

# Griffin's History

## Chapter XXI

### BETHANY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

1844. In August, Delegates from seven churches met, pursuant to previous arrangement, at New Bethel Church, Leake county, for the purpose of organizing an Association. Eld. E. Wilbanks was called to the chair as Moderator, and J. G. Crecelius to act as Clerk. The letters from the several churches having been read, and the names of the Delegates enrolled, the Convention proceeded to appoint committees, and then adjourned till Monday. The Convention met pursuant to adjournment, and, the Constitution and Articles of Faith having been read and adopted, the Moderator declared the Association duly organized. A hymn of praise was sung, and the right hand of fellowship extended to the Delegates.

The Association then convened and chose the same Moderator and Clerk.

Correspondence arranged with two Associations, viz: the Primitive Baptist and Noxubee.

"Resolved, That our reasons for withdrawing from the Mt. Pisgah Association be read, which was done. And on further motion, the same was adopted."

#### REASONS AND APPEAL

"When, in view of passing events, conscience points out the necessity of breaking asunder the bonds of union which have hitherto bound together those who profess to be of the same sentiments, and to be governed by the same laws, and rules, it becomes those who dissent or separate themselves from others, to set forth their reasons for such separation.

"Therefore, we, who have hitherto been members of the Mt. Pisgah Baptist Association, hereby make known our reasons for separating ourselves from those brethren who still choose to remain in that body.

"1. Because they hold and publish to the world that there is now more gospel Ministers than there is money to send out. (See Minutes of the Baptist State Convention of May 4, 1838, page 7.)

"2. Because they hold and publish to the world that embarrassments in pecuniary matters have obstructed some of the holiest enterprises for the advancement of Messiah's Kingdom. (See Third Annual Report of American and Foreign Bible Society.)

"3. Because they are in the practice of buying and selling life membership in Societies under the pretension of spreading the Gospel, thereby placing the Gospel side by side with common merchandise, and placing the poor brother on an unequal footing with the rich hypocrite. (See Constitution of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, article 3.)

"4. Because they employ men at high stipulated wages to go out, preach, and act as agents in collecting money and laying the claims of education before the churches. (See minutes of the Baptist State Convention, 1843, appendix A, page 8.)

"5. Because they hold and publish to the world that large sums of money can be spent with prudence, economy and profit, in advancing Christ's Kingdom, if such sums, can be obtained; and if such sums cannot be obtained, such profitable efforts cannot be effected—thereby laying such stress upon money, as to make the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom entirely dependent on the amount of money that can be raised, thereby placing the salvation of God's Church on human efforts and contingency, which is in direct violation of God's system of salvation as revealed in his written and infallible word, which he has given for the rule of our faith and practice. (See Tenth Annual Report of the Baptist Home Missionary Society, page 18, April 1842.)

"These are some of the reasons that impel us to the course which we are now pursuing. We do not wish to be understood as saying, that all the brethren, from whom we have separated, are in the direct and immediate practice of all the unscriptural and newly invented schemes against which we here complain, or that all of them directly favor or sustain all the mammon— like schemes of the present day Societies, which were never participated in by the Baptists until within our recollection. But we hold such brethren to be in disorder, for countenancing and continuing in fellowship with those who are practicing and endeavoring to carry out such worldly and unscriptural measures as we have herein set forth. We are unwilling to give up the long cherished doctrine and sentiments upon which the Baptists have relied ever since the Lord Jesus Christ established his church on earth. Finally, brethren, addressing ourselves to you who profess to be particular Baptists of the old school, but, who are suffering such things to be preached and practiced amongst you, as are learned from men, and not from the word of God; it

is for you to say—not us —whether we can longer walk in union with you. We regret, and so must you, to see brethren professing the same faith, severing themselves from each other—but, brethren, if you compel us either to sanction the traditions and inventions of men as religious obligations, or to separate ourselves from you, the sin lieth at your own door. Thus, brethren, our appeal is to you—you may treat it with contempt, if you can despise the cause for which we contend in conformity with the word of God."

1845. In October, the Association convened at Antioch Church, Scott county—9 churches represented.

Eld. S. Berry preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. E. Wilbanks chosen Moderator, and J. G. Crecelius, Clerk.

Correspondence received from Zion's Rest and Primitive Baptist Associations.

Correspondence arranged with the same two, and the Noxubee Baptist Association.

Elds. W. H. Crawford, G. W. McDonald, N. Morris, and Eli McDonald, preached on Sunday, in the order of their names.

