

MINUTES

OF THE CONVENTION AND THE FIRST SESSION OF THE

New River Baptist Association,

HELD AT FAYETTEVILLE BAPTIST

MEETING-HOUSE,

Fayette County, Ala.,

Commencing, Saturday before the 5th Sabbath in October,

1871.

FAYETTE C. H., ALA.
Printed at the Office of the FAYETTE WATCHMAN.



MINUTES.

1. WHEREAS, It was thought expedient to divide the North River Association, several churches of the 1st District obtained letters of dismission for the purpose of organizing a new Association. With a view to this end, the delegates from the aforesaid churches met at the Fayetteville Baptist meeting-house Saturday before the fifth Sabbath in October, 1871. *Oct. 29.*

The Introductory Sermon was preached by Eld. B. V. Shirley, from the 19th verse and 15th chap. of Acts: "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God."

2. After fifteen minutes intermission, the delegates assembled in the Fayetteville Baptist meeting-house.

3. Upon motion of Eld. J. C. Jones, Eld. B. V. Shirley was called to act as Chairman, and H. M. Bell, Secretary.

4. The Convention was opened by singing, and prayer by the chm'n.

5. Called for letters from the churches, which were presented, read, and the names of the delegates enrolled as follows:

Mt. Pleasant--D. G. Kirkland, G. Lawrence and J. W. White.
 Mt. Olive--Eld. B. V. Shirley, M. R. Barnett, W. B. Shirley and J. S. Shirley.
 Union--J. H. Wade, S. Hollingsworth and G. W. McDonald.
 Pilgrims Rest--H. Yerby, A. T. Rushing and E. D. Rushing.
 Shady Grove--Ira Griffin, Willis Davis* and W. A. D. Roberts.
 Mt. Joy--M. C. Bowling, T. Harris and M. Shirey.
 Shepherd--Eld. N. J. Dyer, G. W. Gravellee and G. J. Collins.
 Rocky Mount--M. Bobo, G. W. Howton and S. S. Bobo.
 Fayetteville--Elds J. C. Jones and J. E. Bell, E. B. Newton, A. F. Bell and H. M. Bell.
 New Bethel--C. B. Estes, A. B. Lowrey* and Jas. Freeman.*
 Absentees marked thus (*)

Upon motion of Eld. J. C. Jones, Wm Brown and J. J. Hogan were received from Hopewell church, without a letter.

Satisfactory evidence being given as to their orthodoxy, the following newly constituted churches were received, and the names of their delegates enrolled as follows:

Philadelphia--Eld. J. B. Ferguson, J. J. Deavours and W. H. Brashure.
 Chapel Hill--Joel Ashcraft, J. F. Ashcraft and I. N. Ashraft.
 Mt. Zion--Thos. Holms, A. J. Reeves and W. F. M. Harbin.

6. Baptist ministers present, not delegates, were invited to seats with us, and the right hand of fellowship extended by the Chairman.

8. Upon motion of Elder J. C. Jones, the chairman appointed the following committees:

On Preaching—Eld J. C. Jones, W. B. Shirley, D. G. Kirkland, J. H. Wade, and the Deacons of the Fayetteville church. For the report of the committee see appendix A.

To draft Articles of Faith, Constitution, and Rules of Decorum—A. F. Bell, Eld J. C. Jones, D. G. Kirkland, Elds J. E. Bell, N. J. Dyer and M. C. Owings, J. J. Hogan, J. J. Dickerson, H. Yerby, M. Shirey, and upon motion the chairman was added.

8. Upon motion of Eld J. C. Jones the convention adjourned to meet Monday at half past 8 o'clock, a. m. Prayer by Eld M C Owings.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30th, 1871.

1. Met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Eld N. J. Dyer:
2. Upon motion of A. F. Bell the convention agreed to conform to the ordinary usages of deliberative bodies.
3. Called for report of committee to draft Articles of Faith, Constitution, and Rules of Decorum; whereupon the following were presented, and upon second reading were, article by article, adopted. See appendix B.
4. From among the several names which were suggested, that of "New River" was chosen by which to designate the Association.
5. Upon motion of D. G. Kirkland the convention resolved itself into an Association by singing a hymn and giving the right hand of fellowship.
6. Proceeded to organize by electing officers; whereupon Eld. B. V. Shirley, was chosen Moderator, H. M. Bell, Clerk; and Eld. J. E. Bell, Corresponding Secretary.
7. Opened the Association for business by signing, and prayer by the Moderator.

