

MINUTES  
OF THE  
SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL SESSION  
OF THE  
MOUNT MORIAH  
FREE-WILL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD WITH THE  
MACEDONIA CHURCH, PICKENS COUNTY, ALABAMA,

*October 10th and 12th, 1874.*

The next Session to be held with Corinth Church, Sanford County, Ala.,  
commencing on Saturday before the 2nd Sabbath in October, 1875.

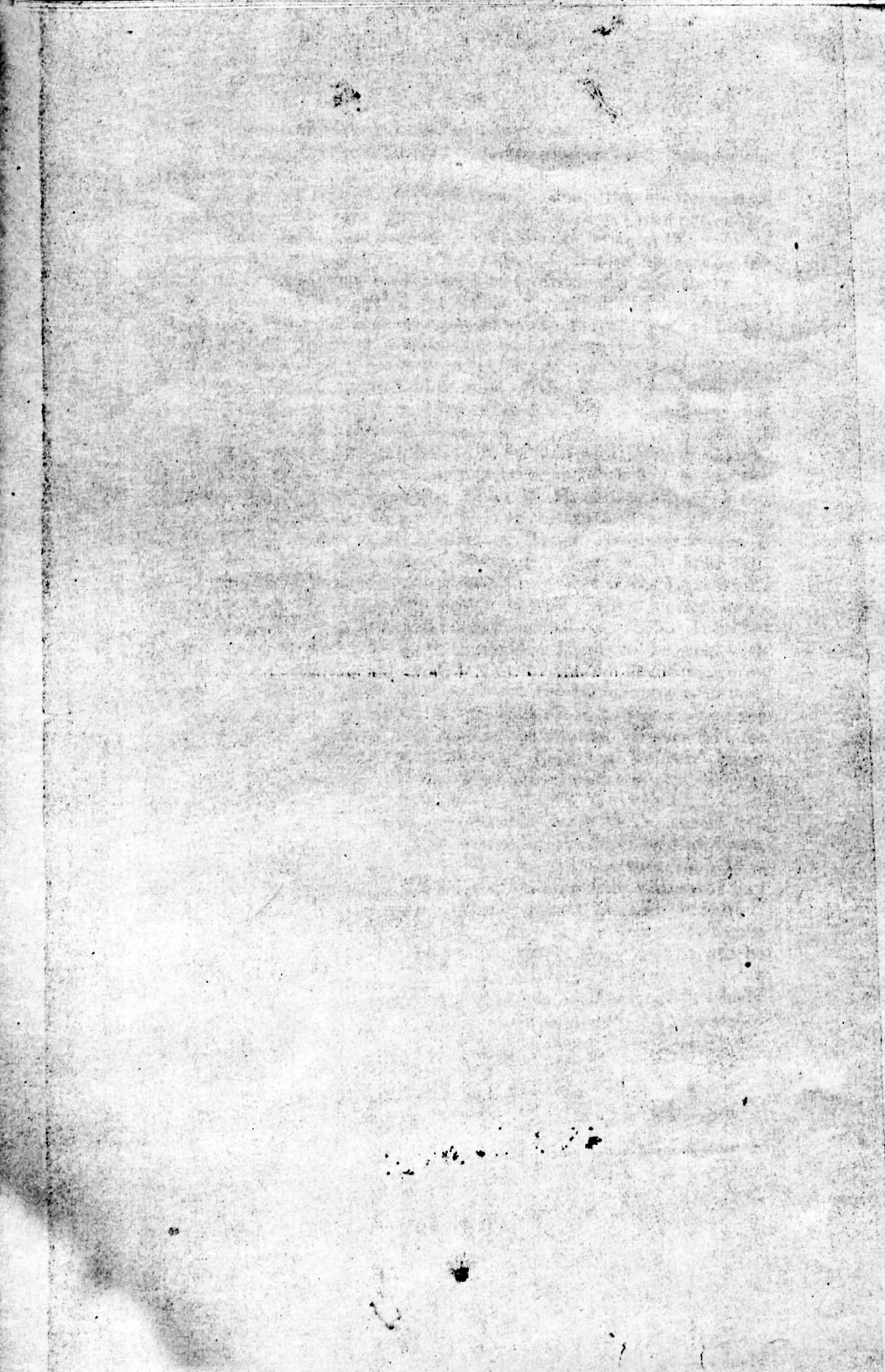
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# MINUTES.

