

MINUTES

OF THE

NINTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

North River United Baptist Association,

CONVENED AT

SALEM MEETING HOUSE, TUSKALOOSA COUNTY, ALABAMA,

On the 15th day of September, 1843.

PRINTED BY J. F. GRANT, JACKSONVILLE, ALA.

STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

CHURCHES AND COUNTIES	C. M.	MINISTERS & DELEGATES.	Baptised	Letter	Secession.	Dismiss'n.	Excl. ded.	Restored	Deceased	Total.	Contribu.
Salem, Tusca	3	John Baker, W. Richards, Garland Jones,	1	6	1	1	4		2	112	362
Shepherd, Fay	2	John Savage, <i>James Ray</i> , Elcanv. Ware,	17	2	3	8	3	2		96	300
Union, Fayette.	1	John H. Ray, Jacob Black, Walter Papizan,	29			3	1	3		65	118
Zion, Marion co.	4	W. W. Hamner, A. Markum, Jesse Cooksey,	13	1	1				1	43	100
Ebenezer, w'k	4	<i>J. A. Jones</i> , wm. Rutledge, A. C. esteen,	9				2			31	
Pilgrim's Rest.	4	D. W. ANDREWS, J. WALDEN, R. Walden,	7	3		1	1			33	112
Bethlehem, Tus	1	<i>Abner Files</i> , John Holley, Richard Files,				4		1		14	
Liberty, Tus. co	4	John Yerby, A. Deason, John Garner,								16	100
New Hope, w'k	3	Griffin Lampkin, T. G. Roby, A. Lawrence.								30	262
Mount Pleasant		Allen Walls, Dennis Davis, J. F. Collins,								31	100

Ordained ministers in SMALL CAPITALS—Licentiates in *italics*.

1st. Elder Joshua Halbert who was appointed last session by this body, to preach the introductory sermon; being removed by death. Elder Jesse Walden, his alternate, delivered an appropriate discourse from Rom., 14 chap. v. 7 to 13, inclusive.

2nd. After a short intermission, the Delegates assembled in the meeting house, and the Association was opened by prayer, by brother David W. Andrews.

3rd. Called for and received letters from the several churches, enrolled the names of the delegates, and minuted the state of the churches.

4th. Elected Elder D. W. Andrews, Moderator, and John Baker, Clerk.

5th. Opened a door for the reception of churches—came forward and was received by letter and delegates, the following churches. (to-wit:) New Hope, Walker co., and Mount Pleasant, Fayette co., in token of which the Moderator gave the right hand of fellowship.

6th. Appointed a committee composed of brethren John Yerby, Willis Richards, Griffin Lampkin, and Richard Files, with the Moderator and Clerk to arrange the business necessary to come before the Association.

7th. Appointed a committee composed of brethren A. Deason, W. W. Hamner and John Savage to arrange the preaching during this Association.

8th. Then adjourned until to-morrow, 10 o'clock.

9th. Met according to adjournment after prayer by the Moderator, then called the names of the delegates.

10th. Then called for, and received the Rules of Decorum.

11th. Called for the report of the Committee of arrangement, which was presented, read, received, and the committee discharged.

12th. Called for the Circular Letter, which was received, approved and ordered to be printed in the Minutes.

13th. *Resolved*, That the next Association of this body be held with New Hope church, Walker co., to commence on Friday before the 3rd Sabbath in September, 1844. Elder David W. Andrews to preach the introductory sermon and Elder James A. Jones, his alternate. Appointed brother Griffin Lampkin to write the next Circular Letter, and choose his own subject.

14th. *Resolved*, That the first protracted meeting be held with Zion church, Marion co., to commence Friday before the fourth Sabbath in July, 1844.

15th. *Resolved*, That the second protracted meeting be held with Liberty church Tuscaloosa co., to commence Friday before the 2nd Sabbath in October, 1844.

16th. *Resolved*, That the death of Eld. Joshua Halbert be inserted in these Minutes.

17th. *Resolved*, That this Association recommend to those churches belonging to her body, that are regularly supplied with the ministry, the necessity of giving their ministering brethren, that belong to their churches, liberty to devote a part of their time to supply those destitute churches in her bounds, and that they have liberty; to make their own arrangements in this matter.

