

THE ANCIENT BAPTIST JOURNAL

PROMOTING BAPTIST PRINCIPLES
& BIBLICAL PREACHING



VOLUME VII • ISSUE III

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William B. Sprague, D.D.

BAPTIST BOOK REVIEW
Patrick D. Kennedy, M. Div.

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INTRODUCTION

BY PATRICK D. KENNEDY, M.Div.

W elcome to a special issue of the ANCIENT BAPTIST JOURNAL. The contributors and editors of the Journal have been working to put together a unique issue that will coincide with the 2017 Baptist History Tour in New England, hosted by Pastor Jeff Faggart and the Baptist History Preservation Society. The men who are able to join the tour in May will receive a copy of the issue to take home with them. Of course, those who have been subscribers and supporters of the ANCIENT BAPTIST JOURNAL will still receive your copy.

In keeping in tune with the history tour, this issue will be chocked full of stories about individuals, churches and events associated with Baptist history in New England. We have gathered together numerous articles which we trust will be an encouragement, blessing and, perhaps, even challenging to your walk with the Lord and your ministry.

Many of the years in New England that are covered in this issue were perilous times for Baptists. In early Massachusetts and other

colonies, a Baptist who refused to bring their child to be baptized faced severe penalties. If a Baptist was arrested for preaching or discussing anything but the accepted teaching of the established church, they faced heavy fines, beating, imprisonment, or even banishment.

Included in this issue are a general history of New England Baptists, a story of the Baptists in Boston, an sermon from Hezekiah Smith regarding Benedict Arnold, and several shorter biographies on Baptists from New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Vermont.

In addition, there are several memorials of New England Baptists and churches from the Baptist History Preservation Society.

I trust you will find this ANCIENT BAPTIST JOURNAL to be a blessing to you and your church family as you read about our ancestors in the faith.

THE
BOOK OF THE GENERAL
LAUUES AND LIBERTYES
CONCERNING THE INHABITANTS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS
COLLECTED OUT OF THE RECORDS OF THE GENERAL COURT
FOR THE SEVERAL YEARS WHEREIN THEY WERE MADE
AND ESTABLISHED,

And now revised by the same Court and disposed into an Alphabetical order
and published by the same Authorit.e in the General Court
held at *Boston* the fourteenth of the
first month *Anno*
1647.

*Who so ever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God,
and they that resist receive to themselves damnation. Romanes 13. 2.*



CAMBRIDGE.
Printed according to order of the GENERAL COURT.
1648.

And are to be sold at the shop of *Hezekiah Usher*
in *Boston*.

Forasmuch as experience hath plentifully & often proved that since the first arising of the Ana-baptists about a hundred years past they have been the Incendiaries of Common-wealths & the Infectors of persons in main matters of Religion, & the Troublers of Churches in most places where they have been, & that they who have held the baptizing of Infants unlawful, have usually held other errors or heresies together therewith (though as hereticks use to doe they have concealed the same untill they espied a fit advantage and opportunity to vent them by way of question or scruple) and wheras divers of this kinde have since our coming into New-England have appeared amongst our selvs, some wherof as others before them have denied the Ordinance of Magistracy, and the lawfulness of making warre, others the lawfulness of Magistrates, and their Inspection into any breach of the first Table: which opinions if connived at by us are like to be increased among us & so necessarily bring guilt upon us, infection, & trouble to the Churches & hazzard to the whole Common-wealth:

It is therefore ordered by this Court & Authoritie therof, that if any person or persons within this Jurisdiction shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptizing of Infants, or goe about secretly to seduce others from the approbation or use therof, or shal purposely depart the Congregation at the administration of that Ordinance; or shal deny the Ordinance of Magistracy, or their lawfull right or authoritie to make war, or to punish the outward breaches of the first Table, and shall appear to the Court wilfully and obstinately to continue therein, after due meanes of conviction, everie such person or persons shall be sentenced to Banishment. [1644]

