

MINUTES
OF THE
Eighth Session
OF THE
AFRICAN
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
OF NOVA SCOTIA.
HELD AT WEYMOUTH,

ON
Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, Sept.
21st. 23d. 24th. and 25th.

ALSO
THE CIRCULAR LETTER, &c.

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PRINTED BY W. CUNNABELL,
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MINUTES.

WEYMOUTH, SEPTEMBER 21st 1861.—The Association met pursuant to adjournment. After singing and prayer, Rev. J. Thomas read the 6th chapter of Isaiah; after which a number of God's people spoke. We had a good time.

SUNDAY, 22d.—11 o'clock, A. M. Late Brother Preston's Funeral Sermon preached by Rev. J. Thomas, from 2 Samuel, 3d chapter, part of 38th verse—"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen in Israel." Followed by Revs. B. Smithers and H. Jackson, and others. Met again at 3, P. M. Preaching by Rev. H. Jackson, from Numbers, 23d chapter, 10th verse; followed by Revs. J. Thomas and B. Smithers, and others. Met again at 7, P. M. Preaching by Rev. B. Smithers, from Revelations, 4th chapter, 8th verse; followed by Revs. H. Jackson and J. Thomas, and a large number of Brethren and Sisters.

MONDAY, 23d. Ministers and Delegates met at 9, A. M., after singing and prayer, the Rev. Benson Smyth, was chosen Moderator.—Rev. H. Jackson, Secretary, and Rev. J. Thomas, Treasurer. Brethren P. J. Hawkins and J. B. Wright to examine the letters and to report thereupon. The letters being read, from which the Statistics was found.

State of the Churches—Increase and Decrease.

	Baptized.	Received.	Excluded.	Died.	Total.
1st Preston	0	1	4	3	72
2d Preston,	0	0	0	2	67
Dartmouth,	0	0	0	0	9
Halifax,	0	0	0	3	92
Beach Hill,	0	0	0	0	7
Campbell Road	0	0	0	1	7
Hammond Pls.	0	0	4	3	42
Horton,	11	0	0	1	25
Cornwallis,	3	0	0	0	29
Granville Mo'n	9	0	0	0	46
Bear River,	4	0	1	0	19
Digby Joggings	0	0	0	0	16
Weymouth,	2	1	2	0	21
Yarmouth,	0	0	0	0	34
Liverpool,	11	0	0	0	17

RESOLUTIONS.

Voted that the Liverpool Church be received in our Asso-

ciation, and the Right Hand of Fellowship was given to the Rev. J. Thomas, in their behalf. Adjourned for a few minutes.—Met at 11 o'clock, A. M. 23d Sept. The Introductory Sermon was preached by the Rev. J. Thomas, from Isaiah 35th chap. 3d and part of the 4th verses, "Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees—say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, and fear not."

Half past 2 o'clock, met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Deacon Charles Jackson, the monies were handed into the Treasurer, it was Resolved, that our Ministers be requested to visit the various Churches in our Connection, and that the Churches make quarterly collections, to pay their expenses.

Resolved, that our next Association be held with the Granville Mountain Church, and Rev. H. Jackson, preach the introductory Sermon, and that the Rev. B. Smithers be his alternative.—A vote of thanks was given to our Ministers for their exertions the past year, in promoting the cause of God. A vote of credit was given by the Ministers and Delegates to the little Church and Friends at Weymouth, for their exertions in erecting a Meeting House, for the worship of God.

Voted that Revs. J. Thomas and Smithers superintend the printing of the Minutes, and that they be paid out of the funds for their services. Voted that Brother James Thomas write the Circular Letter.

Our Brother Ringwood made request to the Association, for some of the Brethren to visit the Church in Moose River. Brother Jackson and Smithers were appointed to do so, and see what could be done for them.

Adjourned to meet at 7 o'clock, P. M., Preaching by Brother Wright, from Psalms 102, verse 17th, followed by a number of Brethren, after which Brother Thomas read a letter sent from England, to the late Rev. R. Preston, dated May, 1861, which was listened to and received with great applause; after which hands joined in hands and a ring was formed, as an emblem of our love to each other, and the Doxology was sung, and Rev. Henry Jackson offered up a Prayer to Almighty God. A solemnity apparently covered the assembled audience,—the Benediction being pronounced at 10 o'clock. But the congregation would not leave the House,—Singing, Praying, and Speaking commenced, and was kept up till half past 11 o'clock.

TUESDAY, 24th.—Met at 11, A. M. Preaching by Brother E. Jackson, licentiate, from Psalm 103d. chap. 13th verse; followed by a number of Brethren. At half past one, our Meeting closed. At 7, P. M. met together, Preaching by Rev. H. Jackson, from Psalms 34th chap. 1st v. Speaking, Singing and Prayer kept up till late in the night, this being the last public meeting. Prayer Meetings during the intervals at several of the Dwelling Houses were held.

