

1880 Circular Yellow River Primitive Baptist Association

Prepared by
J. H. Cook

[Associations in correspondence this session were: Ocmulgee, Oconee, Primitive Western, Euharlee, New Hope, Marietta, Warwick, and Delaware River.

Ministers seated were Elders J. G. Eubanks from Ocmulgee, W. D. Chandler from Oconee, F.M. Casey, J. W. Yarbrough from Euharlee, W.W. Carroll, I. N. Moon, J. D. Prichard, and B. M. Camp from Marietta, **Gilbert Beebe**, from Warwick, and **William L. Beebe**, now serving the Old School Baptist Church of Canada. I. Hamby, moderator, and J. T. Jordan, clerk, W. D. Almand, William Adams, J. J. Adams B.F. Morton, E. Webb, J. A. Jordan, R. M. Lasseter, J. D. Prichard, B.M. Camp, W. R. Daniel, W.H. Gullledge and J. M. Smith.

Note: A committee suggested that due to false doctrine being preached in the Marietta Association, that it be given another year to restore order before a decision is made in its regard.]

Circular Letter

The Yellow River Baptist Association, in session with the church at Hardemans, Dekalb Co., Ga., September 25th, 26, 27th, 1880, to the churches composing the same.

Dear Brethren:- Through the goodness of God we have been permitted to meet in another association, for which we desire to be thankful. According to our custom, it becomes our duty to address you by a Circular Letter, and for this purpose we will call your attention to 1 Thessalonians v.6: **“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”**

From the reading of the text, with many other Scriptures, it is evident that in all ages of the church there has been a necessity for this admonition, from the fact that God’s people have been liable to get into a sleepy condition, and are therefore insensible, to a certain extent, of the dangers by which they are surrounded. This gives the enemy, who is always awake and on the watch, the advantage, and trouble, confusion and distress get in among them; and it is necessary at this time to be awake, and to watch and be sober.

Brethren, if ever there was a time with us that we should be sober and watchful, now is the time. In the first place, we should watch ourselves closely and prayerfully, to see if we are sober; for we know that a man who is drunk is not capable of attending to any business right. His reason is dethroned, and he looks upon everybody that tries to counsel him as his enemy, and thinks everybody is drunk but himself. Therefore let us watch and be sober; and as we have seen from time to time the trouble that has got into

churches and associations by unfaithfulness, we should try to profit by it. We are certain that there has been more trouble brought in among the Baptists by preachers, than in any other way. Then how necessary it is that preachers should be sober and watch themselves, and take the admonition of Paul to Timothy, "*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*"- 1 Tim. iv.16. if then the minister can save himself and them that hear him by obeying the admonition of the apostle, he can by not adhering to it destroy himself and them that hear him. Then, brethren preachers, let us not get intoxicated over any cherished idea or theory, and destroy ourselves and the peace of others before we will hear our brethren's admonitions. And where a preaching brother sees that his doctrine is causing trouble and distress among his brethren, and refuses to take their admonitions, it is evident that he is drunk. His reason is dethroned, and he is not in a condition to watch faithfully himself nor any one else, and should be taken from his post.

If churches and preachers rightly understand the relationship they bear to each other, there would not be so much trouble. Churches, and especially deacons, should watch their preachers, and whenever they get wrong, go to them at once, and try to get them out of their error; but if the preacher refuses to hear the deacon, or any other good brother, after the first and second admonition reject, and stop him.

Preachers conclude sometimes that they are too large, and of too much importance, to hear and be corrected by their brethren. It seems that they have forgotten, by their intoxication, that they are the servants of the church, and that it takes no more power to cut them off from the communion of the church than any private member. Therefore we should submit ourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord; and, brethren, it never hurts any one to execute good and wholesome laws. All parties are benefited if they are administered properly and in the right spirit; but we should keep sober, because a drunken man or church or association is not calculated to know the bounds of their authority, much less to execute it. A drunken man, if he finds his fellow-man in the mud, and desires to get him out, will very likely commence wrong; and instead of getting him out, will get him in worse, and get in himself. Then we should be sober; and when we have watched, and found that we are sober, let us move straight on in the discharge of our duty, **remembering that the church of Christ is the only executive authority of the laws of Christ on earth, and that an association is only what its name signifies, an association of brethren for public worship.**

We should **not allow difficulties to be brought into or discussed in our associational meetings.** If a difficulty cannot be settled outside the church is the authority to hear and settle it given to others? Brethren, let us of the Yellow River Association watch and be sober, and not allow drunkenness to get in among us. [Note: the writer apparently is not speaking of drinking wine or strong drink, but the natural effects which such is produced, being replicated by an erring deportment.] We have had some experience with drunken men, and the best thing we can do is to get away from

them, and keep away until they get sober, whether naturally or *religiously*. As a general rule, when preachers are sober, it is hard to get them to preach, at least there is some inclination to shrink from duty; but as soon as they get wrong, or drunken, they are very anxious to push themselves forward, and to force their **new doctrine upon us**, thus intoxicating good brethren and sisters.

Now a word to brethren and sisters generally. We see a disposition among the Baptists to be **followers of men**. We should never become so attached to our preachers that we cannot see his faults, and follow him off to our own destruction; but we should always watch and be sober, and love him well enough to tell him of his faults, and try to save him. Be sure you discharge your duty towards him and his family: be in your seats upon your meeting days, visit him and see what he really needs, administer to his necessities; and if he should tell you what your duty is, and admonish you to the discharge of it, do not get drunk, and throw stumbling-blocks in his way, and thereby drive him away from you, and destroy yourselves. But be sober, and try faithfully to discharge your duty. May God in His infinite mercy enable us all by His Spirit to see what our duty is, and to soberly and prayfully discharge it, is our prayer for Christ's sake. Amen.

Isaac Hamby, *Moderator*.

J. T. Jordan, *Clerk*