

MINUTES

OF THE

FLORIDA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD WITH EBENEZER CHURCH, JEFFERSON COUNTY, FLORIDA, AT ITS FIRST ANNUAL SESSION, COMMENCING ON SATURDAY, THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER, A. D., 1843.

1. The Introductory Sermon was delivered by Brother Richard J. Mays, from Ephesians, 2d, C. 8, 9 v.
2. The delegates then retired to the Church, and on motion of Brother H. S. Linton, Brother John Broome was called to the Chair, and Brother S. C. Craft to act as Clerk.
3. Letters from the various churches composing this body were then called for, and ten being presented by the delegates, were read and their statistical information minuted.
4. Petitionary letters for admission into this body were then called for and received the following with their delegates, viz: Ceilla, Liberty, Apalachicola, Bethpage, Providence, Hopewell and Little River, which, after being read, the right hand of fellowship was extended to the delegates by the Chairman.
5. On motion, the Association then proceeded to the election of Moderator and Clerk.— Br. John Broome was elected Moderator, and Br. S. C. Craft, Clerk.
6. Moved by Br. S. H. Butler and carried, that the Association do now proceed to prayer before the transaction of any other business. Prayer by Br. J. Mercer.
7. Brethren J. O. Goldwire, J. M. Sloan, J. Cason and U. Wood were appointed, in conjunction with the Deacon of the Church, to arrange preaching during the Association.
8. Brethren S. H. Butler, J. S. Hart, H. S. Linton, R. J. Mays and W. B. Cooper were appointed a committee to draft a Constitution, Confession of Faith, Decorum, &c., to present to the Association.
9. Brethren S. H. Butler, G. T. Coddington and J. Cason were appointed a Committee of Finance.
10. Ministering brethren, on motion of Br. T. Lang, were invited to seats with us.
11. Brethren T. Lang, B. S. Fuller and Mercer, were appointed a Committee to arrange business.
12. The Committee of Arrangements were instructed to report to the Association, the expediency of adopting some hymn-book, to be used as a standard work by the churches composing this body, and also the expediency of holding a ministers' and deacons' meeting.
13. Moved and carried to adjourn until Monday morning, 10 o'clock. Prayer by Brother Moderator.

SUNDAY, 15TH OCTOBER.

This day was wholly devoted to religious exercises of the Sanctuary of God. Brethren J. Mercer and R. J. Mays preached in the forenoon and brethren B. S. Fuller and H. S. Linton in the evening, in the order of their names, to a large concourse of hearers, who appeared much edified, and we hope ere long to see the good seed sown, spring forth, and bear fruit to the salvation of immortal souls.

MONDAY, 16TH OCTOBER.

14. The Association met, pursuant to adjournment, prayer by Brother B. S. Fuller.
15. The Committee of Arrangements made its report, which, on motion, was received.
16. Moved and carried, that this Association correspond with Bethel Association, and that Br. S. H. Butler be appointed to write the corresponding letter, and that Brethren John Broome, H. S. Linton and R. J. Mays be appointed to bear the same; also, that we correspond with the Ocklockoonnee Association, and that Brethren R. J. Mays, B. S. Fuller and G. T. Coddington be appointed to write the letter, and that Brethren G. T. Coddington, J. M. Sloan and B. S. Fuller be appointed to bear the same. And also, that we correspond with

appointed a committee to draft a Constitution, Confession of Faith, Decorum, &c., to present to the Association. 2

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15. The Committee of Arrangements made its report, which, on motion, was received.

16. Moved and carried, that this Association correspond with Bethel Association, and that Br. S. H. Butler be appointed to write the corresponding letter, and that Brethren John Broome, H. S. Linton and R. J. Mays be appointed to bear the same; also, that we correspond with the Ocklockonnee Association, and that Brethren R. J. Mays, B. S. Fuller and G. T. Coddling be appointed to write the letter, and that Brethren G. T. Coddling, J. M. Sloan and B. S. Fuller be appointed to bear the same. And also, that we correspond with the Suwannee River Association—Brother B. S. Fuller to write said corresponding letter, and Brethren Joshua McCall and B. S. Fuller to bear the same.

