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Baptists . Massachusetts . Leyden Association, 1808.

Minutes . . . in Laverett . . . October, 1808.

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MINUTES
OF THE
LEYDEN ASSOCIATION,

HOLDEN AT THE
BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE

IN
LEVERETT,

ON THE 12th AND 13th OCTOBER, 1808.

TOGETHER WITH THEIR
CIRCULAR AND CORRESPONDING
LETTERS.

GRAVES & CLAP—PRINTERS.
NORTHAMPTON, NOV. 1808.

MINUTES, &c.

1. AT one o'clock, P. M. agreeably to appointment, Brother WILLIAM M'CULLOR delivered the introductory Sermon from Matt. v. 14.

2. Chose Brother JONATHAN HUNTLEY Moderator, and Brother SAMUEL KING Clerk. Prayer by the Moderator.

3. Read the Letters from the Churches, and took the following list of their alterations and present state.

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

Churches.	Elders and Messengers.	Added.	Dismissed.	Excluded.	Died.	Total.	Money pd.
Leyden,	{ ASA HIBARD, Dea. Benjamin Baker, Jared Crandal,	21	5	0	0	27	0 50
Leverett and Montague,	{ ELIJAH MONTAGUE, Dea. Elijah Hubbard, Dea. Silas Hofmier, Dea. Elijah Guan, Samuel Puffer,	48	2	1	2	187	1 00
1st Guilford	{ JEREMIAH PACKER, John Noyes, Matthew Bennet,	28	12	0	1	128	0 50
† 2d Colrain	_____	0	0	0	0	32	0 00
Richmond,	_____	1	3	0	1	35	0 50
Somerset,	{ _____ James Thurston,	18	39	0	0	30	0 31
Dummerston,	{ JONATHAN HUNTLEY Stephen Bennet, 2d, Moody Tenney,	3	12	6	1	167	1 00
Halifax,	{ ABNER DEMIS, Dea. David Allen, Dea. Samuel Wood, William Hewes,	46	2	0	3	155	0 70
Marlborough & New Fane,	{ William King, Archelaus Dean,	2	0	0	0	86	0 62
3d Guilford,	{ BENJAMIN LUCKLAND, Enos Martin, Edward Green,	13	0	0	1	52	0 50
1st Colrain,	{ THOS. PURRINGTON, Isaac Chapin, Edward Davenport,	59	8	0	3	134	1 00

Churches.	Elders and Messengers.	Admit.	Dismissed.	Excluded.	Died.	Total.	Money Pa.
Charlemont,	SAMUEL CARPENTER, * Elizur Hall, Nathaniel Rice,	25	2	2	2	102	0 53
Royalston & Winchendon	Ephraim Whitney,	0	0	0	0	24	0 25
Wendell,	SAMUEL KING, Dea. Elishu Osgood, Samuel Parks, Ephraim Locke, Aaron Fisher,	0	0	0	1	57	0 75
Guilford united Church,	LEWIS ALLEN, Solomon Fessenden, Francis Phelps, Cyrus Carpenter,	7	0	0	1	86	0 75
Dana,	Daniel Bullard, Dea. John Sellon, Samuel Haskins, John Peckham, Ellis Peckham,	1	2	0	0	41	0 50
Royalston & Warwick,	LEVI NODGE, Dea. Melton Bullock, Dea. Jacob Esty, John Chamberlain,	0	1	4	3	142	0 66
Brookline,	Lamech Blandin, John Blandin, Benjamin Stone,	2	3	0	1	84	0 50
Fitzwilliam,	NATHANIEL BOWLES, Artemas Stone, William Hills,	7	0	0	1	34	0 75
Swansey & Winchester.	WILLIAM M'CALLOR Paddock Lawrence, Arad Hall,	2	1	0	0	36	0 50
Heath,	GEORGE WITHERILL, Dea. Vernon Gleazon Thomas Perkins,	18	2	0	0	28	0 31
New-Salem,	PAUL DAVIS, Timothy Upton, Josiah Hemmenaway, Tristan Aldrich,	2	1	0	0	44	0 60
Wilmington,	Linus Austin, Madad Smith, Josiah Stearns,	2	0	0	1	41	0 50
Hinsdale,	Daniel Crowninshield, Josiah Moor, Elishu Streeter,	2	0	0	1	37	0 75
		289	96	15	23	1853	13 96

4. Chose Brethren Hebard, Montague, Davis Purrington and M'Cullor a Committee to examine the Circular and Corresponding Letters.

5. Adjourned till 9 o'clock to morrow morning.

Thursday, Oct. 13.