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The Seventeenth Annual Session of the MT. MORIAH FREE-WILL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION was held with the Macedonia Church, Pickens county, Ala., on the 10th and 12th of October, 1874. Introductory Sermon by Elder Thomas Malloy, from Mat. 28: 19, 20. After thirty minutes recess the Association was called to order by the Moderator, Elder Ellis Gore, who, after singing, offered a feeling prayer.

Letters from the churches called for and read, and names of delegates enrolled, as per statistical table.

Proceeded to elect a Moderator and Clerk; whereupon Eld. ELLIS GORE was elected Moderator, and J. M. I. GUYTON Clerk.

1. Petitionary letters were presented from following Churches: Shiloh, Pickens county, Ala., Union Chapel and Detroit, Sanford county, Ala., Bethlehem, Monroe county, Miss., Shiloh, Lafayette county, Miss., for admission into our Association. The churches having been organized upon our Articles of Faith, and upon examination found orthodox were received, and the Moderator gave the right hand of fellowship to the delegates and cordially invited them to seats and to participate in our deliberations.

2. Called for correspondence from sister Associations. No correspondence received. On motion, Elder E. Gore was appointed to correspond with the Chattahoochee Free-Will Baptist Association of Georgia, in person or by letter.

3. The following committees were appointed:

*Finance*—Joseph Woods and Robert Fields.

*Preaching*—H. Stacy, J. R. Robertson, J. M. Weaver, and Deacons of this Church.

*Documents and Business*—Elders T. W. Springfield, Thos. Malloy, E. Bowles, J. P. Lewis, and the Moderator and Clerk were added.

4. Committee on Preaching reported: Elder J. P. Lewis preach to-night, Elder W. H. McGee to-morrow (Sabbath) at 9 o'clock, Elder E. Gore at 11 A. M., on Doctrine, and Elder T. W. Springfield at night. On motion, adjourned until Monday morning 8 o'clock. Prayer by Bro. Bowles.

## THE LORD'S DAY.

At 9 o'clock, Elder W. H. McGee preached from St. John 23c.: 17; Elder E. Gore, at 11 o'clock, from Isaiah 40: 29-31; Elder T. W. Springfield at night, from Dan. 12: 4—all to very large and attentive congregations.

## MONDAY MORNING, 8 O'CLOCK.

The Association met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Bro. Latham.

5. Minutes of Saturday read and approved.

6. Visiting brethren invited to seats and to participate in our deliberations.

7. Called for reports of Committees. Committee on Documents and Order of Business made their report, which was read and adopted. 1. No documents presented. 2. We recommend the order of business to be carried out as last year. 3. Before appointing the next Association consider the petition to divide the Association.

8. Circular Letter called for. Bro. Springfield having failed to write one, Elder E. Gore was appointed to prepare one, to be appended to the Minutes, choosing his own subject.

9. Committee on Finance reported \$41.65 for Minutes.

10. On motion, the Churches west of the Tombigbee River belonging to this Association were granted letters of dismission and authorized to organize an Association.

11. Appointed next Association to be held with Corinth church, seven miles S. E. of Vernon, commencing on Saturday before the 2nd Sabbath in October, 1875. Elder W. H. McGee to preach the Introductory Sermon; Elder M. E. Vail, alternate.

