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Baptists . Massachusetts . Sturbridge Association, 1813.

Minutes . . . in Thompson Wednesday September 29, 1813.

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MINUTES

OF THE

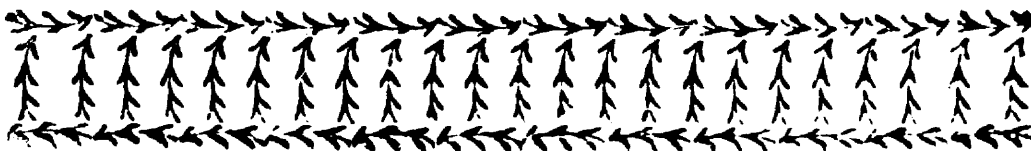
STURBRIDGE ASSOCIATION,

CONVENED AT THE BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE IN

THOMPSON WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 20 1912.



FROM E. TERRY'S PRESS.



M I N U T E S &c.

Wednesday September 29 1813.

1 At 10 o'clock A.M. a sermon was delivered by Elder James Crow from Ephesians III chapter and 8 verse.

2 Choro Elder Samuel Waters *Moderator*, and Elder Ezekiel Terry *Clerk*.

3 Adjourned for three quarters of an hour.

4 Met according to adjournment, and after solemn prayer, proceeded to read the letters from the churches, and the following minutes were taken.

*N. B. The names of ordained ministers are printed in small capitals; unordained preachers in the fellowship of the churches in italics; ministers not present are distinguished by this mark *; churches not heard from by this †; and vacant churches thus ———*

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Elders and Messengers.</i>	<i>Added</i>	<i>Dismiss.</i>	<i>Exclud.</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>No.</i>
Sutton,	SAMUEL WATERS, ISAAC DWINNEL, <i>Daniel Putnam,</i> <i>Esceck Brown,</i> John Burden, Solomon Marble, Warren Snow, Moses Putnam.	33	0	2	1	174
Leicester,	————— <i>Buckley Waters,</i> David Bryant, Luke Chase.	0	0	2	7	67
Charlton,	JAMES BOOMER, Daniel Bacon, Rufus Bacon, Job B. Boomer.	3	2	0	4	89
1 Woodstock,	————— S muel Crawford, John Clark.	2	0	0	3	64
2 Woodstock,	GEORGE ANGEL, James Wheaton, Wm. H. Manning.	7	3	0	2	141
S. Brimfield,	*ELIJAH CODING, John Manger,	0	0	0	5	76

<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Elders and Messengers.</i>	<i>United Discs.</i>	<i>United Discs.</i>	<i>United Discs.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Belcherstown,	DAVID PEASE, Thomas Barret, Austin Ames.	11	0	3	123
Sturbridge,	ZENAS L. LEONARD, Joshua Fisk, Philemon Shepard.	6	0	0	107
2 Ashford,	————— Benjamin Converse, Wm. Snell.	2	1	0	72
3 Ashford,	————— Jonathan Carpenter, Ephraim Hayward.	0	0	0	30
Shutesbury,	JOSEPH SMALLIDGE, Lycom Brigham, Silas Cook.	1	3	0	150
Wilbraham,	*ALVIN BENNET.	1	0	0	113
Hardwick,	EBENEZER BURT, *NATHAN VAUGHAN, Elisha Startovant.	0	0	1	112
Thompson,	PARSON CROSEY, Leahuel Knap, Thomas Day, Aaron Robinson.	15	0	2	130
Pomfret,	JAMES GROW, Artemas Bruce, James Gregory.	1	0	2	62
Enfield, Longmea- dow & Wilbraham,	} GEO. ATWELL, } EZEKIEL TERRY, Ebenezer Spelman.	6	0	0	141
Killingly,	CALVIN COOPER, Jonathan Herington, Edward Bailon Ebenezer Leach.	2	0	0	116
Tolland,	————— Augustus Bolles, Jeduthan Cobb, Samuel Read.	2	0	0	67
1 Stafford,†	—————				45
2 Stafford,	SAMUEL BLOSS, SPENCER ALDEN, Samuel Alden.	1	1	0	38

—4—						
<i>Churches.</i>	<i>Elders and Messengers.</i>	<i>Added</i>	<i>Dismiss</i>	<i>Exclud</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>No.</i>
Dana,	_____	3	1	0	2	51
	Nathan Smith,					
	David Elwell,					
	Edmund Rogers,					
Shrewsbury & } Royalston, }	LUTHER GODDARD					45
	John Stiles.					
<i>Total.</i>		99	11	12	42	2013

N. B. The last church was added this session.

5 Invited Brethren from sister Associations to take a seat with us.

6 Received *Messengers* and *Minutes* from corresponding Associations as follows, viz. from the *Warren*, Elders Cornel and Gammel, with minutes: *Stonington*, Brother Webb, with minutes: *Leyden*, Elder Montague, and minutes: *Westfield*, Elders Cornel and Terry, and minutes. From the *Danbury* and *Boston* Associations we had no information.