17. The Committee appointed to draft a Constitution, Confession of Faith and Decorum, for this Association submitted their report, which, after due deliberation thereon, was unanimously received, and will be found appended to these Minutes, marked and numbered as follows:—"Constitution, No. 1," "Confession of Faith, No. 2," "Decorum, No. 3."

18. The Circular letter was then called for, read and adopted, and will be found attached to these Minutes, marked "No. 4."

19. Moved and carried, that this Association be laid off into two Districts. The first, including the counties of Jackson, Calhoun and Leon; the second including the counties of Jefferson, Madison, Thomas and Lowndes. The general meeting to be held in the first district.

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trict, on the fifth Lord's day in January, 1844, at Providence Church, Gladen county.—
The ministers appointed to attend said meeting are Brethren J. Goodman, J. Mercer, John W. Mann, T. Lang and B. S. Fuller. The general meeting of the 2d district to be held at Liberty Church, Thomas County, Georgia, on the fifth Lord's day in June, 1844. The ministers appointed to attend the same are Brethren A. Mosely, J. Broome, R. J. Mays, H. S. Linton, S. C. Craft, W. B. Cooper, J. M. Call, Ryan Fryer and R. T. Stanlan.

20. Brother Coddington was appointed Treasurer to this Association.

21. Adjourned until to-morrow morning, 10 o'clock—prayer by Br. S. H. Butler.

TUESDAY, 17TH OCTOBER.

22. Met pursuant to adjournment—prayer by Br. J. McCall.

23. Brother B. S. Fuller was appointed to preach the next Introductory Sermon, and Br. T. Lang his alternate. Br. W. B. Cooper to preach a Missionary Sermon, and Br. H. S. Linton his alternate.

24. Brethren G. T. Coddington, John S. Hart, S. B. Barrington, J. M. Sloan and U. Wood were appointed a Home Missionary Committee.

25. The following resolutions, offered by Br. J. Mercer, were adopted:—

Resolved, That the Committee appointed to take charge of the domestic Missionary operations of this Association, are authorized to engage the services of some discreet and acceptable minister, to travel and preach in the destitute places in this Association and adjacent neighborhoods, and make quarterly returns of his services and success; and the Committee are authorized to draw upon the Treasurer of this Association, for as much of the funds as are necessary to defray the expenses, according to previous engagements.

Resolved, further, That the pastors of churches shall receive such donations as the churches may send up, to each session of this body; and *further*, that there shall be a public collection taken up, directly after the close of the Missionary Sermon in aid of this laudable design; and that this Committee shall report to this body of all their operations, as also the quarterly reports of their Missionary or Missionaries, subject to the review of this body, and that this Committee shall be elected annually by ballot.

26. The following preamble and resolution, introduced by Br. R. J. Mays, were unanimously adopted.

WHEREAS, It has pleased an All-wise Jehovah to remove from us by death, His devoted servant and our affectionate and dearly beloved brother, WILLIAM W. HART, the Clerk of the Convention which formed the Association; thereby depriving us of a useful member—the Church of one of its brightest ornaments, and withdrawing all the tenderest affections that cluster around the human breast: And feeling it our duty and glorious privilege “to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep”

Therefore, resolved, That this Association deeply regrets the loss it has sustained in the death of Br. W. W. Hart, and tenders its Christian sympathies to the surviving relations and family of the deceased.

27. Br. S. H. Butler presented the following resolutions which were unanimously adopted:
Resolved, That the thanks and gratitude of this Association be respectfully tendered to the people of this vicinity for their kind hospitality extended to us during our session.

28. *Resolved*, That this Association adopt, for a standard hymn-book, the new edition of Watts and Rippon, and recommend it to the churches of this Association.

29. *Resolved*, That the churches composing this body be requested to send up, at our next session, a history of their constitution, progress, &c.