WEDNESDAY, 25th, our Brethren took the parting hand to meet on the 3rd Saturday in September, 1862, with the Granville Mountain Church:

Ministers, Licentiates, Deacons, Counsellors, &c.
 First Church Preston,—Licentiate J. Collins, T. Saunders, G. Brown; Deacons, J. Slaughter, W. Dare, D. Brown.
 Second Church Preston,—Rev. B. Smithers; Licentiate, G. Neal; Deacons, J. Smith, P. Craney, C. Glasgo, S. Williams, J. Smith, junr.
 Dartmouth—Deacons, J. Gerry, C. Roan.
 Halifax—Rev. J. Thomas; Deacons, A. Dickson, W. Barratt, P. Brown; Licentiate, N. Goffican, J. Coombs; Counsellors, C. Hill, D. Gross, T. Connix, J. Simons, J. Cox; Door Keepers, J. Sprigs, Jas. Barnes; Clerk, J. R. Thomas.
 Beach Hill,—Brother Tyson.
 Campbell Road—Deacon J. Grant.
 Hammond Plain,—Deacons, D. Wiley, G. David; Licentiate, T. Jones; Clerk, D. Goffican.
 Horton—Rev. J. Thomas; Deacon, D. Doalman.
 Cornwallis—Rev. J. Thomas; Deacons, D. Taylor, S. Bishop, Counsellors, P. Butler, J. Smith, J. Martin.
 Granville Mountain—Deacons, C. Jackson, A. Clements, and Brother Dickson.
 Bear River—Rev. H. Jackson; Deacons, P. J. Hawkins, J. Johnson; Licentiate, J. Ervin.
 Digby Joggings—Rev. H. Jackson; Deacon, J. Francis; Licentiate, J. Wilmot; Counsellor, I. Frances.
 Weymouth—Rev. H. Jackson; Counsellors, J. Lankford, P. Woodard; Clerk, J. Pleasant.
 Yarmouth—Licentiate, H. Jackson; Deacons, S. Chandler, J. Crawford.
 Liverpool—Deacon, J. Fells; Counsellors, J. Wade, R. Eley.

MONEY RECEIVED.			
Preston, 1st Church	£0 15 0	Cornwallis,	0 6 6
Preston, 2d Do	0 12 6	Granville Mountain,	0 15 1
Dartmouth,	0 7 6	Bear River,	0 8 6
Halifax,	1 0 0	Digby Joggings,	0 5 0
Campbell Road,	0 3 9	Weymouth,	0 4 0
Beach Hill,	0 0 0	Yarmouth,	0 7 0
Hammond Plains	0 6 3	Liverpool,	0 5 0
Horton,	0 10 0		
			£6 6 1

CIRCULAR LETTER.

Dearly Beloved Brethren—

The past year has been a year of sorrow unto us, mingled with joy. We have been called on to mourn the death of our much esteemed, and beloved brother Preston, who has been the Pastor of the African Baptist Church in Halifax, and the suburbs of the City the past 29 years. Our dearly beloved brother was deeply, and sincerely interested about the spiritual, and temporal welfare of all our Churches. The Churches of our connection used to be one of the great topics of his conversation during his last illness; he used to speak of their rising up and taking a stand upon one common platform amongst the great nations of the earth. Oh! how he used to advise his brethren to dwell together in union. Bear in mind, says the good man, divided you fall, united you stand; be as one man's children and all the powers of hell can never move you; keep your eyes unto God the Lord, whenever you meet at your Annual Associations or at your private or public meetings, and he will not leave your souls destitute. Oh! how his heart was cheered, when receiving a letter from one of our English Ministers, a few weeks before his death; in that letter he heard from a number of his ministering brethren, and others of whom he had formed acquaintances with 30 years ago. Oh! how I would like to live, if it was the will of God, and go once more to old England, and tell them how much I love and esteem them for what they done for our brethren 30 years ago; but I shall see them

in a higher and a better world, and there, my God will thank and pay them for what they have done for my people. Much more of what he said in the few last weeks of his illness might be written and no doubt be profitable; but this must suffice. It is joy for us to know that our brother left this world in triumph's faith, strong in the Lord till the last,—pointing his hands upward to heaven, and finding his body grow weak, he called upon one that stood near him to hold his hands up, while he died; and then with a smile on his face he breaths out the last breath with his hands pointed upwards, and his head no doubt on the breast of that Jesus, whom he so much loved.

