

Pa. Springs Field

MINUTES

OF THE

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL SESSION

OF THE

MOUNT MORIAH

FREE-WILL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

CONVENED WITH

HOLLY SPRINGS CHURCH, PICKENS CO., ALA.,

October 10th and 12th, 1885.

CARROLLTON:

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PROCEEDINGS.

The Thirty-fifth Annual Session of the MOUNT MORIAH FREE-WILL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION was held with the Holly Springs church, in Pickens county Ala., on the 10th and 12th of October, 1885. The Introductory Sermon was preached by Eld. Wood Springfield, text 1 Cor. 14: 40. A recess of half hour, and dinner was taken. After which the delegation met in the house. After singing by the congregation and an edifying prayer by Eld. R. H. Tomlin business was transacted in the following order, viz:

1. Letters from the churches called for, handed in and read contents noted, as per statistical table.

2. Proceeded to elect a Moderator and Clerk, whereupon Eld. Wood Springfield was elected Moderator and James H. Estes Clerk.

3. Opened the door for the reception of churches into our body: none presented.

4. Called for correspondence from sister Associations. Received a letter and messengers from Vernon Association. Eld. T. W. Springfield and Eld. R. H. Tomlin, the messengers from Vernon Association, were cordially invited to seats with us, and their presence highly appreciated. The Moderator gave them the right hand of fellowship.

5. Appointed the following committees, viz:

On Documents and Order of Business—Eld. J. R. Roberson, Eld. W. R. Latham, Eld. T. Nabers, W. E. Harden, Martin Hutchinson: Moderator and Clerk.

On Finance—Joseph E. Woods and Robert Fields.

On Preaching—R. T. Guin, A. J. Hays, S. L. McAdams and deacons of Holly Springs church.

On Temperance—A. J. Wallace, J. P. Roberson, B. Cash.

On Sabbath-schools—J. M. Wright, J. W. Guyton, J. G. Pearson.

On Deceased Ministers and Deacons—W. E. Harden, H. Sanders, and M. P. Hutchinson.

6. Appointed as corresponding messengers with Vernon Association brethren J. E. Woods, Eld. J. R. Roberson, Eld. W. Springfield, W. E. Harden, corresponding secretary Martin Hutchinson

Appointed as corresponding messengers to Tupelo Association Eld. W. Springfield, C. Schrimshaw, Moses McGee and Nathan McShan; Martin Hutchinson to write.

7. The committee on Preaching reports as follows: Eld. Isaac T. Nabers to preach to-night; Eld. J. R. Roberson, Sabbath, 9

o'clock; Eld. R. H. Tomlin, Sabbath, 11 o'clock; Eld. T. W. Springfield at night.

On motion the Association adjourned until Monday morning, 8 o'clock.

SATURDAY NIGHT AND SABBATH.

Saturday night Eld. Isaac T. Nabers preached to a large and orderly congregation; text Luke 18: 18. Sabbath, 9 o'clock. Eld. J. R. Roberson preached an interesting sermon; text 13 Math. 12. Eld. R. H. Tomlin preached to a large and intelligent congregation at 11 o'clock Sabbath; text 1 Peter 1: 2. Subject elegantly discussed on the word "Elect." Eld. T. W. Springfield Sunday night, Text 45 Genesis 4; he delivered an able and eloquent sermon.

MONDAY MORNING, 8 O'CLOCK.

The association met pursuant to adjournment. Singing and prayer by the Moderator. After which the body was called to order.

8. The minutes of Saturday were read and approved.

9. Called for reports of committees, which were presented as follows:

1. The committee on Documents and Order of Business recommend that the Circular Letter (written by W. Springfield) be adopted and appended to the minutes.

2. That the next session of this Association be held with Shady Grove Church, Lamar county, Ala. Elder W. H. McGee to preach the Introductory sermon, Elder Peter McGee alternate.

3. That Bro. James H. Estes write the Circular Letter and choose his own subject.

4. That James H. Estes be continued as Treasurer.

5. That Bro. James H. Estes prepare the minutes for publication, and get the printing done where he can get it done the cheapest.

6. We recommend the next Union meeting to be held with Macedonia church to convene on Friday before the first Sabbath in September, 1886. Introductory sermon to be preached by Eld. J. R. Roberson, Eld. J. H. Jordan alternate.

