

# Griffin's History

## Chapter XVII

### PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The Convention for the purpose of forming a new Association convened, according to previous arrangement, at Rocky Spring Church, in Holmes county, Mississippi, on Friday before the 4th Sunday in April, 1839.

After preaching by Eld. S. Parks, the Convention was called to order by Eld. N. Morris. Bro. S. Parks chosen Moderator, and Bro. A. Erwin, Clerk. The following churches were represented by delegates, who, being called on, presented their church letters. Names of churches and delegates, viz: Hickory Spring, Holmes county, Eld. Simpson Parks, Joseph Erwin, Granderson Harris,, and Abner Erwin; Yazoo, Holmes county, Eld. Nathan Morris, William Grisom, John Bennett, and Hilliard Fatheree; Rocky Spring, Holmes county, Silas Mercer, Anderson West, H. Blister, and Samuel Cook; Lebanon, Attala county, Eld. J. A. Scott, D. Stephens, Z. B. Gess, and R. Weeks.

The Convention being duly organized, appointed Brethren N. Morris, S. Parks, S. Mercer, and Z. B. Gess, a committee to draft a Constitution, Articles of Faith and Rules of Decorum, and then adjourned till Saturday morning 10 o'clock. Met pursuant to adjournment and unanimously adopted the Constitution, Articles of Faith and Rules of Decorum, presented by the committee— which are as follows:

#### CONSTITUTION

"1. This Association shall be composed of members chosen by the different churches of our union, who, upon presenting their credentials, shall be entitled to seats— Provided, That this clause shall not be so construed as to admit any member to take a seat, who does not fully believe, and faithfully maintain the Articles of Faith adopted by this Association. The members thus chosen and convened shall be known by the name of the "Primitive Baptist Association.

"2. This Association when convened shall immediately proceed to the choice, by ballot, of a Moderator and Clerk, from amongst the delegates composing the same. The duty of the Moderator shall be to see that the rules are strictly observed; and to take the voice of the Association on all subjects, legally introduced; and to determine on all points of order—nevertheless he shall be subject to the decision of

a majority of the Association; provided said decision be called for, on the same day, that the decision was passed. The duty of the Clerk shall be to take a proper and correct minute of the proceedings of the Association.

"3. This Association, when convened, shall have power to judge of the qualifications of its own members.

"4. This Association shall have power to exclude from its body all churches which are not orthodox in their faith—or shall adopt or admit anything in their proceedings, not in accordance with apostolic practice.

"5. This Association shall not have power to interfere with, or Lord it over the internal rights and privileges of the churches—but shall be considered only as an advisory counsel, in all matters relative to their peace and happiness.

"6. The churches of our union shall transmit to each annual session of this body a written communication, specifying the number in fellowship, Baptized, received by letter, Dismissed, Excluded, Restored, and Deceased, since the last session.

"7. Each church composing this body shall be entitled to representation in the following manner, viz: all churches, having fifty members, or under, shall be entitled to three delegates—and one for each additional fifty.

"8. New churches may be admitted into our body, by delegates, bearing petitionary letters, requesting the same. If, upon due examination, they be found orthodox and orderly, the Moderator, by order of the Association, shall manifest their admission by giving the right hand of fellowship.

"9. This Association, when convened, shall be governed by regular and proper rules of decorum, which she shall be authorized to amend at discretion.

"10. The constitution and articles of faith of this Association shall not be subject to any alteration whatever."

## **ARTICLES OF FAITH**

"1. We believe in one God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—and these three are one.

"2. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, are the word of God, and the only rules of faith and practice.

"3. We believe in the fall of Adam, and the total depravity of the human heart, and man's entire inability to restore himself to the favor of God.

"4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people—in the eternal and 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 Christ, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe.

"6. We believe that those who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, are and will be in time effectually called, regenerated, converted, sanctified, and kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

"7. We believe that there is one Mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus—who, by the satisfaction he made to divine justice, by the shedding of his own blood, hath redeemed his elect especially from under the curse of the law.

"8. We believe that good works are fruits of faith and are an evidence of a state of grace.

"9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment; and that the joys of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.

"10. We believe Eaptism is immersion, and that believers are the only subjects.

"11. We believe that regularly baptized church members only have a right to commune at the Lord's table.

## **RULES OF DECORUM**

"1. The Association shall be opened by singing and prayer.

"2. But one member shall speak at a time, who shall rise on his feet, and, on obtaining permission, proceed.

"3. The moderator, when addressed by a member, shall signify his right to the floor, by naming the person or otherwise.

