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Baptists. Massachusetts. Sturbridge Association, 1807.

Minutes of the ... at Sturbridge, September ... 1807.

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MWA copy.

M I N U T E S

OF THE

STURBRIDGE ASSOCIATION,

HOLDEN AT

STURBRIDGE,

SEPTEMBER 30th, & OCTOBER 1st.

1807.

PRINTED AT SUTTON, (MASS.)

By SEWALL GOODRIDGE.

October 1807.

MINUTES, &c.

WEDNESDAY, September 30.

1. AT two o'clock brother Blood preached from 1 John ii, 28.
2. Chose brother Wells moderator and brother Leonard scribe.
3. Read the letters from the Churches, and made the following minutes.

N. B. Names of ordained Ministers in SMALL CAPITALS; Ministers with this mark * not present.

		Added.	Dism.	Excl.	Died.	Num.
Sutton,	SAMUEL WATERS, Moses Putnam, Rufus Bacon, Caleb Torrey.	1	0	0	0	82
Leicester,	PETER ROGERS, Samuel Green, James Sprague, David Livermore, David Parker, Jacob Bond.	0	0	0	2	51
Charlton,	JAMES BOOMER, Daniel Bacon, jun, Abijah Lamb, David Bates, Robert Fitts,	0	0	0	3	94
1. Woodstock,	BIEL LEDOYT, Samuel Crawford, Penuel Corbin, Samuel Crawford, jun,					
2. Woodstock,	AMOS WELLS, Robert Baxter, Henry Wells, Jeremiah Wheaton.	1	0	0	1	148
South-Brimfield,	ELIJAH CODING, John Munger.	0	1	0	2	123
Belchertown, Sturbridge,	*JEREMIAH HASKELL, ZENAS L. LEONARD, Henry Filke, John Phillips, Stephen Haskell.	3	1	0	0	35 94

		Added.	Dysm.	Excl.	Died.	Mem.
2. Ashford,	*JOHN RATHBUN, Stephen Chapman, William Snell, jun.	8	0	0	1	72
3. Ashford,	William Palmer, David Corbin, Ephraim Hayward.	8	1	0	0	32
Shutesbury,	JOSEPH SMALLIDGE, Ebenezer Lyfcom.	0	10	0	1	95
Wilbraham,	STEPHEN SHEPARD, Israel Bennett, Nathan Knowlton, Aaron Chapin, Bela Bennett.	3	0	3	0	72
Hardwick,	EBENEZER BURT, Seth Willis, Benjamin Rider.	0	1	0	0	53
Thompson,	PARSON CROSBY, Thomas Day, James Brown, Afa Jacobs, Joseph Town, jun.	2	0	2	2	117
1. W. Springfield,	JESSE WIGHTMAN, Daniel Munger.	0	0	0	0	54
2. W. Springfield,	THOMAS RAND, Joseph Howard.	2	0	0	0	40
Westfield,	AZARIAH HANKS. Benjamin Hastings.	-	-	-	-	47
Pomfret,	JAMES GROW, Jeremiah Field, Pardon Kingsley.	-	-	-	-	36
Enfield,	GEORGE ATWELL, David Pease, Aziel Pease.	-	-	-	-	76

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N. B. The three last Churches were added this year.

4. Adjourned till to-morrow morning nine o'clock. Brother Whitman preached in the evening from Isaiah lxiii. 1.

THURSDAY, October 1.

Met according to adjournment.

1. With heart-felt satisfaction, we receive our brethren from Corresponding Associations, viz: SAMUEL ABBOT, from the Warren; minutes from the Leyden; and NATHANIEL COLLE, from the Stonington.

2. Voted to send our Minutes to the Woodstock, Shaftsbury, and Saratoga Associations, to open a correspondence with them in the exchange of Minutes.

3. The Circular letter, prepared by brother Waters, and the corresponding by brother Leonard, were read and accepted.

4. Query from the second Church in Woodstock, "Is baptism a door into the visible Church?" Voted to postpone an answer until the next Association, that there might be opportunity for further consideration upon the subject.

5. The committee, appointed by the Association last year to enquire into the state of the first Church in Wilbraham, reported, "there was not the visibility of a Church there," Voted to accept the report, and drop them from our Minutes.

6. Chose brethren Waters and Rand messengers to the Warren Association;—brethren Ebenezer Lyscom and Rand to the Leyden;—brethren Hanks and Wightman, to the Stonington;—brethren Whitman, Rand, Hanks, Atwell and Shephard, to the Danbury.

7. Chose brother Rand to write the circular letter, and brother Atwell the corresponding, for the next year.

8. Voted to recommend to the Churches composing this Association, a contribution in April next for missionary purposes. Chose brethren Leonard, Waters, Wells, Crosby and Rand, a committee to receive monies contributed, and to lay them out as they may think proper.

9. Chose brethren Waters, Ledoyt and Leonard a committee to visit and enquire into the state and practice of South-Brimfield Church, relative to open communion, and report to the Association next year.

10. Voted that our Association meet next year at Leicester, on the last Wednesday of September, at two o'clock P. M. Brother Atwell to preach the introductory sermon, in case of the failure of brother Burt.