7. The committee on Sabbath-schools report as follows: They do not find as much interest as should be; they therefore recommend to each church a greater interest in Sabbath-schools, as it is certainly an auxiliary to the success of the cause of christianity; therefore we urge upon ministers of our order to encourage their respective churches to attend to this much neglected enterprise.

8. The committee on Temperance make the following report: We believe that amongst the many evils we deem the intemperate use of intoxicating liquors the greatest. Many men who might have been good and useful citizens who have become its victims have fallen into sin, crime and desperation. In view of

these facts we recommend that our ministers faithfully warn sinners and professors of the various evils and make temperance a special subject.

9. The committee on Finance report as follows: For minutes, \$24.45.

10. The committee on deceased Ministers and Deacons report: That our beloved brother Eld. John Woodward has been removed from us by death. He was pastor of Macedonia church, and was much beloved by all. Also our beloved brother John Brewer, deacon of Mount Moriah church, has been removed from us by death; we therefore recommend that we pay them a tribute of respect, and append to the minutes.

11. *Resolved.* That the Ministers of the Gospel composing this Association be recognized as standing delegates to all our annual meetings, without election.

12. *Resolved.* That our Ministers use the best periodicals that can be obtained according to ability, believing that it is their duty to show themselves approved workmen in the vineyard of the Lord, and especially to study the Bible, and report at the next Association the success of their labors, including mileage, number of organizations, ordinations of ministers and deacons, number of conversions; also the amount of money received for the support of the Gospel during the associational year.

Report of Ministers' labors. Eld. W. Springfield reports as follows: Served 7 churches, traveled 3,000 miles, preached 112 sermons, preached 7 funerals, baptized 16, received by letter 9, restored 3, excluded 1, ordained 1, ministers received by affiliation 5, marriages 2.

13. *Resolved.* That we adopt the following order of business: 1st, The minutes of Saturday be read and approved. 2nd, Reports of Committees.

First—Report of committee on Documents and order of business. Second—Committee on Finance. Third—Committee on Sabbath-schools. Fourth—Committee on Temperance. Fifth—Committee on Deceased Ministers and Deacons. Sixth—Report of Ministers the past associational year. Seventh—Report of Treasurers of different churches. Eighth—Report of Clerks of different churches. Ninth—Report of Delegates in regard to the support of their ministers and condition of their church houses, etc.

14. *Resolved.* That our thanks are due and are hereby tendered to the members of the Holly Springs church, and the members of other churches, and the citizens of the community for their kindness and hospitality, and for the assistance of the noble confraternity in aiding us in our meeting during this session.

15. On motion the Association adjourned to meet at Shady Grove church, Saturday before the second Sabbath in October, 1886. After an eloquent sermon, delivered by Eld. R. H. Tomlin, an appropriate hymn was sung and the parting hand was taken amid shouts and tears of joy.

JAMES H. ESTES, Clerk.

WOOD SPRINGFIELD,
Moderator.

CIRCULAR LETTER;

WRITTEN BY ELDER WOOD SPRINGFIELD.