"4. No member shall be interrupted while speaking, unless he wander from the subject, or use language of a personal character.

"5. Every motion made and seconded shall come under the consideration of the Association, unless withdrawn by him who made it.

"6. Every case taken up by the Association shall be decided, or withdrawn, before another is offered.

"7. When a question is taken up, after allowing time for debate, the Moderator shall take the vote of the Association, on the subject, in any manner he may think proper, and pronounce the decision forthwith.

"8. Any member wishing to retire, shall obtain permission of the Moderator.

"9. No member shall speak more than twice to the same proposition, without permission of the Moderator— nor more than once till every member, wishing to speak, shall have spoken—nor shall any proposition be made to close the subject, until the debates are through.

"10. The appellation of brother shall be used in the Association, by members in addressing each other.

"11. The names of the members may be called as often as the Association may direct.

"12. No member shall be tolerated in any practice which may tend to interrupt public speaking.

"13. The Moderator shall be entitled to the same privilege of speaking as any other member—Provided, That he appoint another to his seat during the time—but shall not vote on any question, unless the Association be equally divided.

"14. Any member violating these rules shall be admonished by the Moderator at discretion; but only on the day on which the breach shall have been made.

"The Constitution, Articles of Faith, and Rules of Decorum, being read and adopted, the Moderator of the Convention gave the delegates the right hand of fellowship, and declared the Association duly organized.

1839. In April, the Association convened at Rocky Springs, Holmes county—4 churches represented.

"Eld. N. Morris chosen Moderator, and brother G. Harris, Clerk.

"Resolved, That we offer correspondence with the Tallahatchie Association.

"Preaching on Sunday by elders J. A. Scott, N. Morris, and S. Parks, in the order of their names.

"Resolved, That we appoint brother N. Morris to write a circular letter, to be attached to these minutes, showing the reason why we have formed this Association.

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

"As the above named newly—constituted Association has ordered that her first letter shall show the cause of her constituting in so feeble a state as the minutes will show, we have undertaken the painful, though obedient task. We do not claim the credit of being on the Lord's side because we say we are—neither can we admit that others are because they say so.

"Now to the law and the testimony—and here we would remark, that our objections are to principles, and not men, only on account of principles. We object to the doctrine of General Atonement; and that, too, for no other reason than because it is contrary to the word of God.

"Atonement, theologically, signifies a satisfaction or covering for sin—these being synonymous terms. We will quote a few texts, bearing on this point, viz: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered,' Ps. XXXii: 1. 'Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin,' Ps. lxxxv: 2. 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered,' Rom. iv: 7. A general atonement would be a general forgiveness; and all who will search the Scriptures, except those who are wilfully ignorant, must see the fallacy of such an idea. And notwithstanding you may nurse it in your bosoms, we boldly affirm, that it will die on your lips, together with all your unscriptural doctrines and practice.

"The case of Uzza is another striking instance of God's curse upon men for disobedience. Has not the Lord said by the mouth of the prophet, 'Who hath required such things of you, have I?' It is certain that everything which God has not

commanded, he has forbidden—and those who go beyond the commands of God, are saying by their acts, that God has forgotten to command some things actually necessary in carrying on his work.

"Reflections of this kind are the cause wherefore we protest against Missionary, Tract, Sunday School, and Temperance Societies—not because we are opposed to the spread of the gospel, but because our Lord has not commanded any such thing. About Sunday Schools and Temperance societies, we shall say nothing more than we consider them a part of the trumpery of 'Mystery Babylon the Great.'

"We cannot fellowship your theological schools; and you tauntingly say, that we oppose those schools because we are afraid, that if learned men are brought into the Gospel field, the glory will depart from us; that is, that we shall be less esteemed in the church and in the world. We will say the truth to you, and then you may mock on! God knows we desire that He would send able ministers of the New Testament into His harvest—but we want God to send them and not man. We challenge the learned world to show any divine authority for sending a man to school after God has called him to the ministry; nor is there any need of it—for all power in heaven and on earth is in the hands of God. If He wants a learned Moses, or a Saul of Tarsus, He will have them qualified before he calls them to his work. If he had not intended to hold in his own hand, the right to qualify and send ministers, he would not have told us to pray to Him, as Lord of the harvest, to send more laborers into the field.

"Now, there is no danger but what he will send them—just such as he wants—and that too at the right time. And if they are not completely qualified, He has so ordered it, that as they use their gifts or talents, they will continue to grow therein. Then He holds them in his right hand, waters them every moment, and makes His words theirs. And you will not hear them saying that the heathen are going to hell for the want of preachers, or lack of money. Souls were not redeemed by money, neither will God permit that they shall be made free from the love of sin by it. The Saviour redeemed them by a sore travail—and so the apostles found it, in spreading the glad tidings of salvation.

