Entered.

MINUTES

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

CONVENED AT THE MEETING-HOUSE OF

MARS' HILL CHURCH,

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, AMITE COUNTY;

On the 18th, 19th and 20th October, 1823.

PRINTED

AT THE EXPERIMENT OFFICE,

ST. FRANCISVILLE.

1823.

MINUTES, &c.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1823.

IN the absence of Elder Courtney, occasioned by sickness, at noon, brother Felder delivered the introductory sermon, from I. Peter, 2 chap. 9 verse, " But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness unto his marvellous light."—Elder Cooper made a few deductive observations; and the Messengers convened for business.

Letters from fifteen Churches were read, their Delegates enrolled, D. Cooper chosen Moderator, and E. Estes, Clerk.

The Association was truly happy in the visit of Elders, D. Collins and S. King, Messengers from the Pearl River Baptist Association, ; bearing a letter of correspondence, and thirty copies of their latest Minutes. A similar complacency was felt, in a Corresponding Letter from the Union Baptist Association, presented by their Messengers, J. Birch and Nat. Perkins. The visiting brethren in the Ministry, S. Coker and E. Andrews, were cordially invited to sit and confer with us.

Elder Cooper read the Circular Letter, prepared at the request of this body; which was submitted to the committee of arrangement, D Collins, D. Cooper, E. Estes, G. A. Irion and S. Marsh, to inspect, and report on Monday morning.

Agreed, unanimously, that we correspond with

the following Associations ; viz. with the Pearl River, by delegates D. Cooper, S. Marsh, C. Felder, and G. A. Irion ; with the Union, by delegates E. Estes, G. A. Irion, C. Felder and A. Mercer ; and the Louisiana, by E. Estes and E. Andrews : the delegates being desired to write letters, agreeable to their respective appointments, before the close of this meeting.

Agreed, by general vote, that Elders, D. Cooper, D. Collins and S. King, preach to-morrow, (Lord's day) and that divine service commence at half past ten o'clock. Elder Marsh prayed, and the Association adjourned to Monday morning, 10 o'clock.

Lord's Day, October 19.

The assemby was unusually numerous, remarkaby attentive, and many we trust, the happy recipients of the word of life. Elder King preached from Heb. vi. 17 18. Elder Cooper, from Matt. i. 21. Elder Collins, from Mark xvi. 15 16.—The public worship of this bright day terminated with prayer and exhortation by Elder Marsh.—May poor sinners receive the gospel preached unto them, and be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light !

Monday October 20.

Met according to adjournment. After divine worship, conducted by the Moderator, a door was opened for the admission of newly constituted Churches ;—but no application being made, the committee reported their ready approbation of the Circular, together with the business of the day.

Ordered, therefore, that the circular, furnished by Elder Cooper, be printed with the proceedings of this meeting.

Query, from New Providence—" Would it not be more consistent with Gospel Order, to have our Letters of Dismission so worded, as to leave dismissed members at liberty, either to hold their letters, or to join some other church of the same faith and order ?" Answer—This Association think it unnecessary to make any alteration in the present mode of dismissing church members ; but is of the opinion, that a member, holding a letter of dismission, within the bounds of a church, of the same faith and order, shall after a reasonable length of time, be considered in disorder, and accountable to the church from which he is dismissed.

Resolved, unanimonsly, that we concur with the Pearl River and Union Associations, in appointing faithful brethren to assist in forming a constitution, for the more systematic and efficient appropriation of our talents, in the great concerns of religion ; and that D. Cooper, E. Estes, J. A. Irion, J. Smith, E. Courtney, S. Marsh& C. Felder, be our delegates, to meet those of the other associations, at Boguechitto Church, Pike County, on Saturday before the third Lord's day in February, 1824.

Agreed, that this association recommend and observe a Yearly Meeting, of three days, or more, beginning on Friday before the first Lord's day in July next, at the Meeting-House of Percy's Creek Church.

This Association, in unison with others, recommend to the churches, the first day of January

next, to be observed, at their respective places of worship, with fasting and prayer, in behalf of poor sinners, and for the general prosperity of the ransomed of the Lord.

On receiving a petition from a few members at Tanchipaho, desiring the freedom of joining some effective church, in their vicinity ; Resolved, that we freely acquiesce in that alternative.

Agreed, That Elder J. Smith be requesed to write our next Circular Address ; and that the subject be " the high responsibility and criminality of those who do not contribute, according to their circumstances, to the cause of religion in general."

Agreed, that our next Association be held at New Providence Church, Amite county, beginning on Saturday before the second Sabbath in October, 1824 : that Elder G. A. Irion preach the introductory sermon, and, in case of failure, Elder J. Smith.

Ordered, That five hundred copies of these minutes be printed and distributed, under the superintendance of the clerk ; that he draw on the Treasurer for that expense, and receive fifteen dollars for his services.—The amount remaining in the Treasurer's hands, after the annual settlement, was eighty-three dollars four and a quarter cents.

The duties of the meeting being accomplished, the moderator made a serious, affectionate address, prayed to the Great Head of the Church, and pronounced the Apostolic benediction.