DEAR BRETHREN:—I being appointed by your honorable body to write the next circular letter, and chose my own subject, I shall proceed to write upon the Eleventh Article of our Faith as a subject. We believe that the Lord's Supper is of perpetual obligation by which the members of churches in the use of bread and wine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ, preceded by a solemn self-examination. If we understand the scriptures on this important subject the supper spoken of was instituted by our Redeemer in order that it might be perpetual throughout His church till he comes. Well, it seems to be a question with some who claim to be Christians who are the proper subjects to partake of the Lord's Supper. If the Lord instituted the supper spoken of for the church, surely all true believers are proper subjects. But as it is thought by some that it was only instituted for their own faith and order, it is necessary for us to prove that it is not confined to sex nor age, but Free to all true believers. As this is an ordinance, and the institution of this ordinance is recorded in Matthew 26: 26; Mark 14: 22-26; Luke 22: 11-20; 1 Cor. 11: 22-26, from these and other passages it is evident that the ordinance is of perpetual obligation in the church militant. The propriety and importance of such an institution are readily seen. The main design of the Lord's supper is clearly indicated in the above passages, viz: a memorial of Christ. Do this in remembrance of Me. Ye do show forth the Lord's death till He comes. Commemoration of events have existed in all ages and nations, and have been of great service in cherishing the remembrance of important events, such was the Passover to the Jews, such is the Fourth of July to us. Christ is the hope of the world; without his atonement every sinner must have perished. By his sacrifice Christ made possible the salvation of all mankind; multitudes have already been saved, and an innumerable throng will finally surround His throne, redeemed by His blood. It is fit that the work of salvation should be commemorated by the redeemed. Christians should ever feel it to be not only a sacred duty but a most delightful privilege to surround the table of their divine Lord. A secondary object of this ordinance is to maintain the fellowship of the saints, hence it is called the communion; in it believers have communion with Christ and each other. It is not necessary that each communicant should approve of every thing in all other communicants' order, for this would be to require absolute perfection of all as a prerequisite, and would destroy the Ordinance. The view generally held by experienced Christians is, that while there is nothing supernatural in the Eucharist it is commemorative, and the elements used are but symbolical, yet an appropriate spiritual blessing is enjoyed in the Ordinance by all who rightfully partake. 1 Cor. 11: 27-29. Such is the experience of the most devout Christians. Preparation should be made before coming to the table of the Lord. The services on the occasion of celebrating the ordinance should be heartily engaged in by all the communicants. It is a suitable occasion for deep self-examination, repentance of sin and renewed consecration, also gratitude to our divine benefactor. It should be attended with a sincere heart and in faith. Those who thus partake worthily they may feel their own unworthiness of this or any other blessing of grace. But none can be accused of partaking un-

worthily, unless like some in the Primitive church, they pervert and profane the ordinance, then they procure to themselves condemnation, not deserving the Lord's body.

The circumstantial of this ordinance are not prescribed in the Scriptures but are left to be regulated by the church. Good judgment must regulate these according to the condition of each church. Experience has also shown that in ordinary cases it had better not be administered less frequently than Three months nor oftener than once a month. We cannot see any reason why we should not commune with the dying Christian when requested, for if there are any proper subjects it must be those who have fought the good fight and kept the faith to the end of life, and are called the redeemed of the Lord even unto death. Who should be invited to partake at the Lord's table? It must be seen that this question would admit of an easy answer, viz: The Lord's children. But we need not say that simple scriptural direction has been strangely overlooked and unauthorized tests set up. Some denominations receive to this ordinance those who are not professedly regenerates though belonging to their church, while they reject those not within their pale, though acknowledged to be eminent christians. This is palpably opposed to the terms and spirit of the institution and the uniform practice of the Apostolic churches. Among Evangelical denominations in this country the chief controversy on this subject is with the close communion Baptist. They will not admit members of the pedobaptist churches to the ordinance, on the ground that baptism is prerequisite to communion and pedobaptist have not been baptized; they also reject the Freewill baptist, although they have been baptized, because they commune with pedobaptists. It will be seen, therefore, that in their view that christian character, church fellowship, and baptism will not entitle one to communion; he must be of their faith and order. This is a position which they rarely undertake to defend, by argument, yet it accords with their general practice. But is baptism an indispensable prerequisite to communion? Ought pedobaptist Christians to be barred to admission to this ordinance? We will notice some of the arguments used in the affirmative:

1st. The order was in the apostolic commission. Matt. 28: 19 and 20. Baptizing in the name, etc., teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. But this contains no prohibition of the kind contended for; it is hardly a commission to baptize, and inculcates the performance of all other duties. It establishes no priority one over another.

2nd. The order of the apostolical practice, see Acts 2: 41 and 42. Then they that gladly received the word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls, and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread and in prayer. Why not on the strength of this passage make baptism a prerequisite to prayer since it precedes it in the order of the record? All the passage proves is, that in a given case a multitude were baptized immediately after conversion and continued in the performance of the various christian duties. Nothing is here intimated of the apostles making baptism an indispensable requisite to communion, but even if they did this does not necessarily authorize close communion. Now, in the time of the apostles there was no controversy on the subject of baptism; all Christians were baptized. If any were not baptized it was because they rejected the ordinance. How stands the case now? Are there no unbaptized christians now in the estimation of our Calvinistic baptist brethren? Was not Dodridge, Brainard, and Whitfield Christians? but they were not baptized according to the Baptist faith. The Apostles admitted all christians to the Lord's Table or Supper. We must do the same if we would follow their example; to be consistent we must either do this or deny that any pedobaptists are christians. It is said by one of old that if any man is good enough for the Lord he is good enough for me. It is said by some that baptism is the door into the church, but that is not true. Christ is the door. John 12: 9. Finally it is said if we commune with the pedobaptists we ought to admit them to membership in our church; this does not follow, if we regard them as christians we can agree with them in commemorating the sacrifice