30. *Resolved*, That our next Association be held at Liberty Church, Thomas county, Georgia, commencing on Saturday before the third Sabbath in October, 1844.

31. *Ordered*, That five hundred copies of these Minutes, with the accompanying documents, be printed, and that the Clerk be appointed to superintend the same, and that he be authorized to draw upon the Treasurer for the expenses thereof.

trict, on the fifth Lord's day in January, 1844, at Providence Church, Gadsden county.—
The ministers appointed to attend said meeting are Brethren J. Goodman, J. Mercer, John W. Mann, T. Lang and B. S. Fuller. The general meeting of the 2d district to be held at Liberty Church, Thomas County, Georgia, on the fifth Lord's day in June, 1844. The ministers appointed to attend the same are Brethren A. Mosely, J. Broome, R. J. Mays, H. S. Linton, S. C. Craft, W. B. Cooper, J. M. Call, Ryan Fryer and R. T. Stanlan.

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24. Brethren G. T. Coddington, John S. Hart, S. B. Barrington, J. M. Sloan and U. Wood were appointed a Home Missionary Committee.

25. The following resolutions, offered by Br. J. Mercer, were adopted:—

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32. Br. S. H. Butler was appointed to write the next Circular letter.

33. The financial Committee reported \$60 received for printing Minutes.

[Of this sum, thirty dollars only were expended, leaving a balance of \$30 in the Treasury.]

34. The Missionary Committee reported \$406 received by subscription, and \$12 in cash, for Missionary purposes.

35. Moved and carried to adjourn. Prayer by Br. Moderator.

JOHN BROOME, MODERATOR.

SAMUEL C. CRAFT, CLERK.

Constitution of the Florida Baptist Association.

1st. This Association shall be known by the name of the Florida Baptist Association.

2d. The Association shall be composed of members chosen by the respective Churches in its union, not to exceed two members from each Church, who shall be duly authorized by letter to represent the Churches delegating them.

3d. In the letters sent up by the Churches at each session of the Association, shall be expressed their respective members in full fellowship, those baptized, received by letter, restored, dismissed, excommunicated, and dead, since the last session.

4th. Believing it to be proper, on account of the diversity of opinion among men as to the import of the Scripture doctrines contained in the Old and New Testament, to declare our belief and understanding thereof, we therefore append our belief in twelve Articles, and present them, with our Minutes, to the Baptist denomination.

5th. The Association, when convened, shall be governed by a regular and proper Decorum. A Moderator and a Clerk, shall be chosen by the vote of the members present, who shall hold their office till the next session of the body, and until successors are elected. The Moderator shall preside at the meetings of the Association, and the Clerk shall record the proceedings thereof, and prepare them for the press.

6th. The Association, thus organized, shall have no power to Lord it over God's heritage, nor infringe upon the internal rights of any Church.

7th. Newly constituted Churches may be admitted into this union, upon application by letter and delegates; and if, upon examination, found to be orthodox, shall be received by the Association, and the right hand of fellowship extended to the delegates by the Moderator.

8th. The Association shall furnish the Churches with the Minutes of their proceedings, in proportion to the funds sent up for that purpose by the Churches.

9th. The Minutes of the Association shall be publicly and distinctly read, (and corrected if necessary,) and then signed by the Moderator and Clerk before adjournment.

10th. Any amendment or alteration of this Constitution, may be made by the votes of two thirds of the members present, at any regular meeting of the Association, (of which notice shall be given in the minutes); and the concurrence of two thirds of the members present at the next Association shall make the desired alteration. All other matters in this Association shall be decided by a majority of votes.

11th. The Association shall have power,

First, To provide for the general union of the Churches.

Secondly, To give the Churches advice and counsel in matters of difficulty.

Thirdly, To enquire into the course of any Churches failing to be represented at the meetings of the Association.

Fourthly, To withdraw all connection from any Church or Churches in this union, who shall violate the rules of this Association, or shall deviate from the orthodox principles of the revealed word of God.

