

1923

MINUTES

OF THE

*Thirtieth
Annual Session*

OF THE

Sardis Association

OF

Regular Baptists

HELD WITH THE

Bent Branch Church
PIKE COUNTY, KENTUCKY

ELDER ESTER HOPKINS, MODERATOR
ELDER JONAH BEVINS, CLERK

MINUTES OF THE 30th, ANNUAL SESSION
of the
SARDIS ASSOCIATION
of REGULAR BAPTISTS

The Sardis Association of Regular Baptist, of Jesus Christ met with Bent Branch Church, Meta, Pike County Kentucky, September 14th, 1923 and after singing by the congregation and a pointed introductory by Elder Jonah Bevins, the introductory sermon was delivered by Elder Ester Hopkins, from Rom. 5:1- "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then after a short intermission, the delegates from the several churches assembled at the School House and after singing and prayer by F. M. Preece, the association proceeded to business in the following order:

1st—Called for the Letters from the several Churches which were handed in, read and received and the delegates seated as shown in the table of statistics.

2nd—The association then organized by electing Elder Ester Hopkins, Moderator; Jonah Bevins, Assistant Moderator and Clerk; F. M. Preece, Assistant Clerk.

3rd—Called for newly constituted Churches, none responded.

4th—Called for rules of Decorum to be read and omitted on motion.

5th—By motion the Moderator make all temporary appointments and appointed Bro. W. Blackburn and Orison Stanley to see that peace prevailed at the stand.

6th—Appointed a committee to arrange the Ministry for Saturday, consisting of one member from each Church with the entire delegation from the Bent Branch Church, who reported as follows: first, Elder Harvey Spence; Second, L. T. Preston; Z. M. Dyer; fourth, F. A. Hopkins.

7th—Appointed committee on finance as follows: Elder J. H. Brown and F. M. Preece.

8th—Appointed committee on arrangements, one delegate from each church, with Moderator and Clerk. Visiting brethren from Sister Associations invited.

9th—Called for Letters from Sister Associations and received New Salem with a file of Minutes, at the hands of Elders F. H. Hopkins, Hayse Maynard, Finess Adkins, A. J. Maynard, H. J., L. V. and Tom Williams. Letter in hand of F. A. Hopkins, Bethlehem at the hands of Elders H. G. Spence, M. Dyer, and W. M. Ray. Letter in hand of H. G. Spence.

10th—Called for transient Ministers and received Elders A. W. Runyons, J. H. Brown, W. Blackburn, Hose Bolling and W. M. Moore.

11th—Appointed the Clerk and Assistant Clerk to write the corresponding letter to the Sister Associations, the New Salem and Bethlehem.

12th—On motion the Association adjourned until Saturday morning, 9:30 A. M.

Saturday morning, 9:30 A. M.

September 15th, 1923.

Met pursuant to adjournment and after singing and prayer by E. F. Fields, proceeded to business in the following order:

1st—Called the roll and marked the absentees.

2nd—Rules of decorum read by the Clerk.

3rd—Called on the committee of arrangement to report who reported and were discharged.

4th—Called on committee of finance to make report who reported Eighty-six Dollars and Twenty-one cents, (\$86.21).

5th—Called on Secretary and Treasurer to report who reported the books complete and a total on hand from last year \$84.08 which with the sum received from the several churches makes a total of \$170.39 in his hands for the year.

6th—By motion, Bro. J. M. Hensley, was retained as Treasurer.

7th—Called on those appointed last year to attend Associations and Union Meetings, to report, who generally reported satisfactorily but some failures were reported, and those failing to attend were excused.

8th—Appointed the same committee on ministry as of yesterday who reported the following Ministers to preach on Sunday:

1st—Elder W. Blackburn,

2nd—Elder Hayse Maynard,

3rd—Elder W. C. Hay,

4th—Elder Finess Atkins

9th—The corresponding letters to Sister Associations were read and received and appointed the following delegates to bear the same to them. New Salem Association Elders Jonah Bevins, W. Blackburn, Bro. A. J. Case, H. Young, Elder L. T. Preston, Bro. C. Williamson and W. L. Keesee. Letter in the hands of Elder Jonah Bevins, to bear the same to be held with the New Salem Church, Floyd County, Ky., to begin on Friday before the Fourth Sunday in September, 1923, and the two following days.

