

S247:7

Baptists, Massachusetts. Sturbridge Association, 1812.

Minutes . . . Hardwick . . . September.

[Palmer, Mass.,] Terry, [1812]. 8 pp.

MWA copy,

MINUTES

OF THE

STURBRIDGE ASSOCIATION,

Convened at the Baptist Meetinghouse in Hardwick on
WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 30 1812.

1. At 10 o'clock A.M. a sermon was delivered by brother Joseph Smallidge, from 2 Timothy iv. 6, 7 and 8.

2. Brother Samuel Waters was chosen *Moderator* and brother Zenas L. Leonard *Scribe*.

3. Read the letters from the Churches, and took the following minutes —

N.B. The names of ordained ministers are in small 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 by a dash —

Churches.	Elders and Messengers.	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Died.	Total.
Sutton.	SAMUEL WATERS, <i>Isaac Dwinne,</i> Solomon Marble, Jonah Goulding, Benjamin Clark.	7	0	2	4	150
Leicester.	* PETER ROGERS, James Sprague, David Bryant, David Parker, Samuel Britton.	0	0	2	0	76
Charlton.	JAMES BOOMER, Abijah Lamb, Lemuel Greene, Daniel Bacon Jr.	2	0	0	3	92
1. Woodstock.	† BIEL LEDOIT, John Clark, Penuel Corbin.	0	2	0	1	65
2. Woodstock.	† AMOS WELLS.	0	0	0	0	139
S. Brimfield.	† * ELIJAH CODDING.					82

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Elders and Messengers.</i>	<i>Added.</i>	<i>Dismiss.</i>	<i>Exclud.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Belcherstown	DAVID PEASE, Reuben Barton, Ebenezer Green.	0	1	1	1	113
Sturbridge.	ZENAS L. LEONARD, Samuel Cheever, Amasa Adams.	0	0	4	2	104
2. Ashford.	————— Wm. Johnson.	0	0	0	0	71
3. Ashford.	————— Ephraim Hayward, Abraham Holman.	0	0	0	0	30
Shutesbury.	JOSEPH SMALLIDGE, Lyscom Brigham, Silas Cook.	8	2	0	1	154
Wilbraham.	ALVIN BENNET, Ebenezer Curtiss, James Calkins, Aaron Chapin Jr.	2	3	0	2	112
Hardwick.	EBENEZER BURT, <i>Nathan Vaughan,</i> Benjamin Rider, Esek Brown, Moses Winchester.	0	1	2	1	115
Thompson.	PARSON CROSBY, Joseph Town.	0	0	0	2	120
Pemfret.	JAMES GROW, Simeon Allen.	0	0	0	0	63
Enfield, Longmeadow and Wilbraham	GEORGE ATWELL, EZEKIEL TERRY, Elisha Cleaveland, Timothy Burr, Theo. Sweatland, Elijah Billings.	22	0	2	2	157
Killingly.	†CALVIN COOPER, Edward Bartlet, Jeremiah Harrington.	10	0	0	3	116
Tolland.	————— Ira West, Jeduthan Cobb, Ichabod Hinkley,	0	0	0	0	67
1. Stafford. †	—————					43

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Elders and Messengers.</i>	<i>Added.</i>	<i>Dismiss.</i>	<i>Exclud.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
2. Stafford.	SAMUEL BLOSS, SPENCER ALDEN, Elijah Alden.	0	0	0	1	22
Dana. †	DAVID BATES, Samuel Haskins, Nathan Smith, John Peckham, Moses Bliss.					58
		63	9	13	23	1956

† This church was added this session.

4. Received Minutes and Messengers from sister Associations, viz : from the Warren, brethren Andrews, Allen, & Marshal ; from the Stonington, brother Asa Bennet with minutes ; from the Leyden, brother Peckham with minutes ; from the Danbury, minutes ; from the Westfield, brethren Andrews and Rand ; from the Boston, brother Livermore.

5. Appointed messengers to corresponding Associations. To the Warren, brethren Grow, Crosby, Dwinnel and Vaughan ; to the Stonington, brother Asa Bennet ; to the Leyden, brethren Peckham and Alden ; to the Danbury, brethren Alden and Bloss ; to the Shaftsbury, brethren Pease and Alden ; to the Boston, brethren Livermore and B. Waters ; to the Westfield, Pease and Bennet.

6. Read and approved the circular letter prepared by brother Wells, and the corresponding by brother Bennet, they being previously inspected by a committee.