"There was no Missionary Society for them to run to for money to buy fine horses and fine dressing. But when they were not actually employed in preaching, they were laboring with their own hands, that they might not be chargeable to any—that as they had freely received that they might freely give. Were it possible to see the apostles of our Lord in company with some of our modern Baptists—who call themselves the successors of the Apostles—what a contrast would appear! The one

you would see going afoot with a pair of sandals on his feet; the other mounted on a fine steed, with fine boots on his feet—the one with his fisher's coat on; the other the finest broadcloth—the one with rough hands, all exposed by reason of hard labor; the other with fair hands covered with gloves. Now compare their doctrine and you will find as great a contrast. The one saying, silver and gold have I none—and at another time, thy money perish with thee; the other saying three or four thousand dollars more will be of great benefit in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom.

"As the Baptists from whom we have separated have represented us as the cause of the confusion among the churches, we will in all candor propound to them a few questions:

1. Have we brought in any new thing among the churches?
2. Have we brought in the General Atonement?
3. Have we brought in the faith contained in the Encyclopaedia?
4. Have we brought in the Missionary Societies?
5. Have we brought in your Theological Schools, together with all such like things?
6. Do you not know that these things are the cause of all the confusion that is going on all over the United States?

"Surely you must have a great thirst for money, that you should beg it in the name of converting the heathen! —for if you know anything of God, you know this, that it is His prerogative to convert the heathen, or as many of them as he wants converted. And He holds the means in his own hands to do it, and as much money at His command as He wants, without your horse— leech system—'crying give, give.'

"We believe that you have among you some of the Primitive Baptists; to them we say, 'COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE,' and though like us, you may have some ministers and relatives whom you are loath to leave, remember Lot! What would have been his condition had he continued in Sodom, clinging to his relatives.

"We shall now draw to a close, and only request our readers to give this an impartial perusal, and compare it with the word of God, and not to the traditions of

men for if you do the latter, we shall appeal to a higher court—and may the Lord give you understanding in all things."

1839. In October, the Association convened at Hickory Spring, in Holmes county, 5 churches represented.

"Eld. S. Parks preached the introductory sermon.

"Eld. Nathan Morris chosen Moderator, and A. Erwin, Clerk.

"Correspondence received from the Tallahatchie Association.

"Correspondence arranged with three Associations, viz: Tallahatchie, Pilgrim's Rest and Buttahatchy.

"Three Union meetings were appointed.

1840. In April, the Association convened at County Line church, Choctaw county.

"Eld. N. Morris chosen Moderator, and Eld. S. Parks, Clerk.

"The Antioch church petitioned for admittance into the Association which was granted.

"Elds. J. P. Taylor, N. Morris and S. Parks, preached on Sunday in the order of their names.

1840. In October, the Association convened at Lebanon church, Attala county—9 churches represented.

"Eld. S. Parks preached the introductory sermon— text, viz: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel—for the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the Lot of his inheritance—Deut. xxxii; 8 and 9.

"Eld. N. Morris chosen Moderator, and A. Erwin, Clerk.

"Correspondence received from three Associations, viz: The Tallahatchie, by her Messenger, E. A. Meaders; the Pilgrim's Rest, by her messenger, J. Pearsall; the Buttahatchy, by letter.



"Elds. E. N. Langford, J. Pearsall and E. A. Meaders, preached on Sunday in the order of their names.

Query.—"Is it order for churches composing this Association to receive members into their bodies, who have been baptized by the ministry of the Missionary Baptist order, since the time that we declared an unfellowship with them, without baptizing them.

"Answer.—Our opinion in counsel is, that it is disorder."

1841. In October, the Association convened at County Line church, Choctaw county—14 churches represented.

"Eld. J. A. Scott preached the introductory sermon. "Eld. N. Morris chosen Moderator, and A. Erwin, Clerk.

"Correspondence was received from three Associations, viz: The Buttahatchy, by her Messengers, Wm. Moore and J. Loden; the Tallahatchie, by her messengers, J. Harber and Elisha Moore; the Zion's Rest, by her messengers, W. H. Crawford and G. W. McDonald.

"Elds. F. Baker, S. Parks, W. H. Crawford, and N. Morris, preached in the order of their names on Sunday.