Bethlehem Association Bro. C. Williamson, Elder W. Blackburn, Bro. A. J. Case, Elders L. T. Preston, W. H. Maynard, F. Canterbury, Bro. Sam Robson, J. M. Hensley and Elder F. M. Preece. Letter in the hand of F. M. Preece. To commence on Friday before the First Sunday in September 1924; to convene with the Kenova Church Wayne County West Virginia, and two days following.

10th—By motion, it was ordered that the Meeting time of the Sardis Association be and it is changed to begin on Friday before the second Saturday in September instead of Friday before the Third Saturday in September on account of conflicting with corresponding associations.

11th—By motion, it was ordered that the Clerk with a committee as follows: Bro. J. M. Hensley, Elder Frank Fields, Elder F. M. Preece, find the record of the Sardis Association from its organization, and if the record cannot be obtained that they proceed to make one from the face of the Minutes, and that a record book be purchased by the Clerk.

12—Ordered that article 15 in the minutes of 1921 be reprinted in this year's minutes for the benefit of the several churches, which is as follows:

“Ordered that we advise the churches of this union not to receive or retain any one in their fellowship who belongs to any secret order”.

13.—Ordered that article 11 and 13 be removed from the minutes and placed in the Association record.

14.— Ordered that the following churches have union meetings:

Mt. Pleasant, Second Sunday in July, 1924.
Elders Jonah Bevins, F. M. Preece, Finis Adkins, with Moderator attend.

Mary Elizabeth, Third Saturday in July, 1924.
Elders Finis Adkins, Hays Maynard, L. T. Preston, with the Moderator attend.

Bent Branch, Third Saturday in August, 1924.
Elders Ester Hopkins, H. G. Spence, F. A. Hopkins, with the Moderator attend.

Narrow's Branch, Fourth Saturday in July,
Elders Jonah Bevins, W. C. Hay, H. G. Spence, with the Moderator attend.

Salem, First Saturday in August, 1924.
Elders Hays Maynard, L. T. Preston, Jonah Bevins, A. J. Maynard, with the Moderator attend.

Lenah, Second Saturday in June, 1924.
Elders Jonah Bevins, Ester Hopkins, F. A. Hopkins, L. T. Preston, with the Moderator attend.

Dick's Fork, First Saturday in July, 1924.
Elders W. Blackburn, W. C. Hay, with the Moderator attend.

Bethany, Fourth Saturday in July, 1924.
Elders F. M. Preece, L. T. Preston, Simeon Johnson, with the Moderator attend.

Big Branch, Third Saturday in July, 1924.
Elders F. M. Preece, Simeon Johnson, Andy Runyan, Jonah Bevins, with the Moderator attend.

Rebecca, Second Saturday in August, 1924.
Elders Jonah Bevins, Ester Hopkins, L. T. Preston, F. Canterbury, with the Moderator attend.

Pilgrim Home, Fourth Sunday in June, 1924.
Elders Hays Maynard, F. A. Hopkins, Ester Hopkins, L. T. Preston, with the Moderator attend.

Mt. Carmel, First Sunday in August, 1924.
Elders Jonah Bevins, Finis Adkins, J. H. Jackson, W. C. Cole, with the Moderator attend.

15.—Ordered that the obituary of Sister Rebecca Young be printed in our minutes, with any others the clerk may receive prior to the printing of the minutes.

16.—Ordered that L. T. Preston write a circular letter and the clerk have the same printed in our minutes.

17.—Ordered that we have one thousand copies of the minutes printed and that the clerk superintend the printing and distribution of the same.

18.—Ordered that our next Association be held with the Brushy Fork Church, Jarad, Pike County, Kentucky, beginning on Friday before the second Saturday in September, 1924, and that Elder L. T. Preston preach the introductory sermon and that Elder Ester Hopkins be his alternate.

19.—Ordered that we extend our thanks to the brethren and sisters of the Bent Branch church and to the community at large for the hospitality they have shown.

20.—Ordered that the Association adjourn to the time and place above mentioned.

Elder Ester Hopkins, Moderator.

Elder Jonah Bevins, Clerk.

Elder F. M. Preece, Assistant Clerk.

SUNDAY SERVICE.

A large and attentive audience was present when Elder Willis Blackburn introduced the services by a short address and song: "I am a poor wayfaring pilgrim". The brethren preached in the order of their arrangement. Elder Hays Maynard preached from Psalms 72:16: "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountain. The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth."