Fifthly, To appropriate the moneys contributed to the Association fund, by the Churches, to any purpose they may think best for the interest of the Church of Christ.

Sixthly, To adjourn to any future time and place they may deem most convenient to the Churches in the union.

Assented to by the Florida Association at Ebenezer Church, Jefferson County, Middle Florida; and signed by order of the same, on the 16th day of October, 1843.

JOHN BROOME, Moderator.

SAMUEL C. CRAFT, Clerk.

TERRITORY OF FLORIDA.

The following is a brief declaration of the sentiments and faith of the Florida Baptist Association; and is believed to express, with little variation, the general sentiments of the body in the United States:

1st. 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—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 supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions, should be tried.

2d. *Of the true God.*—That there is one, and only one, true and living God, whose name is Jehovah, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth, and of all possible creations of his.

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Sixthly: To adjourn to any future time and place they may deem most convenient to the Churches in the union.

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2d. *Of the true God*,—That there is one, and only one, true and living God, whose name is Jehovah, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth—inexpressibly glorious in holiness, worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love—revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

3d. *Of the fall of man*,—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 sinners—not by constraint, but choice—being by nature utterly void of that 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.

4th. *Of the way of Salvation*,—That the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial office of the Son of God; who took upon 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 perfections, is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

5th. *Of Justification*,—That the great Gospel blessing, which Christ of his fulness bestows on such as believe in him, is justification; that justification consists in the pardon of sin

and the promise of eternal life, on principles of righteousness, that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, 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.

6th. *Of the freeness of Salvation*,—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.

7th. *Of Grace in Regeneration*,—That in order to be saved, we must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind, and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its evidence is found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.

8th. *Of God's purpose in Grace*,—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—but it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility; prayer, praise, trust in God and active imitation of his free mercy, and 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.

9th. *Of the Perseverance of the Saints*,—That such only are true believers as endure to 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 that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

10th. *Harmony of the Law and Gospel*,—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 the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfil its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them 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.

11th. *Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper*,—That Christian Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit—to shew forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior; that it is pre-requisite 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, preceded always by a solemn self-examination.

12th. *Of a Gospel Church*,—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 Elders, or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

13th. *The Christian Sabbath*,—The first day of the week is the Lord's day, or the Christian Sabbath, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes.

14th. *Of the World to Come*,—That the end of this world is approaching; that at the last day, Christ will descend from Heaven and raise the dead from their graves to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

JOHN BROOME, MODERATOR.

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JOHN BROOME, MODERATOR.

SAM'L C. CRAFT, CLERK.

Rules of Decorum for the Florida Baptist Association.

1. At every meeting of the Association, the Moderator shall call the members to order, and cause the Clerk to read the minutes of the preceding Association.

2. The Moderator shall preserve order, shall speak on points of order in preference to other members, and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the Association when requested by any two members.

3. The Moderator shall put all questions distinctly in this form:—"As many as are in favour (as the question may be) say *aye*;" and after the affirmative voice is taken—"as many as are of a contrary opinion say *no*." If doubtful which voice is in the majority, it shall be decided by rising and counting.

4. The Moderator shall appoint committees, except in cases of appointment by ballot.

5. In all cases of ballot, the Moderator may vote; in other cases he shall not vote, unless the Association be equally divided, or unless his vote, if given to the minority, will make the division equal, in that case the question shall be lost.

6. When any member is about to speak in debate, he shall rise and address himself respectfully to the Moderator.

7. If any member, while speaking or otherwise, transgress the rules of decorum, the Moderator shall, or any member may, call him to order.

8. When two or more members rise at the same time, the Moderator shall determine who is first entitled to the floor.

9. No member shall indulge unkind remark in debate; nor shall any member speak more than twice on the same question without leave of the Association, nor more than once, until every member choosing to speak shall have done so.

10. While any member is addressing the Association, it shall be the duty of the Moderator to suppress all private discourse that may be entertained between the members, and to require strict attention on the part of the members.

