

Minutes, &c.

The Sermon Introductory to business was delivered by Elder D. J. APPERSON, from the 5th chapter of Gallatians. 1st verse: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." After which the Delegates assembled at the Church, and were called to order. Prayer by Elder D. J. Apperson.

1st. Invited Ministers of other Ecclesiastical Denominations to seats with us.

2d. Called for Corresponding Letters. Received and read the Letters from ten Churches, and minuted their state.

3d. Organized the body by electing Elder D. J. APPERSON Moderator, and Elder E. C. BEERS Clerk.

4th. Appointed the following Committees, viz: On preaching, Brethren S. Fulford and C. Souther from the Church, and J. A. Park, S. Averett and A. Duncan from the body. On arrangement, F. T. Bozeman, R. Christian, E. C. Beers, J. C. Brooks, and W. T. Park.

5th. Called for Petitionary Letters, and received a Letter and Delegate from New Friendship, a newly constituted Church in Russell county, Alabama, which was received, and the right hand of fellowship extended to their Delegate by the Moderator.

6th. Called for Correspondence, and received Brethren J. C. R. Lockhart and E. J. Rodgers, from the U. B. Association, with a package of minutes—the right hand of friendship extended to them by the Moderator. Adjourned till Monday morning, 9 o'clock. Prayer by Brother J. C. R. Lockhart.

On the Sabbath the stand was occupied by Elders J. C. R. Lockhart and E. J. Rodgers, in the order of their names, we trust with much good effect—Brother Lockhart on the subject of Missions—after which a collection was taken up and received \$14 70.

MONDAY MORNING, 9 o'clock.

Met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Brother E. J. Rodgers.

1st. Called the names of Delegates and marked absentees.

2d. Renewed the call for Correspondence.

3d. Read the Decorum.

4th. Read the Constitution of the Association.

5th. Appointed the following Brethren a Committee on Correspondence, viz: K. Massey, W. F. Benson, E. C. Beers and L. Shepherd.

6th. Called for the Circular Letter, and agreed to receive and publish it. (Appendix A.) Adjourned for Preaching. Afternoon—met according to adjournment. Prayer by Brother W. W. Palmere.

7th. Called for and received the report of the Executive Committee. (Appendix B.)

8th. Called for the report of the Committee appointed to endeavor to adjust the difficulty between J. Rees, Sardis Church and this body, which was received and referred to a select Committee, composed of the following Brethren, viz: W. F. Benson, E. C. Beers and J. C. Brooks.

9th. Appointed the next Annual Session of this body to be held with Macedonia Church, Russell county, Alabama, to commence on Saturday before the third Sabbath in October, 1855.

10th. Appointed Brother J. C. Brooks to write the next Circular Letter.

11th. Appointed the following Brethren Delegates to the U. B. Association, to be held with Armagedon Church, Pike county, Ga., seven miles S. W. from Zebulon, to commence on Saturday before the second Sunday in September next, viz: W. F. Benson, E. C. Beers, R. Christian, W. W. Palmere and J. A. Park.

12th. Appointed Brother E. C. Beers to write the Letter of Correspondence. (Appendix C.)

13th. Appointed Elder K. Massey to preach the next Introductory Sermon—Elder J. Hartsfield his alternate.

14th. The Union Meeting of the first District to be held with Republican Church, Muscogee county, to commence on Friday night before the fifth Sunday in July next—W. F. Benson to preach the Introductory Sermon.

15th. The Union Meeting of the second District to be held with Corinth Church, Marion county, to commence on Friday night before the fourth Sunday in July next—D. J. Apperson to preach the Introductory Sermon. Adjourned till to-morrow morning, 9 o'clock. Prayer by Brother K. Massey.

TUESDAY MORNING, 9 o'clock.

Met according to adjournment. Prayer by W. T. Park.

1st. Called for the report of the select Committee to whom was referred the adjustment of the case of Elder J. Rees, Sardis Church, and this body. The Committee report as follows: That whereas the Sardis Church and Elder J. Rees have withdrawn from this Association, contrary to the Constitution, and that the said Sardis Church has also dissolved in disorder, we, the select Committee, declare its proceedings to have been illegal, and they are no longer amenable to us, nor are we accountable for them hereafter—which was received and adopted.

2d. Appointed an Executive Committee, to consist of the following Brethren, viz: W. T. Park, R. Christian and J. C. Brooks.

3d. Called for contributions for Minutes, and received \$22 15.

4th. Took up a subscription for the support of the itinerancy, and received \$61 00. (Appendix D.)

5th. Agreed to give to the Union Meetings of their respective Districts, the privilege of appointing the place of holding the Associations and Union Meetings.

6th. Resolved, that we, as United Baptists, will not hereafter receive into our Churches any persons who have not been legally immersed upon a creditable profession of their faith in Christ, by a legal administrator.

7th. Ordered the Clerk to have three hundred copies of these minutes printed and distributed, and have the overplus of money for his services.

