &c.

TUESDAY, September 8.

1. **A**T two o'clock Brother Stephen Gay, *agreedly* to appointment, preached the introductory Sermon, from *Mat. vi. 17*: "These men are the servants of the most high God, which follow the way of salvation." After which, collected for the widows and children of Ministers deceased.

2. Chose Dr. Hezekiah Smith *Moderator*, and Brother Thomas Baldwin *Clerk*.

3. Read letters from the churches, and took the following account.

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 and Messengers.</i>	<i>Adm.</i>	<i>Dismiss.</i>	<i>Exclud.</i>	<i>Did.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
1st. Boston,	*SAMUEL STILLMAN, Micah Orcutt, James Loring, Ebenezer L. Boyd.	15	14	3	5	255
2d. Boston,	THOMAS BALDWIN, Richard Smith, William Bentley.	18	6	1	5	179
Haverhill,	HEZEKIAH SMITH.	6			3	182
Warren,	*LUTHER BAKER.	12			2	56
3d. Middleborough,	*ISAAC BACKUS, Joseph Ames, Samuel Leonard, Alexander Alden.	5	2			84
2d. Middleborough,	EBENEZER HINDS.	8			2	35
3d. Middleborough,	*SAMUEL NELSON, Elisha Clark, Nathaniel Barrows.		2	2	3	97
Charlton,	— Daniel Bacon, David Bates, Samuel Robinson.	2			1	100
Wrentham,	*WILLIAM WILLIAMS, Joseph Guild, <i>Thomas Rand,</i> Ebenezer Snell.	3†				62
South-Drumfield,	ELIJAH CODDING.	3	6	1	5	147
Attleborough,	JAMES REED, William Everett.	30	2	6	1	85
Wilbraham,	*SETH CLARK.	8	3		10	230

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers and Messengers.</i>	<i>Added.</i>	<i>Dismiss.</i>	<i>Exclud.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Woodstock,	ROBERT STANTON, Samuel Crawford, Silas Corban.	38	2	4	1	99
Chelmsford,	JOHN PECKENS, Benjamin Adams, Samuel Brown.	3	2		2	93
Barnstable (a)	—		1		1	58
New-Salem,	*JOSHUA ORCUTT,	6				44
Leicester,	— Samuel Green, James Sprague.	1				56
Medfield,	— Afa Mason.					28
Harwich,	ABNER LEWIS.		1		2	74
Harvard,	*ISAIAH PARKER, GEORGE ROBINSON, Abraham Gates.	29		1		136
Newton,	*JOSEPH GRAFTON.				4	95
Salem, (N. H.)	— Dudley Bayley.	5	9	1	11	44
Northbridge.	JOHN COOPER, Nathaniel Cooper.					46
Woburn,	— Joseph Winn, Samuel Holden.	11	3		1	168
† Ashburnham, Providence,	— STEPHEN GANO, Afa Messer, David Martin, Joseph Martin.	47	2		6	57 243
Sturbridge,	ZENAS L. LEONARD, Henry Fisk, David Fisk, Reuben Stone.	1	1	6	2	103
Templeton,	ELISHA ANDREWS, Silas Cutler, Nathan Bryant, Stephen Haskell.	4	5	1		102
Rowley,	SHUBAEL LOVELL.	6			3	46
Bridgewater,	VALENTINE W. RATHBUN, Alpheus Leach, Daniel Tolman.	11	1		1	78

(a) In the course of the past year the Church at Barnstable has been called to part with their beloved Pastor — our much esteemed brother, Enoch Eldridge, whose praise was in all the churches which had the happiness of his acquaintance. May the infinite JEHOVAH comfort and sustain the bereaved family and flock, and sanctify this painful dispensation to Zion and her watchmen.