8. Appointed the following committees:

- On Arrangement... E. B. Newton, M. R. Barnet, Eld J. B. Ferguson, H. M. Bell and Ira Griffin.
- On Documents... A. T. Rushing, S. Hollingsworth, G. J. Collins and Eld J. E. Bell.
- On Finance... W. A. D. Roberts, W. B. Shirley and G. W. Gravelle.
- On Sabbath School... Eld J. E. Bell, D. G. Kirkland and M. R. Barnet.
- To District the Association... H. M. Bell, Eld M. C. Owings and N. J. Dyer.
- On Temperance... A. F. Bell, Ira Griffin and Thomas Holms.
- On Nominations... A. J. Reeves, D. G. Kirkland, A. F. Bell, M. C. Bowling and G. J. Collins.

9. Upon motion of E. D. Rushing a committee was appointed to nominate time and place for the District Meetings, and also time for holding the Association, composed of the following brethren: J. J. Dickerson, E. B. Newton, and Elds. J. C. Jones and J. E. Bell.

10. Upon motion, Eld Wm. L. Jones and James Middleton were invited to participate in the discussions.

11. The report of committee on arrangement directed as herein mentioned. Called for the reports of committees in the following order, which were received and the committees discharged:

- I. On Document. See appendix C.
- II. On Sabbath School. See appendix D.
- III. On Temperance. See appendix E.
- IV. On Districting the Association. See appendix F.
- V. On nomination. See appendix G.
- VI. On Finance. See appendix H.
- VII. On nominating time and place of District Meetings, and time for holding the Association.
- VIII. Appointed H. M. Bell, Treasurer. [See Appendix I]
- IX. Miscellaneous business.

12. Upon motion the Finance committee was directed to pay over the funds on hand to the Treasurer.

13. Upon motion it was ordered that the Clerk superintend the printing of the Minutes, procure as many copies as the fund will pay for, reserve 20 copies for each correspondence, and be allowed Ten Dollars for his services.

14. Upon motion, A. F. Bell, H. M. Bell and E. B. Newton were appointed to prepare a short address to the churches, upon the subject of Mission, and have the same inserted in this Minute. See appendix K.

15. The following resolution, offered by brother E. D. Rushing, was adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of this body are due, and are hereby ten-

dered to the Fayetteville church, and vicinity, for their kindness and hospitality to us during the present session.

16. Appointed Eld J. C. Jones, distributing agent for the first District, and Eld M. C. Owings, for the second District.

17. Read and corrected the Minutes.

18. Upon motion of A. F. Bell, adjourned to meet at Pilgrims Rest church, seven miles south of Fayetteville on the Carrollton road, Saturday before the second Sabbath in September, 1872.

19. After prayer by Eld J. C. Jones, the brethren sung a hymn and took the parting hand.

B. V. SHIRLEY, *Moderator*.

H. M. BELL, *Clerk*.

(APPENDIX A.)

We, your committee on Preaching, announce the following arrangement: Preaching to-night by Eld J. B. Ferguson, followed by Elder I. Wooten. Prayer meeting Sunday at 9 o'clock, a. m., conducted by Elder E. Howell. Preaching at 11 o'clock, by Elder M. C. Owings, followed by Elder N. J. Dyer; Sunday night Elder I. Wooten, followed by Elder E. Howell; Monday at 11 o'clock, Elder N. J. Dyer, followed by Elder J. B. Ferguson; Monday night Elder B. V. Shirley, followed by Elder I. Wooten. J. C. JONES, *Chm'n*.

The services were conducted as above announced, to attentive and large congregations, and we hope the good accomplished will inspire the brethren who labored to a continuance of their earnest zeal in the cause.

CLERK.

(APPENDIX B.)

Articles of Faith.

1st. We believe there is one only living and true God; and there are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one.

2nd. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, and the only true rule of faith and practice.

3rd. We believe in the doctrine of human depravity, that it disables man from keeping the Law for life; and that man's recovery and final salvation depends entirely upon the provision which Christ has made, and offered, upon the condition of faith.

4th. We believe in the doctrine of election, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of Truth.

5th. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the merits of Jesus Christ.

6th. We believe that saints shall persevere in grace, and not one of them finally fall away.

7th. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and general judgement, and that the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.

As for Gospel Order:

1st. We believe that the visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptised believers, who have gained christian fellowship with each other, and have given themselves up to the Lord, and one another, and have agreed to keep up a Godly discipline according to the rules of the Gospel.

2nd. We believe that Jesus Christ is the great Head of the church and only law-giver, and that the government is with the body, and is the privilege of each individual; and that the discipline of the church is intended for the reclaiming of the christians who may be disorderly either in principle or practice, and must be faithfully kept up for God's glory and the peace and unity of the churches.

