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Baptists. Massachusetts. Sturbridge Association, 1809.  
Minutes ... in West Springfield, September 27 and 28,  
1809.

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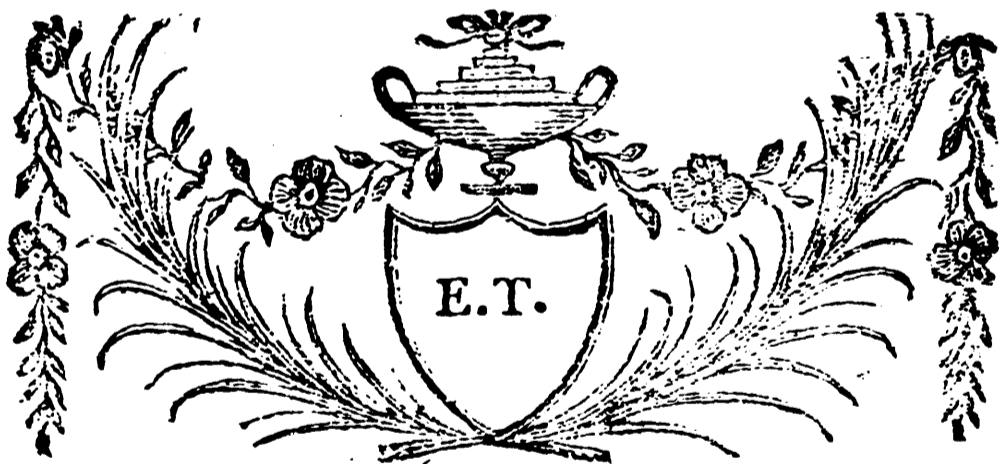
M I N U T E S

OF THE

STURBRIDGE ASSOCIATION,

Convened at the Meeting house occupied by the first Baptist

Church in West Springfield, September 27 and 28, 1869.



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PRINTED AT PALMER,  
BY EZEKIEL TERRY.

## MINUTES. &c.

*Wednesday September 27, 1809.*

At 2 o'clock a sermon was delivered by brother Leonard from Eph. ii, 6.

There was a contribution for widows of deceased ministers.

2 Chose brother Waters moderator and brother Rand scribe.

3 Read the letters from the churches and took the following minutes

**N. B.** The names of ordained ministers are in capitals; licenced preachers in italics; churches from whom we received no information are distinguished by this mark †; ministers not present by an asterisk \*; vacant churches with a dash —

Churches.	Minst. & Mess.	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclu.	Died.	Num.
Sutton.	SAMUEL WATERS, Solomon Marble, Moses Putnam, James Hawes, Isaac Dwennel.	13,	1,	2,	2,	88.
Liecester,	PETER ROGERS, James Sprague, William Fuller.	4,	0,	0,	0,	53.
Charlton,	JAMES BOOMER, Daniel Bacon.	3,	0,	1,	2,	91.
† 1. Woodstock,	*BIAL LEDOYT.	0,	0,	0,	0,	80.
2. Woodstock,	*AMOS WELLS, Augustus Bolles, Daniel Rice, Charles Chandler.	4,	4,	2,	0,	134.
S. Brimfield,	*E. CODDING, Amos Green.	0,	0,	0,	2,	126.
Belcherstown,	<i>David Pease,</i> Reuben Barton, Stephen Chamberlain.	37,	0,	0,	1,	85.
Sturbridge,	Z. L. LEONARD, Henry Fiske.	0,	3,	2,	4,	81.
2. Ashford,	— Samuel Munger, *Charles Richmond,	5,	1,	1,	1,	75.

	Eeben. Snell.					
3. Ashford;	— - -	1,	0,	0,	0,	30.
	William Palmer, Ephraim Hayward.					
Shutesbury,	J. SMALLIDGE, Lyscom Brigham, Luther Spear.	15,	0,	0,	1,	111.
Wilbraham,	S. SHEPARD, *Alvin Bennett, Israel Bennett.	3,	2,	0,	0,	107.
Hardwick,	EBEN. BURT, David Bates.	4,	1,	0,	1,	55.
Thompson,	P. CROSBY, Nath. Jacobs, Joseph Towne.	0,	3,	0,	0,	114.
1. W. Springfield,	J. WIGHAMAN, John Porter, Afa Button, Amos Worthington.	1,	0,	0,	0,	56.
2. W. Springfield,	TH. RAND, Caleb Humelton, Peresh Hitchcock, Joel Day.	4,	1,	0,	0,	50.
Westfield,	A. HANKS, Benjamin Hastings.	4,	1,	1,	0,	78.
Pomfret,	*J. GROW Artemas Bruce, Pardon Kingley.	13,	0,	0,	0,	72.
Enfield and Longmeadow,	G. ATWELL, John Bestor, Abial Pease, Chandler Pease.	15,	0,	0,	0,	114.
Killingly,	C. COOPER, Ebenezer Leach.	9,	0,	0,	1,	111.
Tolland,	A. NILES, Ira West, Aaron Chapman.					64.
1. Stafford	— — — Jonathan Pasko, Amos Burrows.					41.