"Correspondence arranged with four Associations, viz: Tallahatchie, Pilgrim's Rest, Zion's Rest and Buttahatchie.

1842. In October, the Association convened at Pilgrim's Rest church, Carroll county—17 churches represented.

"Eld. S. Parks preached the introductory sermon— text, viz: 'And this I say: that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ—the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul— that it should make the promise of none effect.'—Gal. iii: 17.

"Eld. N. Morris, chosen Moderator, and A. Erwin, Clerk.

"Correspondence was received from five Associations, viz: The Tallahatchie; the Buttahatchy, by her Messenger brother Moore; the Pilgrim's Rest; the Zion's Rest, by her messengers G. W. McDonald and E. Roberts; the Noxubee, by her messenger T. G. Neal.

"Arranged correspondence with the same.

1843. In September, the Association convened at Hebron church, Attala county—16 churches represented.

"Eld. F. Baker preached the introductory sermon.

"Eld. N. Morris chosen Moderator, and A. Erwin, Clerk.

"Correspondence arranged with six Associations, viz: The Noxubee, Tallahatchie, Lusascona, Buttahatchy, Pilgrim's Rest and Zion's Rest.

"Resolved, That this Association will not in future receive any church into her body, that holds members baptized by the Missionaries since the separation; and, that we advise the churches not to receive the official acts of the missionary ministry."

1844. In September, the Association convened at Elam church, Madison county, and in consequence of sickness, adjourned, without transacting any business of importance.

1845. In April, the Association convened at Hickory Spring, Holmes county—18 churches represented.

"Eld. F. Baker, chosen Moderator, and S. Canterbury, Clerk.

"Correspondence was received from Bethany Association by her messenger, Eld. E. Wilbanks.

"Thirty dollars of the Association fund was appropriated to pay traveling expenses of the corresponding messengers to sister Associations."

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

"It has been reported by some, and believed by others, that we discard the idea of God's using means or instruments for the accomplishment of his divine purposes. This charge is gratuitous and untrue. Although we do most positively deny the supposed power or efficacy of humanly devised means, to facilitate the salvation of lost sinners, in the manner the doctrine is preached, believed and acted upon at the present day, yet we most freely admit, and firmly believe, that the allwise and glorious God has appointed instruments by which he will accomplish his adorable

purposes. This truth is clearly taught in the scriptures; but in the examples we shall give, the reader will do well to mark the difference between the wisdom of God and the policy of men, in providing and bringing means into requisition.

"The first example we shall give of God's using means, is that of the salvation of Noah and his family. The means used on this occasion was an ark; the plan, form and construction of which were all of God. He that was able to dash a thousand worlds to destruction, at a word, and amidst the general calamity, say, 'Let Noah and his family be saved,' chose to pursue a different course. No part of the work was left discretionary with Noah, but all must be done agreeably to the Divine instruction, which Noah received from God.

"The plan of man to save the human race from a devouring deluge, was to build a tower whose top should reach to heaven—but the means which God employed to stop the progress of the work of Babel, was to go down and confound their language.

"The train of means which God employed to elevate Joseph, and to humble his ambitious brethren, was such as human wisdom would have thought most unlikely to success. The jealousy of Joseph's brethren—their envy and hatred—their murderous designs—their avarice and treachery—their selling him into slavery—did not look much like means to bring him into power, and subjugate his brethren.

"The unmerciful Ishmaelites were another link of God's appointed means. By an Allwise decree they were on the spot at the appointed moment—had they delayed their journey a few moments, Joseph had been no more. But when the murderers saw them, Joseph was raised from the pit and conducted down to Egypt; where he withstood the temptation of his mistress; was falsely accused; unjustly condemned; thrown into prison; miraculously brought forth therefrom; and finally raised to the government of Egypt. Good old Jacob did not seem to understand or like the means which God made use of in this case.

"The means which God employed to rid his ancient Israel of a rebellious king, was to send an evil spirit with a commission to go and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all Ahab's prophets. These were commissioned to persuade him to go and fall at Ramath Gilead—and that by lying to him, and saying, that he should go and prosper—and the Lord would deliver Ramath Gilead into his hands.