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

"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the Prophets prophesy falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?—Jer. v: 30, 31. The usual length of a circular forbids our entering largely upon this text. The Prophet, in the preceding part of this chapter, very plainly exhibits the inconsistency of the Jews, and God's anger against them. In the 21st verse of this chapter they are called foolish people, and without understanding; though they are said to have eyes and see not, ears and hear not. A horrible thing, indeed, that professors of Christianity should entertain and exercise towards each other a spirit of hatred, envy and malice; and that men professing to be preachers, instead of being determined to know nothing in their ministerial labors, save Christ and him crucified, have turned aside into vain quarreling, stirring up strife and contention, not unfrequently making their sermons introductory to whatever Society they wish to bring to the notice of their auditory., and in which they themselves feel the most interested. The members yielding their assent to such wonderful and horrible things as are committed in the land, are sometimes led into hateful and envious opposition to each other; and suffer themselves to be ruled and Priest— ridden by those Judaizing teachers—and

wonderful indeed that many seem to love to have it so. It is a fact worthy of remark, that the members of many churches generally imbibe the spirit of their pastor or supply, and we are not alone in believing, that if the spirit that dwelt in Christ had also dwelt in them, those works of the flesh would never have been manifested to such a shameful and sinful degree as has been the case amongst the Baptists of this country. If half the zeal and energy which have been exerted in favor of the missionary cause, had been to fulfill the scripture duty in administering to the poor, that 'horrible thing' would not have been committed in the land—the preachers would not have preached falsely, and the deacons would not have ruled by their means, and the people would not have loved to have it so; but 'what will ye do in the end thereof.' Read Mat. xxv: 31—46."

1846. In October, the Association convened at Primitive Church, Neshoba county—8 churches represented.

Eld. R. R. Fortson preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. E. Wilbanks chosen Moderator, and J. G. Crecelius, Clerk.

Elds. W. H. Crawford, R. R. Fortson, G. W. McDonald, and E. Y. Terrell preached on Sunday.

Correspondence arranged with three Associations, viz: The Primitive, Predestinarian and Zion's Rest.

1848. In October, the Association convened at New Chapel Church, Scott county—9 churches represented.

Eld. S. Hansbrough preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. E. Wilbanks chosen Moderator, and J. G. Crecelius, Clerk.

Elds. J. A. Scott, M. Hopson and W. Roberts preached on Sunday.

Arranged correspondence with three Associations, viz: The Primitive, Predestinarian and Zion's Rest.

1849. In October, the Association convened at Lebanon Church, Scott county—8 churches represented.

Eld. E. Wilbanks chosen Moderator, and J. G. Crecelius, Clerk.

Query from New Chapel Church.— "Is it good order for a church to grant a member a letter of dismission who lives in the immediate settlement of the church, and is not going to move, and no other church of the same faith and order within convenient distance of such applicant?"

Answer.— "We believe it to be good order for a church to grant letters in all cases to members in full fellowship —the church to exercise a sound discretion agreeable to the Gospel."

Correspondence arranged with three Associations, viz: The Primitive, Predestinarian and Zion's Rest.

1850. In October, the Association convened at the Primitive Church, Newton county—10 churches represented.

Eld. W. Roberts preached the introductory sermon.

Eld. E. Wilbanks chosen Moderator, and J. G. Crecelius, Clerk.

Query.— "What shall this Association do with a church that permits her members to join and frequent Free Mason Lodges?"

Answer.— "Withdraw from such a church as a disorderly member."

"Whereas, it is represented and established to the satisfaction of this Association, that Edinburgh church is in disorder by retaining in her fellowship a member who has attached himself to the Free Masons. Therefore,

"Resolved, That this Association recommend to four churches of her union, viz: Lebanon, New Bethel, Primitive and Antioch, that they appoint three delegates each, to meet with Edinburgh Church, on Saturday before the fifth Sunday in December next, to labor with said church and effect a reconciliation if possible."

## REMARKS

We have now disposed of all the minutes in our possession, except a few scattering minutes of Buttahatchy and Zion's Rest. From a minute of the former in 1846, we learn that five churches of her union were located in Mississippi and the balance in

Alabama. And from a minute of Zion's Rest Association in 1847, we learn that eight churches were in the former State and the balance in the latter.

Besides the foregoing there are three other Old School Baptist Associations which are wholly or in part in this State, viz: Pilgrim's Rest, on the eastern border; Predestinarian, in the South— east, and New Hope, in the North— east.

The Zion, Choctaw. Mt. Pisgah, and perhaps some other Associations, were organized on Old School Baptist principles. But as they are now 'joined to their idols' and harmoniously building with the New School Baptists, we shall 'let them alone.' However highly we may esteem some of their members individually, we are constrained to renounce their system of religion as unauthorized by the Scriptures—insiduously tending to evil and not too good. This conclusion may seem like presumption to those whose opinions are formed from specious appearances. But we can only decide by a strict comparison with the divine Rule, aided by our measure of faith and experience. And according to these, we not only reject their effort system, but deplore the course of some in its support, from whom we had good grounds to hope for better things.