135, 17, 9, 15, 1817.

he two last churches were added this session.

4. Adjourned till to morrow morning at 8 o'clock.

Brother J. G. Wightman preached in the evening.

Thursday September 28, met according to adjournment.

5. Received messengers &c. from sister associations. From the Warren—From the Stonington, Brethren Wightman, Gallum and Bennett, with minutes and letter. The Leyden, King and Root, with minutes and letter. The Danbury, Bester, with minutes and letter. The Shaftsbury, Hartwell and Todd.

6. Read and approved the circular letter prepared by brother Hastings, and the corresponding by brother Hanks.

7. Appointed messengers to corresponding associations. To the Warren, brethren Crosby, Boomer, Bates and Pease. The Stonington, Niles, Crosby and Wightman. The Leyden, Pease and King. The Danbury, Wightman and Hanks. The Shaftsbury, Hartwell and Todd. The Saratoga, Hanks. The Woolstock, voted to send minutes.

8. Chose brethren, Leonard to write the circular, and Wightman the corresponding letters for next year.

9. Voted that the association take upon them the capacity of a missionary society, and therefore chose brethren, Waters, Leonard, Rand, Crosby, Wightman, Hastings, Wells, Bates and Smallidge a board of trustees.

10. Voted to recommend that the churches contribute for missionary purposes, on the first Lord's day in Nov. next.

11. That our next association meet at Sutton next year, on the last wednesday in Sep. at ten o'clock in the morning.

Brother Wells to preach the sermon, and in case of failure, brother Burt.

12. Brethren, Rand and Atwell to superintend the printing the minutes.

13. Voted to continue the concert of prayer on the first tuesday of Oct. Jan. April and July.

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## CIRCULAR LETTER.

*The ministers and messengers of the several baptist churches of the Saurbridge Association, assembled at West Springfield, September 27, and 28, 1809 ;*

Maintaining the important doctrine of a triune God, infinite in wisdom, power and goodness ; eternal and personal election ; original sin ; an all-sufficient atonement, yet particular redemption ; free justification by the righteousness of Christ ; efficacious grace in regeneration ; the final perseverance of real believers ; the resurrection of the dead ; the future judgment ; the eternal happiness of the righteous ; and everlasting misery of such as die impenitent :—

To the several churches they represent, or from which they have received letters ;

Grace be to you, and peace from God our father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord !

Beloved Brethren,

By divine providence we held our annual meeting at the time and place appointed, and hope we enjoyed communion with God, & one with another. We trust we can truly say we were enabled to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The intelligence received from some of the churches was indeed like cool water to the thirsty soul. For a more particular statement, we refer you to the minutes.

On the many subjects on which we might address you, we have chosen that of *Evangelical Humility* as the leading theme of this letter.

In attempting to illustrate the subject, we shall endeavor, briefly, to state its *Foundation and Nature* ; and then add some *Motives exciting thereto*, and prescribe some *Means to perpetuate the same*.

### I. Its foundation.

This humility presupposes that the subject of it has been *Born again* : that he has experienced, in some measure, a just knowledge of God—of his being and perfections—of his holy law—of the nature and necessity of grace—and of the way of life and salvation through Jesus Christ. Consequently, if we are the happy subjects, we have been made to see and daily experience teaches us, that we are sinners by nature and practice. We have been deeply sensible of our total moral depravity. And the truth of such passages of scripture as the following have been, in some measure, realized by us : Psalm

li, 5, *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* Romans viii, 7, *The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* Genesis vi, 5, *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* This being our experience, a foundation is laid for humility.

Indeed, if this is our character, what have we to glory in? frail man, weak man, who is of but yesterday, and knows comparatively nothing; dependant for every blessing, even every breath,—a poor polluted breathing atom of dust! Rather let him abase himself as in the dust; than ever presume to exalt himself, or suffer pride to govern his heart. Let him exalt the great I AM, by reflecting on his inconceivable greatness, power, wisdom, and holiness. This may teach him something of humility.