THE BOSTON BAPTISTS

*BY THOMAS ARMITAGE, D.D., LL.D.
(1819-1896)*

Fierce bigotry and intolerance did much for the ancient Baptists in Jerusalem of old, and this history repeated itself in Boston during the year 1651. The story is very simple. William Witter, a plain old farmer, lived at Swampscott, near Lynn, and was a member of the Congregational Church there. As far back as February 28th, 1643, he renounced infant baptism, and was brought before the Court, charged with speaking indecently of that ordinance. But having made some sort of an apology, he was arraigned a second time, February 18th, 1646, and was formally excommunicated July 24th, 1651, “for absenting himself from the public ordinances nine months or more and for being rebaptized.”¹ Meanwhile he had become a member of Clarke’s Church at Newport; at what time does not appear, but evidently some time before, as he had not attended the Church at Lynn for more than nine months. Having become blind as well as old, and living little, if any thing, less

¹ Ms. Rec. Essex Court, 25, 9mo, 1651.

than seventy-five miles from his Church, he was unable to attend its communion or to share its Christian sympathy and fellowship, all his surroundings being hostile to him. Whether he had invited a visit from representatives of the Newport Church, or they were prompted to visit him in his affliction, is not stated, but the Church records say: "Three of the brethren, namely, Mr. John Clarke, pastor, Obadiah Holmes and James Crandall, were taken upon the Lord's day, July 20th, 1651, at the house of one of the brethren whom they went to visit; namely, William Witter, in the town of Lyn." But it is clear from the record itself that he was a "brother" in that Church, as Backus calls him; also Arnold, in his "History of Rhode Island," calls him "an aged member," and Dr. Palfrey mentions him as a "brother in the Church of Baptists."

The above named three started on this mission of love worthy of Jesus himself and an honor to his servants. They passed quietly on their long journey, possibly through Boston, and reached Witter's home on Saturday night, hoping for a quiet Sabbath under a Christian roof. But this was criminal, much as Peter and John sinned against Jerusalem by helping a poor cripple there. When the Sabbath dawned they thought that they would "worship God in their own way on the Lord's day" in Witter's family. Yes; but what right had they to think any such thing? Did they not know that it was a crime to worship God "in your own way," even under your own roof, in Massachusetts? Notwithstanding this Clarke began to preach God's word, from Revelation 3:10, to Witter's family, his two traveling companions, and,

as he says, to “four or five strangers that came in unexpected after I had begun.” Quite likely those sinners of the Gentiles, John Wood, Joseph Rednap and Roger Scott, were all present. Wood had been tried, February 19th, 1616, for “professing Anabaptist sentiments and withholding his children from baptism;” Rednap had broken the law in usually “departing from the congregation at the time of administering the seal of baptism;”² and Scott was that drowsy sinner who was tried by the Court, February 28th, 1643, “for common sleeping at the public exercise upon the Lord’s day, and for striking him that waked him,” and was “severely whipped” for the same in the ensuing December. This deponent saith not whether he really was at Witter’s, or, if so, whether he wanted a quiet nap unaroused by a pugnacious Puritan Dogberry; perhaps he thought that a stirring Baptist sermon was just the novelty to keep him wide awake on that Sunday and in that particular place.

But no matter who was there, Clarke had begun to preach powerfully on the faithfulness of God to his people in the hour of temptation, when two constables invaded the farm-house, rushing in with a warrant from Robert Bridges, the “ordinary;” and the Newport brethren were brought before this officer of justice as prisoners. Bridges insisted that they should attend service at the State Church, and they insisted that they would not. Clarke said, “If thou forcest us into your assembly we cannot hold communion with them.” Clarke was very clear-headed, but he mistook the squire, for it was not “communion”

² Felt, Ecc. Hist., ii, p.46

that he was aiming at. The law required all to attend the State Church, and, therefore, them; and go they should anyhow, so they were forced into the assembly. Clarke says that when he was taken in he removed his hat and “civilly saluted them,” but when he had been conducted to a seat he put on his hat, “opened my book and fell to reading.” This troubled the “ordinary,” and he commanded the constable to “pluck off our hats, which he did, and where he laid mine there I let it lie.” When the service closed Clarke desired to speak to the congregation, but silence was commanded and the prisoners were removed. Some liberty was granted them on Monday, which they used, as Paul and Silas used theirs at Philippi, when they entered into the house of Lydia and exhorted the brethren. So here, Clarke and his brethren entered the house of Witter and actually shocked the magistrates by commemorating the love of Jesus together in observing the Lord’s Supper. This act filled the cup of their iniquity to the brim, and it was probably the main object of their visit.