11. When a motion is made and seconded, it shall be stated by the Moderator before debated.

12. Every motion shall be reduced to writing, if desired by any member of the Association.

13. After a motion is made and seconded, it shall be deemed in possession of the Association, but may be withdrawn at any time before decided or amended.

14. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be entertained, unless to amend it, or to refer it to a committee, or for the previous question, or for adjournment.

15. A motion for adjournment shall be always in order, and decided without debate.

16. Any member may call for the division of a question where two or more distinct propositions are set forth, and when the substance will admit of division.

17. Motions and amendments may be referred to a committee, at the pleasure of the Association.

18. Every resolution shall receive two statements, or readings, in the Association, previous to its passage. The first shall be for information, and the second when the decision of the Association is to be made.

19. The rules may be changed, or amended, at any regular and full meeting of the Association.

20. The Association shall be opened and closed with prayer each day, either by the Moderator or some other member.

JOHN BROOME, MODERATOR.

SAMUEL C. CRAFT, CLERK.

The Florida Baptist Association to the Churches composing said Body.

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in Christ, our Lord.—Through the providence of our God we have been permitted to meet together in an associational capacity, and proceed to address you a few lines by way of encouragement, advice and admonition. By reference to our present minutes, you will see what steps we have taken to repair the loss of our last; therefore it is needless to mention any of the proceedings of the late Convention. Suffice it to say, we met last Spring, according to previous appointment, organized, and became a constituted body.

It is so recently seceded from the Ocklockonnee Association, and this being our first Circular, a decent and respectful regard for the opinions of other Christian denominations, and to mankind in general, would, perhaps, justify, and even claim, at present, a declaration of the causes which impelled us to this separation. By referring to the last minutes of said Association, you will be found an article passed at that session, couched in the following dictatorial language:—"It is the duty of this Association to provide for the general union of the Churches, and will not fellowship any Church or Churches, nor hold them in union that support any modern Missionary, Bible, Tract or Sunday School Union societies or Theological School, either in themselves, or in any other person or persons, or any other society that now is or may hereafter be constituted, under a pretence of circulating the Gospel of Christ; nor will she correspond with any Association that support or fellowship any of the above named societies." Christian friends and patriots of America, we claim to be descen-

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JOHN BROOME, MODERATOR.

SAMUEL C. CRAFT, CLERK.

The Florida Baptist Association to the Churches composing said Body.

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in Christ, our Lord.—Through the providence of our God we have been permitted to meet together in an associational capacity, and proceed to address you a few lines by way of encouragement, advice and admonition. By reference to our present minutes, you will see what steps we have taken to repair the loss of our last; therefore it is needless to mention any of the proceedings of the late Convention. Suffice it to say, we met last Spring, according to previous appointment, organized, and became a constituted body.

Having so recently seceded from the Ocklockonnee Association, and this being our first Circular, a decent and respectful regard for the opinions of other Christian denominations, and to mankind in general, would, perhaps, justify, and even claim, at present, a declaration of the causes which impelled us to this separation. By referring to the last minutes of said Association, will be found an article passed at that session, couched in the following dictatorial language:—"It is the duty of this Association to provide for the general union of the Churches, and will not fellowship any Church or Churches, nor hold them in union, that support any modern Missionary, Bible, Tract or Sunday School Union societies or Theological School, either in themselves, or in any other person or persons, or any other society that now is or may hereafter be constituted, under a pretence of circulating the Gospel of Christ; nor will she correspond with any Association that support or fellowship any of the above named societies." Christian friends and patriots of America, we claim to be descendants of the venerable fathers of the Reformation, and the legitimate offspring of the sages and heroes of the American Revolution; and we contend that in our breasts is the repository of that inestimable boon, obtained by the blood of our venerated fathers—liberty of conscience. We contend for the free exercise of that reason which God has given us, and by which we are distinguished from the beasts of the field, and which constitutes man's resemblance to the Deity, and elevates him to the superiority he possesses of this lower creation.