12. Called for report of Missionary Board. Nothing received.

13. Appointed three Union Meetings. First to be held with Bethlehem church, commencing on Saturday before the 1st Sabbath in September, 1875. Second to be held with Shiloh church, commencing on Saturday before the 4th Sab. in July, 1875. Introductory Sermon by Elder T. W. Springfield. Third, to be held with the Mt. Pleasant church, on Saturday before the 2nd Sabbath in August, 1875. Elder E. Gore to preach the Introductory Sermon.

14. On motion, appointed Elder Ellis Gore to superintend the printing of the Minutes, and that he be allowed all over \$30 for his services. Also, that our Articles of Faith and Rules of Decorum, and the names and address of all the ministers of our Association be printed with the Minutes.

15. On motion, continued Bro. Joseph Woods as Treasurer.

16. On motion, adopted following resolution offered by Eld. Gore:

*Resolved*, That the churches of this Association with their Pastors, meet at their respective houses of worship next Christmas day for the purpose of prayer and thanks-giving to God for his abundant blessings to our order during the past year, and that He would continue to bless us and add to our number daily such as will be saved in the last day.

17. On motion, *Resolved*, That the sincere thanks of this body are hereby tendered to the Macedonia church and the citizens of the vicinity, for their hospitality and kindness to us during the present session.

18. On motion, adjourned. Prayer by Elder M. E. Vail.

J. M. I. GUYTON, Clerk.

ELLIS GORE, Moderator.

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N. B.—The Union Grove Association will be held with Union Grove Church, Lafayette county, Miss., 10 miles South of Oxford, commencing on Saturday before the 3rd Sabbath in October, 1875.



# CIRCULAR LETTER;

WRITTEN BY ELDER ELLIS GORE.

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## CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

DEAR BRETHREN:—At your request, I furnish the following Essay on Church Discipline heretofore prepared by me, in lieu of a Circular Letter; the person appointed having failed to prepare the Circular:

I look upon this subject as but little understood, and badly carried out, by the members of the Church in their respective capacities and relations, as they stand one to another. First, it will be my duty to define the Church, or what constitutes a Church, properly authorized to exercise discipline in the government of her members. In a general sense, we understand the word Church to mean the whole body of believers in Christ, in every age of the world. But in a particular sense, we understand the word Church to mean an association, or assembly, of Christians, united together by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by his laws, and exercising the rights, gifts and privileges invested in them by his word. Its proper officers are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and to Titus, as Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons. The next question in order is, how many members does it require to constitute a particular church, fully authorized to exercise discipline and govern in a church, in all ordinary cases? In my opinion, notwithstanding the smallest number is not defined in the Bible, five well-informed christians in the doctrines of the Bible are competent to form a church, and exercise discipline in government. It is, however, desirable that there always should be more, for in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. To carry out the entire discipline, government and ordinances of the church, there must be a Pastor and Deacon or Deacons; but the discipline of the church belongs to the body, as equals in government. Hence, the Elder is not to lord it over God's heritage—but we are to be subject one to another, in humility.—Peter 5: 5. By church discipline we mean, that watch and care which church members should have for and over each other, and the course of labor to be pursued toward transgressors. The members of a church covenant together, to walk according to the scriptures. A departure from this, renders them subject to the discipline of the church.

In every community there must be authority somewhere invested, to carry the laws and regulations of that community into effect. In the church, this power is in the body. A majority should rule.

Nor are we left wanting in the Scriptures, to know what an offense is, and what course we should pursue in discipline; also, we are taught the spirit in which this work should be done. The object of discipline is, to save the transgressor and keep the church pure as possible. Hence in matters of discipline we should not be selfish and oppressive, but tender, kind and affectionate, and always attend to this matter in the spirit of forbearance and prayer, knowing that the transgressor is under satanic influence and back-slidden in heart; hence easily irritated, (a soft word turneth away wrath,) or he is penitent, and sorely distressed on account of his sins. In either of these cases, plain, tender, pungent treatment is the best.