D. COOPER, *Moderator.*

E. ESTES, *Clerk.*

STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

The names of Ordained Ministers, in small capitals. Churches, without representation, are marked with an asterisk *

CHURCHES	MESSENGERS	Baptized.	Rec'd by letter.	Restored.	Dismissed.	Excluded.	Deceased.	Total Number.	Contributions.
New Hope,	JOSEPH SLOCUM, John Irwin,	1	-	-	9	1	4	19	$2 75
Bethel,	GEORGE A. IRION, John Hubbard,	6	4	-	1	..	2	44	5 00
New Providence,	SAMUEL MARSH, William Longmire,	2	1	-	1	1	1	57	5 00
Zion Hill,	JAMES CAIN, Charles Rhodes,	2	2	1	6	1	..	48	3 38
Shiloh,	D. COOPER, Charles Edwards,	-	1	-	1	2	1	27	5 00
East Fork,	CHARLES FELDER, John Wilson,	2	5	-	..	..	3	25	4 00
Percy's Creek,	Gab. Sojourner,	-	5	-	..	2	..	21	4 37
Hephzibah,	William Brian, Lewis Yarborough,	1	-	1	1	2	2	57	5 18
Jerusalem,	Martin Naul, John Edy,	8	1	1	..	..	..	24	4 00
Mars' Hill,	Wilson Clark, Moses Clark,	3	-	2	5	..	1	20	3 38
Sharon,	WILLIAM BALFOUR, J. Nighton,	-	2	-	1	3	2	45	1 00
New Orleans,*	- - - -	-	-	-	..	..	..	..	
St. Francisville,	E. ESTES,	3	1	-	..	..	..	2[illegible]	4 00
Mount Zion,	ASA MERCER, Thomas Swearingen,	-	1	-	..	..	..	36	3 00
Ebenezer,	James M. Mumford,	-	-	-	..	..	2	36	4 00
Pinckneyville*	- - - -	1	2	..	2	..	..	14	1 00
		29	26	5	27	12	18	495	55 06

Expense of Printing, Folding and Stitching 500 copies—Forty Dollars.

CIRCULAR.

The Ministers and Messengers of the Mississippi Baptist Association; to the Churches whom they represent—may Grace, Mercy, and Peace be multiplied, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

BELOVED BRETHREN—

IT has long been the practice of this Association, to address the churches through the medium of a circular. But we are not without our fears, that in too many instances, it has been a mere form, without any practical benefit.—That our communications are but superficially read, and thrown by as a common newspaper; the means of instruction neglected, the churches unimpressed, and unedified. Nevertheless, we still feel it our duty, while in this tabernacle, to stir up your minds by way of remembrance; and to impart unto you some spiritual gift, that you may grow in grace and in the knowledge of God, and his beloved Son, our blessed SAVIOUR—and that you may be found faithful, useful, and worthy members of his church.

We purpose in this letter to call to your recollection, and to impress upon your minds a few things; (not because you do not know them, but because you do know them) things which concern the Glory of God, the happiness of man, the prosperity of the church, the increase and extension of

the kingdom of Christ. At the present period, the churches appear to be in a lukewarm state; the additions are small—but few enquiring the way to Zion, or crying "men and brethren what shall we do to be saved"—but few like Elijah, zealous for the Lord of Hosts—or like the faithful Prophets of old, weep between the porch and the altar, and are grieved for the afflictions of Joseph. Dear Brethren, have you fallen into a state of carnal security? A state of moral insensibility, and almost forgotten that you were purged from your old sins?—The time is now come; it is high time to awake out of sleep—remember that you are not your own; you have been bought with the precious Blood of the Son of God. It is therefore your duty to glorify God, in your bodies and spirits, which are his. In the language of the Spirit unto the churches, we call upon as many as have sinned, and wickedly departed from the living God, to *repent* and do their first works. Repentance implies a Godly sorrow for sin, a broken heart, a contrite spirit—a forsaking of the evil of your doings, and turning unto God with full purpose of heart. This is not only absolutely necessary, but entirely reasonable. Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts—and let him return unto the Lord who will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. But if you refuse to return, and continue to rebel against the Lord, ye shall surely die; and God will remove the candlestick out of his place. Brethren, we would also impress upon your minds the necessity and importance of constant and fervent *prayer* to God—you

should always pray and never faint—pray without ceasing. We exhort you by the coming of the Lord Jesus, that you be much engaged in the exercise of this duty—and to esteem it one of your greatest privileges, that you are permitted to make known your requests unto God by prayer and supplication. You are invited to come boldly to a throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy ; you are needy creatures—your wants are many, and the objects for which it is your duty to pray are numerous. Bring them all with you to the throne of mercy, in the name of the blessed Jesus, and in the exercise of a living faith—in his name you will be heard and receive the blessing of life and peace. By faith and prayer you can do all things—all things are possible to them that believe. With an humble and firm reliance on God, you will obtain a complete victury over all your enemies, and come off more than conquerors.—Prayer is a weapon proper for all christians ; and to be used upon all occasions—for " Satan trembles when he sees the weakest Saint upon his knees." Let your supplications like holy incense ascend up before God in behalf of all men—for the ministers of God, whether of church or of state—for all the faithful in Christ Jesus—for poor careless sinners, for your wicked and malicious enemies—for the universal spead of the Gospel of Christ—for the destruction of the kingdom of darkness—the fulness of the Gentiles—the gathering in of the Jews, and for the peace and glory of Zion. These are some of the objects for which you should pray in faith ; and in which all should fervently engage. There is not a member belong-