Truth, moral and divine, can only flourish in Freedom's soil. There, only, it shoots up and sheds its fruit for the healing of the nations. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," was the advice of the Apostle to his Christian Brethren; and surely no substantial reason can ever be given, to warrant the abrogation of such wholesome advice. Suppose we, for once, relinquish the exercise of our reason in religious matters, and submissively acquiesce in the dogmas of others, we should, ere long, (as sad experience has evinced,) be brought to groan beneath the absurdities of bigotry and prejudice, and our religious devotions burdened and perplexed with a long train of traditionary ceremonies. We believe that neither God nor the Constitution of our country has authorized any set of men to dictate to us, or to impose their dogmas under pain of excommunication. No,—

"Let Cæsar's dues ever be paid to Cæsar and his throne,
But consciences and souls were made to be the Lord's alone."

If we but cast our eyes back, and review the mournful and melancholy pages of ecclesiastical history, we shall find that an awful languor and death-like torpidity hung over the Church of God, and enveloped mankind in darkness and doubt, whilst the will and reason of man were made to crouch at the footstool of a Roman pontiff.

But since the glorious dawn of the Reformation, Truth has emerged from those shades of superstition and error, in which she had been enshrouded by the intrigues of the artful and designing. Now, through the instrumentality of the departed worthies of the Reformation and of the American Revolution, are we permitted to read, think and reason for ourselves; and by means of these glorious privileges, error ceases to be perpetuated from the sire to the son, as in former days. Therefore, we deem it to be our indispensable duty, as the descendants of a race of illustrious sires, who have transmitted to us, untarnished, those invaluable rights of man, which God has implanted in the breast of his intelligent creatures, to discountenance any man or set of men, who, under the sacred garb of religion, would again attempt to rivet upon us the trammels of despotism; and that in its worst hue—the liberty of conscience.

Our churches having been originally formed upon the “true platform of Republican Democracy,” as an eminent statesman has justly observed, and, believing, as we did, that the article above quoted, as well as the general course and conduct of our former brethren towards us, tended directly to militate against all free discussion and the exercise of private judgment, we remonstrated with them in a most respectful, yet energetic manner. We implored them, by all the considerations of Christian charity and forbearance, to rescind their anathema. But in vain did we plead as dutiful children. The bull was denounced against us, and we were compelled obsequiously to submit, as heretics, excommunicated and delivered over to Satan, or to assert the legitimate rights that God and our beloved country have guaranteed to us. We chose the latter, and call Heaven to witness the purity of our motives, and the impartiality of the Christian world, and the tenacity of American patriotism to testify to the correctness of our views and our consequent steps. These, Christians and friends, are the causes which led to the formation of the Florida Baptist Association.

We come now, brethren and sisters, more directly to address you, and, by referring you to the state of some of our churches, you will discover that we have something whereof to glory in our God. The time seems to be fulfilled, in which God intends to bless the means of his own appointment, to the salvation of his creatures. When we take a melancholy retrospect of the past, and compare it with the delightful state of things which present themselves to our view at present, O, brethren and sisters, can we but be filled with gratitude and praise to the “Author of every good and perfect gift?” The awful and portending cloud of “false doctrine,” which, like an incubus, has so long hung over the churches of our denomination in Florida, and settled its members down into a death-like lethargy and lukewarmness, is now rapidly passing away before the pure light of the Gospel of Truth. Yea, the time is fulfilled and the “kingdom of God is at hand.” The cloud of temporal war has passed from our borders. No more do we hear the savages. No more are our wives and children subject to the tomahawk and scalping-knife; and the spiritual cloud of ignorance, prejudice, bigotry and superstition, is fast vanishing before the superior and radiant blaze of the light of the Gospel:—

“For darkness and doubt are now flying away,
No longer we roam in conjecture forlorn;
So breaks on the traveller, faint and estray,
The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.
See Truth, Love and Mercy in triumph descending,
And nature all glowing in Eden’s first bloom;
On the cold cheek of Death smiles and roses are blending,
And beauty immortal awakes from the tomb.”