There are two general classes of offences committed by church members. First, there are personal or private offences; second, there are public or

general offences, viz: offences against the whole body, (the church,) or cause of Christ in general. In personal or private offences, we have all the instruction necessary, how we should proceed, in the 18th chapter of the Gospel by St. Matthew, 15th verse: If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Now, my brethren, we should notice the language used here by our Saviour. If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. Not go and tell it to somebody else—as is too often the case. I understand this to be a personal and private offence; and no person but God, yourself, and the offender, should know anything about it, until you have taken the first step; if you gain your brother, or in other words, if he gives you satisfaction, it should be a secret with you and him forever; but, if he will not give you satisfaction, you are still not to make it public, by telling it to others, in a common way, nor even by telling it to the church, but in your mind you are to fix upon one or two confidential and judicious brethren; make known to them your grievance, and if they know their business, they will keep it a secret; and if in this second step you gain your brother, the matter should rest there, with you two or three, forever, and not expose your brother, and give the church and the world a bad opinion of him when satisfaction is made; but if he will not hear them, then tell it to the church, then it becomes the property of the church; if he hears the church, a good work is done—the brother is saved; if he will not hear the church, let him be as a heathen—cut him off. Our Saviour is very lenient in his advice how we should act toward our brethren that should sin against us, if he should sin seventy times seven, in a day, and turn saying, I repent, we are to forgive him. The letter and the spirit of this chapter should be carried out as much as possible—did I say as much as possible—Christ requires or enjoins no impossibilities on his creatures, much less upon his children, who are elemented for the work assigned them to do; especially, when they yield to the influence of his spirit, which always corresponds with his word and produces conviction in the heart, of the propriety and happy tendency of doing what he has commanded us to do. All this is plain, and if there seem to us impossibilities or things hard to be understood, the fault is in us. We have not learned enough—or right in the school of Christ, and it would be well for us, instead of stumbling over seeming impossibilities, to read God's word with care, prayerfully, and our mountains will become mole-hills. We soon would learn, to do unto others as we would they should do unto us, and when smitten on one cheek, turn the other; love our enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use us. Yes, it would be the delight of our hearts to forgive our brother that had sinned seventy times seven, against us, in a day, when he turned saying, I repent. These expressions show that we should be abundant in forgiveness, especially as the merciful only shall obtain mercy. We have no thought that one, brother will sin seventy times seven against another, in a day; yet it is possible he might—and it is equally possible, that a christian, with a heart loving God, may forgive those trespasses, and he must do it, when repented of, or he will not get to heaven himself. Discipline to a church, is like that of order in a family, or the maintaining of government, and the application of the laws for the prosperity of a nation. Its object should never be to serve a party interest or course, the judgment or counsel of men; but to secure the purity of the church, the honor of religion, the good of the offender, and the glory of God. The church should be well informed, and act with purity of intention, and unity of design. The laws of Christ, for the government of his church, should be studied, understood, carefully and inflexibly adhered to, and in every respect carried into effect, according to their true spirit and meaning. But while the laws of Christ, in the government of the church, are to be tenaciously carried out, we are not to consider them all judgment; or as pursuing the offender to inflict punishment without regard to mercy or forbearance. Forbearing and forgiving one another in love, is a great christianian virtue; hence we should not expect to agree in everything, and we should not make every little infirmity a matter of discipline, where the purity and piety of the individual, and the honor of the church, is not endangered. We should advise and admonish in such cases as these. But alas! what is the common course of church members in these days? When some little cir-



cumstance occurs, a mere oversight or unguarded expression, not designed as an offense by any means, instead of going to our brother, and in a tender manner, asking an explanation of the matter, many church members fall into a pout, stand at a distance from his brother, while he is profoundly ignorant of any grievance. But the brother is very busy gadding about over the settlement, telling it to none of the members of the church—perhaps he does to some of the ignorant ones, especially if he thinks they are prejudiced against the same individual.