18th. *Resolved*, That 600 copies of these Minutes be struck, and that the Moderator and Clerk superintend the printing and distribution of the same.

19th. *Resolved*, that this Association tenders her thanks to the neighborhood of Salem church and its vicinity for their hospitality to the delegates and foreigners.

DAVID W. ANDREWS, MODERATOR.

JOHN BAKER, Clerk.

DEATH OF ELDER JOSHUA HALBERT.

While the Association looks back with gratitude and rejoices that her prospects are brightened by the rising glories of the Messiah's kingdom and the unfailing promise of God; yet the removal of one of our fellow laborers is painfully felt by his surviving friends, but with calm submission, we would say the will of the Lord be done. Soon after our last annual meeting, our beloved Brother, Elder Joshua Halbert fell asleep in Jesus and is gone from the evil to come. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth yea sayeth the Spirit that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them." He was a man of deep piety, extensive usefulness, and lamented by all who knew him best; he has left us with his children to mourn, our great loss, but our loss is his infinite gain. Altho' the Association has been called to mourn the death of our Brother, it is cheering to reflect that many during the last year have been baptised, and although our brother has left the walls of Zion, Israel's God has called others to the great work, and they

are now preaching up the Cross of the Redeemer's Kingdom. The Lord liveth and blessed be the name of the Lord forever.

A query sent up from Shepherd Church for advice.

When a member of our church leaves us without applying for a letter of dismissal and joins another church of another denomination, how shall we proceed to act in Gospel order, with such members. Answer. Inasmuch as it is well known that we grant letters of dismissal to members of churches (who are in fellowship) to join any church they may wish, we think it to be a violation of church rules for a member to leave the church without applying for a letter. Therefore we believe it to be the duty of a church in such a case, to deal with such as violaters or disturbers of the peace.

And again, if such members fall into transgression, and are excluded from the fellowship of those churches, where they may have joined, and then return to us and make a Gospel acknowledgement, shall we request such members to go back and give satisfaction to the church where they were excluded, or not. To this we answer in the affirmative.

CIRCULAR,

To the Delegates of the North River United Baptist Association, and the Churches they represent—Sendeth Greeting:

BELOVED BRETHREN:—This epistle we write unto you, to stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance, that you may be mindful of the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ, "That ye love one another." And we beseech you brethren, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; for there is one body and one Spirit; even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. chap. 4. And again as the Psalmist saith, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore. Ps. cxxxiii.

Brethren, nothing on earth is more calculated to produce such happy effects, in churches, as a close and prayerful reading of the Bible:

Book of Books, of all—the best,
Give me the Bible, take all the rest;
Other Books may souls betray,
The Bible will never lead astray.

"The Bible," says an evangelical writer, "is a universal boon to mankind. It is not written for any particular nation or age. It does not depend for its authority upon any church, or all churches. It stands upon its own peculiar evidences: and no more requires the endorsement of the church to make it current, than the sun requires the authority of astronomers to warrant our belief in its existence, or our perception of its light and heat. The Bible belongs to the world, like the air, the ocean, the rivers, and the fountains of water: It is a common light, a common blessing; it has long since achieved for itself an emancipation from the priestcraft, which had restricted its circulation and dictated its import to the world: The Bible most assuredly, will appear to be a revelation from God, if we consider the purity, holiness

and spirituality of its principles and precepts. No system of religion can be compared, with it in this respect. The doctrines of the Bible, the religion of Jesus, gives laws to the heart. They lay down rules and regulations to direct the most secret thoughts and emotions of the mind. The bible declares, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment," when God shall Judge the secret thoughts of men. It extends to every wanton look, every immodest thought and covetous desire. It forbids all anger, wrath, ill will and revenge; and requires a peaceable, mild, loving and forgiving spirit and temper of mind.