Having briefly pointed out that work which is necessary as the foundation, we will proceed to describe,

## II, The nature of humility.

True evangelical humility is not an exercise of slavish fear, or mercenary mortification; nor of philosophic astonishment; but a holy, voluntary selfabasement; from a consciousness, not of our inferiority, but of the contrariety of our nature to God; and utter unworthiness of his approbation, or even his notice, or any blessing at his hand. It is that exercise of the heart which is fitly though faintly represented by that reverential and filial affection, which the dutiful, dependant child feels toward his earthly parent. And notwithstanding our unworthiness, yet the great God in infinite condescension, through the mediation of his son Jesus Christ, has invited us to come boldly to the throne of his grace, and not only ask, but receive every needed favor. Matthew vii, 11, *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?* And the subject, when in the exercise of faith, is enabled to realize a sacred nearness to his heavenly Father. Yea, such precious encouragement does he receive from the word of God, that he can, with humble confidence, apply such passages as the following to himself. Romans viii, 16, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father.* Galatians iv, 6, *And, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Ab-*



*to Father.*

III, We were in the third place to add some motives to the exercise of this grace.

Humility becomes us as rational creatures, and as social beings. How disgusting, to a person of sense and refinement, does one appear, who is puffed up with pride and haughtiness—one, who, in his own esteem, by birth, property, or some other imaginary superiority, disdains to associate with the poor, though virtuous person. And how derogatory is such a spirit, and behavior, to the precepts and genius of the gospel? Its precepts teach a contrary behavior, and its influence on our hearts produceth another spirit. Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. We cannot have true love to God, and to our fellow creatures, without humility—Humility is so essentially necessary to the christian, that he cannot be happy without it. True humility is known, and exercised, only by the christian: for it is one of the graces of the spirit; and, in proportion as we have this in exercise, such is our real happiness—And likewise, in proportion as we cherish or neglect this grace in our hearts, so will our happiness increase or diminish. Could we but constantly keep this temper of mind in exercise, how would it buoy us up while wading through trials and troubles, and thus greatly smooth the rugged road of life, and sweeten the bitter cup of affliction.

And how richly might we enjoy the blessings promised to such as are thus ornamented. Isaiah lxvi, 2, To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit. Matthew v, 3, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. And by this means how greatly would the peace, order and beauty of the church be promoted.

That we may more clearly discover its propriety, and feel its constraining motives, we will attend to one or two examples, Paul, who received his classical education at the feet of Gamaliel, and could say, "If any man has whereof to boast, I more;" and who also received a part of his spiritual education in the third heaven; under the inspiration of the holy spirit could also say, "I'me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given."

And if even he who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, became of no reputation, condescended to be born of a woman, and cradled in a manger,—He who was able to lay down his life, and take it again; has given himself a sacrifice

for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness—If he in infinite condescension, is pleased to bring guilty mortals, who deserve nothing but divine displeasure, and endless despair, into a state of favor with God; implanting a principle of divine grace and holy love in the soul—If he is pleased to acknowledge the relation, and invite to that near connection, faintly represented by the terms brother, sister and bride—And who will ere long take his weary bride home to himself, forever to participate of that inheritance, of which, there the nature of it is revealed, and an earnest is imparted while in this pilgrimage state, yet eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the excellency and glory thereof—where prayer will be turned into praise, sighs into songs, tears into triumphs, sorrow into joy, the cross into a crown, reproaches into pearls, labor into rest, darkness into light, death to life and love—If the great bridegroom has done all this, and prepared such mansions, what motives more constraining!

The primary, and last motive, which we shall here hint at, is, the glory of God. If we have any regard to the King of Kings, any concern to promote the declarative glory of God, in ourselves, or by our deportment, surely this motive will stimulate us to a constant, and careful cultivation of this most beautiful plant of grace. Which leads us,

IV. To prescribe some means to perpetuate the same. And

1. If we would maintain this temper of mind, we must strictly attend to *watchfulness*. And as conscience may be considered the eye of the soul, we need to be careful that the light be not obscured by the maxims of men, and the deceitfulness of sin: but directed by the compass of divine truth. And we need constantly to be upon our watchtower; since we are not only exposed to rocks, and sands; but to foes without, and foes within. The world, flesh and satan, are all combined to effect our destruction. And although the christian's ultimate safety is in the great head of the church; and he will finally come off more than conqueror, yet much of his own happiness, and safety, in this world, depend upon his watchfulness. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." "What I say unto you I say unto all, watch."