But do they stop here, no; it is not uncommon that they tell it highly exaggerated, to the most profane, skeptical and profligate of the community. Is this discipline? Is this going to your brother and telling him the fault between thee and him, alone? Perhaps the next you hear of such a brother, he is telling it about that he is going to quit the church—cannot live with such and such a brother. Such a course as this, is strong evidence that there is something wrong with the man himself—he needs the life and power of religion in his own soul; or he is very ignorant of the laws of Christ, and his own duty. My opinion is, that he is wanting in both; for the most ignorant African I ever saw, when his soul is full of the love of God, will not speak evil, or backbite his brother, notwithstanding he never heard a chapter read in the Bible in his life; for the “fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance”—against such there is no law. But the works of the flesh are hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, envying, murders, drunkenness, railings. They that do such things shall not enter the kingdom of God. My opinion is, that a brother, or a member of the church, that tells his grievance to another, or speaks of the faults of his brother behind his back, before he first goes to his brother and tells him alone, in a kind and brotherly manner, is a proper subject of discipline himself. We should never hear such ungodly tales, envious talking, backbiting, and gossips, for they are a curse to a community, to a church and to the world. They should not be countenanced by any proper thinking people. Private offenses should be settled in a private way, if possible; if not, the 18th chapter of Mathew is the proper rule of action.

Our second proposition is, to notice public or outrageous offences, which need no private dealing with; because the offense is against the body. Hence the church must make a public disposition of the case. Paul says to Timothy, 5: 20, 22, “Them that sin, rebuke before all; that others also may fear.” Paul must have had reference here to public sins, for no man who believes the Bible to be the Word of God, can suppose that the Apostles would contradict what Christ says in Mathew 18: 15—“If thy brother trespass against thee, tell him his fault between thee and him alone,” &c. We are to rebuke publicly those that sin publicly, for their good, and that the whole church may fear to sin in the same way.

We notice a few cases in the Scriptures that deserve public rebuke; also, a few cases that demand, for the honor and purity of the church, and the good of the offender, public exclusion. Gallatians, 2: 11, 14, we learn that Paul rebuked Peter before the whole church at Antioch, for dissembling, which is hypocrisy, or pretending to believe what he did not. By his example Peter led Barnabas into error. We should maintain what we believe, in humility, if we were at hell's door, for hypocrisy or deceiving, not repented of, will lead us into its vaults.—Paul to Titus, 1: 10-16, inclusive. We have another character that should be rebuked sharply, which is, the unruly, vain talkers, deceivers; teaching things they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. They are liars, acting hypocritically, not sound in the faith. They profess to know God, but in works, they deny him. In short, they are characters that introduce doctrines and opinions contrary to the true and pure plan, set forth in the Gospel, upon which Christ will save sinners. Having the form of godliness without the power; having the standard of piety, making a great parade for religion, and living in sin; such mouths ought to be stopped.

We now notice a few cases that demand exclusion, that are of public character, and need no private dealing, but for the church simply to notify the brother to a day of trial, that he may prove his innocence, if he can. In Cor. 6: 1, there is a long catalogue of flagrant crimes set forth, of which we notice a few that demand exclusion without compromise: Drunkenness, murder,

lying, stealing, adultery, heresies, and I would say, the drunkard-maker. "Woe unto him that putteth the bottle to his brother's mouth."

Now, all this class of sins are against God and the whole church; and only to be known by the church, that the member is guilty of the act. Nothing short of exclusion will fill out the requisition of the Gospel. Upon an examination of the Scriptures, I find no passage that recommends a course of labor with such characters, or for satisfaction. The sentiment of the Bible is, "put away from among you that wicked person." "No murderer hath eternal life." "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God." Hence we are under no obligation to labor, in a private way, to bring such outrageous characters to repentance to keep them in the church. We may, and should labor for their repentance and conversion; but the honor and purity of the church must be sustained in their exclusion. At a proper time, by proving the sincerity of their repentance and reformation, such may be received back into the church.