"When the beloved Son of God was to fulfill all that was written, in law or prophets, or psalms, wicked men and devils were God's sword. In many instances we are told by the evangelists, of what they did, 'That the scriptures might be

fulfilled.' When but a babe we see the Holy Child chased down into Egypt by cruel persecution; and being called from thence, he turned into a small city, that the scriptures might be fulfilled. From the manger to the cross, his life is loaded with reproaches, abuses, blasphemies and insults; and all to preserve the sacred volume inviolate. At length against Him both Herod and Pontius Pilate meet, with men of Israel and the Gentiles, 'for to do whatsoever God's hand and counsel before determined should be done.' The heathen raged, and the people imagined vain things against the Lord, and against his Christ; yet all these things were God's chosen instrumentalities for the accomplishment of what his hand and counsel had predestinated. And when the dear, disconsolate disciples, on their way to Emmaus, journeyed and were sad, because of what their Lord had done and suffered from the hands of wicked men and devils, our Lord reproved them, saying 'O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written, ought not Christ to suffer these things, and then enter into his glory.' Heaven had ordained the accomplishment of these things; and all requisite means for the accomplishment of the end were duly provided.

"But before we close our remarks on this subject, let us examine the means which God has ordinarily employed to facilitate the spread of the gospel ministry—not the making of ministers, nor the regeneration of souls—but the publication of the gospel. As the heavens are high above the earth, so the ways and thoughts of God do truly transcend the ways and thoughts of man. Let us contrast them. For the spread of what they call gospel, men form large, popular, and moneyed societies—establish permanent funds—call into existence unheard of, and unscriptural begging agencies—establish executive Boards, &c: to induce by hire or bribery, such as are greedy of filthy lucre, to enter their field, and labor under their own religious and ecclesiastical dictation.

"How different is the plan of God! The means, if we may call them so, which he employed in the primitive days of his gospel church, were to let loose the powers of wicked men and devils upon his dear servants, to persecute, whip and imprison—calumniate and distress them. He had previously directed them, 'if they make up for you a full purse and splendid outfit in one city, take it and go as their hirelings to another!' Stop! We mistake. Our eye was on another plan. The Divine direction is this: 'If they persecute you in one city, flee unto another.' Such were the means which the Allwise God employed. And when it became necessary to start them out about their Master's work, there arose a great persecution, and the saints were scattered, and they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.

"It was persecution, under God, that took Paul to Rome, and John to Patmos—and persecution has been ever since employed by the Holy Ghost in compelling Christ's ministers to traverse the earth with the ministry of the everlasting Gospel. But, mark! while the enraged Jews were made subservient to the cause of God, in wickedly and maliciously persecuting the ministers of Jesus, they themselves had their popular religious proselyting missionaries out in all the land and sea, under good pay and easy circumstances, even as their successors in the pharasaical crusade of modern times.

"Down through the dark ages of pagan, papal and protestant persecution, God has overruled all their rage and malice, and brought it to bear upon his servants in such a manner as to make them the more active in preaching the word of God everywhere. It was persecution in Europe, that brought the pioneers of the Gospel ministry to our beloved shores; and when they thought to sit unmolested and secure under their gourds, and enjoy that social felicity together, for which they had bidden adieu to their native country, and for the enjoyment of which they had crossed the mighty deep, God prepared a worm to gnaw the gourd—it withered—it died. Persecution then arose from the most popular party (Congregationalists.) and they were scattered and went everywhere as God directed their way in providence."

1845. In September, the Association convened at Antioch church, Yallobusha county—17 churches represented.

"Eld. G. W. McDonald preached the introductory sermon—text, viz: 'And exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.'—Jude i:3.

"Elder F. Baker chosen Moderator, and S. Canterbury, Clerk.

"Correspondence arranged with seven Associations, viz: Buttahatchy, Noxubee, Tallahatchie, Zion's Rest, Bethany, Pilgrim's Rest and Lusascoona.

"Appropriated \$36.75 to pay traveling expenses of our messengers to sister Associations.

"Elds. J. Harvey, J. A. Scott, S. Parks and E. Moore, preached on Sunday.

1846. In September, the Association convened at Lewis's Creek church, Carroll county—18 churches represented.

"Eld. S. Parks chosen Moderator, and S. Canterbury, Clerk.

"Elds. S. Parks, J. A. Scott, and G. W. McDonald, preached on Sunday.

"Correspondence arranged with six Associations, viz: The Tallahatchie, Zion's Rest, Bethany, Pilgrim's Rest, Lusascoona and Buttahatchy.

"Resolved, That we highly approve of the course pursued by brother Joel Harvey in relation to the Noxubee Primitive Baptist Association, and that we drop correspondence with her under existing circumstances.

"Query from the Union Church.—"Is it order to receive members baptised by Baptist ministers in the bounds of Associations, where protests, against the antisciptural societies of the day, have not been entered up—but where there are some contending for, and some against the same.

"Answer.—The Association agreed to give the following advice—that it is the right of each church to judge of the qualifications of her own members.