3rd. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects, and conscientiously do believe the true mode of baptism is immersion.

4th. We believe that none have a right to administer the ordinances but ministers of the Gospel, regularly ordained to that office.

5th. We believe that none but those regularly baptised have a right to participate in Lord's Supper.

Constitution.

1. The Association shall be composed of members chosen by the different churches in our Union, who, on producing their letters, shall be entitled to seats.

2. The members thus chosen and convened shall be known as the *New River Baptist Association*, which shall have the privilege to enact and carry out missionary purposes in all their bearings; yet so as that churches and individual members are left free, and that giving or withholding shall not be a bar to fellowship.

3. To give churches the best advice she can in all matters of difficulty; and if the Union be broken between any of the sister churches, to enquire into the cause of the breach, and use her best endeavors to remove the difficulty; but if the breach cannot be repaired, to withdraw from any church or churches which she may look upon as being unsound in principle or immoral in practice, until the same can be reclaimed.

4. The churches in our Union shall transmit to every annual session of the Association a written communication specifying the names of their delegates, their number in fellowship, baptised, received by letter, restored, dismissed, excommunicated and deceased since the last session, which shall be read and minuted accordingly.

5. Every church in our union shall be entitled to representation in the following manner: Each church shall be entitled to send three delegates and no more. Any church failing to represent herself as above prescribed, shall state her reasons at the next session.

6. Churches may be admitted into this Union, who petition by letter and delegates; and upon examination, if found orthodox and orderly, shall be received by the Association, which shall be manifested by the Moderator's giving the right hand of fellowship.

7. The Association thus formed, shall choose by ballot, a *Moderator* and *Clerk*, who shall serve one year.

8. Every query sent up to the Association by any church in the Union, shall be read and put to a vote by the *Moderator* whether it shall be debated; and if there be a majority for it, it shall be taken up and investigated; but if not, it shall be withdrawn, provided always that those be first considered which affect the union of the churches.

9. Voting shall be confined exclusively to the body in all acts respecting their internal concerns.

10. The Association shall not adjourn any session until she shall have finished all business on hand, except in extraordinary cases.

11. The minute of the Association shall be read and corrected, if necessary, and signed by the Moderator and Clerk, before the session rises.

12. The Association, shall, in all cases, be governed by a majority of the members present.

13. Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any session of the Association, when a majority of its members present shall deem it necessary.

Rules of Decorum.

1. The Association shall be opened and closed by Prayer.

2. To expedite business, committees may be appointed, at the discretion of the Association.

3. The Moderator shall be deemed judge of order and shall have a right to call to order at any time; and any brother not satisfied with his decision on any point of order, may appeal to the Association, on the same day, but at no other time.

4. Every motion made and seconded, shall come under the consideration of the Association, except withdrawn by him who made it.

5. Every case taken up by the Association shall be decided or withdrawn, before another shall be offered.

6. Every person who shall speak in debate shall rise from his seat and address the Moderator, and shall not be interrupted while speaking, unless he depart from the subject, or use words of personal reflection.

7. The Moderator, when addressed for leave to speak shall signify the right of the applicant by naming him or otherwise.

8. No person shall speak more than twice on the same subject without leave of the Association.

9. No member shall be tolerated in any practice which tends to interrupt public speaking.

10. Any member, wishing to retire, shall obtain permission of the Moderator.

11. The Moderator shall give the casting vote, and shall be entitled to the same privilege of speaking as any other member, provided he appoint another to his seat during the time.

12. The appellation of Brother shall be used in our address, one to another.

13. The names of Delegates shall be called as often as the Association may direct.

14. Any member violating the above Rules, may be reprov'd as the Association thinks proper; only on the day the offence shall have occurred.

(APPENDIX, C.)

We your committee on Documents, beg leave to report: That upon examining the Documents placed in our hands, find a request, from Pilgrims Rest church, for the next session of the Association, and we recommend that her request be granted. A. T. RUSHING, Chairman.

(APPENDIX D)

We your committee on Sabbath Schools, beg leave to report the following: Believing it to be the duty of churches, to provide for the religious instruction of all persons connected with them, both adults and children. We desire to bring before the churches of this Association, the institution of Sabbath Schools, as being the most suitable means, in connection with the preaching of the word, by which the important end may be accomplished. The Sabbath School is especially suited for the training of children in the way they should go. We would not, however, overlook the indispensable necessity of parental training in connection with it. The merit of the Sabbath School is well established. Therefore, we urge it upon each church in this body to organize a Sabbath School as soon as possible, and further, that each minister in our bounds, be requested to take an interest in the matter and use their best efforts to carry forward this work by pressing the subject upon the churches under their care, and that the churches be requested to report at each session of the Association their Sabbath Schools.

