

# Griffin's History

## Chapter XIV

### PEARL RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

This Association is the second daughter of the Mississippi Baptist Association; the Union, being the first. The latter was organized before, and the former, after the Mother's session in 1820. Consequently the Union was represented by messengers in that session, but the Pearl River was not.

This Association adopted the Articles of Faith, Gospel Order, Rules of Decorum, and Powers of the Association, of the mother; and hence a repetition is deemed unnecessary. Moreover, as the general history, compiled from the minutes of the Mississippi Baptist Association, and comment thereon, relative to Missionism, equally apply to this Association, we shall omit every thing of that character.

1820. In November, the Association convened at Fair River church, Lawrence county—24 churches represented.

"Eld. J. Thigpen preached the introductory sermon.

"Eld. W. Cooper chosen Moderator and S. King, Clerk.

"Correspondence arranged with three Associations, viz: Mississippi, Union and Bigby, (Ala.)"

1821. In September, the Association convened at Ebenezer church, Lawrence county—24 churches represented.

"Eld. Norvell Robertson preached the introductory sermon.

"Eld. C. Collins chosen Moderator, and S. King, Clerk.

"Query.—What course should a church pursue to which, application is made for fellowship, by a person who has been a member of a sister church in a distant State, and removed to this State, excommunicated; but since believes that God has granted his repentance, and healed his backslidings?

"Answer.—We recommend, in all such cases, that such person be instructed to obtain a letter of dismissal from the church to which he formerly belonged, if

such church be in existence; if not, let the church to which the application is made, act discretionarily.

"Resolved, That we consider it inexpedient to have our Associations to be communion seasons."

#### Extract From the Circular Letter

"In order, therefore, that a sinner may be placed in a situation to perform good works, a change must be effected. The tree must be made good. Man must be made a new creature. This is the work of God. It is wrought by a power equal to that which created the world. The Apostle, addressing the saints at Ephesus, writes thus: 'Not of works lest any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.'

"We see in the above passage, that the change under consideration, is described in the light of a creation—the workmanship of Him who created all things by Jesus Christ; and this creation must necessarily bear an analogy to the creation of the Universe. We likewise learn from the history of that event, given by Moses, that the word of God was alone employed in bringing all things into existence; and also, in the second creation the same word is employed, as saith the Apostle Peter, 1 Epistle i: 23.—'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.'

"Prior to this work the sinner is dead, as to spiritual things, and all the works that he performs are dead works; and thus he remains until life is imparted from Christ, who is the life of every believer; and the life which he imparts is eternal life; for power is given him of his Father, to 'give eternal life to as many as He hath given Him.'

"They are under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the glorious trinity, by whom they are instructed, in a certain degree, into the knowledge of spiritual things, of which they were before ignorant. Among these is the moral law, which is enforced in its purity and spirituality, and convinces them of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the impurity of their own works, which fall infinitely short of justifying them in the sight of an infinitely pure and holy law-giver, who will accept of nothing from his creatures, but the perfection of holiness.

"In this extremity the Gospel points out the way of salvation, through the obedience of Him who has magnified the law, by presenting a righteousness which

He completed when He arose from the dead; and which, when imputed to a sinner, is 'the fulfilling the law for righteousness.' This view of the atonement weans the sinner from all hopes of justification by works of righteousness, which he can do, and sets him to hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of Christ.

"In this frame of soul, the Gospel recognizes him as the character to whom the promises are made; and, at the time appointed by Infinite wisdom, he is enabled, by faith, to appropriate to himself, the blessings of salvation, offered in the Gospel to such characters, which makes him rejoice in hope of eternal life. He is no longer under the law, but under grace, and therefore has the promise that sin shall not have dominion over him. Thus, being made a new creature, he feels himself under obligation to promote the glory of Him that loved him, and whom he loves in return, and is solicitous to know what He will have him to do. His inquiry now, is not 'What shall I do that I may be worthy;' but 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits.'

"He now performs his services from notions of obedience, flowing from love to God and man. He has received the spirit of adoption, and, as far as his proportion of faith will admit, he claims God as his Father, and desires to approve himself as an obedient and loving child. All he does in the way of obedience, is in the name of the Lord Jesus, through whom he hopes, that himself and his works will be accepted before the throne of God. All his petitions, thanksgivings, and acknowledgements, are offered up through Christ; and he looks for all necessary blessings to flow down to him through the same channel.

"We have sufficiently shown, in the preceding remarks, that the design of good works is not to justify or recommend a sinner to the favor of God; still it is presumed, that the Sovereign Judge of all the earth, had an important end designed in enjoining them both under the law and under the Gospel."

1822. In September the Association convened at New Chapel church, Pike county—24 churches represented.

Eld. N. Morris preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. D. Collins chosen Moderator, and S. King, Clerk.

"Took into consideration the petition from the African church, and, after due deliberation, it was

"Resolved, That brethren S. King, D. Cleveland and A. Harper, be appointed a committee to visit the said church, inquire into all the bearings which a late state law of this State has on them, in depriving them of their religious privileges; and to give them such advice as their circumstances may require.

"Resolved, unanimously. That the brethren D. Collins, S. King, G. W. King, and H. Runnels, be appointed a committee to memorialize the Legislature of this State, in behalf of this Association, for the repeal of so much of the said law as deprives our African churches of their religious privileges; and that the said committee wait on the Legislature at their next session with the said memorial.

"Resolved, unanimously. That we request the Mississippi and Union Baptist Associations to unite with us in memorializing the Legislature for the repeal of so much of said law as affects our African churches.

"Correspondence arranged with three Associations, viz, Mississippi, Union and Bigby. (Ala.)

"Appropriated twenty— five dollars to pay traveling expenses of corresponding messengers.

## **EXTRACTS FROM THE CIRCULAR LETTER**

"Brethren in the Ministry:\*\*\*\*\*

"In the mean time be careful for nothing. Cannot your heavenly Father clothe you from His bounty, and feed you out of his hand of benevolence? Your God is love, and you are the peculiar objects of his care! In him are treasured all temporal and spiritual blessings; and while in the faithful discharge of your duty 'Your bread shall be sure, and your water shall not fail.'