On Monday they were removed to Boston and cast into prison, the charges against them being, for “disturbing the congregation in the afternoon, for drawing aside others after their erroneous judgments and practices, and for suspicion of rebaptizing one or more amongst us.” Clarke was fined £20, Holmes £30, Crandall £5, and on refusal to pay they were “to be well whipped,” although Winthrop had told the English government that they had no law “to whip in that kind.” Edwards says that while “Mr. Clarke stood stripped at the whipping-

THE UNHAPPINESS OF THOSE WHO TRUST NOT GOD

*BY HEZEKIAH SMITH, D.D.
(1737-1805)*

A sermon preached by Hezekiah Smith

To the troops on the Occasion of the Betrayal

Of the Revolution by Benedict Arnold

With an introduction by Rueben A. Guild, D.D.

In the latter part of the year 1780, occurred the saddest episode of our Revolutionary history—the treason of Benedict Arnold. Every writer has dwelt at length upon this remarkable event, and we need only allude in our present narrative to the mere facts. Chaplain Smith was with the American Army at Orangetown, or Tappan,¹ as it appears,

¹ Tappan lies in a fertile and romantic valley, three miles back from the Palisades, and about twenty miles from New York. This valley was once the scene of carnage, and beneath the sod lie the bones of hundreds of brave men who perished in battle. Two hundred yards south of the station, the New York, Ontario, and Western Railroad skirts the base of the hill, upon the summit of which, within fifty feet of the New Jersey State line, Major André was executed. In 1821, his remains were disinterred by order of the Duke of York, and taken to Westminster Abbey, where they now rest. In 1879, Mr. Cyrus W. Field purchased thirty acres, including the site of the execution and burial, and erected thereon a monument with the following inscription, written by the late A. P. Stanley, Dean of Westminster:—

at the time when André was tried and executed. A sermon that he preached to the Massachusetts Brigade upon the melancholy occasion has fortunately been preserved. It is remarkable for its clear analysis of passing events, for its patriotic glow, and especially for its implicit trust throughout in a Divine and Overruling Providence. The author, it will be observed, refers to the “baseness of the low-lived traitor,” as exceeding “if possible, that of a Tory.” Men were in earnest then, and the two conflicting parties were known only as patriots, or Whigs, and Tories.

On the 17th of September, says Thatcher, in his “Military Journal,” His Excellency General Washington, the Marquis de La Fayette, and General Knox, with a splendid retinue, left camp for Hartford, to hold a conference with Count Rochambeau, and the other French officers. On the 20th, Major John André, Adjutant General of the British Army, proceeded up the Hudson, and went on board the

“Here Died, October 2d, 1780,
 MAJOR JOHN ANDRÉ, OF THE BRITISH ARMY,
 who, entering the American lines on a secret mission to Benedict Arnold
 for the surrender of West Point,
 was taken prisoner, tried, and condemned as a spy;
 His Death,
 though according to the stern code of war, moved even his enemies to pity;
 and both Armies
 mourned the fate of one so young and so brave.
 In 1821, his remains were removed to
 Westminster Abbey.
 A hundred years after the execution this stone is placed above the spot where
 he laid, by a citizen of the United States against whom he fought;
 not to perpetuate the record of strife, but in token of those better feelings
 which have since united two nations, one in race,
 in language, and in religion, with the hope that this friendly union will
 never be broken.”

Vulture. On the 21st, at midnight, at the foot of a shadowy mountain six miles below Stony Point, occurred that memorable interview with Arnold so fraught with disaster and shame. On the morning of Saturday, September 23, André, while on his return to New York, was arrested at Tarrytown by Paulding, Williams, and Van Vert.