of our common Lord. But christians honestly differ on various important points of church building and discipline; while these differences of sentiment exist there had better be a distinction of churches, denominations and organizations. Still they should cherish each other as brethren in the same general church of Christ, and should cooperate with each other for the salvation of the world. The doctrine of Free communion may be stated in few words, it is that communion of saints, every true believer has a right to commune. This is the principle and is authorized on these grounds: 1st of reason. All christians have a common Interest in the Redeemer's blood. They are alike accepted of Christ, and united to Him and to each other in the same spiritual relation together, and are of the same heavenly inheritance. They now cooperate in various ways in which they acknowledge each other to be christians. They may therefore unite in commemorating the Saviour's suffering and death. Experience has shown the influence of close communion to be bad and free communion to be good.

The scripture precept is such as to exclude no true believer from the Lord's Supper but makes it the duty of all to partake, in remembrance of their common Saviour. Says he, "Drink ye all of it." We have no evidence from the practice of the Apostles that they excluded any from the ordinance whom they recognized as christians. On the contrary, see Romans 14: 1. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye." See also a lengthy argument for the exercise of mutual charity and fellowship, 1. Cor. 12: 12-27. So if we regard our pedobaptist brethren as christians we should not exclude them from the communion for the table is the Lord's, not ours. We have no right to exclude any whom He has not excluded. It is thought by many that free communion is communing with the world, but they take the wrong idea of the term, for what we mean by free communion is, that we believe that all christians have an equal right to participate at any time and place that circumstances will admit. Oh! that the sectarian coat could be thrown off, and controversies would cease, and christians would seize hold of the word that is able to stand. Oh! let us call to mind that dark and doleful night when the powers of earth and hell arose against the Son of God's delight, and friends betrayed Him to his foes. Jesus invites saints to meet around His board. Here pardoned sinners sit and hold communion with their Lord.

Then in conclusion we must say that we believe that the Lord's Supper is free to all christians who hold it in memory of His death till he comes. We also believe that Jesus, through the invitations of the Gospel, hath invited every saint of every name and denomination to partake together the bread and wine, which is emblematical of his broken body and spilled blood for the sins of the whole world. We also believe that when we invite communicants that we should invite true believers, and if there are any present who are not believers by practice they would not feel themselves invited. But if they should partake what is that to us. Paul says, Let a man examine himself and so eat of that bread and drink of that cup, for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not deriving the Lord's body. For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. 1 Cor. 11: 28, 29, and 31. As we are sure that there has been enough said to convince any reasonable individual that is searching for light on this important subject, we will now submit these broken sketches to the consideration of all that may read them with unsectarian design. May the Lord bless our efforts and incline our hearts in the right path. Amen.

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE 1. This Association shall be known as the Mount Moriah Freewill Baptist Association of Alabama, and be composed of delegates from the different churches composing the same. Each church shall be entitled to three delegates to represent her at each session.

2. This body shall be considered an advisory council, but having no authority over the local affairs of the churches.

3. Each church in this Association shall be considered as an independent body, and shall control her own internal affairs in matters of discipline, etc. She may, however, in extreme cases call in aid from sister churches.

4. All questions on doctrine and matters of general interest shall be settled by a two-thirds vote of the Association, and this decision shall be final.

5. The officers of this Association shall be a Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer, who shall be chosen by a majority vote annually.

6. The Association shall meet annually at such time and place as shall be most convenient, and shall not adjourn finally until all the business is transacted.

7. Churches wishing to become members of this Association must adopt the Articles of Faith and conform to its usages.

8. We agree, as churches composing this Association, to use our best influence to promote the interest of all moral and benevolent institutions, such as the Temperance cause, Sabbath-schools, Missionary operations, etc., etc.