"Brethren of the churches: \*\*\*\*\*

"Will you unfeelingly withhold your christian supplications and temporal means from your ministers, while they are toiling in the harvest of the Lord? No, brethren, we are persuaded better things of you; and things which pertain to salvation."

1823. In September, the Association convened at Providence church, Marion county—29 churches represented.

Eld. D. Collins chosen Moderator, and S. King, Clerk.

Correspondence arranged with three Associations, viz: Mississippi, Union and Beckbee, (Bigby, Ala.)

"Took up the petition from New Chapel church, on which

Resolved, That this Association approve of the conduct of the New Chapel church, in the excommunication of Thomas Willingham, formerly known as a Baptist preacher; and that the churches and Baptist connection are advised not to receive or encourage him as a preacher."

### **EXTRACT FROM THE CIRCULAR LETTER**

"The ordinary officers of the church, and the only ones now existing, are ministers and deacons. In the first Gospel churches there were other officers, such as Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, who were endowed with extraordinary gifts, which were then necessary for the confirmation of the Gospel; but are since become extinct."

1824. In September, the Association convened at Antioch church, Marion county—31 churches represented.

Eld. Norvall Robertson preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. D. Collins chosen Moderator, and A. G. Moore, Clerk.

"Correspondence arranged with the same three Associations.

"Appointed brethren Thigpen and Harvey to visit Mount Nebo church, and labor to set them in order, and report to the next Association—and brethren N. Morris and S. Coaker to visit Habolachitto and report in like manner.

"Resolved, That the Association reserve to herself the right of appointing the ministers to preach during the session."

1825. In September, the Association convened at Hebron church, Lawrence county—30 churches represented.

Eld. J. P. Martin preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. D. Collins, chosen Moderator, and A. G. Moore, Clerk.

"Correspondence arranged with the same three Associations.

"Resolved, That visiting members have no right to vote in a church, except invited by the church, and if invited, their vote should be considered valid.'

"Query from Ebenezer.—Do the Baptist Church permit their members to join the Masonic Lodge; or if members of that Lodge, to continue with them when they join the church?

"Answer.—This Association does not presume to decide the merits or demerits of Masonry; but recommend a strict observance of the Gospel discipline among the churches.

"Query from Half— Moon Bluff.—Is it consistent with Gospel order for a church to act in the reception or exclusion of a member—or in the administration of any of the ordinances of the Gospel without an ordained minister at her head.

"Answer.—There are certain duties and privileges belonging especially to the church; such as receiving members to fellowship, and excluding disorderly members from fellowship; but the administration of baptism, and the Lord's supper, belong exclusively to ordained ministers."

## **EXTRACTS FROM THE CIRCULAR LETTER**

"If we make our liberty a stumbling block to them that are weak, by indulging in things lawful, but which are not expedient, we justly provoke the Lord and his church to jealousy: we cause divisions and offences—and such the primitive christians were charged to avoid. When, in things which may be lawful, but not expedient, we sin against the brethren, by wounding their weak consciences, we sin against Christ. We abuse the spiritual law of liberty, by which we were made free from the law of sin and death. We become the authors of offences; and we know that a terrible woe is denounced against those by whom offences shall come.

"Instead of pulling together as a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot, we leave the King's highway to crop the flowers—or in other words, to catch the alluring vanities of this world; such as worldly profit, worldly honors, and worldly wisdom. It is more profit to shield the tender conscience from a needless wound, than to gain the whole world. Let us leave worldly honors to be enjoyed by worldly men; let us despise them and seek only after the honors of God. Let us aspire after no other knowledge ourselves; and know nothing among our brethren saving Christ, and him crucified."

1826. In September, the Association convened at Hepzibah, Lawrence county—33 churches represented.

Eld. S. Coaker preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. J. Thigpen chosen Moderator, and A. G. Moore, Clerk.

"Correspondence arranged with three Associations, viz: Mississippi, Union and Beckbee, (Ala.)

Query from Ebenezer Church—"Will Gospel discipline take under dealings any brother for attending the Masonic Lodge as a member of that Lodge, to the grief of his brother.

"Answered in the affirmative.

1827. In September, the Association convened at Bethlehem, Pike county—34 churches represented.

Eld. J. Thigpen chosen Moderator, and A. G. Moore, Clerk.

Elds. Felder, Collins, Newland and Mercer preached on Sunday in the order of their names.

"Correspondence arranged with the same three Associations.

1828. In September, the Associations convened at Bethany church, Lawrence county—34 churches represented.

Eld. J. Harvey, preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. J. Thigpen chosen Moderator, and N. Robertson, Clerk.

"Correspondence arranged with three Associations, viz: Mississippi, Union and Bethlehem, (Beckbee, Ala.)

Remarks.—Having failed in all our efforts to procure any more minutes of this Association, we must refer the reader to the proceedings of the Mississippi Association, which we believe from various circumstances will portray the general character of this Association. This Association like that, is composed of two people struggling against each other; and, we presume, from facts within our knowledge, that it continues so even to this day. We could give many interesting incidents

illustrative of this important truth; but as we wish to avoid all fabulous and uncertain statements, shaped to favor either party, we have chosen to confine ourselves strictly to record testimony.

It will be seen that the statutes of the State had become so rigid through the influence of the Missouri excitement, that in 1822 the Association resolved to memorialize the legislature in behalf of the religious privileges of the African churches. Previous to that time, they were permitted to have separate churches composed entirely of African members. But the course pursued by the northern people, led on by talented fools, has been such that personal safety to the white race, had rendered it necessary to clip the privileges of the black race, little by little, till now they are not even permitted to hold public worship by themselves. However much we may regret this state of affairs, yet, no man of sense and observation, who has marked the influence working on the minds of the black race, by the abolition movement, can possibly doubt the propriety of the State policy on the subject. In 1825 the subject of joining Masonic Lodges came up by a query from one of the churches, which was disposed of in as kind terms as could well be, to avoid giving offence. This answer was followed up with appropriate remarks in their circular letter, bearing directly on this and all such like subjects.

