

Griffin's History

Chapter XVI

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, rmissionism 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.