

Griffin's History

Chapter XX

NOXUBEE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

1841. In October, Delegates from eight churches met at Bethesda Church, Oktibbeha county, for the purpose of organizing an Association. The introductory sermon was preached by Eld. G. Woodruff, from Exodus xxv: 40.—'And look that thou make them after their pattern showed thee in the Mount.' After which, the Delegates from the several churches assembled together in convention, and chose Eld. B. Holbrook, Moderator; and Brother A. C. Habert, Clerk. The letters from the several churches were read and the names of the Delegates enrolled. An invitation being given by the Moderator to ministering brethren of our faith and order, Elders Cook and Gunn took seats in the Convention. Having appointed a committee to draft a Constitution, Abstract of Faith, and Rules of Decorum, the convention adjourned till to—morrow morning. Met pursuant to adjournment: and unanimously adopted the Constitution, Abstract of Faith, and Rules of Decorum, prepared and presented by the committee—then adjourned sine die.

The convention having adjourned, the Association immediately formed, consisting of the Delegates of the convention, who were authorized by their respective churches to meet in Association.

Eld. B. Holbrook chosen Moderator and E. Pace, Clerk.

Correspondence arranged with four Associations, viz: Pilgrim's Rest, Buttahatchy, Zion's Rest and Primitive.

PREAMBLE AND DECLARATION OF THE NOXUBEE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION Whereas, a division is taking place among the Baptist denomination in almost every part of the world, which has caused much distress, and in a good degree prostrated the life of Godliness amongst us; and whereas, (according to our view,) through the ingenuity and cunning craftiness of the New School party, they have so managed as to attach all the blame to the Old School; and thereby have called down upon us, in some degree, the censures of many who are not acquainted with the true cause which has led to the separation. We feel it to be our duty, and esteem it a high privilege, to set forth the true cause which has produced the effect—which is now exhibited to public view.

We will first mention a few things which they allege against us, and then reply to each allegation in order. It is said that we are opposed to the spread of the gospel. It is also said that we are opposed to men's contributing their money, in any way they may think proper, and thus abridging the constitutional rights of men. And it is further said that we are opposed to the support of the ministry.

To the first allegation, we answer, that we are not guilty; and God forbid that we ever should oppose the spread of the gospel—yet, we are ready to acknowledge, that we are opposed to the method pursued by them in spreading it— for the following reasons:

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, and the only unerring rule of Faith and Practice; and in them we find neither command, precept, nor example, for the formation of any religious society except the gospel church—and as such we are constrained to view all the Societies, from the State Conventions down to the Temperance Societies, nothing but the invention of men; and we learn from the Scriptures that the people in days of old, 'provoked the Lord to anger with their inventions—and the plague broke in upon them.' Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions."

We are informed that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine—for reproof—for correction—for instruction in righteousness—that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Hence, we believe Jesus Christ is King in Zion, and has the sole right to give laws for the government of His Church; and that it is at our peril to add to, alter, or attempt to amend them in the slightest degree. Finding the whole system which the advocates thereof are pleased to call benevolent enterprise, unprecedented in the word of Truth, we, with the fear of God before our eyes, are compelled to dissent therefrom.

Again, we view it was not only a departure from the word and spirit of the Gospel, but also, of the most evil tendency—it is tending to a law religion, which we all know has ever proved pernicious to the peace and wellbeing of the church; and also, destructive of the civil and religious liberties of those countries where it predominates—and now rapidly tending to endanger those of our own happy Republic.

As regards our being opposed to every man's using his money as he pleases—we answer, every man has a legal right to use his money as he may think proper, if it

be to lay it out for ardent spirits, upon which he drinks himself to death, and brings his family into distress and degradation. We acknowledge that he has a legal right to lend his money to another, for the known purpose of gambling and dissipating. And we know also that he would be at the same time encouraging and facilitating one of the greatest moral evils that ever pervaded human society. We now ask the question, who can blame us for trying to enlighten the mind of an individual thus injuring himself, and the circle in which he moves—to impress upon him his moral obligation, in abstaining from the abuse of his legal privileges.

But it may be said by some, that it is unreasonable and ungenerous to compare the benevolent institutions of the present day, with those sinks of iniquity; to which we reply, that could we view those institutions in the light in which they are represented by their advocates, we would acknowledge our wrong, take shame to ourselves, and desist. But it will be seen by referring to our previous remarks, that we have taken quite a different view of the subject, believing they are fast tending to a law religion, and leading to a union (or what is still worse, if possible a collusion,) between church and State. The propagation of the Christian Faith was not only unaided, but directly opposed in most instances by the civil government in the different countries in which it spread. The publishers of the gospel were in general plain and unlearned men, destitute of all worldly influence and power. Their doctrine was in itself obnoxious, and their appearance little calculated to procure a favorable hearing; nor could they present to the view of men any other inducement to embrace their testimony than the prospect of life and immortality in the world to come—with the certainty, that through much tribulation believers must enter the Kingdom of God. The success of their doctrine stood in direct opposition to the power of Princes, the wisdom of Philosophers, the intrigue of Courts, with all the weight of an established system of idolatry and superstition. The general character of the disciples of Christ is that of a suffering people; and, notwithstanding some intervals of repose, the progress of the Gospel is, in general, traced in the blood of the Saints. And their successfully fighting a good fight and keeping the faith, against the most formidable opposition—not by banding together and fighting with carnal weapons, but by earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the Saints, and submitting to all the wrongs legally heaped upon them—is a clear manifestation that the power is of God, and not of man.