God is the author of the Bible, because its doctrines are calculated to suppress vice and wickedness, and promote virtue and happiness. The Bible denounces the most dreadful penalties against the wicked—declaring the wrath and curse of God, the eternal pains and torment of hell, as the just desert of every sinful thought word or action. But promises the smiles and favor of God, the consolations of the Spirit in the present world, and eternal blessedness in the world to come: as the reward of virtue and holiness. The Bible requires all magistrates and officers of government to be men of truth, fearing God, and hating covetousness, and that they should exercise the power with which God has invested them for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. It requires all servants to be humble, faithful, dutiful and obedient: not as eye servants, but performing their duty to their masters, as to the Lord. It requires of masters to be kind, tender and humane to their servants: not exacting more of them than is just and proper. The Bible requires parents to be tender, strict, prudent, and affectionate to their children, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It requires husbands to love their wives as their own souls, to cherish and comfort them; and treat them with tenderness, and requires of "wives to love, respect and honor their husbands, wives submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church" "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church," "so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself," and lastly; the Bible requires all men to be just and faithful, kind and charitable, loving, affectionate and forgiving one to another. Now if every man and woman would be governed and directed by these rules and precepts, how happy would the world be!

The religion of Jesus, leads to true happiness, even in this life: For it requires us to have consciences "void of offence toward God, and toward men," and what a source of happiness does this afford? with what heroic boldness can he whose conscience is void of offence toward God and men, appear in every company and in every place? He is not afraid to face the world, and he is not afraid to meet death, or stand at the judgment of God. The religion of Jesus leads to true happiness; for it points out the only way by which man can be at peace with God; and hold sweet fellowship and communion with him. It fills his heart with such heavenly comfort and unspeakable joys that he can rejoice in tribulation, and be happy in the most extremic affliction, and finally, it gives him a rational and substantial hope of eternal life—immortal glory. Here let me observe, happy is the man who maketh the word of God the man of his council; that hath the Spirit of God, bearing witness with his Spirit that he is born of God.

Beloved Brethren, in our last session, we gave it as our best advice to you, to search the Scriptures, believing also that they will make you wise unto salvation, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and also believing, that you have prayerfully and earnestly been engaged in reading the Holy Scriptures; we would still im-

press this delightful duty upon you; for no doubt many of you can say, as the Psalmist said in his day, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea sweeter than honey to my mouth!" "Through thy precepts I get understanding." "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day." "Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage forever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart." Ps. cxix. Beloved brethren, bear it in mind, that they that sow in tears shall reap in joy. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seeds, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Brethren, have we not abundant reason to praise the Lord for what he has done for us. He has done great things for us, O let us be glad, thankful and humble before him continually.

But Brethren, pause and look back, and take a view of the situation of the churches in this section of country, some ten or twelve years ago, and contrast the condition of the churches then and the condition of the churches now, and we see but a few years have rolled away, since the churches were opposed to every benevolent institution of the day, yea the churches were generally in the lap of antinomianism, calvanistic doctrines in the highest order were promulgated from church to church. Scarcely anything else to be heard, from those antinomian preachers, but such as this, that Jesus Christ made a particular or a special atonement for a definite number of Adam's apostate race, and the rest of mankind was past by and ordained to wrath for their sins. Besides all this—any and every other doctrine with those Antinomians was heresy. But Brethren look at the other side and see what a great difference, between the doctrine advanced by those Ministers that now belong to the North River Association. Those ministers preach now like they used to preach which was and is as follows: Christ Jesus made an atonement, general in its nature; that is he tasted death for every man; that the Holy Spirit reproves the world, that God commands all men every where to repent; and that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and also that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; but hath committed unto us the words of reconciliation; and lastly, "That the Gospel is the Power of God, unto Salvation to every one that believeth;" and all this or such doctrine as this, were called heresy by those antinomians.

But Brethren where are those antinomians now? some of them are gone to reap the reward of their labor in another world; and some others are gone into distant countries, and do they preach the same doctrine now, that they preached a few years ago? Surely not; there surely has been a great reformation among them in the ministry, since a few years past: for some among them are effort brethren now as they affirm, & are zealously preaching a general atonement, while some of their brethren (who are still antinomians) are crying out heresy, and a great departure from the Faith. Verily, verily, we say, that those ministers that have reformed, are now receiving the same pay from their antinomian brethren, that they once gave us, when they themselves were anti-effort: we do pity those brethren, if their brethren run them through the same flint mill that they themselves did us; nevertheless we are sure that those effort brethren will have to contend for the truth, and stand or else fall back again into the antinomian system, the latter we hope they will not do.