EXTRACT FROM THE OBITUARY NOTICE, PUBLISHED IN LIEU OF A CIRCULAR LETTER. "Died, at his residence, in Yallobusha county, Miss., on the 26th June, 1846, Elder FRANCIS BAKER, in the 66th year of his age. When the separation of the O. S. Baptists and N. S. Baptists took place, his patience and forbearance were such, that he lingered behind for two or three years, laboring and striving for a restoration of gospel order. But when he found that all his efforts were unavailing, and that the N. S. party were bringing in heresy like a flood, he came out from among them, and declared an unceasing warfare against all their errors—for which he received a full share of that portion of a christian's legacy which consists of persecution. But none of these things moved him—he was prepared by the word of God to expect them.

"He saw that the N. S. party had become unsound in faith and doctrine, and that their works were of a like character—like faith, like works—like always begetting its like—and he ceased not to warn the people against their unscriptural doctrine and practice. This he did from a high sense of ministerial duty, notwithstanding he knew that those who could not endure sound doctrine would be offended nevertheless he shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God—knowing that it was impossible to preach sovereign, discriminating grace without givinng offence. Witness the effects of Jesus' remarks relative to the widow of Serepta and Naaman the Syrian. It seems that they heard him patiently, perhaps willing to call his doctrine conservative, until he come out openly and preached discriminating grace, and then the ire of their father was kindled within them, and they were filled with wrath and sought to destroy him. The servant is not greater than his master—and

brother Baker knew, that if they thus persecuted the Master, they would also persecute the servant—and hence he marvelled not as if some strange thing had happened to him."

1847. In September, the Association convened at Rocky Spring church, Holmes county—20 churches represented.

"Eld. J. Harvey preached the introductory sermon— text, viz: 'Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.'

"Eld. S. Parks chosen Moderator, and S. Canterbury, Clerk.

"Eld. S. Parks, S. C. Johnson, E. A. Meaders and G. W. McDonald, preached on Sunday.

"By request of Mt. Paran church,

Resolved. That we appoint Elds. N. Morris, J. A. Scott, S. Parks and G. W. McDonald, together with brethren B. Griffin and S. Canterbury, a committee to visit said church, on Thursday before the 3rd Sunday in April, 1848, to examine into the order of said church, and report at our next meeting.

Query presented by Brother A. West, viz:—"Will the Association sustain the churches in their resolutions against Free Masonry and Odd Fellowship?" After some debate the following was offered, by Brother B. Griffin, as a substitute, viz: "Should a church hold in fellowship a member, who shall hereafter be in the habit of attending the Lodges of the Free Masons or Odd Fellows, to the detriment of the peace and harmony of the church?"

Answer.—"We advise their absence from the Lodges."

## **EXTRACTS FROM THE CIRCULAR LETTER**

"By good works we are not to understand any thing that the vain imagination of man may consider such— for many will come unto Christ 'in that day' and boast of the 'wonderful works' they had done in the name of Jesus but notwithstanding their impudent and hypocritical expostulations, he will declare he never knew them. This may not be wondered at,, when it is considered, that the name of Christ has the ascendancy in the civilized world; and Christianity, a popular theme. And thousands use his name merely to take away their 'reproach' leaning and relying on their own efforts, as the cause of their salvation.

"Hence all the institutions of men, invented for evangelizing the world, are called auxiliaries, to aid Jesus in saving his people from their sins. The characters here brought to view are not Jews, Mahomedans, nor heathens, for these refuse to do anything in the name of Jesus, and much less 'wonderful works.' It is clear to all unprejudiced minds, that they are professed christians—and that not a few but 'many.' And from the very form of their expostulation 'in that day' it is evident, they expected a seat in Christ's Kingdom in consideration of what they had done.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God; and those only who have the faith in God's elect—which is the gift of God, and works by love, and purifies the heart—can perform good works acceptable in the sight of God. And though His people are zealous of good works, they view them as the fruits of faith, but not the cause. And though good works are strenuously insisted on, by the inspired writers—and without them faith is dead—yet they are nothing more than the sweet smelling fruit, that adorn the branches of the true vine.

"Hence the special care taken by the inspired writers, to distinguish between works and grace. "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth." But on the contrary. "To him that work not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' Many say, that if they believe this doctrine, they would take their fill of sin. This, in its proper sense, is true of every christian; for foolish thoughts are sufficient to fill him; and acts added thereto often make him overflow. But taken in the sense in which it is usually spoken, there is not better evidence to prove, that those persons are still in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity.