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Ministers and Messengers.</i>	<i>Adm'd.</i>	<i>Dignif.</i>	<i>Resolv'd.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Weston,	————— Samuel Train, Phineas Upham.	1			1	16
Randolph,	JOEL BRIGGS, William Blanchard, Elisha Ames		2			83
Carver, Hoilis,	————— Joshua Davis	1	2 1		1 1	28
Marshfield,	————— William Curtis, jun.	5			1	42
Belchertown,	SAMUEL BIGELOW, *JEREMIAH HASKELL,	13				
1st. Sutton,	SAMUEL WATERS, SAMUEL KING, Afa Haskell, Jonathan Holman, Jonah Goulding.	12			3	84
2d. Sutton,	WILLIAM BATCHELDER, Amos Thayer, William Batchelder, jun.	1	1			40
† Danvers, Londonderry,	————— ————— Reuben Sawyer.	2			1	49 41
† 2d. Freetown,	*JOB BORDEN, *JAMES BOOMER.					36
Marshpee, Newport,	JOHN FREEMAN. *GARDNER THURSTON, JOSHUA BRADLEY, Samuel Barker.	3		3	1	42 80
Charlestown,	————— David Goodwin.					22
Rehoboth,	————— JOHN PITMAN, Caleb Mason, John Brown.					56
Beverly,	————— *JOSHUA YOUNG, Amos Sawyer.					30
Grafton,	————— Mark Batchelder, John C. Pratt.					25
Total		341	68	30	80	3782

N. B. The five last Churches were added at our present meeting.

4 Voted, To adjourn until to-morrow morning, 8 o'clock. Sermon in the evening, at the meeting-house, by Dr. Smith, from Eph. ii. 8, 9. Several of the Brethren, also, preached in different parts of the vicinity.

WEDNESDAY, September 9.

Meeting according to adjournment. Business introduced by prayer.

1. Chose Brother Meiser to write a Circular Letter, as Brother E. Smith, who was appointed the last year, had failed to bring one forward.
2. A Letter, signed by a number of the brethren of the Church in Bellingham, was read; but as it was not by the authority of the Church it was Voted to pass it over.
3. Chose Dr. Stillman, Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Boyd a Committee to take charge of the money collected for Widows of deceased Ministers, and to distribute the same.
4. Received Letters, Minutes and Messengers from the following sister Associations; viz. from Philadelphia, Minutes; from Charleston and Woodstock, Letters and Minutes; from Stonington, Letter and Minutes, by their Messengers, Brethren John Rathbun, V. W. Rathbun, and Saml. Wells; from the New-Hampshire, Letter and Minutes, by their Messenger, Brother John Peak; from the Bowdoinham, Messengers, Brethren Cafe and Woodward, but their Letter and Minutes failed; from Shaftsbury we had no information! from the Groton Conference, Letter and Minutes were received, by their Messengers, William Northup and Job Hill.
5. Application from the Leyden Association to open a Correspondence with us; after obtaining satisfaction respecting their faith and order, Voted, to receive them into our connexion: Their Letter and Minutes were then presented, by their Messengers, Brethren Hebard and Montague.
6. Read and approved the Corresponding Letter prepared by Brother Pitman.
7. Chose Mr. Ebenezer L. Boyd a Trustee of the Baptist Education Society, in the room of Mr. Benjamin M. Stillman, late Secretary of said Society, deceased.
8. Voted, That this Association present their cordial thanks to the several persons, whose names are unknown to them, for their generous donations to the fund of the Education Society.
9. Voted, To request the Churches, which have not contributed, to have a contribution in the course of the present year, and forward their collections to the Treasurer of the Society.
10. Voted and chose Dr. Smith, Dr. Stillman, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Grafton and Mr. Briggs a Committee, to whom persons taxed to other denominations may apply for advice.
11. Voted, To appoint a Committee to inquire into the state of any Church or Churches, belonging to this body, who neglect their correspondence with us, or who do not maintain the visible order of the Gospel.—Chose for the above purpose Messrs. Baldwin, Rathbun, Gano, Robinson and Andrews.
12. Voted, on application of the following Churches, viz. the 1st. in Sutton, Leicester, Chaulton, 1st. in Woodstock, Sturbridge, South-Brimfield, Belchertown and Wilbraham, that they are so far dismissed from us as to form a separate Association, should it be thought best by a joint committee from said Churches and this Body.—Chose on our part Brethren Gano, Pitman and Robinson to unite with them in conference on the subject.