Thus they hoped no doubt, that this vexing question was finally settled. But in this they were sadly mistaken. The mild answer given was just such as to encourage the enemies of the church. Hence the controversy was continued. And in 1826 the question came up again, from one of the churches, in the following form viz; "Will gospel discipline take under dealings any brother for attending the Masonic Lodge as a member of that Lodge, to the grief of his brother—answered in the affirmative." This flat decision finally settled the question so far as the minutes in our possession show.

This decision, relative to Masonry, is in strict accordance with Regular or Old School Baptist usage, throughout the United States, wherever the question is raised. And we wish it remembered in certain quarters, that this decision of the Pearl River Association was made before the Primitive Baptist Association had an existence. And more than that were it necessary, we could give many other decisions, of a like character, and of older date, from various parts of the United States.

We are apprized of the fact, that it is charged by "the wise and prudent," that such decisions emanate from ignorance. This is not the place, were we so inclined, to vindicate the propriety of our course on this subject. It is sufficient for us here to



say, that such decisions are in strict accordance with Primitive or Old School Baptist usage—and that, according to analogy of principles among honorable men, it is not exactly becoming in the members of one Fraternity, to condemn the rules of another, because those rules are an impediment to their own peculiar views. The Masons have rules, and they would not, it is presumed, abandon those rules, or any one of them, at the dictation of another society. It is the right of every sect, society, Denomination or Fraternity to fix the rules of their own government, so as not to infringe upon the rights of others—and for this privilege the Primitive Baptists will ever pray.

#### UNION ASSOCIATION.

1820. In September this Association was organized, and was the first off— spring of the old Mississippi Association. Mr. D. Benedict, in his late General History of the Baptists, has blundered into an error on this subject. The Union churches were the first to petition the Mother Association for dismissal, and the first to organize. The Pearl River churches, however, petitioned at the same session, (1819) but, for some cause not explained in the minutes did not organize till November, 1820. We have not been able to procure a regular file of the minutes of the Union Association. But there has ever existed so close a harmony of action between this Pearl River, and the Mother Association, as shown by the minutes of the latter, that, so far as principle and character is concerned, the history of one, will substantially be the history of all three.

1830. In October, the Association convened at Elliott's meeting house church, Copiah county—31 churches represented.

Eld. W. Balfour preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. N. Morris chosen Moderator, and E. Hibbard, Clerk.

"On charge of Big Creek church against Union church, for slandering brother Samuel Marsh, and for immoral conduct—on motion.

"Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed to examine into the truth of said charges.

"On complaint of Union church against Big Creek church, for refusing to give satisfaction on charges against brother Samuel Marsh, their Pastor—and the Association being satisfied that Big Creek church had been labored with according to the rules of the Gospel.

"On motion,

"Resolved, That we withdraw our fellowship with Big Creek church until reformed.

"On complaint against Liberty Church for disorderly conduct, and heresy in principle—on motion.

"Resolved, That this Association have no fellowship with said church until reformed.

"Resolved, That we hold no fellowship with Alexander Campbell, or any person who directly or indirectly promulgates his opinions.

"Resolved, That this Association have no fellowship with John H. Newland, nor Levi Thompson, for promulgating erroneous doctrines, and for receiving into the fellowship of Liberty church, members, who were excluded from a sister church for disorderly conduct, contrary to the express rules given by Christ in the Gospel, and the long— established custom of the Baptist Church.

"Resolved, That we consider Samuel Marsh, a Baptist minister belonging to Big Creek church, to be in disorder, and that we recommed to all churches not to countenance him as a preacher whilst in such disorder.

"Resolved, That every church belonging to this Association, be requested to send up to this body a transcript of their Articles of Faith, at our next meeting; and all churches who neglect or refuse to comply with this request, be considered in disorder.

"Query.—Is it Gospel order to ordain a minister at a distance from the church to which he belongs, and without their knowledge or consent.

"Answer.—No.

"The Association being notified that Robert Currie is the subject of the above query—therefore

"Resolved, That the said Robert Currie is not an ordained minister.

"Correspondence arranged with the following Associations, viz: Mississippi, Pearl River and Leaf River.

"Resolved, That the Articles of Faith of this Association be printed with the minutes."\*

1832. In October, the Association convened at Mount Bluff church, Madison county—32 churches represented.

Eld. J. Morris preached the introductory sermon.

\* As they are substantially the same as those of the Mississippi Association, we can see no good reason for giving them a place.

Eld. E. Flowers chosen Moderator, and E. Hibbard, Clerk.

"The committee appointed at our last session on the case of Box Creek, and Yazoo Churches, submitted their report, which was received.

"Box Creek church, having sent up two letters and delegates, considered the subject, and, on motion,

Resolved, That we receive and recognize the minority as the Box Creek church.

"On motion,

"Resolved, That some record be made on our minutes of the standing of Brother Harmer; and, on motion of brother Joseph Morris,

"Resolved, That all the official acts of Dr. Wm. R. Harmer be considered as null and void, to all intents.

"Correspondence arranged with three Associations, viz: Mississippi, Peal River and Leaf River.

"Resolved, That we take into consideration the propriety of dividing our Association.\*

### **EXTRACTS FROM THE CIRCULAR LETTER.**

"The Union of Churches.—The magnitude of the subject is such as to require better talents than we can command, and greater space than a circular address. We shall, therefore, only advert to a few particulars, and cite you to the word of God for a more comprehensive view.

"In reviewing this subject, we find that the Church is the body of Christ—a body which is composed of many members, and yet all in Union with each other and with the Head—so that the church is compared to the physical body—1 Cor. x; 17; Col. i; 18, And she is said to be but one.—Cant, vi: 9.

"While the church is presented in this compact as one body, yet, at the same time, she is presented as having many members and officers, differing, but the same spirit, so that while a part of the members of Christ's body are in Heaven, there are apart on earth, and yet but one body. And if the saints in heaven are in union with the saints on earth, how much more should there be union among those who are engaged in the warfare, whose common enemy is the same?

\*Preliminary steps were taken at this session for organizing the Yazoo Association, which was constituted in November following, with churches from this body.