I will now close by making a few remarks with regard to that relation which exists between parents and children, and masters and servants, while at the same time members of the church. Their being members of the church does not lessen the right of the father and master to command and rule, in humanity and reason, for the order and natural good of all parties; nor does it lessen the obligation of the child or servant to obey. Neither Christ nor his Apostles have given any such intimation; but the reverse. Have commanded, that children should obey their parents, and servants obey their masters. And if to keep good order, and carry out proper government in a family, the father or the master has not only to rebuke, but use the rod while it is in reason. The church has no business with it. Those relations existed in the days of Christ, and he did not meddle with them, only to urge obedience on the part of children and servants, and tenderness and forbearance on the part of parents and masters. I have written in much haste and confusion, and have not done that justice to the subject which is due to one of such importance.

May the grace of God keep us from sinning against Him, from offending our brethren, and bringing upon ourselves the necessity of discipline. Amen.

## RULES OF DECORUM.

ARTICLE 1. The Association shall be called to order by the Moderator who presided at the last Association; former Clerk also officiate, until the Association shall be fully organized.

2. The Association shall be opened and closed by singing and prayer.

3. The Moderator and Clerk shall be chosen by ballot at each Association; a majority of the members present elects.

4. The names of the Delegates from the different churches shall be enrolled and called as often as may be necessary during the Association.

5. A majority of the delegates present shall rule in all cases, except in the reception of churches into our body, which must be unanimous.

6. The Moderator shall vote in no case only when the Association is equally divided, but shall have equal right to speak upon any subject, provided he appoint some brother present to the chair while speaking.

7. Only one person shall speak at the same time, who shall arise and address the Moderator.

8. No brother shall be interrupted while speaking, unless he depart from the subject in discussion or use words of personal reflection.

9. No person shall be allowed to speak more than twice on the same subject without leave from the Association, nor more than fifteen minutes at a time.

10. No member shall laugh or talk during the times the debates are going on.

11. No member shall absent himself from the conference without leave from the Moderator.



## ARTICLES OF FAITH.

ARTICLE 1. We believe that there is only one true and living God, who is the Supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth, self-existent Creator of all things, and revealed under the personal distinctions of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and existing in distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

2. We believe the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of Heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, Salvation for its end, and Truth for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of this world, the centre of Christian union, the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions will be tried.

3. We believe that man was created holy, under the law of his Maker, but from voluntary transgression, fell from that holy and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, and wholly unable of their own free will and ability, to recover themselves from the fallen state in which they are by nature.

4. We believe that God has not fixed the future state of mankind by an absolute and unconditional decree, but salvation is offered in the Gospel, free to all, and if sinners are lost forever, it will be their own fault.

5. We believe that Christ, by his death and sufferings, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; however, that none but those who believe in Him can be partakers of the divine benefits.

6. We believe that true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, or from the force and operation of free will, since man, in consequence of his natural corruption, is incapable either of thinking or doing anything spiritually good.

7. We believe in a general application of the grace of God to fallen man, sufficient to enable him morally and actually to obey the requirements of the law of liberty, (Ja. 1: 25,) that is, to act saving faith, (John 1: 9,) however, none but those who believe and acquiesce in Christ, will be saved thereby.—(Acts 17: 31; Rom. 1: 19; John 3: 19).

8. We believe in the moral free-agency of man, by the grace of God, before and after conversion, and that he is laid under no invincible necessity, by his Creator, to act in any given way: that if he lives after the flesh he shall die, but if he, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, he shall live; and therefore man is always a proper subject of admonition and exhortation.—(Heb. 3: 11, 12, 13; Rom. 13: 14; Mark 13: 33; Eze. 18: 24; Rev. 2 and 3 chs.; Eze. 33: 13, 18; 1 Tim. 4: 1; Heb. 3: 6; 1 Cor. 10: 12, 22; 1 Peter 1: 10).

9. We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by his word; that its only proper officers are bishops or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties, are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

10. We believe christian baptism is immersion in water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and that believers are the proper subjects.