6. Met according to adjournment. Prayer by Brother Rand.

7. Read and approved the Circular and Corresponding Letters.

8. Received Messengers and Letters from Corresponding Associations, viz. From the Shaftsbury, a Letter and Minutes, but no Messenger; from the Sturbridge, a Letter and Minutes, by their Messengers, Elders, Smalledge and Rand and Brother Pease; from the Woodstock, a Letter and Minutes, by their Messenger, Brother Joseph Elliot; from the Warren, a Letter and Minutes, by their Messenger, Elder Coombs; from the Stonington, a Letter and Minutes but no Messenger; from the Vermont, a Letter and Minutes, by their Messenger Elder M'Culler.

9. On being informed that Elder P. P. Root purpose to publish a Magazine, and wishes for our Minutes; Voted to send them annually, by mail, directed to him at Canadaigua.

10. Appointed Elder *Montague* to write the Circular, and Elder *Hebard* the Corresponding Letter for next year.

11. Voted to recommend to the Churches, to write their Letters, to us, as concisely as is consistent with the design of this Association.

12. Appointed the following Messengers to sister Associations, viz. To the Shaftsbury, Elder Witherill and Brother Linus Austin; to the Woodstock, Elders M'Cullor and Allen; to the Warren, Elders M'Cullor and Montague; to the Sturbridge, Elders King, Montague and Davis; to the Vermont, Elders Huntley, Bowles and Witherill.

13. Elder *King* to superintend the printing of the Minutes.

14. Voted to hold our next Association at Charlemont on the second Wednesday of October next at

one o'clock, P. M. Elder *Hebard* to preach the introductory Sermon, and in case of failure, Elder *Packer*. Business closed with solemn prayer by Elder *Buckland*.

At one o'clock, Elder *Coombs* addressed the people in an interesting, instructive manner, from Joshua 24. 19.

During our present interview, the greatest harmony prevailed; and we were made to rejoice in the God of our Salvation.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Elders and Messengers of the Leyden Association, to the Churches they represent, send Christian Salutation.

DEAR BRETHREN,

True it is that the Bible contains, in itself, the most exalted and enriching treasure that was ever bestowed on man; and it highly becomes us to receive and improve it as such with thankful hearts, truly susceptible of the truth which it contains.

Brethren, it does not astonish us to see men of reprobate minds, who walk in the darkness of sin, and loath the truth which the scripture breathes, ignorant of its doctrine and precepts; but to see high professors of religion, who, by profession, look to God in his word, and from thence essay to derive just conceptions of the Almighty's character and injunctions, ignorant of the system which the Bible, in the most unequivocal language declares, is truly alarming.— Yea, while we behold in the word a system of truth replete with, seemingly, all the appendages of divine perfections, originating in, and highly becoming the dignity of its eternal Author, and completely calculated to furnish the man of God to all good works; & at the same time, to behold many professors of religions & even members of Churches, almost entirely ignorant of the first principles of the Oracles of God, and, if possible, at a greater distance from the practice than the

knowledge of the sacred book, not only alarms us, but we are ready to say that it is an existing evil that truly ought to be remedied. And for professors of religion to be divided and subdivided into hundreds of different denominations and contending that they have Bible authority therefor, is another evil which ought to be guarded against. And above all to insinuate that it is best so to be, in order to make christians search the Bible more attentively, and that it must be so, for thus it is determined, and the Bible is a mystery and we cannot understand our duty, only let us be loving and every one believe and do what he pleases no matter what, if we get to heaven at last. Here are a train of evils which, arise for want of a true understanding of God's word; and evils that ought to be eradicated from his spiritual kingdom. We no more believe that christians are justifiable in being ignorant of the scriptures, than a child for being ignorant of his father's manifest, positive command: nor that there ought to be a hundred sorts of christians any more than a hundred Bibles or a hundred sorts of Gods; or that it is necessary there should be, in order to make them search the sacred word diligently, than that it is necessary to establish error, simulate christians to the faithful discharge of their duty; or that it is thus determined, than we believe that God says one thing and determines another, for He who has determined events has commanded christians to be of the same mind and same judgment; or that the rule of doctrine and duty, contained in the holy scriptures, is covered with mystery and darkness;—than we believe it is not what it is said to be, a light that shineth in a dark place; a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors. Obedience to one single injunction of our Lord, would remove all the evils in which we are involved through ignorance of the scriptures, search the scriptures for yourselves the scriptures must be searched with an unbiassed mind, and with prayerful attention. We are not to come to the sacred bible to find props to support tenets near and dear to us,

and to overthrow all others ; but search for the truth the Bible illustrates, as for silver and gold. In short, we never should undertake to bring the Bible to us and then square it by our rule ; but we should seek to come to that, and be squared by that unerring rule. But how shall we by searching find the rule the Bible illustrates, and so all be of one mind, having one rule to direct us, seeing hundreds have tried it and found hundreds of different rules of practice ?