7. Voted that brother Bloss write the circular letter for the next year, and brother Atwell the corresponding.

8. Voted that our Association meet next year at Thompson on the last wednesday in Sept. at 10 o'clock A. M. Brother Grow to preach the introductory sermon ; in case of failure, brother Burt.

9. Voted that brother Terry superintend the printing and distribution of the minutes.

10. Chose brethren Waters, Leonard and Boomer a committee to take into consideration the subject of the incorporation of religious societies by special legeslative acts ; and examine whether, it be, or be not, consistent with the gospel of Christ ; and to make report of their opinion thereon at the next session of the Association, with a

view to harmonize our sentiments and concentrate our strength.

11. Voted, that while the awful judgments of Heaven are hovering over us as a nation, both as it respects foreign aggression and internal animosities, which most imminently threaten the destruction of our independence, it is the duty of our churches to meet at stated times for united & solemn prayer to Almighty God to graciously interpose, pour out his holy Spirit upon us, forgive us our sins and save us from impending ruin; and also that the glorious gospel of peace may prevail to the ends of the earth. Voted that the time of meeting be on the second Tuesday of October 2 o'clock P.M. & thus quarterly a year.



The Missionary Society with pleasure acknowledge the receipt of money from many generous friends of Zion, to whom we wish the good will and blessings of him who dwelt in the bush.

From the female cent society in Sutton,	\$ 14, 26.
From the male cent society in Sutton,	10, 68.
Contributed after a sermon before the Miss. Soci,	7, 33.
From Mr. John Greggs,	1, 00.
From Mr. Joseph Greggs,	1, 10.
From Mr. Nathaniel Whitmore,	1, 00.
From two female friends,	1, 50.
	<hr/>
	\$ 36, 87.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Sturbridge Association, to the churches we represent.

BELOVED BRETHERN,

YOU know where it is written; "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable"—and likewise where it is said; "it is a good thing, that the heart be established with grace." And as we profess to believe the one, and to have experienced the other; and as the establishment of the heart with grace necessarily involves an unshaken reliance on the word of God; we would address you, at this time, with a few thoughts on the authenticity of the scriptures.

To this end we will present you with a few of the most cardinal points, exhibited in divine revelation. First, for

redemption by Christ is one of the main pillars, on which all the rest more or less depend. This is the principal subject of the sacred book. This until revealed was locked up in the secrets of the Eternal Mind, hidden from the scrutiny of either angels or men. And when revealed, cannot be fully comprehended by any, nor even all created existences. The writers, therefore, of the inspired volume, could have no knowledge of this deep and mysterious subject, but by divine revelation. And even could we possibly suppose them to be possessed of ingenuity sufficient to form such a plan, the manifest impossibility of success in the enterprise would have deterred them from attempting to impose upon mankind, a system, which is in all its parts so palpably repugnant to the feelings, tempers and dispositions of men in a carnal state. The religion taught in the bible, especially when reduced to its gospel form has nothing in it pleasing to the taste of carnal men ; its doctrines are too spiritual, its morals too pure, & its duties require too great a degree of selfdenial to meet the approbation of their vitiated hearts ; so that it is not possible to see how divine revelation could make its way, either in the hands of Moses, or the Prophets & Apostles of Jesus Christ, but by the interposition of a supernatural cause.

Men destitute of all accomplishments essential to imposition and intrigue ; destitute of wealth, power, or popularity ; despised and persecuted both by Jews and Pagans with all the wealth, wisdom and power of the world against them, were, to say the least, very unlikely instruments to carry on successfully a system of imposture.

If the scriptures be priestcraft and wicked imposition, how strange that the veil has never been rent, and the delusion made manifest ! Strange indeed, that the most violent enemies of divine revelation have been necessitated to descend to the low arts of chicanery, ridicule and vulgar scurrility, without being able to produce a single fair and manly argument against its validity ! Wonderful strange, that a few Sheperds and Fishermen should have invented and supported a system, which baffles, and triumphs over the wisdom of all the learned world. These considerations form a strong presumption, that the wisdom which the world never knew guided the writers of the sacred volume.

A second thing, which merits our attention is the lapse

of time, which intervened from the period when the holy scriptures began to be written, till their completion. The exodus from Egypt was about fourteen hundred ninety-one years before the advent of Christ. John wrote his revelation in the ninety-sixth year of the christian æra; so that a space of nearly sixteen hundred years was taken up in the completion of the sacred volume; yet those, who went before and they who followed after manifestly breathed the same spirit, embraced the same promises, exhibited the same object as the foundation of hope for sinners, and manifested the same meekness, humility and patience in suffering in the same interesting cause; so that in every respect we discover the utmost harmony amongst them, which could not have been, had they not been inspired, guided and governed by the unerring spirit of God. It is certain there could have been no combination among the parties. Neither could any thing of a worldly nature inspire the later writers to pursue the path of their predecessors; a path, in which little could be expected, except pain, sorrow and death, together with the insults of a gainsaying world.