8th. Resolved, that we tender the sincere thanks of this body to the citizens of this vicinity, for their kindness and hospitality to us during our stay with them. Adjourned. Prayer by Brother W. W. Palmere.

D. J. APPERSON, Moderator.

EDWARD C. BEERS, Clerk.

(APPENDIX A.)

CIRCULAR LETTER.

DEAR BRETHREN:—The time has arrived again when it becomes our duty to address you in the form of a Circular. We have therefore thought proper to offer you a few thoughts on the nature and extent of the Atonement.

The Atonement is, itself, one of the counsels of God, and should be considered as a specimen of all his counsels, an index to their course, and sample of their character.

First: The Atonement is a public expression of the divine decrees. In the Atonement of his Son, the Eternal Father, and blessed God, unbosoms his purposes, and says, "Fury is not in me;" "I knew the thought which I have thought concerning you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil." Nothing can be so revolting to humanity, and so repugnant to a heavenly mind, as an hypothesis that supposes the great God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, brooding from eternity over a scheme of evil against the creature man. The counsel of God, ordered in all things and sure, is a counsel of peace, and not of evil. The evil is not in the counsel; for God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that in two things by which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation. Where, then, do men find despair? Where do they find perdition? Certainly not in the counsel of God; for in this there is nothing but "strong consolation." God has no counsel against the salvation of any sinner. Let some one point out to us where such a hostile counsel is revealed. Let some sinner be mentioned who has perished in consequence of such counsel. The whole counsel of God is for good, and for good only. It says, "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Is it possible that God may have any secret counsel opposed to this public declaration? He

has no decree that operates against his promises. He has no purpose that contradicts his oath. I believe not. He cannot deny himself. If nothing else will prove that the decrees of God are not thoughts of evil, let the condescension of Bethlehem—let the death of Calvary, prove it: believe it for the very work's sake. The Son of God was delivered to death "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." And how did this counsel run? Take a specimen: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Does the cross then express any thoughts of evil against the sinner? No; but it bears the inscription written with the blood of Atonement, and addressed to men of all languages: Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

As the Atonement itself is a measure of pure benevolence, it is as such, a specimen of all the counsels of God. Hear what the author of the Atonement says: "This is the condemnation"—not that there is a settled degree of reprobation gone forth, against any man or number of men, but "that light is come unto the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." Hence, it is charged against the Pharisees as a heinous crime, that they "rejected the counsel of God against themselves," to their own ruin. This charge alleges that every thing in the counsel itself is for the benefit of the sinner, and nothing against him; that all the benefits of the counsel are freely and sincerely offered to the acceptance of the sinner; that the sinner voluntarily, but most perversely, rejects these benefits of the counsel; and that such rejection is a crime, and makes the sinner, and the sinner alone, the author of his own ruin. The purpose, design and tendency of the Atonement is, not to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved. The supposition that there are, notwithstanding, some decrees secretly opposed to this avowed design of the Atonement, is unreasonable, improbable, and impossible.

Second: The Atonement may be considered, farther, as an expression of the non-interference of the divine decrees with the liberty of moral agents.

The whole work of Atonement, from the incarnation of Christ to his ascension, was accomplished without interfering with the free agency of any one being. Its operation in moral government, and its application to man by the Holy Spirit, are carried on without interfering or infringing at all on human liberty; and as in the character of the Atonement itself, so is the character of the counsel concerning it. No advocate of liberty can wish for a freer range for the freedom of the will, than the Jews and the Gentiles had, when the Son of God was engaged in the work of making an Atonement; and yet in the transaction the counsel of God stands, and free agency is perfectly unconstrained. For of a truth against the holy child Jesus, whom God had anointed, both "Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the children of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever the hand and the counsel of God had deter-

mined before to be done." We may puzzle ourselves and puzzle others by asking with Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" But it should be considered that the demonstration of such problems is not given to scholars on our form—that our work is to search the Scriptures whether these things be so or not, and act accordingly. In these Scriptures we discover that the divine decrees did not interfere with the freedom of any person concerned in the murdering and crucifying of Christ. This non-interference with free agency, the Atonement maintains in all its operations and influence in moral government. The Gospel exhibits the Atonement, as an open medium of reconciliation with God, and as a motive to deter from sin, and persuade to holy obedience. The benefits of the Atonement are freely offered to the unconstrained acceptance of every one who hears the Gospel. Any acceptance of it that is not free and unconstrained, is not pleasing to God, nor available to the benefit of man. In accepting it, and choosing it, as a motive to holiness and as a medium of pardon, the believer is free and unconstrained; and in rejecting it as the means of salvation, every one acts according to his own free will and uninfluenced choice. When the Holy Spirit opens the heart to attend to the claims and influence of the Atonement, there is no more violence offered to the freedom of the will, than there was in Christ showing his wounds to doubting Thomas, to make him "not faithless but believing." The Atonement effects no change whatever in the laws of liberty. It does not constrain the sinner to accept pardon. It does not constrain God to exercise mercy. As, therefore, this counsel of God can be administered without infringing on free agency, it is a sample and a proof that *all* the purposes of God may be so too. All the works of God are the products of his mind and counsel, and are, therefore, all of the same nature and tendency. The works of God do not contradict his thoughts, nor do his thoughts contradict his works. His works are always the open and sincere expression of his thoughts and purposes, and as the Atonement is one of his chief works, it is an expression and a specimen of the benevolence of all his decrees, and of their non-interference with the laws of free grace.