ing to Christ's Kingdom who is authorised to be idle—all have something to do, and all may be useful—let none say, *I am a dead tree.* Those members, which appear most feeble are all necessary ; for we are many members, but one body in Christ. Let every member therefore exercise himself according to the degree of faith which he has received, and endeavor to fill that place in the house of God for which he was designed by the Head of the Church. It is required in stewardship that a man be found faithful—the Ministers of Christ must be faithful as those who have to give an account unto God It is their duty to give themselves to the ministry of the word and prayer —to be instant in season, out of season, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine ; and to watch over the people of their charge with unwearied deligence. And let it be remembered that they who labour in word and doctrine are to be esteemed very highly, and to be accounted worthy of double honour. And that it is the duty of those who are taught in the word, to communicate unto him who teacheth in all good things—for so hath God ordained, that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel ; because it is an unreasonable thing, that any man should go a warfare at his own charges ; or should feed a flock and not eat of the milk of the flock. Therefore, we are bound to believe that it is the duty of every member of the church to honour God with his substance, and to contribute liberally for the support and spread of the gospel, as God has prospered him in the world ; according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not.

Beloved Brethren, you have long prayed for the destruction of the Man of Sin, the downfall of Antichrist, the overthrow of the Beast and the false Prophets, that the kingdom of Christ might come with power, and that the whole earth might be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. The prayers of the righteous shall prevail; for God will hear and answer his elect who cry unto him day and night. God is moving on in majesty, power and glory, bringing about his own purposes, according to the council of his own will. May none of us be found opposing that which we have so long desired, and for which we have most fervently prayed. Neither let us oppose the means which God has appointed to accomplish and bring about his most holy purposes of judgment and of mercy. The means which God has used, is now using, and will continue to use; are Bible Societies, Education Societies, Missionary Establishments, and Missionary Labours. In these we see men qualified to print, circulate, and spread abroad the word of God—to preach and explain the Holy Scriptures, by which knowledge shall increase, and many shall be purified and made white. We know that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; that his council shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. Hence we conclude, that the time can not be very distant, when the whole earth shall be filled with divine knowledge, and all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest.—In this glorious work which involves the happiness of man, the glory of God, and the increase of the Redeemer's Kingdom; all may have the honor of sharing a part—if not by proclaiming the word of

life to a dying world, they may by their prayers and contributions, become workers together with God, and be the honoured instruments of building up the church, and of sending the gospel to those who sit in the regions of the shadow of death.

Dear Brethren, we shall close this address by recommending to your serious consideration and strict observance, the *discipline* of the gospel; which we fear has been too much neglected. This is a subject of great importance. Nothing in our opinion has a more direct tendency to promote the cause of piety, the health and prosperity of the church, than a Godly discipline. And here it will be proper to remark; that it is the duty of each member to begin the work of reform with himself. To bring himself under that discipline which he intends to inforce upon others. Let each one examine himself and endeavor to correct the errors of his own heart and life; let him pull the beam out of his own eye, that he may see clearly how to pluck the mote out of his brother's eye.

The discipline of the gospel ought to be used with faithfulness, prudence, and moderation; If you see your brother sin, it is your duty to tell him his fault, and to pray for him that he may be healed. We recommend that you always begin the work of reformation with fervent prayer to God in behalf of the offender, and for a blessing on your labours;—then go and tell him his faults between thee and him alone—were this rule strictly attended to in the bowels of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of the gospel, you would scarcely ever fail of success in reclaiming the offender; which indeed would be a source of much joy to yourself,

and to the church, also, to the angels of God in Heaven ; who rejoice more over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. As holiness becometh the house of God forever ; you must purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump ; achan, the Babylonish garment must be removed out of the camp.

The discipline of the gospel is intended by our Lord to answer many important purposes ; viz, to reclaim offenders by bringing them to repentance ; to remove ungodly members out of the church, who are only a reproach to religion—to purge and purify the church from all errors, so that her light may shine, and she be found without spot and blameless, &c.

You are commanded therefore, to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly ; to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness ; but rather to reprove them. To keep disorderly members in the church month after month, contrary to the spirit of the gospel, is an injury to the offender, a reproach to the church, and a dishonor to Christ her head. And now brethren we commend you to God and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up in the knowledge and faith of our Lord Jesus Christ ; May yon live in love, and keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. Touch not, taste not, handle not the unclean thing ; keep yourselves unspotted from the word, that you may be the sons of God without rebuke ; and be found worthy to stand before the Son of Man when he shall come to judge the world in rightcousness.

Jos: Johnson, requests
The Hon bl Henry Johnson to
have this Enacted to the
Rev. d Luther Rice
Washington City