7 Appointed Messengers to corresponding Associations as follows, viz. to the *Warren*, Elders Bloss, Pease, and Angel, and Brother Bolles: *Stonington*, Elders Cooper and Atwell, and Brother Bolles: *Leyden*, Elders Montague and Burt: *Danbury*, Elders Terry, Bloss, and Atwell: *Westfield*, Elders Waters, Bloss, Terry and Goddard: *Boston*, Elder Goddard and Brother B. Waters.

8 Read and approved the circular letter prepared by Elder Bloss.

9 Appointed Elder Burt to write the circular letter, and Brother Bolles the corresponding, for next year.

10 Voted that the Association meet next year at *Woodstock* with the second Baptist church, at their meeting house, on the last wednesday in September, at 10 o' clock A. M: Elder Atwell to preach the introductory sermon, and in case of failure, Elder Crosby.

11 Voted to pass receiving the report according to the appointment in the tenth article last year.

12 Voted to continue quarterly prayer meetings as we did last year.

13 Appointed Elder Terry to superintend the printing and distributing the minutes.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Sturbridge baptized Association, to the several Churches which they represent, sendeth christian salutation.

BELOVED BRETHREN :

WHEN we take a retrospective view of the several departments of christendom, discovering the diversity of sentiments imbibed and the diversity of practices pursued, we are led anxiously to enquire when the watchmen of Zion shall see eye to eye ; the lion and the lamb lie down together and nothing found to hurt or destroy in all the holy mount of God ? Why do not all regenerate persons, who have the volume of truth open before them, understand its sentiments alike ? Why are not the practices in all christian churches similar, if they all obtain direction from the same fountain ? A combination of causes have doubtless led to this unpleasant diversity in sentiment and practice in churches in different ages. Permit us briefly to comment at this time on one cause which has obtained in christendom in all the dark ages, and continues to obtain to the separation of real friends, viz. that if a person is sincere or honest in his belief concerning any sentiment or practice he ought to be esteemed right, although his sentiment or practice does not exactly correspond with *bible* truth. The introduction of this idea into the church has done great injury to the cause ; for it forsakes that standard of truth erected by Almighty God, and substitutes a new one. It opens a flood-gate of error and establishes delusions and superstitions in the worship of the living God.

The following reasons will show why this sentiment is esteemed a root of bitterness in the church.

1st. *It undervalues the Saviour.* If it be immaterial what a person's faith embraces as an object, provided he be honest in its exercise ; then *Mahomet*, *Zoroaster* or *Confucius* are objects of faith, in the character of a Saviour, equal in dignity to the Lord Jesus Christ. The alcoran or the lumber of ancient philosophers, immersed in the depths of paganism, may be as cordially embraced, for a rule of life as the holy *Bible*, handed us from above.

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The papal rites and ceremonies, so much condemned by the word of God, may as readily be embraced and reduced to practice by the church at the present day, as the ordinances of Christ established by himself. In fine this error may lead a person with an *Egyptian* to worship the quadrupeds of the field, with an idolatrous person to bow before a curious production of an artist and with the *Aborigines* of America to worship a supposed spirit residing on yonder mountain. Its introduction into the church in primitive ages, contributed greatly to strengthen the man of sin, to lead the church into the wilderness and blindly hold them in the abyss of superstition. By this the glory of the ordinances of God's house has been greatly tarnished; in some instances undergoing a change, in others receiving a substitute and often entirely set aside; just as the staggering faith of a candidate should dictate. How greatly does the sentiment derogate from the character of that immaculate Lamb of God, who alone by his sacrifice can expiate guilt, who alone can take away the sin of the world!