W. H. Hay preached from Acts 7:26: "Sirs, ye are brethren".

Elder Finis Adkins preached from St. John 3:19: "And this is condemnation, that light is come into the world and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil."

The brethren one and all seemed to be laden with the Gospel of peace and divinely blessed as they preached in defense of the old time truth, once delivered to the Saints, and with hearts overflowing with love. The parting hand was given and the thirtieth session of the Sardis Association passed into history.

The Clerk.

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CIRCULAR LETTER.

Dear Brothers and Sisters
of the Sardis Association:

In order to comply with your request I will write a circular letter. Feeling my weakness, I will only depend on God for aid, hoping he will direct my mind to a subject. I will use the Apostle Paul to Titus; 3:8: "This is a faithful saying and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

First, I want to thank God for this faithful saying that has been faithfully kept, from the coming of Jesus Christ until now and will be reserved until his coming. In First Timothy, fifteenth verse, we find: This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am

chief. These things I will that thou affirm in good works."

We see that after Jesus was baptized, he ascended up in the mount and called the twelve and ordained them which was preparing them for his own use, and making foundations in the church.

Jesus said to them, Mat. 5:14; "Ye are the light of the world;" and in the sixteenth verse, he says: "Let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

We see these had believed in God for Jesus came to his own— and they received him not, but unto as many as did receive Him to them he gave the power to become sons of God. Therefore, he gave the good works of his that his Father had sent him to do. The Father had sent him to fulfill the laws and to save his people from their sins that they might be manifest in himself and receive of Him the will of the Father, that sent Him.

And as the work of God is good, so is it with those who believe in him. As God is love so are the children which are born of him. When we receive the love of God it makes us love the work of God. We are like our father Abraham. Being moved with fear, we started on the path of obedience. Our position is like Peter's. We followed when called. Christ said un-

to Peter: First John, 21:22; "Follow thou me." Peter followed. To follow him into the water and be buried in the likeness of his death, to rise in the likeness of his resurrection, to walk that newness of life doing the work that he gave his believers to do, is what he meant when he said: "If you love me keep my commandments". 1st John 19-15.

So we know as Jesus said to Nicodemus (1, John 3:3): "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom, neither can he know the good works". In order to maintain good works we must first get in possession. In the 8th chapter of Hebrews, we see he has said: "I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts." When that law is written in the heart we should be careful to maintain it; to keep the divine law, and let the light of love shine, because it is good, not only for ourselves but for those who see it and will believe in God to the glorying of his name. Peter 2:9 "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 has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light". Peter 2:11: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul". In the 13th verse, he says: "Submit yourself to every ordinance of men for the Lord's sake. Verse, 15: "For so is the will of God that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignor-

ance of foolish men". Titus 2:11: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works". Ephesians 2:11: "But God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loves us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ Jesus and hath raised us together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

"For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast", but after we were born again, our sins all taken away, our souls redeemed, and saved from sin and death, baptised by the one spirit into the one body. Then it was we received the one law of love that we know. God hath first loved us and we with his grace and love applied to our poor needy souls have been made able to love him who gave his life for us; and as he so loved us, we should also give our lives for the brethren. Here is good works manifest in us, for we know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren and in the manifestation of love for one another.

Sinners are convinced that we are the children of God for the light shines forth to them when they see us so zealous in doing what the Lord of glory has commanded his children to do. Then it is not to get saved that makes us do these good works but because we are of God and because he has already saved us. "For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are one", Ye are of God, little children, then manifest your love in the care for each other for he careth for you and hath left us the promise that he never will leave or forsake his people; and I do believe that The Regular Baptists, in harmony with his word, are his people. Brethren, beware of adultery which means to take from his divine law or add to it; but let us stand on the one foundation. Many, I fear, have tried to lay other foundations, but they are failures. Other foundations can no man lay, only that which is laid in Jesus Christ. Then brethren, be careful, how we build. Be like John the Baptist: if they do not bring fruits, meet for repentance, do not try to wash the filth of the flesh away with water.