13. Read and accepted the Circular Letter prepared by Brother
Mr. Ser.

14. Appointed Brother Andrews to write a Circular Letter for next year, and Brother Rathbun the Corresponding.

15. Appointed the following Brethren our Messengers to sister Associations. To New-York, Brethren Gano and Bradley. To Shaftsbury, Brother Lewis. To Stonington, Brethren Bradley, Stanton and Reed. To New-Hampshire, Dr. Smith and Brother Lovell. To the Woodstock, Brethren Robinson and Andrews. To the Bowdoinham, Brethren Lovell, ~~Clark and Rathbun~~. To Groton Conference, Brethren Bradley, Reed ~~and Clark~~ Leyden, Brethren Andrews and Robinson.

16. Agreed to the following supplies :

Marshfield,	{	Mr. Keed, last Lord's Day in November.
		Mr. Rathbun, 1st in January.
		Mr. Briggs, last do.
Weston,	{	Mr. Lewis, 2d in May.
		Mr. Clark, 2d in October.
		Mr. Briggs, 2d in November.
		Mr. Robinson, 2d in April.
Hollis,		Mr. Rathbun, 2d in May.
		Mr. Rand, 2d in June.
Londonderry,		Mr. Lovell, 2d in May.

17. Voted, To hold our next Association at Brother Williams's Meeting-House, in Wrentham, the Tuesday after the first Wednesday in September, 1802, at 2 o'clock, P. M.

18. Appointed Brother Elisha Andrews to preach the introductory sermon; in case of failure, Brother Lovell. The business being finished at 1 o'clock, the meeting was concluded by prayer. A meeting was appointed in the afternoon, and Brother Case requested to preach.

Circular Letter.

The ELDERS *and* MESSENGERS *of the* WARREN ASSOCIATION, *to the* CHURCHES *they represent, send Christian* Salutation.

BELOVED IN THE LORD,

AS one of our brethren, who was last year appointed to write our circular letter, has disappointed us, we are obliged to address you only in a short and hasty sketch. Hence, as our manner must be simple, let simplicity be our subject. At this day men exhibit an uncommon tendency to depart from the simplicity of the gospel. Not satisfied with the plain declarations of the word of God, they seem inclined to mix

with them the inventions of man, in order to render those declarations more congenial either with the suggestions of human reason, or with the propensities of the human heart. In this way, we think, great injury has been done to the cause of truth. It is acknowledged, that in the word of God there are some things which lie beyond the reach of human reason ; and many, which are directly opposed to the propensities of the human heart. But, because we cannot comprehend some of the great truths contained in the word of God, shall we reject them, or make such a mixture of them with human inventions, as will mar their original excellence and simplicity ? Or, because the word of God gives offence to the carnal mind, shall we prostitute it to the cause of our enemy ? God forbid.

In every science there are certain axioms. These lie at the bottom of the science, and no man attempts to explain them. Indeed, all attempts to explain an axiom must be futile ; because they tend to becloud rather than illustrate the subject. When a philosopher or a mathematician can reduce his position to the axioms of his science, he thinks himself on a firm foundation. The simple declarations of the bible are our axioms in divinity. They are the foundation of our faith and hope, and the joy of our hearts ; and whenever we can establish our faith on them, let us remember, it can have no better foundation. If we cannot comprehend the whole which those declarations express, still we are bound to receive and to believe them, and to be satisfied with them. No reasonable man could expect that an infinite God would give a revelation, containing nothing incomprehensible by finite man. Man cannot comprehend the wonders of himself. How then can he comprehend the wonders of IMMANUEL ! Yet a revelation from God can contain nothing unreasonable or untrue. Whatever our views may be, all the declarations contained in the word of God must accord with the perfection of reason. Is it reasonable then to explain away those declarations, because we cannot comprehend them ? No. Let us receive them as they are, remembering that now we see through a glass darkly ; that now we can know but in part ; but, that by and by, we shall, if the chosen of God, know even as we are known.