"But while we behold the church as one body, yet, at the same glance, we behold her scattered through all generations, and in all parts of the earth, from which it follows, that the body of Christ is mystical—although it is, in some degree, visible. Notwithstanding the members are scattered far and wide, yet they have the same head, who is gracious to all that call upon him. They all stand in the same relation; all need the same assistance from Christ the Head.

"Thus we see the Church in a scattered situation; for so her Head, who is the power and wisdom of God, has presented her; and has, for her benefit and comfort, promised that where two or three are gathered together in one place 'there am I with them.' Therefore, wherever there are a sufficient number of baptized believers to form a covenant to keep house for their Head, they are recognized as a dependant church. For so it was, that John was directed to write to the seven churches in Asia, where she is spoken of in the plural, as "Churches." While the church may have a number of different places, where she, in her different branches meet to worship and enjoy the blessings of the gospel, with ail its ordinances, yet she has but one Lord, one faith, and one baptism; for the Saviour sayeth, They are all in me.' Read John xvii: 11, 21, 22, 23; Rom. xii: 45: 1 Cor. x: 17; Col. iii: 15— from which you will learn, that the members of Christ's church form one body, of which Christ is the Head. They are one body and one spirit, even as they are called in one hope of their calling.

"And seeing such is the union, how straitly should all the members act in their different spheres for the glory of Christ the Head; and for the mutual happiness and comfort of each other. As every nerve, fibre, and muscle, when acting in its proper

office, gives strength to the body, and receives vigor from the head—in like manner should we all act in concert in our different offices, for each other's strength, and growth in grace, and the glory of the Head.

"But how lamentable it is to think how little of this glorious doctrine is heard from our pulpits, and felt in our conference meetings! Were this doctrine urged more from the pulpit and press, and studied more by all the members of the body, we should not so often hear the un-gospel declaration 'we are an independent body.'

Were this doctrine understood and put in practice, it would not be so often counteracted by churches, under the false notion of their being independent bodies.

"As the church is but one and all in union, there are means by which that union is to be maintained; and no doubt but Associations are some of them. We frequently find where churches have difficult matters before them, that they send enquiries up to their Associations concerning the case, and obtain, perhaps, the best advice that could be had on the subject. And when we frequently find that the union of churches is rather destroyed than maintained by some of them refusing to follow that advice.

"But the most efficient means are faithful ministers; for Christ has compared his church to a flock of sheep; and God has promised that he will give them pastors according to his heart, that shall feed them with knowledge and understanding. The ministers, or pastors, ought, therefore, to be men of sound judgment in spiritual things; such as study to show themselves approved of God; workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth; such as speak the things which become sound doctrine; such as take the word of God for their rule of faith and practice; and from it, are able to bring forth such matter as is therein contained; such as will not teach for doctrines the traditions of men.

"Therefore, as much depends upon the pastor, churches should be very careful whom they put into that office. Not one, that cannot be received by sister churches; not one, who only has a gift of exhortation; not one, who has not a good report of them that are without; not one, who does not understand the principles of government in Christ's kingdom; for by all such the union of churches will be rather destroyed than maintained, and the cause of Christ rather retarded than advanced. Therefore, much care should be taken not to call a man to office that God has not appointed.

"Again. The reading of the Scriptures, with earnest prayer, is very useful for those who wish to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. Frequent

conversation on divine things is also necessary; for 'they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.' Therefore, those seasons should be frequent; and, for that purpose, brethren of the same faith and order should often visit each other, and enquire into the state of their souls; pray with and for one another; and converse freely upon the subject of God's everlasting love towards his people, and their obligation to love Him, and each other; at which times all vain and worldly considerations should be excluded. Brethren should also frequently visit sister churches, on their business days, and participate freely in their deliberations, with meekness and love; which conduct tends greatly to promote the union of churches.

"We shall in the next place call your attention to the means employed by the adversary of the church in opposition to the union of churches. Satan, also, has ministers, or agents, by whom, he carries on his dark designs with the utmost sagacity. And if Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, no marvel if his ministers should. It is, therefore, not only the policy of Satan to keep up disorder and confusion among his own subjects, but also, if possible, to introduce his dark designs into the kingdom of Christ; for disorder and confusion are the basis on which his kingdom will prosper. But still he has his own subjects under such complete control, that they are all acting for the promotion of his own, and the downfall of the kingdom of Christ. And his sagacity is such, that when open attempts fail, he will cloak his agents with the name of religion; and they, too, frequently appear to have a flaming zeal for the honor of Christ; but they speak evil of things which they understand not. They speak great swelling words of vanity, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. These be they which separate themselves, having not the spirit. Read the epistle of Jude.

"Being thus cloaked under the name of religion, the world will follow them; for they are of the world, and the world will love its own. On this subject there is such a cloud of testimony, both in the word of God and the chronicle of the church, that we cannot be mistaken, We say cloud of testimony, and we shall here examine some of them. We have already requested you to read the epistle of Jude, which is quite short. We shall next call your attention to Peter: 'But there were false prophets among the people, as there shall be false teachers among you, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies; even denying the Lord that bought them; and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 Pet. ii: 1. Paul calls them 'deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ.' 2 Cor. xi: 13—again; 'False brethren, who come in privily to spy out our liberty in Christ.' Gal. ii: 4—also, the Saviour: 'There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders.'—Matt, xxiv: 24. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.—Matt, vii: 16.

"Thus, we have given a few of the many passages wherein those false teachers are spoken of as denying the Lord Jesus Christ. It is now our duty to enquire how they deny him. They do not act as Voltaire, Hume, Paine and Owen have done, but do it by setting the works and doctrines of devils, under the name of the doctrines of Christ. They pervert the Gospel of Christ, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator.

"Here we shall pause and request you to notice the above recited testimony of Peter, viz: 'Who privily shall bring in damnable heresies'—in the plural, which plainly showeth that there is more than one kind of heresy. We shall now proceed to point out a few of those heresies among us, which we think do in their nature subvert the Christian faith and hope; and which have all come in disguise.