On the 26th of September, continues Thatcher, at three o'clock in the morning, an alarm was spread throughout the American camp, and two regiments of the Pennsylvania line were ordered to march immediately to West Point. The entire army was paraded, and the following startling and spirited communication, in the orders of General Nathaniel Greene, who commanded in the absence of Washington, was read by the adjutants to their respective regiments:—
“Treason, of the blackest dye, was yesterday discovered. General Arnold, who commanded at West Point, lost to every sentiment of honor, of private and public obligation, was about to deliver up that important post into the hands of the enemy. Such an event must have given the American cause a dangerous, if not a fatal, wound. Happily the treason has been timely discovered, to prevent the fatal misfortune. The providential train of circumstances which led to it affords the most convincing proofs that the liberties of America are the object of divine protection. At the same time that the treason is to be regretted, the General cannot help congratulating the army on the happy discovery. Our enemies, despairing of carrying their point by force, are practicing every base art, to effect by bribery and corruption what they cannot

THE EARLY BAPTISTS OF MASSACHUSETTS AND OTHER NEW ENGLAND STATES

*BY HENRY SWEETSER BURRAGE, D.D.
(1837-1926)*

THE EARLY BAPTISTS OF MASSACHUSETTS

Referring to the “Anabaptists” in the colony in 1646, Gov. Winslow said: “We have some living among us; nay, some in our churches of that judgment.”¹ Prominent among these was Charles Chauncy, afterward president of Harvard College, who arrived at Plymouth from England in 1638. He held that baptism “ought only to be by dipping, and putting ye whole body under water, and that sprinkling was unlawful.”² The church at Plymouth wished to secure Mr. Chauncy’s services as assistant pastor, and it was willing that he should “practice as he was persuaded,” provided those who desired to be “otherwise baptized” by another minister, should have this privilege. But

¹ Mather, “Magnalia,” Vol. II., p 459.

² Quincy, “Hist. of Harvard College,” Vol. I., p. 18.

Mr. Chauncy would not agree to such an arrangement, and accordingly, later, after much discussion with prominent ministers, he removed to Scituate, where there was a strong party in the church that held to immersion, some to adult immersion only, and some to immersion of infants as well as of adults. Mr. Chauncy became pastor of the church. Felt says of him, July 7, 1642, "Chauncy at Scituate still adheres to his practice of immersion. He had baptized two of his children in this way."

In 1644, Thomas Painter, of Hingham, was ordered by the General Court to be whipped for refusing to have his new-born babe baptized, and for saying that such baptism was anti-Christian.³ Shortly afterward, in November, 1644, the Court passed this vote: "It is ordered and agreed, that if any person or persons within this particular jurisdiction shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptism of infants, or go about secretly to seduce others from the approbation or use thereof, or shall purposely depart the congregation at the administration of the ordinance, or shall deny the ordinance of magistracy, or their lawful right to make war, or to punish outward breaches of the first table, and shall appear to the Court willfully and obstinately to continue therein after due time and means of conviction, every such person or persons shall be sentenced to banishment."⁴ Gov. Winthrop, referring to this order, says it was occasioned because "Anabaptistry had increased and spread in the country." Hubbard also

³ Backus, "Hist. of the Baptists in New England," Vol. I., p. 127, note.

⁴ Backus, Vol. I., p. 126.

THE EARLY BAPTISTS OF MASSACHUSETTS
AND OTHER NEW ENGLAND STATES

says, "About the year 1644, the Anabaptists increased much in the Massachusetts Colony of New England."

The attitude of the authorities of Massachusetts Bay with reference to the Baptists within their jurisdiction is illustrated by the following facts:⁵ William Witter,⁶ a member of the Baptist church in Newport, R. I., lived in Lynn, about two miles from the village. In July, 1651, the pastor of the Newport Church, Rev. John Clarke, and two of his brethren, Obadiah Holmes and John Crandall, visited Mr. Witter, an aged blind man who desired Christian counsel and consolation. With what joy Mr. Witter greeted the Newport brethren as they reached his house on a Saturday evening can readily be imagined. A religious service was held the next forenoon at which the family, the visitors, "and four or five strangers that came in unexpected," were present. While Mr. Clarke was opening to these the Scriptures, two constables appeared with a warrant for the arrest of Mr. Clarke and his Newport associates. No resistance was offered to the officers, but permission to conclude the service was requested.

This was denied, and those arrested were removed to "the ale-house or ordinary." In the afternoon, against their protest, Mr. Clarke and his companions were compelled to attend the public service. From

⁵ "Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.," 4th Series, Vol. II., p. 27 seq.