Infidelity, we think, has been much encouraged by a willingness apparent in some, who bear even the Christian name, to indulge either in themselves, or in others, a spirit of inquiry and conjecture concerning many truths, which, though revealed, are incomprehensible. Though we wish not to check the progress of rational inquiry, we wish to impress on the minds of our brethren the importance of confining their inquiries to proper objects ; and to remind them that the plain, simple word of God is an infallible guide. When we leave that word, we throw ourselves, like a ship without a rudder, into the raging and boundless ocean of dispute and scepticism. There is no extravagance or absurdity so great, but that the mind of man, not controlled by the love of divine truth, may receive it. Our intellects are confined within such narrow limits, that, at the most, we can know but little in this world. Even of those things which are *knowable*, how small a portion will our greatest investigations enable us to *know* ? Had we not better confine our researches to these, than extend them into those immense regions, where the eye of mortals is put out with the lustre of objects, or where it can

Is there any thing that is *knowable*? The essential truths of divine revelation are so easy and simple, that the pious mind, however weak and unlettered, can understand them sufficiently for his growth in grace; though, in all their relations, they can never be fully comprehended by the human mind. Hence they are fitted to exercise the inquiry and gratify the desires of all classes of pious souls. But in no way can we understand them, but by feeling their weight on our own hearts, and by searching for them in the unerring word of God. There let us look for them; and let us never suffer any mad philosophy, or vain deceit, or traditions of men, or rudiments of the world, or metaphysical jargon, to deter us from holding fast the solemn, important doctrines there revealed. If we wander from our bibles, we wander from the Captain of our Salvation; we wander into our enemy's lines; we expose ourselves to the wiles of that great adversary, who seeks the destruction of our souls. But while we adhere closely to our bibles; while we search them with diligence and prayer; while we regulate by them our temper and conversation, and find in them for our faith and practice a *Thus saith the LORD*, we walk on safe ground. We shall have the approbation of our GOD and SAVIOUR. However much men may deride us; however much infidels may call us fools, we shall not be confounded. O brethren, members of the same precious body of CHRIST, let us fear, lest as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in CHRIST. The world abounds with subtilty. Many evil spirits have gone out into it, and have defiled many. We have need of the whole armour of God, that we may fight valiantly for our divine IMMANUEL. We have need to keep close to his standard; to follow his directions implicitly; and to cultivate in ourselves and in others that peace with all men, and that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. May the great Head of the Church preside in all our churches, and in all our hearts; may he guard us against all error and delusion; may he lead us into all needful truth; may he preserve us stable in the belief of the Gospel in its simplicity, and keep us by his power through faith unto salvation.

Our present meeting has been harmonious, and we trust attended with some tokens of the Divine Presence. The accounts received from the churches have been truly refreshing to us. May the LORD continue his WORK, and increase it an hundred fold, for the REDEEMER's sake Amen.

The ELDERS and BRETHREN of the BAPTIST CHURCHES of CHRIST, met in Association the 8th and 9th of September, 1801, in Sutton, Massachusetts, To the ELDERS and BRETHREN that compose our sister ASSOCIATIONS, send Christian Salutation.