2d. *The idea before us encourages ignorance.* If sincerity and righteousness be synonymous terms; "the more ignorance the more peace:" for conscience is roused to action in proportion to the degree of light which is in the understanding; when that is sufficient to distinguish truth from error; conscience is sure to condemn or acquit as the case may be: therefore with this idea it is dangerous for a person to come to the light lest his deeds be found to be wrought in unrighteousness.

3d. *It leads directly opposite to the word of God;* which informs us that "He will have all men come to the knowledge of the truth:" "Believe not every spirit but try the spirit—prove yourselves whether ye be in the faith or not—again, be not carried away with every wind of doctrine—and he that knew not his master's will and did commit things worthy of stripes was to be beaten with few." To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them. The above cited passages of truth clearly evince the fallacy of the sentiment under consideration, and forbid fellowship with it. If a sentiment or practice existing in the church

have for its support all the authority which the land or of a learned world can afford, and yet be in opposition to the word of God, it should be trampled under foot and rejected, as belonging to the enemy's kingdom. If a person have not a *thus saith the Lord*, for the support of his faith and practice; he may run apparently swifter than many others for a time, but will have a sad account to give at the end of his race; he may say as Abimeaz did to David, "all is well," but if examined, for the reasons of this declaration, or his sentiments and practice, he will be left to declare with shame, that there was great tumult but he knew not the cause.

We would not be understood, brethren, that honesty is not an essential trait in the christian character; but let it be observed that the honest christian is searching more earnestly for the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, than for arguments to prove his present sentiments to be true; more earnestly engaged to rectify himself, than to correct others. It is better, says the wise man, to rule one's spirit than to take a city. If individual christians were all possessing correct ideas of faith and practice, and willing to abide by them; the church universally would walk together without any jarring note. But so long as the above named error is fostered by any as the darling of the heart; and there are any of the intrepid followers of the Lamb in the church militant, who are determined to contend for the faith as delivered to the saints, there will, there ought to be a division, such errors must be reprov-
ed and rejected.

While you anxiously desire a union of all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ; we presume you would not sacrifice truth to effect the object. A league, formed on the enemy's ground, would be a league to be broken, but a union formed on the firm basis of the gospel would be permanent, would be springing up into everlasting life. Let us then have our loins girt about with truth, our lamps trimmed, burning, waiting the approach of the Saviour into his garden to view the spices, and to gather the lilies; willing to meet him thus in the garb we daily wear. O that we were more like Jesus in heart & practice.

Let our fervent prayer be to God that the brightness of his coming among the golden candlesticks may be such as to take away the dross and tin that the pure gold may

shine in its pristine glory : that the churches may be filled with the chosen race, & have a happy interview on that pleasant seat at the foot of the cross. That we may be more and more refined, further and further journeying on our heavenly pilgrimage, until through the parting sky we may wing our way to the happy abodes of the church triumphant with Jesus in their midst to participate of a union which can never be broken.

TO CORRESPONDING ASSOCIATIONS.

Beloved in the Lord :

Our corresponding letter failing, and we not having time to prepare one while in session, the Clerk was directed to publish the failure as accidental ; conceiving that our brethren of sister Associations will be satisfied therewith as a sufficient apology.

It is our cordial desire to continue mutual correspondence with you : and may the blessed God the founder of the eternal principles of holiness, be with you in the efficient glory of his sanctifying Spirit the holy Comforter, that you all may be changed from glory to glory, and possess unspeakable joy in the blessed work of the Lord. Having the principles of the doctrine of Christ in our souls, his gospel shall be distinguished as the power of God unto salvation ; and, through wondrous grace we behold Zion break forth in every direction, and the followers of the Lamb exceeding numerous like a great multitude which no man can number, we all shall appear as one body and one soul. Of what sovereign importance it is that we know each other's affairs, lift up the voice, and together sing. We never can be too ardently engaged to be understandingly united, and in the bonds of the gospel firmly established in the great momentous concerns of the kingdom of Christ : then the fierce winds may howl and rattling storms may beat upon us, and one grand effect shall be a decisive prevalence on the heart of man, that nothing formed and marshaled against Zion shall ever prosper. Being founded by God in the truth, let us give our fears to the wind, and be at peace with all men. Let us never render evil for evil, but contrawise blessing : and if possible by faithful friendly deeds have our ways so please the Lord, as that he shall make even our enemies to be at peace with us.

SAMUEL WATERS, Moderator.

EZEKIEL TERRY, Clerk.