We answer, By searching parables and mysteries we shall avail ourselves of just such bible as we had notions when we began the search : by searching plain, positive precepts we shall be all of one mind, provided we receive what is plainly and positively declared. We should consider some of the scripture as prophecy, some in parables, mysteries &c. &c. But the great doctrine and precepts which the Bible teaches are spoken in the most plain, simple and unequivocal language, yet truly sublime, far above all the art and power of criticism, completely to teach every one his duty who wishes to be taught. Now if we go to the historical, the proverbial, the prophetic, the parabolical, or mysterious parts of the Bible, to learn our duty we are liable to make it read any thing and every thing which our notions dictate ; and like some, who, from the circumstance of King Saul, are furnished with a whole system of falling from grace, and from that of Simon's being baptized, establish a whole system of unbeliever's baptism, and from the parable of the man falling among thieves, establish a whole system of doctrine, and thus twist about the sacred Bible so as to make it mean any thing our fancies wish. But were we to come, directly, to the plain, positive declarations of Bible truth, we should all learn our duty from the one, plain rule therein given, and be all of one mind touching the rule of duty pointed out in the scriptures, and if we play not upon other scriptures, we must of necessary and fair consequence, read and understand much alike for it reads positively, by thus searching the scriptures we should soon learn the time when Bible declares the gospel dispensation

began, and the old dispensation ended, and also, that tho' our Lord, in person, comprehensibly declared the essential doctrine and practice of religion, yet he sent his apostles to particularize many rites which he did not himself.

Beloved Brethren, were we thus to search for our duty as for hid treasures, the people of God would soon be understandingly united as the heart of one man by being first united to Bible rule. Were the Bible thus attended to, the plain Institutions of the Gospel would be uniformly understood and uniformly practised, decorum would shine in church meetings, in meetings of worship, & at the same time engagedness of soul, positive preaching, warm exhortations & fervent prayer, would adorn our worship; Ministers would cease to preach their own suppositions; but declare the positive truth of God, upon the authority of the scriptures, and thereby demonstrate that heaven and hell are realities and showing the difference between truth and error, holiness and sin. Deacons would no more stand at a distance from their duty; but would use the office of a deacon well, and purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus—Common professors would learn their duty in the field, closet, and family, and the church of God—The discipline of the church, would be understood and reduced to daily practice—Christians would become a cross bearing people, abstaining from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, and cease to pervert the right ways of God; Zion would become the only one of her mother, and the choice one of her that bare her, with united efforts would build the walls of spiritual Jerusalem, working with one hand, and holding the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, in the other, diligently labouring all day until the time of seeing stars in the evening, and tho' Sanballet and Tobiah rail, the wall would be built, and the heralds of the Lord mounted on her lofty heights, would jointly blow the gospel trump, as the voice of one man, and the trumpet would give a certain sound, and a distinction in the sound,

that the people might know how to prepare unto the battle, Zion's sons would rally around the glorious standard of divine truth, showing themselves, the real friends, and bold defenders thereof. Thus Zion would appear beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, looking forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners, as a city set on a hill which cannot be hid.— Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God would shine; and Zion's host would become so formidable that, the Lord going forth with our hosts, the powers of darkness would give back, the streams of error be dried up, and the truth of God ride with triumphant sway through the christian world. Oh! may the time soon come, when Zion's watchmen shall lift up their voice together, her sons walk hand in hand the pathway of the just, the testimony of God being her counsellors, and Zion truly be a joy and a praise in the whole earth.

Corresponding Letter.

THE Leyden Baptist Association, met at the baptist meeting-house in Leverett, October 12th and 13th, 1808, to the Elders and brethren of our sister Associations sendeth christian salutation.

BELOVED FATHERS AND BRETHREN,

Through the tender mercy of our God the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, yea, we have a goodly heritage. God has driven out the heathen before us, and given us a good land. Although it does not literally flow with milk and honey, yet it flows with Gospel blessings: We enjoy the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby; which is sweeter to the taste of every heaven born soul than the honey or the honey comb; while many thousands (not only in distant lands but in our favored county) are perishing for lack of knowledge. And it greatly sweetens those blessing that they are all rich, free, sovereign grace and mercy, through the Divine Sav-

iquor. Well might David say "a day in the courts of God is better than a thousand. The Lord is a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory." The spouse beautifully compares her beloved to the apple-tree; which is distinguished from the trees of the wood by its beauty, lowliness and fruitfulness; and she sat down under the shadow with great delight; and its fruit was sweet to her taste. And, blessed be God, the tree has not withered; it makes as good a shade as ever; neither is its fruit exhausted, nor has it lost its sweetness. Surely such distinguishing favors as we enjoy demand returns of gratitude: and shall we not let our devotions arise when they are so pleasing to the Saviour. Hear his language, "Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey comb; honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is as the smell of Lebanon." Song 4th 11th.