His funeral sermon was preached in all our Churches by the Rev. Benson Smithers and Rev. Henry Jackson; and at our Annual Association by the writer, from Second Samuel chap. iii; part of 38th verse,—“Know ye not that there is a Prince and a great man fallen in Israel.” Our brother was converted in Virginia, United States of America, in the year of our Lord 1815, at this time he was held as a slave by American Slaveholders. But God had nobler work for him to do in a British and a free land; and in 1816, he was found clear gone and safely landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia; his heart was filled with joy. I feel, says he, doubly free, free from sin and free from slavery;—thanks be to my God, and thanks be to old England for thy good laws. The slave that gets his foot upon thy shore, his chains fall, and binds him no more. Our brother felt great concern of mind about his brethren in bondage, and at times he would say, I must go and show them the way to Heaven and to England; but while he felt for his bond brethren, the hand of God was underneath him, and round about him his everlasting arms, and filled with the spirit of God, he went forth preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in various parts of this province; and in St. Johns, and Miramichi; and his labours were abundantly blessed in the salvation of many souls, which will be stars in his crown in the day of rejoicing.

In the year 1831, he was delegated to England, to represent the destitution of his brethren in Nova Scotia, and to make an appeal to them to aid him with means to build a house in Halifax, N. S. for his brethren to worship God in,

Our English brethren responded to the call, took our brother Preston by the hand, and collected as much as would build us a comfortable Chapel; and by request of the church, our brother was Ordained in London, G. B. and came out here as pastor of the African Baptist Church in Halifax, and the suburbs of the City, which place he filled till the day of his death. Eight years ago, by request of his brethren living in the different Townships and counties of this province, he felt it his duty to organize them into an Associated Body, and to be called the African Baptist Association. All the Churches mourn his loss; but their loss has been his eternal gain. Our brother was endued with noble gifts, and as a public orator, could command the attention of his audience,—his voice would act as a charm upon their ears. There was a dark cloud of sorrow hovered over the churches on the 16th of July 1861, when they heard that our brother was not, for God had took him, and very many of the members wept aloud and cried, My father, My father,—but he has gone, the crown is put on, let us fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.—But my brethren, this is not all, before our minutes go to press, on the 19th of November the death of our Rev. and much beloved brother John Hamilton, was announced; our brother was an African man, stolen from Africa, sold in America, as you would sell a horse, for the harness, or an ox for the yoke. But that God, who rules Nations and governs Empires, made away for his escape; and at the time of the American war, he was one amongst the many, that was brought to a free soil: He was called by grace out of darkness, translated into the Kingdom of God's dear son. It was not long before the brethren perceived that he had a gift to preach; he was advised to go into the work and although our brother never went far from Hammond Plains, to labour, in word and doctrine, yet he was found to be eminently useful amongst his own flock, which he became pastor of for some years before his death. Our brother was firm in the doctrines of free and sovereign grace, and stood firm as a rock to the last; our brother was a sterling man, nothing was ever known to be brought against him, since he united with the church; he died as he lived, Preaching to the last minute. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Princes shall come out of Egypt and Ethiopia

shall stretch forth her hands unto God. His funeral sermon was preached at Hammond Plains by the writer, from Revelations 22d chap. 4th and part of 5th verses. "And they shall see his face and his name shall be in their foreheads and there shall be no night there." But Dearly beloved brethren, though called upon to mourn the death of our brethren, we rejoice to know that God is converting precious souls. The letters from the various Churches, show an increase to our number, the writer has baptized a number that has not as yet united with our Association. But I must bring my letter to a close, by stating unto you, that we had a good time at our Association. Truly it was good to be there; our meetings were well attended, and some powerful sermons preached, and from what I have heard from Weymouth since, by letter, they have been as bread cast upon the waters, which will be found after many days. Our brother Jackson has visited and Baptized two or three since our Association has been held at Weymouth, and they stated to me by letter, that the fields are white and already to harvest. Dear brethren, I am pleased to state to you, that the business of the Association went on harmoniously; the Spirit of God seemed to brood over Ministers and delegates; many, with the writer, will never forget the solemnity of these meetings, and great credit is due to the friends in Weymouth, for their exertions in erecting a house to worship God in, Oh! that it may be the birthplace of many precious souls; is our prayer. Too much credit cannot be given to the dear friends for their kind hospitality to Ministers and delegates, and strangers, during their stay amongst them. Dear brethren, we are pleased to state to you, that this year again we have received another church into our body; a church organized by the writer at Liverpool in August last. Truly we may adopt the words of the Psalmist, and say, Princes shall come out of Egypt and Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God. Finally brethren dwell together in love, and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free;—be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage,—what I say unto one, I say unto all, watch and pray, and the very God of heaven will come down and bless you. Amen,

JAMES THOMAS.