Beloved brethren, be careful to maintain good works and have no fellowship with the unfaithful works of darkness. Dear brethren, I have tried to fulfill your request in writing this letter. While I feel so unworthy, I hope some one or more may be benefitted by some thoughts that may come when they read what I have awkwardly written. I feel that the love

of the brethren and sisters is with me and that they will forgive my mistakes. I want to ask you all to remember me and each other in your prayers. I close with tears in my eyes and a prayer in my heart that God will keep you, and do more for you than you can think to ask him to do.

Hoping to meet you in our next Association, and if not there, then in glory. Farewell.

Your humble servant,
Elder L. T. Preston.

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CONSTITUTION.

From a long series of experiences, we, the Church of Jesus Christ, being regularly baptized upon our profession of faith in Jesus Christ, are convinced of the necessity of a combination of churches, in order to perpetuate a union and communion among us, and preserve, maintain and keep the rules and orders of an Association, according to the following plan of form of government:

Article 1. The Association shall be composed of members chosen by the different churches in our Union, and duly sent to represent them in the Association, who shall be members whom they judge best qualified for that purpose, and producing letters from their respective churches, certifying their appointment, shall be entitled to a seat.

Article 2. In the letters from the different churches shall be expressed their number in full

membership, those baptized, received by letter, restored, dismissed, excommunicated, and dead, since the last Association.

Article 3. The members thus chosen and convened shall have no power to lord it over God's heritage, nor shall they have any clerical power over the churches, nor shall they infringe on any of the internal rights of any church in the union.

Article 4. The Association, when convened, shall be governed by a regular and proper decorum.

Article 5. The Association shall have a Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer, who shall be chosen by the suffrage of the members present.

Article 6. New churches may be admitted into the union who shall petition by letter and messenger (and if found upon examination to be orthodox and orderly), shall be received by the Association, and manifest by the Moderator giving the right hand of fellowship.

Article 7. Every church in the union shall be entitled to a representative in the Association.

Article 8. Every query presented by any church to the Association, being first debated in their own church, shall be taken up by the Association.

Article 9. Every motion made, and seconded, shall come under the consideration of the Association, except it shall be withdrawn by the member who made it.

Article 10. The Association shall endeavor to furnish the churches with the Minutes of the Association.

Article 11. The churches shall send money by the delegates of each church to pay for printing the Minutes of the Association.

Article 12. There shall be a record book kept wherein the proceedings of every Association shall be regularly recorded by the Secretary for that purpose.

Article 13. The minutes of the Association shall be read (and corrected, if need be), and signed by the Moderator and Clerk before the Association rises.

Article 14. Amendments to this plan or form of government may be made at any time by a majority of the union, when they may deem it necessary.

Article 15. All matters coming before the Association shall be decided by the will of the majority.

Article 16. The Association shall have power (1) to provide for the general union of the churches. (2) To preserve inviolably a chain of communication among the churches. (3) To give the churches necessary advice in matters of church difficulty. (4) To inquire into the cause why the churches fail to represent themselves at any time in the Association. (5) To appoint any member or members, by and with their consent to transact any business which they think necessary. (6) The Association shall have power to withdraw from any church in this union which shall violate the rules of this Association or deviate from the orthodox principles of religion. (7) To admit any orderly minister of our order to a seat with

us in the Association. (8) The Association shall have power to adjourn themselves to any future time or place they may think most convenient to the churches in the union. (9) That no minister shall be ordained unless forwarded by a church, and it shall require two or more ordained ministers to compose a presbytery for that purpose.

We, the Churches of Jesus Christ of Regular Baptists, are constituted on the following faith, viz:

Articles of Faith

Article 1. We believe in only one true and living God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things that are therein contained.

Article 2. We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who is Head and King of His Church.

Article 3. We believe in the Holy Ghost, the sealer and applier of the redemption purchased by Christ.

Article 4. We believe in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and these are one.

Article 5. We believe the Old and New Testament Scripture to be the infallible Word of God, and take it for our only rule of faith and practice, and nothing is to be taken from or added to it.

Article 6. We believe in the free atonement of Jesus Christ; that he tasted death for every man, and that salvation is to all men and women on the terms of the Gospel.

Article 7. We believe that repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus are necessary previous to baptism, and that immersion is the only way of administering the ordinance.

Article 8. We believe that Christ has but one true Gospel Church, and that will finally persevere through grace to glory.

Article 9. We believe in the communion of the Lord's Supper, that is, the taking of the bread and wine by the Church of Jesus Christ in commemoration of the death and sufferings of the Son of God until His second coming.