O, brethren and sisters, should not the glorious news we have from some of our churches

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O, brethren and sisters, should not the glorious news we have from some of our churches, cheer our hearts, animate our affections and arouse us to more strength and zeal, in the cause of our Master, in the salvation of His creatures.

That God should thus bless all the churches within our boundaries being the fervent desire of our hearts, permit us, dear brethren and sisters, upon the present occasion, to point out and recommend to you one of the primary means, in the use of which, God seems to own and bless; and that is—the subject of prayer, which we conceive to be one of the most powerful and efficient means, through which, God has ever blessed His Church. We are commanded by the Apostle to "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 supplicating for all saints.*"

Prayer is the language of dependence; hence the phrase "prayerless Christian," is as irreconcilable and paradoxical as the term "*frigid caloric.*" Prayer is the Christian's food. It is his proper element. It is his delight. That which may tend to promote and strengthen virtue, or to calm and regulate the temper, is a source of happiness. Prayer produces these desirable effects to a remarkable degree. It inspires composure of spirit, mildness and benignity. It weakens the painful and, in a remarkable degree, cherishes the pleasing emotions of our hearts; and, by these means, carries on our lives, in a smooth and placid

tenor. More than this—in opens a field of enjoyment to which the prayerless is an entire stranger. This is that “balm” to which we may all apply with pleasing consolation, when the world leaves us, or, through adversity, it seems to have become our foe; for such seasons the fervent, prayerful Christian has a hidden store of comfort laid up. For, let us be placed in whatever situation of life we may, the world can neither always give us pleasure, nor shield us from distress. There will always be periods of vanity and dejection.

O, if we be strangers to prayer, with what oppressive weight will sickness, disappointment or old age fall upon our spirits! But for these pensive periods, let us always have a relief prepared in prayer, for by this, we are transported from the common vanities of life, and from the painful corrosion of its cares and sorrows, into a new region, and surrounded there with such objects as are most calculated to cheer our dejection, to calm the tumults and heal the wounded heart. Perhaps the world has been too much the object of our pursuit, and finally proved delusive, (as is, alas! too often the case). This will gladden us with the prospect of a higher and better order of things, about to arise. Our friends may have proved ungrateful and base; this displays to our view the faithfulness of that Supreme Being who, though every other friend fail, will never forsake nor cast us off. In short, prayer is the enjoyment, and the only solid enjoyment of a Christian's life. It is the support of his virtue and the rest of his soul, in this turbulent world. It composes his thoughts, calms his passions and exalts his heart. Through this channel, God designs to impart his grace, as well to the low as the high—the poor as well as the rich. In the exercise of this delightful emotion of the soul, worldly distinctions cease, and oft-times worldly sorrows are forgotten. This is a sanctuary ever open to the miserable—inaccessible to none.

But our business, at present, is not so much with the general principles of prayer, as we presume there are but few, calling themselves Christians, but acknowledge its force and vital importance, at least, in theory; therefore we would beg leave to descend to particulars—And, brethren and sisters, however strongly we would wish to recommend to you the subject of secret prayer, meditation and self-examination, and also the beautiful and most pleasing theme, *family prayer and devotion*, yet, hoping that these are all duly attended to by you, our limits admonish us to bring your minds immediately to the subject of “PRAYER MEETINGS,” as experience has taught us that, in these social meetings, the lukewarm and lethargic are aroused to zeal and activity. It is here the timid and diffident are strengthened and encouraged. Here have been fostered, and here germinated, the most towering talents; and some of the most brilliant and useful luminaries that have ever graced the pulpit, since the days of the Apostles. It is in these meetings that God oft-times manifests his call to the ministry; and it is in these, also, that sinners are constrained to say “See how these Christians live and love.” Here they are convicted; here they are comforted, and here they are made to rejoice in Christ, their Saviour. Yes, brethren and sisters, it is in these that have budded the glorious revival and increase of Christ's kingdom, during the present year, which you find recorded in our Minutes. Then permit us, beloved brethren and sisters, by your love for your children, by your anxiety for your neighbors, by your solicitude for the salvation and redemption of lost sinners and by your zeal for the glory of God, to admonish you to foster and cherish, by all laudable means, this channel through which, God seems to delight in communicating his blessings. Finally, brethren and sisters, farewell! and may the God of peace and love dwell with you and us. Amen!