"First, we shall call your attention to the heresy of Campbellism—the denying and even ridiculing the allimportant doctrine of being born of the Spirit, and substituting in its place, baptism, as the insurance of the Holy Spirit and its influences. If this be true, why did Ananias and Sapphira lie to the Holy Ghost after they were baptized; and why do not these church troublers produce the fruits of the spirit, viz: 'Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,' &c. But continued observation proves them to be wolves in sheep's clothing; for wherever they have entered a Baptist church, such is the dire effect of their faith and practice, that instead of love, there is hatred; instead of joy, there is sorrow; instead of peace, there is confusion; and instead of gentleness, there is a wild ferocious disposition; so that the temple of God is defiled by the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not.

"Secondly, we now proceed to notice another heretical doctrine, propagated by those who call themselves Baptists, viz: A general atonement, but especially applied, (Fullerism, alias Missionism, alias New Schoolism,) which is such a contradiction in itself that a babe in Christ may see its fallacy. The error in this place must be in the term general; for Christ sayeth, 'All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me.' from whence it follows, that the receipts of the Saviour will be equivalent to his purchase. And if the atonement be general, why did Christ refuse to pray for the world? Why did he say to the Jews, 'Ye are not of my sheep, my sheep hear my voice,' &c?

"For such persons to be consistent with themselves, they should have the application as broad as the atonement. If they refuse to admit this position, then they are constrained by common sense and good reason to acknowledge that Christ purchased a people whom he never intended to save; or otherwise, a people whom

he had not power to save; either of which will destroy the very essence of the God— head. One of these conclusions is, and must necessarily be, drawn from such premises. Yet, these wild, heretical notions have been, and are yet, a great bar to the union of churches.

"Therefore, seeing that so much of the confusion in churches arise from those who profess to be teachers, how particular ought the churches to be, not only in raising up young ministers, but also in receiving strangers? There should be a double guard put upon your pulpits: and while you are zealous for the faith of the Gospel be equally zealous for the discipline. You will generally find those who are unsound in faith, equally so in discipline."

1835. In October, the Association convened at Elliott's meeting house church, Copiah county —24 churches represented.

Eld. J. Thigpen chosen Moderator, and N. R. Granberry, Clerk.

"Correspondence received from three Associations, viz: Mississippi, Pearl River and Yazoo.

"Correspondence arranged with the same three Associations, and also with Leaf River.

"The committee, appointed last year, by this Association, to meet committees from the Yazoo and Bethel Associations, to confer on the difficulties existing between the latter and the others, reported an 'Abstract of the proceeding of the joint committee, which is as follows: In pursuance of measures adopted by the Union, Yazoo, and Bethel Baptist Associations, at their respective late sessions, committees, on the part of each, met in conference on Friday, December 5, 1834, at Palestine church, Hinds county, Mississippi, for the purpose of taking into consideration the unhappy divisions which existed among them, and, if possible, to effect a reconciliation.

" The delegation from the Union submitted sundry matters of complaint against the Bethel, in which the Yazoo concurred. These were read, and the conference proceeded to investigate them separately. Finally the following was proposed and unanimously acceded to, viz: It is unanimously agreed, that we bear with and forget whatever has past; and that the Associations, as such, come into a state of reconciliation, leaving all matters of merely individual concernment to be settled in a Gospel way; and we recommend a like spirit and course to be exercised by



churches and individuals—so far as the honor of God and the good of his kingdom on earth will admit of it,' &c.

"Whereas we believe that an institution of learning on the manual labor plan, under the control of the Baptists of this State, is at present loudly called for, and, as we have heard that efforts are making to establish such an institution, therefore,

"Resolved, That we recommend said institution to our friends generally, and especially to the churches composing this Association.

"Resolved, That the ministers of this Association be requested to visit all the churches in our bounds, by traveling two together, in the course of this year, if they can conveniently do so.

"Took under consideration the expediency of corresponding with the Bethel Association; and on taking the vote it appeared that a majority was in favor of said correspondence; but as there was a large minority, it was agreed to postpone the matter till next session."

REMARKS.—Although we have been able to procure only a few minutes of this Association, they are ample to show, that it, too, had hard struggles with the Campbellite and Fullerite heresies. The circular letter in 1832, if carefully read and studied, will give the intelligent reader important information relative to their troubled condition. This state of affairs was brought about by false brethren, who crept in unawares, and brought in damnable heresies; and then began to speak evil of those things which they know not; hence the way of truth was evil spoken of. Though these false brethren knew not the mystery of godliness—for if they had they would not have opposed the doctrine of grace—yet, they did know, that it was more compatible with natural justice and social harmony, to build up churches on their own faith, than to creep into Regular Baptist churches, under false pretences, and then contend against the very faith to which they had subscribed. This, however, has been the course of these New School brethren throughout the land; which has finally led to a separation in the greater part of the State. And as great efforts have been made to cast censure upon the Old School party, because they contend earnestly for the faith, we here, in the name of everything that is true, and just, and honorable, call upon the New School party to show one instance in which "Presdestinarian" Baptists have crept into Armenian churches and attempted to draw away members after them.

It will be seen that in 1835 this Association recommended to their friends and the churches an institution of learning of a peculiar kind. This was intended for the

benefit of pious young men who had been called to the ministry before they were qualified. The Association seemed disposed to give them a chance to follow the example of Paul, by laboring with their own hands. This was admirably suited to test the depth of their piety. And, consequently, the whole plan fell to the ground for the want of patronage.

## YAZOO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

"Agreeably to a resolution of the Union Baptist Association, delegates assembled at Wallie's Creek meeting house, in Yazoo county, on the 2nd of November, 1832, from the following churches, viz: Yazoo, Yazoo county; Box Creek, Holmes county; Mount Gilead, Madison county; Mound Bluff, Madison county; Jerusalem, Yazoo county; Union, Hinds county; Tildebogue Madison county; Mount Pisgah, Rankin county.

"A sermon introductory to business, was delivered by brother Nathan Morris.

2. Elder N. Morris was called to the chair, and brother M. Crain requested to act as Clerk, pro tern.

3. On motion.

Resolved, That we enquire for the fellowship of churches.