Beloved Brethren, when we see such a revolution as this doth it not establish and confirm you in the truths of the Gospel: what, to see some of the very ministers who once opposed you, and were fighting against you now engaged in building up that which they once endeavored to pull down. Blessed be the name of the Lord, who

never will foreake his people that put their trust in him. Brethren let us rejoice to see the truth cutting its way through every opposition; and "stand in the liberty wherein ye are called." "Having done all things to stand; stand therefore," yea watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breast plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench, all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

Beloved Brethren, although "we have been troubled on every side we are not distressed; although we have been perplexed we have not despaired, although we have been persecuted we are not forsaken, and although we have been cast down, we are not destroyed." So we will adopt the language of the Psalmist David, "If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick when their wrath was kindled against: us" But "the snare is broken and we are escaped. Ps. cxxiv. "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth: For they that trust in the Lord, shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." Ps. cxxv. Beloved so we see it, for "they that put their trust in the Lord shall never be confounded." We look back to the time of our organization—small in number; we view the persecutions that we have borne, and we can truly say: hitherto, has the Lord helped us. Our members have increased, and since our last session many souls have been converted and added to the churches. Some new churches raised up; and more laborers sent in the vineyard. We have lived in great peace, and still we are in peace, in our Association; O brethren pray, that peace may continue with us, and pray for the peace of Zion, for they shall prosper that love thee: peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces, "For my brethren and companions sake, I will now say peace be within thee." Ps. cxxii. Now "let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." ECCLES. chap. xii.

Let this epistle be read unto all the brethren: "Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." ROM. xvi, 25, 26.

To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

CONSTITUTION.

WE, The United Baptist Churches of Jesus Christ, in Alabama, that believe the doctrine of a free salvation and a general atonement—We all have been baptised upon a professing of our faith in Christ—We are desirous of a reciprocal union—We therefore purpose to maintain the order and rules of an association, according to the following plan.

We believe that the Churches of Christ are mutually independent of each other, and that the congressional form of church government should be inviolably preserved; yet being convinced of the utility of friendly intercourse and pious counsels, on the principle of reciprocal advantage and christian love, we hold it to be a duty of the Churches to pay respect on these principles, to the advice of the Association.

Article 1. This Association shall be composed of members chosen by the different Churches in our Union, who, on producing letters from their respective Churches certifying their appointment, shall be entitled to seats. The letters so produced, shall express the condition of their Churches respectively, viz; the number in fellowship; the number received by baptism, by letters, by secession, dismissed, excommunicated, restored, and dead, since the last Association, which letters shall be read and the Delegates names enrolled.

Art. 2. The members thus chosen and convened, shall be known by the name of the North-River United Baptist Association.

Art. 3. The association thus formed, shall choose, by the suffrages of the members present, a Clerk and Moderator who shall serve one year.

Art. 4. This body shall have no coercive power to lord it over God's heritage, or to infringe on any of the internal privileges or rights of the Churches in our Union; but shall only be considered an advisory council in all matters respecting their internal concerns.

Art. 5. To give Churches the best advice she can in all matters of difficulty; and if the Union should be broken between any of the sister Churches, to inquire 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 they may look upon to be unsound in principle or immoral in practice, until they be reclaimed.

Art. 6. To take up no case of any Church in the Union, without the consent of a majority of the Church, and then only to advise.

Art. 7. Newly constituted or dismissed Churches, may be received into our Union, by their representatives, chosen as before stated; and the Moderator shall signify the same by giving them the right hand of fellowship.

Art. 8. The association, when convened, shall be governed by such rules she may adopt. She may adjourn from day to day, until she shall have finished all the business that may be brought before her.

Art. 9. Every Church shall be entitled to a representation of three members.

Art. 10. To have the minutes of the association read, and altered, if necessary, and signed by the Moderator and Clerk before the Association rises; and have them printed, if she thinks proper.