J. E. BELL, Chairman.

(APPENDIX E.)

We your committee, on Temperance, unanimously submit the following: In view of the great evil of the habitual use of intoxicating liquors, we call attention to the scripture injunction, "Be ye temperate in all things," which we understand to mean, use all things temperately, but not to mean, use moderately all things; for, is there not a curse pronounced against him, who "putteth the bottle to his neighbor's lips?" We believe it to be the duty of every professed follower of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to set before all with whom he associates, an example worthy of imitation. And if it is wrong to sin moderately against our Heavenly Father, we believe it is wrong, when in good health, to use moderately intoxicating liquors.

A. F. BELL, Chairman.

(APPENDIX F.)

We your committee to divide the Association into Districts, submit the following: That the township line between 15 and 16 townships, be the dividing line, making, Shady Grove, Mt. Pleasant, Shepherd, Chapel Hill, Pilgrims Rest, New Bethel, Rocky Mount and Fayetteville churches, constitute the first District; and Philadelphia, Union, Mt. Olive, Mt. Zion, Mt. Joy, Harmony Grove and Hopewell churches, constitute the second District.

H. M. BELL, Chairman.

(APPENDIX G.)

The committee on Nominations, submitted the following: Elders M. C. Owings, to preach the introductory sermon; Eld. J. E. Bell alternate. Eld. B. V. Shirley, to preach at 11 o'clock on Sunday; Eld. N. J. Dyer, alternate; after an intermission, Eld. J. C. Jones. Eld. J. B. Ferguson, to write the Circular Letter.

First Dist.—Eld. N. J. Dyer, to preach the introductory sermon; Eld. J. B. Ferguson, alternate. Eld. J. C. Jones, to preach at 11 o'clock on Sabbath; Eld. J. E. Bell, alternate.

Second Dist.—Eld. J. E. Bell, to preach the introductory sermon;

Eld. B. V. Shirley, alternate. Eld. M. C. Owings, to preach at 11 o'clock on Sabbath; Eld. J. C. Jones, alternate. A. J. REEVES, Ch'm.

(APPENDIX H.)

The committee on Finance, reported the following: Received from the churches, for Minutes, \$20 05
For Associational purposes, \$11 85
Total, \$31 90.

W. A. D. ROBERTS, *Chairman.*

(APPENDIX I.)

The committee to nominate time and place for District meetings, and time for holding the next session of the Association, submitted the following: The Association to commence Saturday before the second Sunday in September next. First Dist. To be holden with Shady Grove church, commencing Saturday before the first Sunday in August next. Second Dist. To be holden with Harmony Grove church, commencing Saturday before the third Sunday in August next.

J. J. DICKERSON, *Chairman.*

(APPENDIX K.)

To the Churches of this Association:

BRETHREN: In complying with the duty enjoined upon us, by the Association, we present, for your consideration the following thoughts:

In as much as we believe that Christ has a Kingdom (a church) established on earth, for a wise and glorious purpose, viz: for the highest good of his people, and also, by means of its agencies and instrumentalities to effect the salvation of sinners. Therefore feeling that we belong to that kingdom, and claiming to have shared the benefits of the salvation of God, through it, we are bound, if we prize its benefits as valuable, to feel concerned and take part in the great work assigned to it on earth. Let us, from this stand point, take a view of the missionary work of the church, and instead of looking at what might have been, let us, with all the earnest of our souls look before us and around us to see what means are afforded us, by which we may do something towards consummating the work laid upon us as the people of the living God. The ministers are standing up to declare the good news of the Gospel. Their Lord has said to them "Go," and feeling that they are the Lord's having been bought with a price they desire to obey Him, and if we, the every individual members of the church, feel that we have been bought with a price, may it not be our earnest desire and effort to obey in all things laid upon us. Brethren, look at the condition of the world. There is great need of faithful preaching even in our bounds, for some of the churches are cold and many of the common people scarcely hear the gospel once a year. Christ's mission was to preach the gospel to the poor, so should ours be, among whom are included the poor heathen who are perishing for want of the bread of life. Some of the ministers of the Lord have left all to bear the glad tidings of salvation to them; and the Baptist of the State have provided a channel through which they support those worthy ministers of Christ.

Brethren, let us as an Association, as churches and as individuals, look at these things, and for the sake of Christ and the souls of men, come up with one accord to the help of the Lord in this work of our God. For the Apostle said: "TO DO GOOD AND TO COMMUNICATE, FORGET NOT, FOR WITH SUCH SACRIFICE THE LORD is well pleased.