"They do not understand, that christians follow the bent of their will after conversion in the performance of good works; and act contrary to their will when they do otherwise. "To will is present with them, but how to perform that which is good they find not.' There is none good but God; and nothing good but what emanates from God; and even a christian never did, nor never can, do a good work, though it may externally appear so, otherwise than by the aid and influence of the Spirit. Hence, we learn that christians 'without Christ can do nothing.' 'But the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.' Therefore, if the branches be alive and receive sap from the true vine, they will bloom in some degree with good works."

1848. In September, the Association convened at Zebulon Church, Leake county—20 churches represented.



"Eld. S. Parks chosen Moderator, and S. Canterberrv, Clerk.

"Correspondence was arranged with six Associations, viz: Tallahatchie, Zion's Rest, Bethany, Pilgrim's Rest, Loosascoona, Buttahatchy.

"On motion, took up the request of Union church, relative to publishing the statement of facts which caused the exclusion of Eld. N. Morris from said church; and after some discussion, it was unanimously agreed that we will comply with the request of said church.

"Whereas, Eld. Nathan Morris has been excluded from the fellowship of Union church, Yazoo county, Mi.; and whereas, he has disregarded the action of the church, and still continues to preach; and whereas, a false impression has been made upon the public mind relative to the cause of his exclusion. Therefore,

Resolved, That the statement of facts relative to his exclusion be published with the minutes of this Association, according to the request of Union church:

"A statement of Facts which caused the exclusion of Eld. Nathan Morris from the fellowship of Union church, Yazoo county, Mississippi.

"1. He admitted in open conference, as he had usually done, that, previous to his marriage to the mother of Reuben Bull, a marriage contract was entered into, in which he agreed, that if he was the longest liver, all her property should, at his death, belong and go to the said Reuben Bull.

"2. He stated in open conference, as he had usually done, that, in his opinion, said contract was not legally binding; but he considered himself morally and conscientiously bound by said contract, and intended to comply with it to the fullest extent.

"3. Subsequent to the death of the mother of Reuben Bull, a misunderstanding arose between him and Eld. N. Morris relative to said property—the former claiming immediate possession of said property, according to his understanding of the contract, and the latter claiming a life estate in said property.

"4. Through the influence of mutual friends, Reuben Bull agreed that, for the sake of peace and harmony, he would submit to the claims of Eld. N. Morris, if he would give him a lawful title to the property to take effect at the death of said Morris so as to enable him to get peaceable possession without any difficulty with his heirs.

"5. The friends of Eld. N. Morris advised him to do so, time after time, for a long period; insisting that it was his duty to live peaceably with all men, so far as in his power lies—that as he professed to believe the contract not legally binding, hence, the greater necessity for giving a title to the property, in order to fulfill and carry out what he openly confessed to be a moral and conscientious obligation.

"6. Notwithstanding it was a general opinion among the Primitive Baptists of this Association wherever the facts were known, that Eld. N. Morris ought to give a title to said property, which was well known to him; and, notwithstanding his brethren had labored with him for a long period of time, entreating him in the kindest manner to give a title for the property at his death, and thereby make an amicable adjustment of the matter, and wipe out a reproach to the Primitive Baptist cause, yet, after all, he utterly refused and offered no other excuse than at a certain time, while offended with Reuben Bull, he said that he would not give a title.

"7. Eld. N. Morris charged Eld. G. W. McDonald with backbiting him relative to said property.

"8. The church at her conference in June, 1848, after having made all preliminary preparations, and having help from three sister churches, took up both cases; and after investigation, Eld. N. Morris refusing to move from his former position relative to the property; and refusing, when called on by the conference, to give any testimony to sustain his charge against Eld. G. W. McDonald; it was unanimously decided that the church cannot approve his course relative to said property; and that in the absence of testimony, his charge against Eld. McDonald cannot be sustained.

"9. The above decision of the church was read to Eld. N. Morris in open conference, and he called on for a reply; whereupon, he stated emphatically in substance, that until he was satisfied of his wrong, he would not give an inch for all the Primitive Baptists in the State; and as to the charge against Eld. McDonald, he offered no satisfaction whatever.

"10. The church then formally excluded him from her fellowship, and agreeably to his request, have written out this statement of facts, all of which is respectfully submitted."

1849. In September, the Association convened at Mt. Pisgah Church, Carroll county—19 churches represented.

"Eld. G. W. McDonald chosen Moderator, and S. Canterbury, Clerk.