Thirdly, the wonderful preservation of the sacred oracles through the revolutions of time, amid the revolutions of nations and in opposition to the most malignant and rancorous hatred of the world is a strong, and irrefragable proof of their divine origin.

Fourthly, the necessity of such a light as is contained in the bible connected with the benevolence of Deity is a strong evidence of the inspiration of the sacred oracles. In them, and in them only among the various systems of religion found among mankind, is revealed to us the supreme Deity clothed with majesty, glory and transcendent excellence, which is worthy the Creator of all things. Here his justice, mercy and every other perfection shine with a splendor, that dazzles the eyes of angels and men, and while they declare him to be the Creator of the world, they teach us to believe it governed by his agency, and that the present state, and final destination of all men are at his disposal.

Fifthly. The doctrine of the bible applies with the most exact propriety to the state of the human mind in all generations, which could not be without divine inspiration; for notwithstanding time has produced great and important changes in language, manners, habits and ex-

— 7 —

ternal practices of men, the radical depravity of heart described in the bible still cleaves to them through every age, and is as real and manifest among the most polite nations as among the most savage and barbarous hords. All are equally opposed to the knowledge, love and service of God. Could any thing but divine wisdom have formed a mirror, which would have so exactly exhibited to view the deceitful heart of man in all its wily windings?

The excellence of the sacred oracles is manifest in that they propose a remedy adequate to the dreadful evil, which they reveal.

Permit us to exhort you, dear brethren, to accept this precious bible as one of the most excellent gifts of Heaven, take it as the man of your counsel, a lamp to your feet and follow its sacred dictates, it will then be your unfailing guide to HEAVEN.



CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The Sturbridge Baptist Association, to the Associations with whom we correspond, *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ.*

BELOVED BRETHREN.

Having enjoyed another anniversary interview in the love of the truth; we desire to express to you our gratitude to the Great Head of the Church, for his unspeakable Care towards those who have been redeemed by his precious blood, in conquering and subduing their rebellious dispositions, whereby they have been enabled to exercise faith in him; and in protecting and defending them from that destruction, into which satan and wicked men have been and still are expecting to see them fall.

We rejoice in a firm belief, that the care and government of Zion rests secure upon the shoulder of Emanuel, so that the inhabitant thereof may well cry out and shout, for great is the holy one of Israel in the midst of her; and not all the evil designs of wicked men, nor all the malicious endeavours of infernal spirits combined shall ever be able to extinguish the glorious light of divine truth, since Jesus lives to plead his own cause.

And while we hear of wars abroad and rumours of war at home, we are not troubled, believing that our G O D

both overrule all things for the display of his perfections, for the fulfilment of his purposes, in the accomplishment of his eternal plan ; causing *all things to work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*, and not a hair of their heads shall fall to the ground without his notice.

In a firm, though humble reliance upon the goodness of this divine being, we rest assured that all, which he hath spoken concerning Zion shall come to pass, to the joy and happiness of every believer in Christ Jesus.

And in a happy submission to his reign and government let us, brethren, humbly fall before the throne of sovereign grace, and with brokenness of heart and contrition of spirit earnestly implore His protecting care, while in this wilderness world ; and give him no rest day nor night, till he establish and make Zion a praise in the whole earth.

Our meeting has been harmonious and pleasing. For the present standing of our churches, we refer you to our minutes : hoping that it may please the great Head of the church to add, more abundantly, unto their numbers of such as shall be saved.

SAMUEL WATERS, Moderator.
ZENAS L. LEONARD, Scribe.



ON Thursday Oct. 1st, after the business of the Association was completed, by the request of the Baptist church in Hardwick, Elders Livermore, Atwell, Terry, Bloss and Alden, and a number of brethren, sat in council with them for the ordination of their brother Nathan Vaughan to the gospel ministry. Fellowship was unanimously obtained : and at 2 o'clock Elder Atwell preached on the occasion to a crowded and attentive assembly ; Elder Bloss made the consecrating prayer ; Elder Terry gave the charge ; Elder Livermore gave the right hand of fellowship ; and Elder Alden made the concluding prayer.