We live under the sunshine of the glorious gospel, which like the rising light has been shining brighter and brighter in the minds of men, ever since its first dawning; and no doubt will continue thus shining, until all christians are united in one denomination.— And we are happy in believing that much of the hardness which has subsisted among christians, even within half a century past, is done away. Yet we are not so happy as to be agreed in all things. There are still many who are eminent for learning and piety, who are yet very tenacious of infant membership, and of sprinkling for baptism. If we ask for the proof of their sentiments, they immediately refer us to the covenant of circumcision, and the sprinkling mentioned in the Law of Moses and the Prophets: Yet if we attempt to prove our distinguishing sentiments by the practice of John the Baptist, or the example of Christ, they tell us that this was under the law, and therefore cannot be admitted as proof; and that too without any apparent apprehension of unfairness towards us, or of contradicting themselves. It would seem by the manner in which these men attempt to prove their sentiments, respecting gospel institutions, that they would transpose 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15. and read thus,

“ But their minds are blinded; for until this day remaineth a veil untaken away in reading the New Testament; which veil is done away by turning back to Moses or Abraham; but until this day when Christ is read the veil is upon their hearts.” But we had rather read the passage as it stands recorded. Altho’ we admire the Old Testament for the Divine institutions it contains, and for the beautiful types and figures which point forward to the great Antetype, and have their fulfilment in Christ; so the veil is done away in him, yet we believe we can best learn what gospel institutions are by studying the New Testament. And it is not strange that those who go back to the old shadowy dispensation to learn what gospel institutions are, should mistake the covenant of circumcision for the covenant of grace, circumcision for baptism, and a babe for a professed believer; and so pervert the gospel of Christ.

It plainly appears that the apostles first taught, secondly baptized those whom they taught or made disciples, and then broke bread to them. And we rejoice that the primitive practice of church building is returning; that so many in this evil day (while every species of error and iniquity is prevailing) are made willing to obey Christ’s commands, and are going forth by the footsteps of the flock. However black we may appear in the eyes of the world, or of carnal professors, or even in our own; yet, being united to the Lord our Righteousness, by that faith which worketh by love, and found walking in obedience to his word, we shall appear comely in the eyes of him who seeth not as man seeth. “ The King’s daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold.” — Amidst the revolutions of kingdoms the kingdom of Christ stands firm and unshaken, upon its own eternal basis. And tho’ crowns have fallen, and the heads of kings been severed from their bodies, yet the Royal Crown still remains on Jesus’ head. And this glorious Head never can be severed from his body, which is the church: Nor can one member of this body ever be amputated. Because the Head lives the mem-

bers shall live also. The God of Heaven has set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people. That covenant promise, *Isaiah* 60: 16, is fulfilling, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." The Gospel is spreading among the heathen in different lands. The Prophet *Isaiah* had a revelation of this when he said, *Chap. 29: h 24,* "And they also that erred in Spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn Doctrine." Thus Brethren, God is fulfilling his glorious promises to his people, and is not slack concerning them, as some men count slackness. He is as faithful to fulfill them as he was when *Joshua* made that solemn promise to *Israel* and said, ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing hath failed thereof. What has the church to fear while she has so many sweet promises to rest upon; "I, the Lord, do keep it; I will water it every moment lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day." *Isaiah xxvii. 3.*

We have great encouragement to hope for the prosperity of Zion: let us be instant in prayer, and try to lay hold on the promises: for "yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." The Lord has visited some of our towns and churches, the year past, with a shower of Divine Grace: as you may learn from our minutes. Others within the compass of this Association, some of our own, and some of other denominations, (of whom you will have no particular account in the minutes) have shared the same blessing.

O that the Lord would carry on his work in the world, until it shall appear evident to all, that no weapon formed against Zion can prosper.

Brethren, we solicit a continuance of your correspondence. We consider ourselves minor brethren, when compared with most of you; and therefore are always glad of your assistance by your Messengers.

In behalf of the Association,

JONATHAN HUNTLEY, *Moderator.*

SAMUEL KING, *Clerk.*