JOHN BROOME, MODERATOR.

SAMUEL C. CRAFT, CLERK.

The Florida Association to the Bethel Association in Georgia, sendeth Christian Salutation:

BELoved BRETHREN:—The first session of the Florida Association was held on Saturday before the third Sabbath in October, which is the time of annual sessions in future. The cause of our separation from the Ocklockonnee Association, is probably known to you. We were compelled to denounce all the efforts, which Christians are making, to spread the

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STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

CHURCHES.	Baptised.	R'd by let	Restored.	Dismiss'd.	Excom'd.	Dead.	TOTAL.	By whom supplied.	Regular Meetings — Sabbaths.	NAMES OF DELEGATES.
1. Concord,	3	6	0	7	0	0	19	R. J. Mays,	4	J. McCall, S. H. Butler,
2. Enon,	7	3	0	0	0	0	21	T. Lang,	4	G. T. Coddine, Parker Levy,
3. Sharon,	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	B. S. Fuller,	1 and 3	JOHN BROOME, J. S. Broome,*
4. Elizabeth,	58	3	10	40	0	0	43	H. S. Linton,	2	J. M. Sloan, H. Whitehurst,
5. Shilo,	41	7	0	22	1	1	137	T. Lang,	2	T. LANG, O. Thompson,
6. Monticello,	1	1	1	0	0	1	11	H. S. Linton,	4	W. H. Sequegas, S. B. Barronson,
7. Indian Springs,	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	J. Goodman,	1	J. Cason, J. S. Hart,
8. Hebron,	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	T. Lang,	3	Asa Munson, John Ingram,
9. Hickstown,	5	1	0	1	1	2	27	B. S. Fuller,	2	B. S. FULLER, John Coker,*
10. Ebenezer,	23	0	0	14	0	0	53	J. Broome,	3	W. West, J. Baugh.
New Churches.										
1. Ocilla,							37	H. S. Linton,	1	H. S. LINTON, Josiah Holton,
2. Liberty,							14	T. J. Mays,	3	R. S. <i>Snider</i> , J. M. Groover,
3. Apalachicola,							17	J. Mercer,	4	J. MERCER, Ransom Harold,*
4. Bethpage,							105		4	SAM. O. CRAFT, J. B. Page,
5. Providence,							27	J. W. Mann,	1	H. Wood, G. W. Phillips,
6. Hopewell,							25		3	B. Winn, J. Brown,
7. Little River,							14	W. B. Cooper,	1	J. O. Goldwire, W. B. COOPER.
	138	21	11	84	2	4	670			

Ordained ministers in Capitals—licensed preachers in italics. Delegates marked with a star were absent.

SENTINEL OFFICE, TALLAHASSEE, 19TH OCTOBER.

Received of G. T. CODDINE, Treasurer of the Florida Association, Thirty Dollars, in full, for printing five hundred copies, Minutes first session of the Florida Association.

JOSEPH CLISBY.

SAMUEL C. CRAFTS, CLERK.

Brethren, we desire to open a correspondence with you—to state your Christian sympathies and prayers; and for this purpose we send, as messengers to you, our esteemed brethren, elder Joux Broome, and elder H. S. LAYTON, and elder R. J. Mays, whom we commend to your brotherly regard, and to whom we refer you for a more minute detail of anything you may wish to know, touching our Association.

May the Lord bless you, and guide you by his unerring Spirit.

JOHN BROOME, MODERATOR.