⁶ Dexter, in his "As to Roger Williams," p. 120, note 470, says it does not appear to be by any means certain that Witter was a member of the Newport Church or any other, as Backus affirms on the authority of the "Newport Church Papers." But these papers "were gathered by the painstaking John Comer, in 1726," and "were derived from Samuel Hubbard and Edward Smith, both members of the Newport Church, and contemporary with the events narrated."—Rev. C. E. Barrows, D. D., in "Baptist Quarterly Review," Vol. X., p. 360.

ELDER ISAAC CASE

BY JEFF FAGGART

PATRIOT – PREACHER – CHURCH PLANTER

Elder Isaac Case was one of the greatest church planters in American history. Wholly given to the ministry, Case was tireless in labour, disinterested in service and single in vision. He was esteemed by his peers and loved by the Baptists of Maine.

The son of William and Abigail Bell Case, Isaac was born in Rehoboth, Massachusetts, February 25, 1761. As a young boy, serious impressions concerning the Saviour were made upon the mind of Isaac, but it was an outer conflict to which he first gave his attention. At the age of 15, Isaac Case enlisted in the army and faithfully served his Country during the War for American Independence.

Converted in 1779 at the age of eighteen, Isaac Case openly professed his faith and united with the Baptist Church in Dighton, Massachusetts. He enlisted as a soldier of Christ and began to fight the

good fight of faith. Like the apostle to the Gentiles, he immediately began to proclaim Christ both publicly and privately in his native state, and his preaching yielded much fruit. Churches were strengthened, sinners converted and men called into the ministry.

Case visited Elder Isaac Backus of Middleborough, Massachusetts in August of 1783. Elder Backus had in his possession a letter from Elder Job Macomber of Maine. The letter, a plea for labourers to preach the gospel in those regions, was presented to Case. The visit proved providential, as the young preacher determined to move eastward. September 10, 1783, at twenty-two years of age, Isaac Case was ordained to the ministry and set out the following day for Maine.

Early in October, he reached his chosen field and straightway began to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Here, in the settlements within the bounds of Maine, he was kindly entreated, and the words of life received. His first evangelistic journey would be a foreshadowing of future endeavours. Beginning at Berwick, he preached in Gorham, Brunswick, Topsham, Bowdoinham, and Harpswell. At that time, a revival was in progress on nearby Sebasco digan Island. Case made his way there and, upon arrival, was asked to preach. With this request he complied and chose Isaiah 45:22¹ for his text. It is noted that hearts were melted as the people listened with eager interest to the preaching of the young stranger. Of this

¹ Isaiah 45:22 *“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”*

ELDER AMASA BROWN

BY JEFF FAGGART

Born April 21, 1754, in Bristol, Massachusetts, Amasa Brown was the son of James and Mary Anthony Brown and a sixth-generation descendant of John Browne, Commissioner to the Colonies and Assistant to Governor Bradford of Plymouth Colony. Few details of his younger days were recorded, but he is known to have lived in Swansea, Massachusetts. It was in Swansea that a Baptist congregation from Ilston, Wales, and Baptists in the Plymouth colony formed the First Baptist Church in Massachusetts. Among the constituent members of that church was James Brown, lateral ancestor of Amasa. The Brown family was afterwards very prominent among the Baptists.

Subsequently, Brown moved to Vermont, where he joined the Ira Baptist Church, February 17, 1786. There, he made known his calling to preach the gospel, was licensed as a minister and given opportunities to exercise his gifts. Succeeding Elder Thomas Skeels, Brown became the second pastor of the church in Ira and continued

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HARTFORD, NEW YORK

BY JEFF FAGGART

The history of the First Baptist Church of Hartford is a chronology of faithfulness, and its influence was commensurate with that of the new nation. Shortly after the War for Independence, this area of Upstate New York witnessed an influx of new settlers. Families carved farms from the wilderness, and saints propagated the faith by planting churches.

Baptists had gathered a church in the town of Westfield by 1787. Services were held not far from this spot in a log barn, and converts were baptized in the nearby brook. Upon the division of the town of Westfield in 1788, the Baptist Church took the name of the new town, Hartford. In 1798, Governor Dewitt Clinton gifted the church with land upon which to erect a new meetinghouse, and in 1805 a log building was raised. The property was also used as a burial ground for the Baptist Society.