4. The Union church, having protested against the acts of the Union Association, as appeared from her letter was advised to remain a member of the Union Association until a reconciliation takes place. Also, the delegates from Mound Bluff, informing us that their church did not acquiesce in the proceedings of the Union Association, received the same advice.

5. The delegates from Mount Pisgah, on account of some instruction given by their church, refused to take seats with us.

6. Took under consideration the propriety of forming a new Association; and, after free discussion,

Resolved, That the churches now represented, form themselves into an Association.

7. Appointed brethren Elder J. Morris, A. B. Sanders, and Maston Crain, a committee to prepare a constitution—which was accordingly done, read and

unanimously agreed to—whereupon, the chairman gave to the several delegates present, the right hand of fellowship, and the Association was organized in proper form.

8. Proceeded to elect a Moderator and Clerk. Elder Nathan Morris was chosen Moderator, and Maston Crain, Clerk.

9. The Rules of Gospel Order, the Rules of Decorum, and the powers of the Association, as appended to these, minutes, were all severally read and adopted.

10. Took up the subject of correspondence, and agreed to correspond with the sister Associations of this State; also, with the Bethel Association. Appointed brethren N. Morris and M. Crain, delegates to the Union; Abner Erwin and A. B. Sanders to the Pearl River; J. Morris and Isaac Perkins to the Bethel; W. Taylor and J. Taylor to the Buttahatchy. Appointed J. Morris to write to the Leaf River, and A. B. Sanders to the Mississippi Association. Appointed the next Association to be held at Hickory Spring meeting house, in Holmes county.\*

1833. In November, the Association convened at Hickory Spring meeting house—6 churches represented, viz: Yazoo, Mount Gilead, Jerusalem, Tildebogue, Phalti, Holmes co., Bethel, Holmes co.

"Elder Nathan Morris was chosen Moderator, and brother M. Crain, Clerk."

"Correspondence was arranged with the following Associations, viz: Leaf River, Bethel, Pearl River, Union, Mississippi and Buttahatchy.

"On motion,

Resolved, That whereas Lee Compere, an ordained minister, has been excluded from Jerusalem church, for heresy and contempt of the church, in refusing to hear and receive her instructions; also, for administering the Lord's supper to a people not in fellowship with the Regular Baptists, and various other charges. That we highly approve of the course pursued by the church at Jerusalem—and whereas, we are informed, that said

\*Here follow the Constitution, Articles of Faith, Gospel Order, and Rules of Decorum, which are similar to those of the Regular or O. S. Baptists generally. It may be well, however, in these days of apostacy from the truth, to give the three following articles of the faith, viz: 4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to His people; in the eternal, unconditional election of a definite number of the human

family, to grace and glory. 5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ; which is unto all, and upon all of them that believe. 6. We believe that all those who were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world, are in time effectually called, regenerated, converted and sanctified; and are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

Compere has joined a church, once constituted upon our faith and order; but which has since apostatized: Therefore, we caution all regular Baptists to beware of said Compere.

"Preaching on the Lord's day by S. Perkins, N. Morris, G. W. Nolan and J. Morris.

"Resolved, That the Clerk superintend the printing and distribution of 400 copies of these minutes, and that he receive ten dollars for his services."

1834. In November, the Association convened at the Jerusalem Church, in Yazoo county—10 churches represented.

"Elder Nathan Morris chosen Moderator, and J. C. Perkins, Clerk.

"Correspondence arranged with the following Associations, viz: Union, Pearl River, Mississippi, and Leaf River.

"Brother Norval Robertson addressed the Moderator. He said that he had been appointed a messenger of correspondence from the Mississippi Baptist Evangelizing Society, with a letter; but that he had mislaid the letter, so that he could not find it. Upon which, he was invited to a seat, and his aid solicited. It was also agreed to correspond with said society. Accordingly, appointed brethren Nathan Morris and Joseph Morris, Messengers; and brother Joseph Morris to write the corresponding letter to the said Society.

"The committee, appointed to take under consideration the letter from the Union Association, reported as follows, viz: We, the select committee, have conversed openly and freely with the corresponding brethren from the Union Association, upon the resolves found in their minutes, desiring us to meet them at some subsequent period and place, which we may appoint, for the purpose of opening some way, whereby the brethren sent from our sister, the Bethel Association, can have a fair and open opportunity of coming forward to the joint committee, to make known their grievances, if they have any, or for them, or any of them, to

return and make confession of their wrong, and be restored to full fellowship, union and communion, with us and the Union Association.

(11)

"We, therefore, appoint to meet them on Friday before the first Sunday in December next, at Palestine church, Hinds county, Mississippi.

Delegates—J. Harvey, Abner Belcher, Joseph Morris, Nathaniel Robbins, J. C. Perkins, N. White, James Lee and William Denson.

1835. In November, the Association convened at Tildebogue church, Madison county, Mississippi. The introductory sermon was preached by Eld. Abner Belcher, from Gal. i: 10, "For if I yet please men, I shall not be the servant of Christ." Without transacting any business of particular note, the Association adjourned to meet at Mount Gilead church, in same county, in May next.

Joseph Morris was chosen Moderator, and Daniel Sutherland, Clerk.

"Correspondence was arranged with the following Associations, viz: Pearl River, Union, Leaf River and Mississippi.

"Appointed Elder Joseph Morris to write to Choctaw Association; himself and Elder Abner Belcher, messengers.

"Appointed Elder Nathan Morris to write a letter to the Yallobusha Association, proposing consolidation. Should that object fail, to request a correspondence. Messengers—Elders Nathan Morris, Moses Crawson, Joel Harvey and Joseph Morris.

"A letter from Bethel Association soliciting correspondence, was read and rejected. Elders Nathan Morris, Joseph Morris and brother Silas Mercer were appointed a committee to report a statement of facts, why it was rejected.

"Report.—1. We believe that the Bethel Association was organized in disorder, from the fact that some of the churches belonging to that body—having been dismissed from the Union, for the purpose of organizing a new Association—protested against the Union, and then refused to return to the Union and labor for a reconciliation, although advised to that course by the Yazoo Associational Convention.

"2. We believe it disorder in the Bethel to recognize William B. Harmer, as a Baptist preacher, after a nonfellowship had been declared by the Phalti church, and that non— fellowship had been recognized by the Union and Yazoo Associations.