Article 10. We believe that feet washing is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, and ought to be observed and kept up by His Church until His second coming.

Article 11. We believe that Jesus Christ is the first resurrection from the dead, and that He lives forever.

Article 12. We believe in the resurrection of the just and the unjust.

Article 13. We believe in the final punishment of the wicked and the eternal happiness of the righteous.

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Rules of Decorum.

Article 1. The Association shall be opened and closed by prayer.

Article 2. A Moderator and Clerk shall be chosen by the suffrage of the members present.

Article 3. Only one member shall speak at the same time, who shall rise from his seat and address the Moderator when he is about to make his speech.

Article 4. The person thus speaking shall not be interrupted in his speech, except by the Moderator, till he is done speaking, and shall strictly adhere to the subject, and in no wise reflect on the person who spoke before or make remarks on his slips or failures and imperfections, but shall verily state the case and matter as nearly as he can, so as to convey his light or idea.

Article 5. No person shall rise and speak more than three times on one subject without liberty obtained from the Association.

Article 6. No person shall abruptly break off or absent himself from the Association without liberty obtained from it.

Article 7. No member of the Association shall have the liberty of laughing during the sittings of the same, nor whispering in time of public speech.

Article 8. No member of the Association shall address another by any other title or appellation than that of Brother.

Article 9. The Moderator shall not interrupt a member until he gives his own idea upon the subject, except he breaks the rules of decorum.

Article 10. The names of the members of the Association shall be enrolled by the Clerk, and called over as often as the Association requires.

Article 11. The Moderator shall have the same privilege of speech as another member, providing the chair be filled, but shall have no vote unless the Association shall be equally divided.

Article 12. Any member who shall willingly and knowingly break any of the rules shall be re-proved by the Association as they think proper.

Article 13. But three members shall take a seat in the Association from each church.

Article 14. No person shall speak more than five minutes at the same time without liberty obtained from the Association.

Article 15. These rules of decorum shall be read by the Clerk at the commencement of every Association.

Names and addresses of Ordained Ministers

Jonah Bevins	Goody, Ky.
Ransom Smith	Hardy, Ky.
E. F. Fields	McClure, Ky.
Wayne Cline	Piso, Ky.
F. M. Preece	Holden, W. Va.
A. J. Maynard	Williamson, W. Va.
A. A. Sheppard	Holden, W. Va.
Ester Hopkins	Williamson, W. Va.
Hose Bolling	Piso, Ky.
J. E. Taylor	Jarad, Ky.
J. H. Brown	Crigger, Ky.
W. Blackburn	Varney, Ky.
L. T. Preston	Catlettsburg, Ky.
W. H. Maynard	Catlettsburg, Ky.
Simeon Johnson	Canterberry, W. Va.
F. A. Canterbury	Canterberry, W. Va.

Table of Churches

		Church Days	Rec. By Bab.	Rec. by Letter	By Restora.	Dis. by Letter	Dis. by Exclu.	Deceased	Total Members	Contributions
Mt. Pleasant ---	J. M. Hensley, A. Smith, J. Bevins -----	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	32	\$10.05
Mary Elizabeth	W. Jackson, W. Smith, Hi Gilamon -----	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	83	3.45
Brushy Fork ---	Lee Maynard, E. Runyons, E. F. Fields---	1	5	1	0	0	0	1	28	4.50
Rebeca -----	F. M. Preece, A. Evans -----	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	59	7.10
Salem -----	Troy Boulton, Ester Hopkins -----	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	37	8.70
Bent Branch ---	A. P. Bevins, E. Bevins, J. Williamson---	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	5.40
Big Branch ---		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	46	3.00
Dix Fork -----	Geo. Stanley, R. Crigger, R. H. Amburger	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	11.00
Pilgrim Home -	W. L. Varney, A. J. Case, C. Williamson	4	21	0	0	0	0	4	70	12.00
Mt. Carmel ---	L. T. Preston, W. H. Maynard -----	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	22	6.20
Bethany -----	F. Canterbury, S. Johnson, G. W. Hensley	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	21	2.00
Lenah -----	T. McCoy, Sam Robinson -----	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	3.56
Sidney -----	James Jude -----	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	
Norrows Branch	Freland Scott -----	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	7.25
Wolf Creek ---		2	1	0	0	0	0	0	22	2.00
Total -----									498	86.21