"Received and read a communication from Rocky Spring Church, charging Pilgrim's Rest Church with visiting the Lodges of the Free Masons to the detriment of the peace and harmony of the churches, and with a departure from gospel order. Said communication stated that she had taken steps to restore peace and harmony, but had failed to obtain satisfaction."

On motion, the case was taken up, and after some debate was laid over until Monday.

When, on motion, it was again called up—whereupon, the following preamble and resolution was unanimously adopted:

"Whereas, The Pilgrim's Rest Church was given good cause of offence to the Rocky Springs and several other churches; and whereas, due steps have been taken by Rocky Spring Church to reconcile the existing difficulties; and whereas, satisfaction has not been obtained. Therefore,

"Resolved, That Pilgrim's Rest Church be excluded from this Association."

"Correspondence arranged with six Associations, viz: Tallahatchie, Zion's Rest, Bethany, Pilgrim's Rest, Loosascoona, and Buttahatchy.

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

"As Free Masonry is marring the peace of some of the churches composing this Association, we have selected it for a subject on which to address you. And in entering upon the subject we will here remark, that an attempt has been made either to slander the Association, or prejudice the minds of the community against us, by saying, that this is a new test of fellowship, gotten up by the Primitive Baptist Association. But this we know to be untrue; for in searching Benedict's, Burkitt's and Semple's histories of the Baptists, we find it has been a fruitful source of debate for past ages, in various parts of the United States. And owing to the troubles which the Baptists have had on this subject, there is considerable prejudice in the minds of the Masons against them; for it has often been and is now said, that the Primitive Baptists are opposed to Masonry and Odd Fellowship. But this in the main is unfounded; for we are not opposed to either of these Fraternities, farther than to keep them out of our churches. This we have ever done; this we are now doing all over the United States; and this we will no doubt continue to do."

1850. In September, the Association convened at Union Church, Yazoo county—16 churches represented.

"Eld. J. A. Scott preached the introductory sermon.

"Eld. G. W. McDonald chosen Moderator, and S. Canterbury, Clerk.

"Resolved, That in place of a circular for our next Association, we publish a history of the rise and progress of the Primitive Baptists in this State, and Brethren Joseph Erwin and B. Griffin be appointed a committee to write said history, and that they are at liberty to select three brethren to assist them."

Correspondence arranged with six Associations, viz: Tallahatchie, Zion's Rest, Bethany, Loosascoona, Pilgrim's Rest and Buttahatchy.

"The committee to visit Salem Church reports as follows: That they visited said church, and labored to restore order and fellowship, but were unable to do so. The church, through said committee, asked the Association for advice, relative to their present condition. The Association agreed to give the following advice: That, if they wished to dissolve, it would be proper and right to call a presbytery to assist in their dissolution.

"Resolved, That it is the opinion of this Association that good order would require in all cases a presbytery to be called to assist the dissolution of any church.

"Resolved, unanimously, that this Association will not hold in fellowship any church that tolerates her members in visiting the Lodges of Free Masons, Odd Fellows, or Sons of Temperance, to the detriment of the peace and harmony of the churches."

1851. In September the Association convened at Coila Church, Carroll county—17 churches represented —20 in all.

"Eld. S. Parks chosen Moderator, and S. Canterbury, Clerk.

"Elds. G. W. McDonald, S. Parks, and E. A. Meaders, preached on Sunday.

"Called for the report of the committee appointed at the last session of this Association, to write a history of the rise and progress of the Primitive Baptists in the State of Mississippi. They report that they had made some progress, but had not been able to complete the work for want of time; and asked that further time be allowed them. The report was received, and the committee requested to report to the next session of this Association."

"Correspondence arranged with six Associations, viz: Tallahatchie, Zion's Rest, Bethany, Loosascoona, Pilgrim's Rest, and Buttahatchy.

1852. In September, the Association convened at Lebanon Church, Attala county—16 churches represented.

"Eld. Thos. G. Neal preached the introductory sermon.

"Eld. S. Parks chosen Moderator, and S. Canterbury, Clerk.

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"Elds. Crecelius, Parks, and Roberts, preached on Sunday.

"On motion,

"Resolved. That we take pleasure in recommending the History of the Primitive Baptist of the State of Mississippi, now in the course of publication by Brother Benjamin Griffin, to the favorable consideration of all our brethren and friends in this and adjoining States.

"Resolved, That the prospectus of said History be published with these minutes in lieu of a circular letter."

"Correspondence arranged with six Associations, viz: Tallahatchie, Bethany, Loosascoona, Pilgrim's Rest, Buttahatchy, and Zion's Rest.