"3. We believe it a disorder in the Bethel to sustain the official acts of Lee Compere, after having acknowledged at the Palestine Convention in 1834, that Mound Bluff church had done wrong in the reception of said Compere, and he under the sentence of excommunication by Jerusalem church.

"4. We believe it disorder in the Bethel to sustain the churches of their body, in the reception of persons excluded from the churches of our body for immoral conduct.

"5. We believe it disorder in the Bethel to hold a church in their fellowship, constituted in the bounds of another Baptist church—members being received in said newly constituted church, belonging to the old church, without letters of dismission.

"6. We believe that the Bethel is in disorder in recognizing the majority of the Box Creek church, or a part of them, as members of the Baptist order, after they had been rejected by the Union Association for gross immoralities.

"These are some of the reasons why we cannot open associational correspondence with the Bethel; and should our brethren think us extravagant in the above statement, we hold ourselves bound to establish the facts by Gospel testimony, before any regular tribunal of the Baptist order, formed for that purpose.

"The report was read and adopted—9 churches represented.

1836. In November, the Association convened at Carrollton, Carroll county, Mississippi—10 churches represented.

"Eld. Nathan Morris chosen Moderator, and M. Crain, Clerk.

"Correspondence.—A letter and package of minutes received from the Union by her messenger, brother Allen—a letter and minutes from the Mississippi, Pearl River, Choctaw, and also from the Yallobusha by delegates, viz: Francis Baker, H. McNeal, E. Sullivan and Wm. Kennedy.

"Correspondence arranged with the following Associations, viz: Mississippi, Union, Pearl River, Leaf River, Choctaw and Yallobusha.

"Took into consideration the propriety of consolidating with the Yallobusha Association—whereupon

Resolved, That we recommend the churches of our body, to meet in convention with the churches of the Yallobusha Association, at Rocky Springs, on Friday before the 3d Sunday in May next, and that if a majority of the two Associations agree to consolidate, then this Association to be dissolved.

Churches.—Emmaus, Mt. Gilead, Tildebogue, Phalti, Bethel, Rocky Spring, Doak's Creek, Mt. Carmel, Yazoo and Hebron. Association fund \$3; Contribution by the churches, \$87—\$90; paid for printing these minutes, \$40; for superintending the same \$15—\$55. Balance in treasury, \$35.

#### YALLOBUSHA ASSOCIATION.

This Association was organized in 1836, but we. have not been able to obtain the minutes of that year—therefore we commence with the succeeding.

1837. In October, the Association convened at Shiloh Church, Yallobusha county—4 churches represented.

"Eld. F. Baker chosen Moderator, and W. Minter, Clerk.

"Correspondence received from Zion Baptist Association.

"Elds. F. Baker, M. White and Moore preached on Sunday.

"Correspondence returned to Zion Baptist Association.

"On motion,

"Resolved. That we drop, for the present, the correspondence with the Yazoo Baptist Association.

"Resolved, That we renew the correspondence with Choctaw Baptist Association, which was dropped last year in prospect of uniting the Yazoo and this Association in one."

1838. In October, the Association convened at Lebanon Church, Yallobusha county—10 churches represented.

"Eld. F. Baker chosen Moderator, and J. G. Hall, Clerk.

"Correspondence arranged with Zion Association.

"Whereas, it has been represented to this body, that the church at Shiloh has infringed on the terms of her union with this body, by receiving an excluded member into her fellowship—Therefore,

"Resolved, That Brethren Robins, Taylor, Sullivan, Minter, Baker, Hall, Littleton, Whitsett, Freeman and Donham, be appointed a committee to inquire if the church at Shiloh has not departed from Scriptural discipline and Baptist order, by receiving into her fellowship an excluded member, and that they report all the facts to the next Association.

"Resolved. That the churches composing this Association be requested to send up contributions for the purpose of bearing the expenses of our delegates to sister Associations."

The circular letter prepared by Brother Francis Baker was reported by the committee appointed to examine it, and then read and ordered to be printed with the minutes.

### **CIRCULAR ADDRESS.**

"Dear Brethren: You have been so often addressed through the medium of circulars, that we are at a loss for a subject for the present; and we have thought of none more appropriate, under existing circumstances, than that very impressive admonition of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." We would not have you to understand by the word of Christ, that the Apostle meant that "Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us," but the revealed word or will of God, the Gospel of his Son.

"It is remarkable that the Scriptures, or word of Christ, have become the text book of the age; and yet we are astonished at the prevailing ignorance with regard to their contents. They are quoted by all classes in Christendom. The statesman, the gentleman at the bar, the politician and the humble peasant, often quote the Bible on various occasions. Yea, the drunkard too, will hold, his cup in his hand, and delay swallowing the intoxicating draught, till he quotes the Bible; and his quotations may as likely be found in the Alcoran as in the Scriptures. And yet, painful to say, he is as apt to make correct and appropriate quotations as many who profess Christ. When we hear misquotations at the bar, or read them in the speeches of gentlemen in the halls of legislation we are not so much astonished; but when we hear egregious errors and misquotations by christians, and especially



by preachers, we are disgusted—and think the admonition appropriate, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you." By frequent misquotation of the Scriptures we betray our ignorance of the Bible; an ignorance more inexcusable because our opportunities are good, and the means ample to obtain the blessing of the richness of the word of Christ. One of the blessings we appropriate to ourselves by letting the word of Christ dwell in us, is, that the wisdom it imparts lights up the path of life, and enables us to walk in the light of his countenance. David hath said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light to my path.

"The wisdom that the word of Christ imparts is not only a director in the externals of religion, but it illuminates the understanding, and enables us to discover the hope of our calling, and brightens our evidences in Christ. It also teaches us our own weakness, and learns us to trust in the Lord.