Steady growth among the Baptists soon necessitated larger

SELECTIONS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE SHAFTSBURY ASSOCIATION ELDER CALEB BLOOD—ELDER AMASA BROWN ELDER OBED WARREN

*BY STEPHEN WRIGHT
(1813-1889)*

ELDER CALEB BLOOD, OF SHAFTSBURY, VT.

Elder Blood was for twenty years an active minister and member in the Association, and from the prominent part he bore in all its doings as well as from his excellent spirit; and general acceptance among his brethren, deserves more than the passing notice given of his worth, in the body of this work, when he took leave of his brethren, in the year 1807. The following sketch is condensed from a notice of him, in the, *Mass. Bap. Miss. Magazine*, vol. iv. pages 50-4; and other authentic sources of information concerning him:

He was born in CHARLTON, Worcester co. Mass. August 10, 1754. In the 21st year of his age, he was brought hopefully to a sweet and comfortable experience of the truth, and professed the religion of the gospel. It is reported that he was struck with a deep sense of his lost

condition, while at a ball, in the midst of mirth and gayety; and that the impression thus made, continued, until the Lord, by his sovereign grace, set his soul at liberty. He soon became impressed with the situation of a world of sinners around him, and in about 18 months, commenced preaching the gospel. It is presumed he was approbated, and sent into the ministry by the church at Charlton, of which Elder Nathaniel Green was then pastor. After preaching in several places, as a door was opened before him, he visited Marlow, New Hampshire, in the autumn of 1777, where he was ordained, and continued to labor for about *two* years. He then removed to Weston, and labored a year and a half with the Baptist church and society. About this time, the Lord poured out his spirit upon the inhabitants of Newton, Mass., and numbers being converted were baptised after the apostolic example, and in the summer of 1780 a church was constituted, which increased to 70 members in 14 months. This infant church invited Elder Blood to become their Pastor, which he did in the spring of 1781, and continued with them, until the year 1788. Though his ministry here was short, he was much beloved by the people. The following incident speaks for itself, as related by Rev. S. F. Smith in his notice of Elder Blood's ministry. "The evening after he had taken leave of his people, two sisters, then mere children, went home in tears; and it is said one of them, steadily affirmed that she would willingly, leave her father and mother, and all that she held dear; for the privilege of accompanying Mr. Blood; even if he should go to the ends

THE DEW OF HERMON

BY ROLLIN HEBER NEALE (1808-1879)

A Discourse Delivered Before the Conference of Baptist Ministers

May 25, 1841, in the Bowdoin Square Baptist Meeting House

By Rollin H. Neale, Pastor of the First Baptist Church Boston

Boston: James Loring. 1841

Boston, May 31, 1841,

The undersigned, believing that the publication of the sermon recently delivered by Rev. R.H. Neale, before the Conference of Massachusetts Baptist Ministers, would be useful, especially to those for whose benefit it was originally prepared, unite in requesting Bro. Neale to commit it to the press.

Daniel Sharp,	Thomas Driver,	John Peck,	James Johnston,
Robert Turnbull,	Bradley Miner,	Wm. Hague,	Wm. Philips
Tho. F. Caldicott,	Wm. H. Shailer,	E. Thresher,	H.A. Graves,
Wm. Collier,	Wm. Howe	Nathaniel Colver,	George H. Black.

DEW OF HERMON

PSALMS, 133:1. *“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”*

I was much impressed with the truth of this sentiment, at our recent anniversaries in Baltimore. There we met with brethren from the north and from the south, from nearly every state and territory in the Union; men who had previously been surrounded by the most various influences, and among whom it was natural that our many subjects differences of opinion should exist; yet when assembled how did they appear? Why it was like the meeting of long absent friends. We were reminded of the early disciples at Jerusalem, who, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. In looking over the assembly, listening to their united prayers, and songs of praise and witnessing the cheerfulness which seemed depicted in every countenance, we could not but exclaim, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” Nor does this language seem a less appropriate description of the present scene. We can truly say, Lord it is good to be here. Who does not feel his mind invigorated his spirit refreshed, and his heart warmed, in coming up to these our annual festivals, and participating in the deliberations, in the religious devotions, and in the friendly greetings of an affectionate brotherhood? It is truly like the dew of Hermon, and as the dews that descended upon the mountains of

Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore.