Art. 11. The association shall in all cases be governed by a majority of the members present.

Art. 12. Voting shall be confined exclusively to the body in all acts respecting their internal concerns.

Art. 13. To amend the plan or form of government at any time, when a majority of the Union shall deem it necessary.

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

WE believe the scriptures, comprising the Old and New Testaments, are the word of God and that all Scriptures are given by inspiration of God; and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work; that they be infallibly true—furnish the only true and unerring standard of faith and practice for individual Churches. We believe that among the abundant truths which they contain, the following are important:

Art. 1. We believe that there is one God.

Art. 2. We believe that there are three that bear record in Heaven—the Father, the Word, and Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

Art. 3. We believe the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and is called Emanuel which being interpreted is, God with us.

Art. 4. We believe that God created man upright, but he abode not in honor; but transgressed the law given him, fell under its penalty, and his posterity has been and still is under its curse; and by reason of actual transgression, superadded to his fallen nature is liable to eternal punishment; and from the dire calamities which sin has subjected him to, he, of himself, has no means by which to extricate himself and and reinstate himself in the image and favor of God.

Art. 5. We believe that Jesus Christ, the son of God, did make an atonement for all men in general; but the benefits of the atonement specially are only received by the true believer.

Art. 6. We believe, notwithstanding our fallen and ruined condition, that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish; but have eternal life; that he himself bore our sins in his own body on the cross; that he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, ascended into Heaven; where, as the Mediator, and High Priest of our profession, he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Art. 7. We believe that in view of all these provisions, richly and abundantly furnished in the Gospel, in which are included his revealed will, and the preaching of the Gospel by men of like passions with ourselves, God commands all men every where to repent and believe the Gospel, promising salvation to such as obey, and threatening damnation to such as believe not, love not, and obey not, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Art. 8. We believe that the Holy Ghost, which is the comforter, has been sent into the world to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and to abide with the children of God as their guide and comforter.

Art. 9. We believe it is the duty of all men every where to repent and believe the Gospel; and of all who do, to be immersed in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that faith, repentance and baptism are prerequisite to church membership. And all who have complied with the above requisitions, and are orderly members have a right to commune together when opportunity offers.

Art. 10. We believe it the duty of the disciples of Christ to obey all his commandments, and follow on to know the Lord, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world ever looking to Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith, and give none occasion of offence, neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the Church of God. Their privilege is, to persevere in the ways of well doing, through grace to glory, to grow in grace & the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, ever bearing in mind, that our Lord hath said, without me ye can do nothing.

Art. 11. We believe that there will be a resurrection both of the just & unjust, & a general judgment after the re-union of soul and body; and judgment in righteousness will exalt & introduce the righteous into life ever lasting in Heaven; while it shall sentence the wicked into eternal banishment from God, and consign them to the lake where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

The foregoing declaration is not intended to lord it over God's heritage; but regarding the New Testament as containing the law of the Lord, we would judge of every case, either of doctrine, government or discipline, by that law, and that alone.

RULES OF DECORUM.

Rule 1. The association shall be opened by prayer.

Rule 2. But one person shall speak at a time, and he shall rise and address the Moderator.

Rule 3. No member shall be interrupted while speaking, unless he departs from the subject in question, or use, words of a personal reflection.

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

Rule 5. Every case taken up by the association shall first be decided or withdrawn before another is offered.

Rule 6. When any question is taken up by the association, after allowing time for debate, the Moderator shall take the question; by yeas and nays, or otherwise. The decision thus made shall be announced by the Moderator immediately.

Rule 7. No person shall depart from the service of the association without leave of the Moderator.

Rule 8. No person shall speak more than twice on the same subject, without leave obtained.

Rule 9. The appellation of Brother shall be used in our addresses to one another.

Rule 10. The Moderator shall be entitled to the same privileges as any other member, provided he appoints some other member to fill his seat while speaking or otherwise, but shall not vote unless the association be equally divided.

Rule 11. Any member violating the above rules may be reprov'd as the association may think proper, only on the same day the offence shall have occurred.