"The wisdom of the word of Christ enables us to discern between truth and error; between the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of anti—Christ; between the church of the living God and the mystic Babylon. It is this wisdom that teaches and enables us to serve and to worship God acceptably: and to discharge our duties to the Lord and one another—thereby enjoying the answer of a good conscience before God, and that peace of mind "which passeth all understanding." That christian whose mind is richly stored with the wisdom of the word, possesses in a very high degree the advantage of hearing and enjoying the blessing of the gospel, over those who are not in possession, and are ignorant, of the wisdom of the word. With what an amazing difference, and ease, can the servant of God preach to an enlightened and Bible taught congregation, to what he can to a people ignorant and unskilled in the word. The instructed and intelligent hearer hears with diligence, tries by the standard, and receives the truth in the love of it, and rejoices in the saving benefits; while the ignorant and unformed sits careless and uninterested; nor can the preacher charm or interest them, though he tune and play ever so wisely on every string of the Gospel. How appropriate, then, the admonition, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.

"The great question, then, is, how shall we obtain this rich treasure? 1. By a prayerful search of the Scriptures; for the good Lord hath said, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and unbraideth not." Yet it is not to be expected that this wisdom is to be revealed directly from Heaven, aside from the word of God; for then Christ need not to have charged us to "search the Scriptures." And the wise man would have spoken folly when he said, "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light."— Prov. vi: 23. Nor need we expect to obtain the treasure by a search of the Scriptures without the light of the Holy

Spirit; but through the light of the Spirit, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and which shineth at the same time more perfectly through the whole volume of inspiration, we may hope to obtain this wisdom. The means to be used as stated above, are to search, study, labor, and compare Scripture with Scripture—those parts that treat of the same subject or principles, with each other; and not confound sentences or passages on one subject, with those relating to another—thereby wresting them from their true meaning.

"2. The wisdom contained in the word may be obtained by a studious attention to the light of experience; for christian experience always accords with, and sheds much light on the Scriptures; and the Gospel explains both the Scriptures and christian experience—for the same Spirit that revealed the word of God to 'holy men of old,' also revealed the Son of God in our souls. And our blessed Lord hath promised us that it shall 'abide with us forever,' and 'lead us into all truth,' and bring to our 'rememberance all things whatsoever he hath told us.' Thus the teachings of the Spirit of God in our souls and the teachings of the word of God are the same, It is thus that our souls know that the word of God is true; and it is through the wisdom of the word that we are taught to 'approve the things that are most excellent.'

"Again, we are informed in the Scripture that, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' By a close attention to the testimony of this witness in us, and an application to the Scriptures, we 'Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly with all wisdom, teaching,' &c; and we receive and enjoy all the blessings and consolations of the Gospel, while our souls are made to feast on the heavenly manna, and drink out of those deep wells of salvation. It teaches, also, to look for the coming of our Lord, who shall change our vile bodies into the likeness of the glorious body of the Son of God; and that we shall have a name and a place in the New Jerusalem, the City of the living God—the General Assembly and Church of the First Born—there to see and embrace our crucified, but now glorified and much beloved Lord.

"Beloved brethren! We have presented you with a few things by way of admonition, to stir up your pure minds by way of rememberance; and may the God of peace and love, who brought again our Lord Jesus from the dead, keep and preserve you for his heavenly Kingdom. Amen."

1839. In October, the Association convened at Loosascoona Church, Yallobusha county—10 churches represented.

"Eld. F. Baker, chosen Moderator, and J. G. Hall, Clerk.

"Elds. Parks, Meaders, Stovall, and Baker, preached on Sunday, in the order of their names.

"Corresponding letters called for. None were presented.

"Resolved, That for the present we drop all correspondence with sister Associations, owing to the condition of our own body.

"Resolved, That Brethren Baker, Minter and Hall, be appointed to superintend the printing of 300 copies of our minutes; and that they annex to said minutes, the constitution, rules of decorum, and abstract of the faith of this Association.

"Brother Hall reported that he had not found it convenient to prepare a circular letter, according to appointment. He, however, presented and read a selection on that subject, but the Association did not deem it expedient to adopt and publish it as their circular."

REMARKS.—We shall now drop this Association. Hitherto, she has been orthodox in her faith and orderly in her practice. So far as their minutes show, missionism has not so much as been mentioned among them. But at this session, the missionary spirit manifested itself furiously. Though the minutes of this session indicate nothing of the kind, yet we learn from letters written at the time, that great excitement and disorder prevailed. An eye witness, who belonged not to the Association, says: "I was also at the Yallobusha Association, and saw more confusion than I ever saw in a religious assembly before; and I thought that the Missionaries tried to take as many advantages of the Old Baptists as Demetrius did of Paul.

Another letter writer, who belonged to another Association, under date of November 17, 1839, says: "I came from thence to the Yallobusha Association, and for me, or any other man to give a correct record of all the proceedings of that assembly would be impossible. I have never in all my life been a witness of such a scene among professors of religion, much less among people calling themselves Baptists. The plain truth is, there were two kinds of people, (to— wit:) Sarah's children and Hagar's; and you, nor I, ever saw the two families together, but what there was mocking and discord and confusion, in lieu of brotherly love and kindness and fellowship.

"I heard one of the well known divines in that Association say, that it would never do for the Baptists to split; for the Lord had given the world to the Baptists, and he could not leave the Baptists. He went on to state that he had been preparing, for some length of time, perhaps six months, to discuss the Missionary question at that Association; and that he was prepared to show, that the anti— Missionaries were nothing more nor less than Roman Catholics, and were actuated by the same spirit.

"Now, brethren, can you not see, without "specs," what sort of love he had for the Old Baptists? Old School Baptists, did you notice those remarks? This is the best compliment you get for all your exertions to keep peace and love with them. As soon as they think they have a majority, the best name you can get from them is Roman Catholics, and are actuated by the same spirit.

"I think it is high time the Old School Baptists were looking at the motto of the Primitive, and obeying the call that says, 'Come out of her my people.' The foregoing with many other harsh speeches were thrown out by the learned gentry of the bar, at that time and place. And finally, the Association left the place in confusion. The old School Baptists repaired to Brother Johnson's about five miles from the place, and entered into an agreement to meet in convention on Friday before the fifth Sabbath in May next, to form a new Association."

The Yallobusha Association was composed of ten churches, five of which withdrew—one united with the Primitive Association, and the others formed the Loosascoona Association.