RULES OF DECORUM.

ARTICLE 1. The Association shall be called to order by the Moderator who presided at the last session; former clerk also officiate until the body is 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 session; a majority of members present elects.

4. The names of delegates from the different churches shall be enrolled, and called as often as may be necessary during the session.

5. A majority of the delegates present shall rule in all cases, except in 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 on any subject, provided he appoint some brother present to the chair while he is speaking.

7. Only one person shall speak at a time, who shall rise 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 of the body, nor more than fifteen minutes at one time.

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

11. No member shall absent himself from the Association in session without leave of the Moderator.

ARTICLES OF FAITH.

ARTICLE. I. 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 distinction of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and existing in distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

II. 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 center of Christian union, the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions shall be tried.

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

IV. 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.

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

VI. 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 any thing spiritually good.

VII. We believe in a general application of the grace of God to fallen man, sufficiently to enable him morally and actually to obey the requirements of the law of liberty, Jas. 1 ch., 25 v.; this is, to act saving faith, John, 1 ch., 9 v.; however, none but those who believe or acquiesce in Christ will be saved thereby—Acts, 17: 31; Rom. 2: 19; John, 3: 19.

VIII. We believe in the free moral 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. 11: 11, 12, 13; Rom. 12: 14; Mark. 13: 13; Eze. 18: 24.

IX. 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 exercise the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by his word; and that its only proper officers are bishops or pastors or deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

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

XI. 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.

XII. 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.

XIII. We believe in open 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.	DELEGATES.	Reg. by Let.	By Exper.	Dis. by Let.	Excluded ..	Deceased..	Total Mem.	Minutes	PASTORS.	POST-OFFICES OF CHURCHES.
Mt. Moriah	J E Woods, W E Hardin, N S McShan	1	5			1	79	3 50	W. Springfield	Beard's, Ala.,
Macedonia.	M P Hutchinson, S L McAdams, I C Jordan, ...	4	3		1	1	63	3 50	W. Springfield	Mill Port, Ala.
Free Hope	M D McGee, A J Wallace, P McGee	3	1	2	2	1	69	2 60	W. Springfield	Kingville, "
Mt. Pleasant.	Not represented									
Corinth.	W Springfield, R T Guin, J M Wright						39	2 00	L. B. Taylor.	Kingville, "
Shiloh	W H McGee, J G Pearson, J H Estes			3			53	2 00	W. Springfield. .	Koon, "
Tabernacle.	Not represented									
Holly Springs ..	W R Latham, C A Lancaster, H Sanders	2					30	2 00	W. R. Latham	Carrollton, Ala.
Military Springs.	Not represented									
Mt. Harmony.	J R Robertson, I P Robertson, A J Robertson ..						30	1 50	Peter McGee.	Vernon, Ala.
Shady Grove	I T Nabers, John Dunn, I Taylor	1	12		1		56	1 65	J. R. Robertson. .	Kennedy, "
Mt. Zion	W B Weathers, B F Cash, D L Cook	1		6			36	2 00	W. Springfield	Anro, "
Antioch	James Foster, B D Williams, Jas Black						27	1 50	J. R. Robertson. .	Fayette C.H., Ala
Friendship.	John Cooper, J Bell, E Holliman						6	50	W. Springfield	Gentry, "
Unity	A J Hays, J M beasley, T L Hays	2	3				12	1 25	Peter McGee.	Vernon, "
		20	24	11	4	3	506	24 00		

ORDAINED MINISTERS AND THEIR POSTOFFICES.—Wood Springfield, Mill-Port, Lamar Co., Ala.; M. E. Vail, Military Springs, John R. Robertson, Kennedy, Ala.; W. H. McGee, W. R. Latham, Koon, Pickens Co., Ala.; Peter McGee, Kingville, Ala.; Benj. McCool, Isaac T. Nabers, J. H. Jordan, Anro, Ala.; John S. Hinton, McConnell, Tuscaloosa county, Ala.

LICENSED MINISTERS—H. Stacy, Anro, Lamar county, Ala.; J. McGee, Kingville, Lamar county, Alabama.