

MINUTES

—OF THE—

Third Annual Conference

—OF THE—

BETHLEHEM ASSOCIATION

—OF—

FREE WILL BAPTIST,

—HELD IN THE—

Pleasant Hill Church,

LAUDERDALE COUNTY, ALABAMA,

COMMENCING ON FRIDAY BEFORE

THE FIRST LORD'S DAY IN

OCTOBER,

1873,

AND DAYS FOLLOWING.

PADUCAH, KY:

DAILY AND WEEKLY NEWS STEAM PRINTING HOUSE.

MINUTES.

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THE INTRODUCTORY SERMON was delivered by Elder P. J. Vandiver, from Hebrews 12th chapter 2nd verse. After which the former Moderator proceeded to organize the Association, and received intelligence from (14) fourteen churches. See statistical table.

The Association being ready for business, the Moderator and Clerk made "A surrender of their trusts," whereas C. C. Vandiver was re-elected Moderator, and W. J. Webb, Clerk.

1st. On motion, opened door for the reception of newly constituted churches; when Brother Robert Pollick and Abraham Staggs came forward with a letter from White Oak Grove Church, representing sixteen members, organized by Elders G. S. Vandiver, J. H. Mitchell, Thomas Mitchell and J. Brewer, 1873. Also, brethren James Lackey, A. S. Grimes and J. D. Grimes, presented a letter from Mt. Morier Church, representing (13) thirteen members, organized by Elders C. C. Vandiver, G. D. Bunch, Henry Groom, Wm. Wade, J. R. Mathena, Nov. 1873.

After due examination, and finding them constituted upon the New Testament, they were received into full connection with the Bethlehem Association by the giving the right hand of fellowship.

2nd. *Resolved* to appoint a Committee to arrange the unfinished business, viz: one from each Church, J. Lambert, Z. P. Melton, J. Swinford, Wm. Gillmon, G. D. Bunch, D. Dowdy, S. Scott, J. Welch, J. R. Mathena, J. Long, J. Jones, J. C. Beves, A. Staggs, A. L. Grimes, including the Moderator and Clerk.

3rd. On motion, adjourned till Saturday morning, 9 o'clock.

Saturday morning, 9 o'clock. Met pursuant to adjournment, and the Committee of Arrangements arranged the unfinished business and adjourned until Monday morning 9 o'clock.

Monday morning, 9 o'clock. Met according to adjournment; after praise and prayer by brother J. Webb, proceeded to business.

1st. On motion, called the names of the delegates. All present.

2nd. Committee of Arrangements made their report, and the Committee were discharged.

3rd. On motion, called for the reading of the Constitution; read and cordially sanctioned by all of the delegates.

4th. On motion, perpetuated the union.

5th. Opened the door for correspondence, and a letter was handed in by R. A. Tucker, from the Forked Deer River Association of Free Will Baptist in the West, who was received by giving the right hand of fellowship, when all hearts were animated.

6th. *Resolved*, To correspond with the Forked Deer River Association, and that brethren C. C. Vandiver, E. W. Vandiver, G. D. Bunch, 'P. Williams, J. R. Mathena, Wm. Wade, and J. B. Mathena bear the letter.

7th. *Resolved*, To buy a new book to keep the records of the Association and file the old one away in the hands of C. C. Vandiver for safe keeping.

8th. *Resolved*, That brother G. D. Bunch write brother C. C. Vandiver credentials and have them recorded in Linden Tennessee, Florence Alabama, and Iuka Mississippi, and also a statement of the former ones being misplaced, and report at the next annual meeting.

9th. *Resolved*, That brother W. G. Frie and P. G. Vandiver assist C. C. Vandiver in preparing hymn books for the press and binding, and bring them before the public as soon as practicable, and if they need any means to furnish them.

10th. *Resolved*, That the Clerk prepare the Minutes for the press and that he have six hundred copies printed and distribute the same.

11th. *Resolved*, To continue the names of the ministers and post office address in the table of the Minutes.

12th. *Resolved*, That the delegates choose their pastors for the ensuing year.

13th. *Resolved*, To supply the different churches as follows: Antioch—J. Webb and J. Lambert. Mt. Olivet—W. J. Webb and S. G. Culver. Ebenezer—J. Webb and Peter Wood. Cedar Creek—C. C. Vandiver. Pleasant Hill—P. J. Vandiver. New Prospect—W. J. Webb. New Salem—Wm. Wade. Mt. Zion—J. Lambert and Wm. Higgins. Mt. Pleasant—S. Scott. White Oak Grove—G. S. Vandiver. Big Cypress—S. Scott. Canaan—G. S. Vandiver. Brush Creek—Z. P. Melton. New Hope—G. S. Vandiver and J. W. Mitchell. New Liberty—C. C. Vandiver and Wm. Gillmore. Mt. Morier—Wm. Wade. Macedonia—P. J. Vandiver.