I rejoice, brethren, that in your spontaneous remarks, this morning, you anticipated much that I had designed now to express. I am thus assured that I have not selected an unwelcome theme.

I propose, in this discourse, to point out some of the dangers to be guarded against, in order that the delightful state of things described in the text, and which we now so happily realize, may be perpetuated.

1. Some danger, perhaps, is to be apprehended from differences of taste, and natural temperament, and peculiarities of individual talent. In these respects, no two among us are precisely alike. There may be comparatively few whom we should regard as congenial spirits, and select as the friends and confidants of our retired moments. Still, as these varieties of talent instead of being an occasion of alienation and distrust are designed to constitute a stronger bond of union. They illustrate the wisdom of God, in adapting us to the diversified labors, which we are called to perform in his service. There is, in the kingdom of Christ, ample room for the exercise of all the natural talents and the acquired abilities, and the peculiarities of individual character, which may exist among us, provided they are under the control of conscience and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Hence when the Saviour ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, he did not provide for his people one and the same class of gifts, but gave some prophets, and some apostles, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

SELECTIONS FROM ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN PULPIT

THE WIGHTMANS—NOAH ALDEN
SAMUEL STILLMAN, D.D.—JAMES MANNING, D.D.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D.D.
(1795-1876)

THE WIGHTMANS

Valentine Wightman. 1705—1747.

Timothy Wightman. 1754—1796.

John Gano Wightman. 1800—1841.

FROM THE REV. FREDERIC DENISON

Norwich, Conn., June 8, 1858.

Rev. and dear Sir: In reply to your inquiry concerning the Wightmans of Groton, Conn., I can only say that, as I know of no person who has gathered a full history of these three worthy fathers, and, as my attention has been turned towards them during the past year, while collecting the Religious Annals of Groton, I have, by advice of friends, consented to forward to you the following memorabilia of them, that have fallen under my notice. In the first two cases, my authorities are family history, private papers, town and church records, ecclesiastical

and Associational Minutes, and historical sketches: in the last instance, I am able to add some personal recollections.

VALENTINE WIGHTMAN was a descendant of Edward Wightman, who was burnt for heresy, at Litchfield, in England, in 1612. Of the Wightmans, there came to this country five brothers, all Baptists—two were preachers; two were deacons; one a private member of the church. Valentine was a son of one of these five.

Valentine was born in North Kingston, R. I., in 1681. He removed to Groton, Conn., in 1705,—the year in which the town was incorporated. Probably he was licensed to preach in his native Colony. Upon his removal to Groton, he immediately gathered the few Baptists in the town into a church, and in the same year (1705) was chosen their Pastor. This was the first Baptist Church planted in the Colony of Connecticut, and which, as a mother of churches, still rejoices in her age.

Unfortunately, no sketch of the early life and personal appearance of Mr. Wightman has come down to us: and what is more to be regretted, since the times were peculiarly fruitful of historic incident, all the records of the church for the entire period of his ministry have perished. However, not a few of the fruits of his labours are yet to be found. The strong marks he made on his generation, and the fragmentary records of his deeds, lodged in collateral history, by the circling waves of his influence, enable us to present the man, the preacher, and the Christian builder, in a light worthy of historic mention.

On coming into public life, Valentine evinced the possession of excellent endowments, and creditable attainments. He was soon widely known, and as widely respected for his character and his abilities. With a sound mind in a sound body, and, what is yet more important, a disposition withal to work, and to work for the good of his generation, he necessarily rose to a commanding position, and wielded a truly enviable influence. In fine, he distinguished himself as a preacher, a writer, a disputant, a counsellor, and a builder in Zion.

Mr. Wightman maintained his individuality and his peculiar tenets; but he was no partisan preacher, no self-sufficient champion of a sect, no bigoted adherent to a school. He was humble, firm, faithful. As a preacher, he was plain, logical, earnest, and sometimes eloquent. As a builder, he was wise, prudent, and skilful. He was an indefatigable labourer, and he laboured to edify rather than to please and captivate. With the numerical increase of his flock, he, as well, sought their culture in all the ways that consisted with the poverty and pressure of his times. He preached in all the adjoining towns. For many years he was the only settled Baptist minister in the Colony.