(APPENDIX B.)
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

We, the Executive Committee, beg leave to report as follows:

Balance on hand.....	\$42 81
Taken up on the Sabbath.....	14 70
Last year's subscription.....	37 00—94 51
Paid Brother D. J. Apperson for his services.....	25 00

Balance on hand.....\$69 51

All of which is respectfully submitted.

R. CHRISTIAN, Chairman.

(APPENDIX C.)
CORRESPONDING LETTER.

DEAR BRETHREN:—Through the mercy of a kind Providence, we have again been permitted to assemble in Associational capacity, and feel that our spiritual strength is renewed. We cordially received your messengers, Elders J. C. R. Lockhart and E. J. Rodgers, and believe their labors with us have been abundantly blessed. The names of our Delegates to you are recorded in the minutes. We trust you will find them faithful. Brethren, pray for and visit us.

Affectionately yours in the bonds of Christian love,

D. J. APPERSON, Moderator.

E. C. BEERS, Clerk.

(APPENDIX D.)

Balance on subscription last year.....	\$15 50
Subscribed for the present year by	
R. J. Apperson.....	5 00
R. Christian, for Macedonia.....	15 00
S. Averett.....	10 00
J. C. Brooks.....	2 00
Wm. B. Watkins.....	5 00
W. W. Palmere.....	5 00
W. F. Benson.....	1 00
E. C. Beers.....	1 00
W. T. Park, for Corinth.....	5 00
K. Massey, for Shiloh Church.....	5 00
W. Lynn, for New Friendship.....	5 00
Wm. Bartlett (paid).....	2 00
	\$76 50

STATE OF THE CHURCHES FOR THE YEAR 1854.

CHURCHES.	COUNTIES.	NAMES OF DELEGATES. *ORDAINED. †LICENSED. ‡ADSENTEES.	CLERKS OF CHURCHES.	Baptised.....	Conf. of Faith...	Rec'd by Letter.	Restored.....	Dis'd by Letter..	Excommunicat'd	Dead.....	Total.....	Contrib'n's for Minutes.	Days of Meeting
Providence	Muscogee	S. Averett, Wm. B. Watkins, E. C. Beers*.....	Wm. B. Watkins	2	0	1	0	2	2	1	30	2 00	4
Antioch	"	J. C. Brooks, J. O. McGuirt†.....	J. M. Parker....	1	2	5	0	4	3	0	38	2 50	12
Republican.....	"	Wm. Bartlett, J. Weaver.....	S. S. Bartlett...	0	1	1	0	5	1	0	58	2 50	21
Shady Grove.....	Chambers, Ala..	I. W. S. Cooper, F. T. Bozeiman.....	H. Wallace.....	2	0	4	2	5	1	1	24	2 00	1
Macedonia.....	Russell, Ala....	R. Christian, Wm. F. Benson,* C. Jones†.....	C. Jones.....	4	1	2	0	5	1	0	30	2 00	3
New Friendship	"	Wm. Lynn, J. Fuller†.....	J. Fuller.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	1 50	4
New Prospect...	Taylor	Laban Shepherd, H. I. Parker, H. E. Parker†	R. Jones.....	1	0	3	1	6	2	0	30	2 00	3
Tabernacle	Marion.....	Wm. W. Palmere,† H. Hutcherson.....	J. Perkins.....	6	0	1	0	1	0	0	33	2 00	3
Corinth	"	Wm. T. Park, J. A. Park.....	J. A. Park.....	2	0	0	0	2	5	2	48	2 00	5
Shiloh	Macon	K. Massey,* J. Hartsfield,* S. Fulford.....	J. Hartsfield....	6	0	7	0	1	0	0	36	2 35	1
Liberty	Sumter.....	Amos Duncan, R. Duckworth, J. Richards.....	A. Duncan.....	0	0	0	0	7	1	0	26	1 05	2
Recapitulation.....				24	4	23	3	37	16	4	362	21 00	
United Baptist Association.....				46	1	21	2	12	14	6	397		
Total.....				70	5	44	5	49	30	10	759		

ORDAINED MINISTERS.	POST OFFICE.	LICENTIATES.	POST OFFICE.
D. J. Apperson.....	Pointexter.....	R. Christian.....	Salem, Ala.....
K. Massey.....	Lanier.....	T. Richards.....	Americus.....
James Hartsfield...	Grangersville...	H. E. Parker.....	Butler.....
Edward C. Beers.....	Columbus.....	W. W. Palmere.....	
Wm. F. Benson.....	Salem, Ala.....		