

PROCEEDINGS

OF A

CONVENTION

OF

BAPTIST CHURCHES

IN

PHILLIPS AND ST. FRANCIS COUNTIES, ARK'S,

HELD WITH

MOUNT VERNON CHURCH, ST. FRANCIS COUNTY,

ON THE

3rd Day of September, A. D. 1853.

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ORGANIZING AN ASSOCIATION.

MEMPHIS, TENN.:

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1853.

PROCEEDINGS.

MOUNT VERNON, ST. FRANCIS COUNTY, ARK'S,

SATURDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 1853. }

A number of persons, Delegates from different Baptist Churches in the counties of Phillips and St. Francis, met this day, according to previous appointment, as a Convention, for the purpose of organizing an Association.

On motion, REV. MARK W. IZARD was appointed Chairman, pro tem., and T. S. N. KING Secretary.

The Convention then engaged in solemn devotional exercises, in which it was led by the Chair.

After which, on motion, the letters from the different Churches were called for and read, when the following Delegates named therein appeared and took their seats, to-wit:

FROM MOUNT VERNON CHURCH, ST. FRANCIS COUNTY.

MARK W. IZARD,
THOS. H. CAMPBELL,
SAM'L C. BECKETT,
J. SATTERWHITE.

FROM ASH GROVE CHURCH, ST. FRANCIS COUNTY.

G. W. SAUNDERS,
P. P. HILL,
E. FAULKNER.

FROM BIBLE UNION CHURCH, ST. FRANCIS COUNTY.

PETER PARKER,
JAS. M. SARRATT,
WILLIAM PRIVET.

FROM HELENA CHURCH, PHILLIPS COUNTY.

SPRUCE HALL,
T. S. N. KING.

FROM NEW HOPE CHURCH, PHILLIPS COUNTY.
WILLIAM McCRARY.

FROM LIBERTY CHURCH, PHILLIPS COUNTY.
W. J. ROWDEN,
J. M. COX,
W. H. WILLIAMS.

On motion, the Chairman and Secretary pro tem. were declared permanent officers of the body.

Resolved, That the Chair appoint a Committee of one member from each Church, whose duty it shall be to prepare, and report at half past three o'clock this evening, a Constitution and Articles of Faith, for the organization and government of the proposed Association.

Whereupon the chair appointed the following brethren, to-wit: T. S. N. King, James M. Cox, P. P. Hill. Wm. McCrary, Wm. Privet and Sam'l C. Beckett; and on motion, the Chairman and Rev. Wm. N. Lea were added to the Committee.

Adjourned until half past three o'clock.

HALF PAST THREE O'CLOCK.

The Convention met.

Prayer by the Chairman.

The Committee appointed to prepare and report a Constitution and Articles of Faith for the organization and government of the proposed Association, submitted a draft of a Constitution, and Articles of Faith. The reports were severally received, and adopted by the Convention. (Which see appended.)

The Convention then went into the election of a Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer of the Association, under the Constitution as adopted, when it appeared that MARK W. IZARD was elected Moderator, T. S. N. KING, Clerk, and SPENCE HALL, Treasurer.

Resolved, That this Convention, having completed the object for which it was appointed, do now adjourn sine die.

T. S. N. KING, Secretary. M. W. IZARD, Chairman.

CONSTITUTION.

1. This Confederation of Churches shall be known and called by the name of "THE MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION."

2. The object of this Association shall be to promote the glory of God on the earth, by the preaching of the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, our Savior; the universal spread of the Bible, the word of the true and living God, and by other appropriate means.

3. This Association shall consist of delegates from the Churches now forming this Union, and such other Baptist Churches as may hereafter be received as constituent members thereof.

4. Every Church shall be entitled to three representatives, without regard to the number of their members respectively; and to an additional one for every fifty members exceeding fifty; Provided, that no Church shall ever be entitled to more than five. A certificate of appointment, or letter from their respective churches, shall be evidence that they have been so delegated.

5. The officers of this body shall be a Moderator, a Clerk or clerks, and a Treasurer, who shall be elected annually by ballot, by a majority of the members present, immediately after the names of the delegates shall have been enrolled; which officers shall perform all the duties, respectively, usually devolved on such officers, and continue to exercise their respective functions until they shall be superseded by a subsequent election.

6. The clerks shall preserve a regular record of the Association, and have it present at the meeting of the body; and

when they vacate their office, deliver the same, with all other books and papers relative to said office, to their successors.'