11. Voted that brother Waters superintend the printing of the minutes.

12. Voted to recommend to the Churches to meet on the first Tuesday of every quarter, beginning with the first Tuesday of October 1807, for the purpose of uniting in solemn prayer to the throne of grace, for blessings on Zion and a ruined world.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

*The STURRIDGE ASSOCIATION, to the several CHURCHES which we represent,
wisheseth grace, mercy and peace to be multiplied among you.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN;

WE find it difficult, upon this occasion, to address you upon any thing new, as former circular letters have embraced almost every subject.—But since our Lord has enjoined upon all his creatures, the great duty of Love, permit us to address you on *this* subject.—He, who demands our

highest affection, hath implanted in us this noble passion, which ought to be displayed on God supremely, and inspire us with the love of His works and ways, as it renders the creature capable of glorifying God and enjoying Divine consolation, and of filling his days with usefulness on earth.—But alas ! we find mankind destitute of these excellent virtues—They are opposed to God and his cause in *this world*, and consequently to their own happiness and salvation, haters of God and one another.

Thus you see this noble passion is used in a bad cause.—In order, therefore, to love God supremely, and to love what is lovely, and hate what is hateful, there must be a Divine work wrought in us by the spirit of God, regulating the disorderedness of our affection.—The love of God is first manifest to the soul, in effecting this great work ; hence, we love him, because he first loved us.

But, Brethren, how shall we manifest our love, in the view of a wicked world, to the praise of His Grace, but in keeping his commands ? In so doing, we discover to the world, that, of a truth, God has our highest affection. May we now call to view some of the requirements of the Head of the Church. First, let your light so shine before men, that, they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in Heaven. To which end, let us hold up the light of revelation by precept and example—and live and behave ourselves like those who maintain a solemn sense of their accountability to God the Judge of all.—Secondly, Let us attend to His requirements as it respects our duty in His church ; to walk in all the commands and ordinances of Christ blameless, and in a word, keep the ordinances as they were delivered. In so doing, we place the crown upon His head and acknowledge Him King in Zion.

Brethren, We do not see how we can manifest our love to God, in the view of Christians, but by keeping up a gospel discipline. May we faithfully execute the laws of Christ's house.

If a Brother be overtaken in a fault, let us deal with him in the spirit of the gospel, not report it abroad, but restore him if possible. Nevertheless, let us withdraw ourselves from every Brother, who continueth to walk disorderly.

The Apostles rule, in maintaining a visibility, is equality, that is, that each Brother do according to what he possesseth—The observance of this rule will have the greatest tendency to prevent covetousness, which ought never to be indulged in a Church.—Finally, Brethren, the object of gospel discipline is God's glory, the consolation of the Church, and the conversion of sinners to the faith of the gospel.—If we know these things, happy are we if we do them. Let love be without dissimulation, and may the God of peace bless you all with a zeal to promote his cause in this world, and with eternal felicity hereafter.—AMEN.

N. B. Our meeting has been attended with a remarkable union and truly we can say we have received some of the clusters of the Heavenly Canon. Under the influence of the Divine Spirit, we can say, it is good for us to be here.—Nevertheless, may the great Head of the Church bless us all, in the way of duty, let our local situation be what it may.—Brethren, may we remember the words of our Lord,—*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

*The STURBRIDGE ASSOCIATION, to the other ASSOCIATIONS in correspondence,
sunderb christian salutation.*

DEAR BRETHREN,

WITH joy we welcome the return of another opportunity to inform you of our steadfastness in the *cause* of truth, and veneration for evangelic religion. While we often hear infidelity boldly asserting that the time is not far distant, when enthusiasm will be extirpated from the earth and the bible sink into general contempt, we are seriously urged to enquire relative to the future prospects of the church. In this inquiry we must look both to the word of God and the events of Providence for information.—The ancient prophecies, which allude to the gospel dispensation, generally refer either to what took place at the beginning, or what will take place at the latter end of this dispensation.—Those which refer to the beginning are all accomplished—those only which relate to the latter end remain to be fulfilled.—In attending to these we find that God has a great and glorious work yet to perform in the world.—The glorious things spoken of in the city of God are but in a small degree accomplished.—A variety of figurative and hieroglyphic language is used in scripture to portray the triumphant power of the gospel, and the wonderful prosperity of Zion in the last days.—How is the inference of evangelic grace compared to a broad river, wherein no hostile galley shall ever unfurl its crimson flag, rolling in its salutiferous tide, immortal peace for millions that are ready to perish ! How is it declared that this influence, which meliorates the most stubborn heart, like the taming of the most ferocious animal, shall become general through the earth ! Of course none will have occasion to say to his brother, “know the Lord.” How is it also asserted that the spirit of war shall be banished from the nations of the earth and return no more ?—These predictions have received their fulfilment but in part.—But we rejoice that they are rapidly rolling into effect at the present period.—They will be completely accomplished in God’s own time.—With ineffable delight we can tell the Zion of God, that Jesus reigns.—Brethren, let us make a solemn pause, and survey the prospects before us.—We are not now called to traverse the sanguinary plains of persecution, where the enemies of godliness riot on the blood of Martyrs.—No ! We are invited to gaze on the trophies of the cross, and behold the wonders God is performing.—Is not the latter day glory of the Church commencing ?—Do not the heavens impart the dews of life to many weary lands ?—Does not the missionary spirit, like lightning, pervade the souls of millions, and evangelic heralds move, with winged speed, through different quarters of the globe ?—God will fulfil his promise in which he saith,—“I will work and none shall let it.”—As well may the enemies of truth attempt to blot out the sun, as to circumscribe the light of salvation, when God shall bid it shine.—Brethren, let us take fresh courage to march on the pilgrims way, until we shall all come to those blest mansions, where we shall see Jesus in full-orbed splendor, and sin and sorrow shall reign no more forever.

In behalf of the Association,

AMOS WELLS, *Moderator.*
HENAS L. LEONARD, *Scribe.*