11. We believe that the Lord's Supper is of perpetual obligation, by which the members of the church, in the use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ—preceded always by solemn self-examination.

12. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the general judgment; that the joys of the righteous and punishment of the wicked will be eternal, upon principles of grace and justice.

13. We believe in open, or mixed communion, and the churches of our body are authorized, through their pastors, to invite christians of all orthodox churches who are in good standing in their respective churches, to commune with us at the Lord's table.

# *Statistical Table of the Mt. Moriah Free-Will Baptist Association.*

Churches.	Names of Delegates.	Accepted by Experience	Accepted by Letter	Dismissed by Letter	Excluded	Processed	Total Members	Contributions.	Pastors.	Post-Offices.	
Mt. Moriah.....	E. Gore, Joseph Woods, J. M. Weaver.....	.....	.....	.....	1	1	26	\$ 6 00	Ellis Gore.....	Yorkville, Pickens co. Ala	
Macedonia.....	R. S. Fields, S. Dowdel, J. Byars.....	.....	.....	.....	60	60	4 00	W. H. McGee.....	Reform, " "	" "	
Vernon.....	T. W. Springfield, Thos. Finch, P. H. Smith	11	7	1	66	2 00	2 00	W. R. Latham.....	" " "	" "	
Free Hope.....	J. D. Crawford, J. M. Ayers, J. Mosley.....	.....	3	4	22	2 00	2 00	Thomas Malloy.....	Vernon, Sanford	" "	
Mt. Pleasant.....	Thos. Malloy, H. Stacy, J. M. L. Guyton.....	4	12	5	58	3 75	3 75	M. E. Vail.....	" " "	" "	
Corinth.....	J. R. Robertson, H. M. Ayers, B. J. Gunn.....	10	3	5	53	3 50	3 50	T. W. Springfield	" " "	" "	
Springfield.....	G. B. Taylor, G. T. Sanders, D. Hollis.....	62	27	1	120	8 00	8 00	G. B. Taylor.....	" " "	" "	
Union Grove.....	E. Bowls, R. P. Johnston.....	1	2	1	49	6 40	6 40	J. M. L. Guyton.....	" " "	" "	
Pilgrim's Chapel	J. J. Willis, J. M. Willis.....	.....	2	2	.....	.....	.....	N. L. Bickstaff.....	" " "	" "	
Free Liberty.....	J. P. Lewis, S. Loller, H. Stewart.....	15	5	1	21	51	50	J. P. Lewis.....	Moscow, " "	" "	
Bethlehem.....	Thos. Taylor, S. L. Smith.....	5	.....	2	11	21	1 00	J. R. Holladay.....	" " "	" "	
Zion.....	Represented by Letter.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	H. T. Taylor.....	" " "	" "	
Pilgrim's Rest.....	Represented by Letter.....	1	2	.....	14	14	1 00	Reubin Guyton.....	Beaverton " "	" "	
Shioh.....	W. H. McGee, W. R. Latham, W. McGee.....	.....	.....	.....	17	17	2 50	Thomas Taylor.....	" " "	" "	
Union Chapel.....	J. M. Lawrence, J. T. Collins.....	.....	.....	.....	24	24	6 00	Henry Stewart.....	Moscow, " "	" "	
Bethlehem.....	J. H. Harmon, J. T. Harmon, E. J. Bennett	.....	.....	.....	46	46	6 00	W. L. Lewis.....	Oxford, LaFayette co. Miss	" "	
Detroit.....	W. A. Dill, J. F. Wright.....	.....	.....	.....	50	50	2 00	Wm. Hitchcock.....	" " "	" "	
Shioh.....	Represented by Letter.....	.....	.....	.....	30	30	.....	Bert Brasier.....	" " "	" "	
		112	61	13	11	4	702	\$41 63	M. Kissner.....	Spring Dale, " "	" "

R. P. Johnston, S. Winter, W. B. Tramil, Spring Dale, LaFayette Co, Miss.