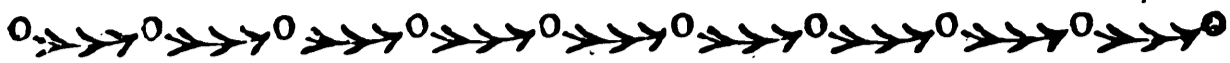
2. Prayer is an other mean by which humility is to be perpetuated: and undoubtedly a real spirit of watchfulness and prayerfulness are closely connected. Would we enjoy a con-

stant exercise of the grace of humility, we must strive to possess a continual praying temper of heart. The psalmist could say, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice." See Ps. lv, 17. Plainly implying the duty, as well as privilege, of always possessing that frame of mind. And we should also have set times for the performance of this duty; not only with our families, but in our closet; and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy father which is in secret, and thy father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. And we must be conscientious in the performance, we must not suffer ourselves to be hurried away with a vain repetition of the heads of prayer, but endeavour to be importunate: remember the incense was put upon burning coals. Lev. xvi. 12.

3. In order to perpetuate humility, we must give ourselves seasons for meditation. We must meditate upon the character, and attributes of God. "And when we would undertake thoughts, and meditations of God, his excellencies, his properties, his glory, his majesty, his love, his goodness, it must be done in a way of deep humiliation and abasement of soul."

4. We must attend to his word, looking to him for help, guidance and directions in the discovery of his mind and will, and that our hearts may be affected with it.—And this must be done frequently. This will supply our minds with tho'ts for carrying on our meditations.

5. We must take up our cross daily, and strive to follow our glorious Redeemer, whether through evil or good report. Finally, brethren, may we be clothed with humility as with a garment. And let us entreat you to press for, and make progress in humility, and selfdenial; and study much the meaning, and importance, of that golden precept, Phil. ii, 3, Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.



### *Corresponding Letter.*

The Sturbridge Association convened at the baptist meeting house in West Springfield, Sep. 27 and 28, 1809; To the Elders and brethren of our sister Associations, sendeth christian salutation.

Beloved Brethren,

It is with pleasure that we from time to time receive intelligence from you by your letters, and messengers; and that candor with which you have hitherto received our communications, encourage us still to continue our correspondence with you; hoping our attempts to promote each other's happiness will not be in vain.

If we observe the commands of our Lord, the most prominent, and that which comprises all, is that *we love one another*. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." The great display of the love of God was made to guilty man, when His only begotten Son came into this world—"not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." In that remarkable gift of God, his character, as the God of love, was so exhibited; and at the same time the condescension, kindness and love of Jesus Christ our Savior was so manifested, in leaving the realms of bliss and glory, to visit the children of men, to open a door of salvation, and establish the gospel, that even the angelic hosts beheld with wonder, and desired to look into the mystery—and even the planetary system joined in witnessing the event.

And when we contemplate upon the subject, and consider the character of those to whom this display of love was made, not to friends, but enemies, not to the whole, but to the helpless—we are ready to exclaim in the language of inspiration, "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin— For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly— Who died for us, that whether we wake, or sleep, we should live together with him."

Viewing the love of Christ in this sense, is it not enough to engage our souls in his cause? And wherever the love of Christ is experienced in the heart, it produceth love to the

brethren : which is manifested in a christian fellowship one with another. And how ought all such characters as have experienced this grace, to be careful, and conscientious in a sacred regard to the rules and ordinances of Christ's house, viz, baptism agreeable to divine appointment, instead of the traditions of men ; and all the consequent duties relating to the Lord's supper, such as a daily watchfulness and prayerfulness, and a faithful watchcare over our brethren in all the labors of love. Now this labor can only be exercised in a christian brotherhood, and in that bond which produceth peace in the church of Christ ; while it will apply to no other society. It is the mark therefore, by which all men shall know Christ's disciples—And thus our Lord calls it peculiarly his commandment—And his apostles are so careful in enforcing obedience to it ; “See that ye love one another with pure hearts fervently.”

Brethren may we all strive to provoke one another to love, and good works, till it please God to call us home, where we may drink full draughts from the fountain head. To which happy place, may God, in his own time, bring us, for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

*Samuel Waters, Moderator.*

*Thomas Rand, Scribe.*