14th. *Resolved*, To notice the Cedar Creek letter, and a move was made to pass it by, and it carried.

LIST OF MINISTERS.

MINISTERS NAMES.	STATE.	COUNTY.	POST OFFICE.
Peter Wood,	Tennessee,	Hardin,	Hamburg.
C. C. Vandiver,	"	Perry,	Cedar Creek.
G. S. Vandiver,	"	Lawrence,	Wayne Furnace.
Z. P. Melton,	"	"	" "
S. Scott,	"	Wayne,	" "
J. H. Mitchell,	"	"	" "
Wm. Gilmor,	"	"	Martin's Mill.
Jas. Lackey,	"	"	Clifton.
W. G. Frie,	"	Hardin,	Cerogorda.
Wm. Wade,	"	"	Cerogorda.
J. R. Mathena,	"	"	"
J. Webb,	Alabama,	Lauderdale,	Waterloo,
W. J. Webb,	"	"	"
S. G. Culver,	"	"	"
P. J. Vandiver,	"	"	Gravely Springs.
Wm. Higgins,	Mississippi,	Printice,	Boonsville.
James Lambert,	"	"	"

The numeration table of Ministers and Churches.—Churches (17) seventeen. Ministers (17) seventeen. Total members of the Bethlehem Association of Free-will Baptist, (610) six hundred and ten.

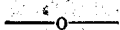
The stand was occupied according to arrangement on Friday night by S. Scott, from St. John 19th chapter, 30th verse. Saturday by R. A. Tucker and S. G. Culver, from Acts 28th chapter 20th verse. Saturday night by Z. P. Melton and Wm. Gillmor, from St. Mark 1st chapter 15th verse. Sunday by C. C. Vandiver and R. A. Tucker, from St. John 3rd chapter 8th verse. Sunday night by R. A. Tucker and J. Lackey, from St. Luke 4th chapter 18th and 19th verses. Monday by Parson Musgrove and J. H. Raughoof, the text 3 Tim. 4th ch. 2 verse. Monday night by C. C. Vandiver and Wm. Gillmor, from Acts 20th chapter 25, 67 verse inclusive.

The Association was attended by a large and well ordered congregation, and the love of God realized by the children of God.

C. C. VANDIVER, MODERATOR.

W. J. WEBB, CLERK.

CONSTITUTION.



BE IT KNOWN, that we, the Free-Will Baptist Churches of Jesus Christ, being in the States of Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi, do believe in a Doctrine of General Atonement; we have been Baptized upon a profession of Faith in Christ, and we are desirous of bringing about a reciprocal Union: We propose, therefore, to maintain the order and rules of an Association according to the following plan:

We believe the Churches of Christ are mutually independent of each other; that a Congregational form of Church Government should be invariably preserved; yet we being convinced of the utility of friendly intercourse, and pious counsel, on the principles of reciprocal union, advantages, and Christian love, we hold it a duty of the Churches to pay respect to these principles with regard to the duty of the Association.

ARTICLE I.

This Association shall be composed of members chosen by the different Churches in our Union, who, on producing letters from their respective Churches, certifying their appointment, shall be entitled to seats.

ARTICLE II.

The letters so produced, shall express the condition of these Churches respectively—that is, the number of members in fellowship; the members received, excluded, and dead since last Association.

ARTICLE III.

This body shall have no conceived power to lord it over God's heritage, or to infringe on any of the internal privileges or rights

of the Churches in our Union; but shall only be considered an advisory council in all things pertaining to the internal concerns of the Churches.

ARTICLE IV.

The Association is to give the Churches the best advice she can, in all matters of difficulty, and if the Union should be broken between any of the Churches, said Association shall inquire into the cause of the breach, and use its best endeavors to remove the difficulty. But if the breach cannot be removed, to withdraw from the Churches, which they may look upon to be unsound in principles, disorderly in conduct or practice until they be reclaimed.

ARTICLE V.

To take up no case of any in the Union, without the consent of a majority of the Churches, and then only to give advice.

ARTICLE VI.

All newly constituted Churches may be received into the Union by their representatives presenting a letter from their respective Churches. If found to be orderly and orthodox, such a reception shall be manifested by giving the right hand.

ARTICLE VII.

We believe that it is pointedly against the laws of Christ to make His Church a Legislative body. We therefore refuse to correspond with other denominations in their Legislative bodies.

ARTICLE VIII.

Forasmuch as the communion of the body and blood of Christ has become a matter of difficulty in many of the Churches, we believe it to be free to all who maintain a right by the authority of the Word of God.

ARTICLE IX.

We believe in a General Resurrection of the Dead and a Universal Judgment and that the Joys of the Righteous and the punishment of the Wicked will be Eternal.

ARTICLE X.

We believe that none but legally authorized administrators have a right to administer baptism, and that immersion is the apostolic mode.

ARTICLE XI.

We believe that none but true believers in Christ are the fit subjects of baptism.