Through his instrumentality, and in the face of sharp opposition from the Standing Order, Baptist Churches were gathered in Waterford, Lyme, Stonington, and other places. His preaching cost him much unpleasant controversy, and not a little persecution, as, in the matter of parish lines, he preferred the commission given by Christ, to the ecclesiastical laws of Connecticut. In his own town, he was increasingly

BAPTIST BOOK REVIEW: BAPTISTS IN EARLY NORTH AMERICA (SERIES) BY WILLIAM H. BRACKNEY & CHARLES H. HARTMAN

By PATRICK D. KENNEDY, M. Div.

“With the publication of this volume, a new beginning takes place in the research, publication, and accessibility to the religious history of North America. The Baptists in Early North America Series (BENA) is a multivolume publication of original records of key Baptist congregations whose origins lie in the colonial and early national periods of North American history.”

Thus begins the series introduction in volume one of the ambitious, projected 13 volume series of original church records. The series is edited by well-known Baptist historian William Brackney, and he, along with an editorial board, have compiled a group of eleven Baptist churches which represent models of Baptist congregational life. Of course, within the models there are varying doctrinal teachings.

The Third volume of the series, “Newport, Rhode Island, Seventh Day Baptists,” published earlier this year, joins the volumes on “Swansea, Massachusetts” and “First Baptist, Providence” as the

completed volumes of the series, thus far.

This new series certainly will add much to the great resources on Baptist history. With the advent of digital online materials, more and more records are accessible, but still, not many original records available unless an archive, academic institution or other repository is visited by the researcher. The editors, by making the transcripts of these important churches available have taken an important step in preserving and disseminating Baptist history in early North America to a wider audience. It is a unique approach to the study of Baptist history and I have enjoyed reading these volumes; although, I have yet to complete the newest addition.

Each volume consists of a lengthy introduction which places the congregation in its historical context and also relates the importance of the congregation being studied. Often short biographies on the shepherds of these churches are also surveyed briefly.

The detail of the volumes may be too much for the casual reader, but I don't believe these studies were intended for popular reading. It is not that the writing is too academic, but rather the detail is probably more than the casual historian might be interested in wading through. In addition, the cost of each volume might also scare the faint of heart, but not unexpected from a university publishing house.

I applaud the idea behind the series, the quality, the scope, etc., but I do have one issue to note.

The reader should understand the introductions to these

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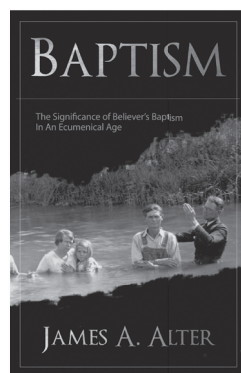
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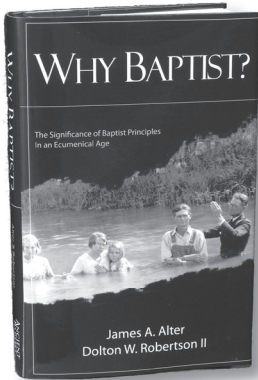
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- Right ecclesiology will prevent the church from sliding into apostasy. Baptist principles are not secondary. They are primary for maintaining orthodoxy and obedience.
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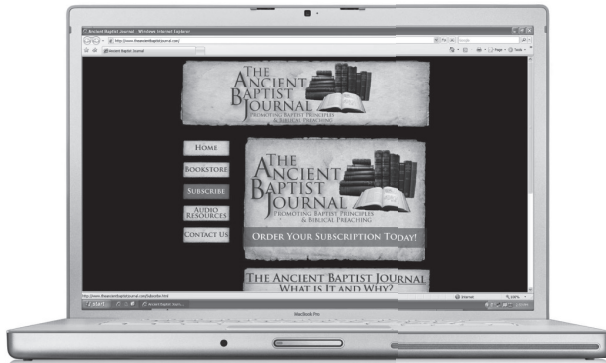
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