BELOVED BRETHREN, MESSENGERS OF THE CHURCHES, AND
THE GLORY OF CHRIST,

WITH exulting hearts we communicate to you that which must excite like sensations in your pious breasts. The kingdom of Christ flourishes. There are many evident displays of the irresistible power of the Spirit of God, in causing the infidel to bow to Christ's sceptre, and to rejoice in the effulgence of divine truth. The mouth that was full of cursing and bitterness breathes out supplications and praises to the Father of Lights; and those who treated with contempt the character of the Son of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him, as unto a faithful Creator. May these be the first droppings of that shower that shall overspread the universe, making the wilderness blossom as the rose, and the world become as the garden of God. Meanwhile be it our care, as the watchmen and citizens of Zion, ever firmly to maintain her cause, and guard her rights. Let us watch with the eye of jealousy, and discountenance with the frown of indignation, every attempt in our associated bodies, to exercise authority over the churches, or infringe their right of independence; while we keep in prospect the horrid monster, Ecclesiastical Tyranny, and dread more than death his introduction among us, with the terrible train of consequences always attending him; while, like the faithful centinel in the night of danger, we would always keep our watch awake within, let us present the point of the sword of the Spirit against those without, who, under the mask of religion, morality, and good order, would deprive us of the richest gift of Heaven, religious liberty.

Is it not a time of danger, when attempts are made by those who wish to have the preeminence, and all their abilities are exerted to engage the civil power to support officers in the Church? This effected, what becomes of the rights of conscience! Shall we not be reduced to the sad alternative of denying the sole authority of Christ to maintain his cause, or be pursued with all the malignity of ecclesiastical ambition? While we are faithful as watchmen, let us exercise ourselves to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; committing ourselves, and the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, to him, as unto a faithful Creator, who will at last bring us off more than conquerors.

Indulged by our heavenly Parent, we have had one more comfortable, and we hope profitable, annual interview.

Brethren, let it be our constant and fervent prayer, that infidelity and error, those fumes ascending from the bottomless pit, may be dissipated; that truth may appear in its native simplicity and glory; that the veil of tradition may be drawn from the ordinances of Christ, and their original lustre attract the attention and excite to obedience every drowsy believer; that the watchmen may speedily see eye to eye, and Zion become the joy of the whole earth.

Our minutes will inform you of the state of the churches ; many of which have been visited with the out-pourings of the Spirit in the course of the past year.

Dear Brethren, we wish a continuance of your correspondence, and an interest in your prayers ; and subscribe ourselves your's in the faith of the Gospel.

Signed, in behalf of the Association,

HEZEKIAH SMITH, *Moderator.*
THOMAS BALDWIN, *Clerk.*

Just published, and for sale by MANNING & LORING,

No. 2, Cornhill, BOSTON,

MEMOIRS of the late Rev. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M. Minister of the Gospel in *Birmingham*; with extracts from some of his most interesting Letters. Compiled by ANDREW FULLER, D. D. Author of "The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems compared, as to their moral tendency," and "The Gospel its own Witness." To the above are added, Three of Mr. FULLER'S occasional Sermons.

The following paragraph is extracted from one of Mr. PEARCE'S letters, written, during his sickness, to one of his ministering brethren, about two months before his death:—

August 4, 1799.

"I am afraid to come back again to life. O how many dangers await me! Perhaps I may be overcome of some fleshly lust—perhaps I may get proud and indolent, and be more of the priest than of the evangelist. Surely I rejoice in feeling my outward man decay, and having the sentence of death in myself. O what prospects are before me in the blessed world whither I am going! To be holy as God is holy—to have nothing but holiness in my nature—to be assured, without a doubt, and eternally to carry about this assurance with me, that the pure God looks on me with constant complacency, for ever blesses me, and says, as at the first creation, "It is very good." I am happy now in hoping in the divine purposes towards me; but I know, and the thought is my constant burden, that the Being I love best always sees something in me which he infinitely hates. "O wretched man that I am!" The thought even now makes me weep, and who can help it, that seriously reflects, he never comes to God to pray or praise, but he brings what his God detests along with him—carries it with him wherever he goes, and can never get rid of it as long as he lives? Come, my dear brother, will you not share my joy, and help my praise, that soon I shall leave this body of sin and death behind, to enter on the perfection of my spiritual nature; and patiently to wait till this natural body shall become a spiritual body, and so be a fit vehicle for my immortal and happy spirit!"

This faithful and active servant of Jesus Christ died in the 34th year of his age, having served the Baptist Church of Christ in *Birmingham* nearly ten years.