7. The Association shall regard the churches as independent bodies in all their internal affairs, and exercise no ecclesiastical jurisdiction or claim any legislative or judicial prerogative over them: nevertheless, the Association may exercise authority over its own members, the representatives of the churches, and power to withdraw from, and disown all churches which may depart from the Gospel as understood and held by this body, by becoming either heterodox in faith, or disorderly in practice: and should, therefore, regard all the churches united in the Association with a vigilant eye for good; and may give, at its own discretion, and in its own way, advice or information when sought, to any church connected with it.

8. It shall be the duty of the Association to ascertain the general condition of its constituent churches: devise means to promote their harmony, and increase their spirituality and efficiency, to promote the cause of truth and righteousness.

9. The Association shall hold annual sessions, to convene on the Saturday before the first Lord's day in September, in each year, and not adjourn until all the business shall have been regularly finished, except circumstances imperiously demand. The place of meeting shall be determined at each previous session and published in the minutes.

10. Baptist Churches not before united in the Association, or those dismissed from other associations, may be admitted as members into this Union, on application by a written petition, or letter, presented by one or more messengers duly appointed by such church or churches; Provided, they give satisfactory evidence that they are orthodox in the faith, and correct in the practice of the Gospel ordinances.

11. Every minister of the Gospel (either ordained or licentiate) whose membership is in, or who may be Pastor of, any church belonging to this body, shall be ex-officio a member of

the Association, with the privilege of offering resolutions and speaking, but not of voting, unless specially delegated by some church.

12. When in session the Association shall be governed by such rules of decorum as it may adopt for itself.

13. It shall be the duty of the churches respectively, annually to report to the Association their general condition; the number of members in fellowship; the number baptised, received by letter, dismissed, ex-communicated, restored, and dead during the year; and the names and post office address of all ministers whether ordained or licensed, designating each—and also the name and address of their clerks. They shall also report on any special matter required, and send up such contributions as they may willingly contribute to aid the body to disseminate more widely the truth as contained in the Holy Scriptures, and the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom on the earth.

14. The neglect or failure of a church to be represented by a delegate or delegates in the Association for three consecutive years, shall be cause to withdraw from such churches at the discretion of the Association.

15. This Association may correspond by letter and delegates with any other religious body of the same faith or order.

16. A board consisting of five members, any three of whom to constitute a quorum, shall be elected at each annual meeting, whose duty it shall be to devise means to carry forward the benevolent objects of the Association.

17. The minutes of the Association shall be publicly read and corrected if necessary, and then signed by the moderator and clerk before the Association adjourns.

18. Any amendment may be made to this constitution at any meeting of the Association, by a vote of two-thirds of the members present; Provided, the same shall have been published in the minutes of the preceding year.

ARTICLES OF FAITH.

1. 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, without mixture of error, for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us. and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world the true centre of Christian union, and the only correct rule of our faith and practice.

2. That there is one, and only one, true and living God, whose name is Jehovah; the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth, unexpressibly glorious in holiness, worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love, revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; equal in every divine perfection, and exercising distinct, but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

3. That man was created in a state of holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but choice; being by nature utterly void of the holiness required by the law of God, wholly given to the gratification of the world, of satan, and of their own sinful passions, and, therefore, under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defence or excuse.

4. That the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial office of the Son of God, who took himself our nature, yet without sin; honored the law by his personal obedience, and made atonement for our sins by his death; being risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, is every way qualified to be a suitable, a

compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

5. That the great Gospel blessing, which Christ of his fullness bestows on such as believe in Him, is justification; that justification consists in the pardon of sin, and the giving of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, or can do, but solely through his own redemption and righteousness; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

6. That the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel: that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial and obedient Faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, except his own voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ; which refusal will subject him to an aggravated condemnation.

7. That in order to be saved, we must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in a thorough change of heart, and giving a holy disposition to the mind, and is effected by the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence is found in the holy fruit, which we bring forth to the glory of God.

8. That election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that, being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it is ascertained by its effects in all who believe the Gospel; is the

foundation of Christian assurance; and that, to ascertain it with regard to ourselves, demands and deserves our utmost diligence.

9. That such only are real believers as endure unto the end, that their persevering attachment to Christ, is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare, and they are kept by the power of God through Faith unto Salvation.

10. That the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen man to fulfil its precepts, arises entirely from his love of sin; to deliver him from which, and restore him through a mediator, to unfeigned obedience to the holy law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church.

11. That a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptised believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by his word; that its only proper officers are Bishops or Pastors and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the epistles to Timothy and Titus; and that a Gospel Church thus organized, is the highest ecclesiastical tribunal known in the word of God.