While the Christian cause was thus opposed by the world, and made its way by its own divine energy, the general purity of its profession was preserved; for what, then, could induce men to embrace it, but a conviction of its heavenly origin and importance. So long as the Christian religion was thus circumstanced, its success carried with it its own witness. But the scene is altogether changed, when we view

the state of matters after the ascension of Constantine—for then, instead of the teachers of Christianity being called upon to show their attachment to it, by self—denial and suffering for its sake, we see them exalted to worldly honor and dignity; and the holy and heavenly religion of Jesus, converted into a system of pride, domination, and hypocrisy; becoming at length the means of gratifying the vilest lusts and passions of the human heart.

From the days of Constantine, the corruption of the Christian profession proceeded with rapid progress; many evils existed before this period, which prepared the way for the events that were to follow. But when the influence of the secular power became an engine of the clergy, to be exercised in their kingdoms, it should not be a matter of surprise, that the progress became rapid in converting the religion of anti—Christ into a system of spiritual tyranny, idolatry, superstition and hypocrisy, until it arrived at its full height in the Roman hierarchy; when, what was called the church became the sink of iniquity.

As to being opposed to the support of the ministry, we answer: That we are utterly opposed to the salary system. We contend that he who stipulates to render so much service for so much money, is an hireling, let what may be said to the contrary. And the language of our Saviour is the hireling fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. Nevertheless, we believe, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel; for even so hath the Lord ordained. We believe, therefore, that is the duty of the minister to preach the gospel, and it is also the duty of the church to supply his necessities.

After saying what we have in reply to the foregoing allegations, we now proceed to show the true cause of our not only dissenting, but finally separating. It will be remembered that the Primitive Baptists have ever stood upon and contended for the predestinarian doctrine. Since the introduction of the mission system, we find in our opponents a great inclination to depart from the doctrine of the Gospel. It is true that some of them say they believe the doctrine of grace. But for the greater part of them are openly inclining to Arminianism, and preach Arminian doctrine. And where there are different doctrines propagated in the same society, it ever will produce division in sentiment; and hence comes confusion, envying's, evil surmising, &c.

We are taught in the word of eternal truth that God is not the author of confusion. And it is also enjoined on us in the same word "to mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, and avoid them." Before the modern mission system found its way in among us, we were in peace

and harmony. Since its introduction, we have been in continual confusion. We, moreover, contend that the system was originated in Arminianism, and to act consistent, they are obliged to preach a doctrine equivalent to it. And as evidence that there is a departure from the faith, we find that the Old School, who still preach the doctrine of grace, and earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints, are traduced, condemned and called Antinonians by the New School party. Many other hard things are said of us, all of which we have to suffer because we trust in the living God. For the sake of many precious brethren and sisters who were led off by these Arminian teachers, we have borne it, and continued with it much longer than we should have done. Therefore, for the sake of our peace, and the force of the divine injunction, we are compelled to enter our protest against all such inventions, and to withdraw as a body from all who do, or may advocate them, or give countenance to their proceedings.

We offer the following Scripture as the cause of our course: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and hath concord hath Christ with Balia? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? for ye are the Temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."—2 Cor. vi: 14, 18. "And I heard a voice from Heaven saying, come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Rev. xviii:4.

1842. In September, the Association convened at Mount Nebo Church, Noxubee county—13 churches represented.

Eld. B. Holbrook chosen Moderator, and E. Pace, Clerk.

Correspondence arranged with four Associations, viz: Zion's Rest, Buttahatchy, Pilgrim's Rest, and Primitive.

1843. In September, the Association convened at Church Hill Church, Lowndes county—12 churches represented.

Eld. E. Pace preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. B. Holbrook chosen Moderator, and E. Pace, Clerk.

Elds. A. M. Reynolds, G. W. McDonald and J. Harvey, preached on Sunday, in the order of their names.

Correspondence received from four Associations, viz: Primitive, Buttahatchy, Zion's Rest, and Loosascoona.

Correspondence arranged with the same four, and also with the Pilgrim's Rest Association.

1846. About this time this Association fell into disorder, as we learn from the minutes of Old School Baptist Associations, which declined her correspondence.