12. That Christian baptism is the immersion of the body of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, administered by a regularly ordained baptist minister in good standing, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its purifying power; that it is the prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation, and to the Lord's supper, in which the members of the Church by the use of bread and wine, are

to commemorate together the dying love of Christ—understanding by the term BELIEVER as above, one who has been regenerated and born again; and who stands justified in the sight of God in, or on account of, the righteousness of Christ imputed to him by a true and living faith.

13. That the first day of the week is the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and recreation, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God.

14. That there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as are justified through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief, are in His sight, wicked and under the curse; and that this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

MINUTES
OF
MT. VERNON ASSOCIATION.

MT. VERNON, SATURDAY, Sept. 3d, 1853.

The newly organized Association was called to order by Mark W. Izard, the moderator.

On motion, a committee on Finance was appointed consisting of brethren T. H. Campbell, P. Parker and W. J. Bowden, who reported a contribution from the Churches of \$22 65.

Rules of decorum were then adopted. (which see appended.)

The following brethren were elected a Board for the ensuing year, under the 16th Article of the Constitution, to-wit:

P. S. N. KING, SPENCE HALL, P. P. HILL, W. J. BOWDEN, and SAM'L C. BECKETT.

Resolved, That we recommend the "Tennessee Baptist," published at Nashville, Tennessee, to the patronage of the brethren in our bound.

Resolved, That the next Association be held with the New-Hope Church, in Phillips county. (New-Hope Church is on the St. Francis road, 12 miles from Helena.)

Resolved, That Rev. T. S. N. King preach the introductory sermon at the next session, and in case of failure, Rev. J. M. Cox.

Resolved, That the Clerk superintend the printing and dis-

tribution of 200 copies of the proceedings of the Convention which organized this body, and including therewith the minutes of this meeting.

And then after prayer and benediction, by Rev. Wm. M. Lea, the Association adjourned to meet with New-Hope Church on Saturday before the first Lord's day in September, 1854.

M. W. IZARD, *Moderator.*

T. S. N. KING, *Clerk.*

STATEMENT OF THE CHURCHES.

CHURCHES.	NO. MEMBERS.	CLERKS & POST-OFFICE.	PASTORS OR SUPPLY.
Mount Vernon.	47	S. C. Izard, Mount Vernon,	M. W. Izard,
Ash Grove.	31	Jos. Simpson, Cotton Plant,	J. M. Cox,
Bible Union,	23	Wm. Privet, Mount Vernon,	M. W. Izard,
Helena,	47	J. A. Jackson, Helena,	T. S. N. King,
New-Hope,	21	E. S. Martin, Lagrange,	P. S. G. Watson,
Liberty.	27	R. J. Thornton, Mariana.	P. S. G. Watson.
Whole Number.	199		

MINISTERS IN MOUNT VERNON ASSOCIATION.

NAMES.	POST-OFFICE ADDRESS.
MARK W. IZARD,	Mount Vernon, Ordained.
P. S. G. WATSON,	Helena, "
J. M. COX,	Beech Grove, "
N. P. MOORE,	Mount Vernon, "
WM. M. LEA,	Helena, "
T. S. N. KING.	Helena, "

RULES OF DECORUM.

1. On the assembling of the Association the former moderator, or in his absence some brother nominated for the purpose, shall take the chair and call the body to order.

2. After prayer, the names of delegates shall be enrolled and officers elected; and when the body is organized, applications for membership from new bodies shall be decided on, and if admitted, their delegates received by the right hand of fellowship. Communications and messengers from corresponding bodies, shall then be attended to, and visiting brethren invited to seats.

3. At every sitting business shall be opened and concluded with prayer by the moderator, or whomsoever he may request.

4. No motion shall be discussed without it has been seconded, and reduced to writing if requested by any member.

5. If any proposition, or motion under debate contain two or more points, it shall be divided at the request of any member, and the vote taken separately.

6. Every speaker shall rise and address the chair by the term *brother Moderator*, and shall use the appellation of *brother* in addressing or speaking of each other. And no member shall speak more than twice on the same subject, without leave of the body.

7. The Moderator shall be the judge as regards order, but an appeal may be made to the Association.

8. All Committees appointed by this body shall be nominated by the Moderator, subject, however, to the approval of the Association.

9. No member shall absent himself from the meeting of the Association without permission.

10. These rules shall be distinctly read from the chair immediately after the organization of each Association.