



KEHUKEE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

This Association held its annual session at Skewarby meeting house, Martin county, on the 3d, 4th and 5th days of October, 1835. Elders William Hyman, Luke Ward, Joshua Lawrence, George W. Carrowan, Joseph Potts, John Ward, Humphrey Stallings, and Micajah Perry attended. Letters from 30 churches were received. During the past year, in the several churches, 15 were baptized, 11 received by letter, 19 dismissed by letter, 26 excommunicated, 35 deceased, 5 restored—1647 members. The next Association is to be held at Great Swamp meeting house, Pitt county.

The following is the Circular Letter.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

To the several Churches we represent.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN: Our annual custom has been to address you by way of Circular Letter, after holding our annual Association, on some important subject which we conceived might be profitable to your growth in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the furtherance of your Christian progress heavenward. And such has been the variety of subjects upon which we have addressed you heretofore, that we are somewhat at a loss to choose a subject, that we think might be for the furtherance of your knowledge and edification in the truths of the gospel of Christ.

Nevertheless, we shall venture to choose the following, hoping it may be for your establishment in the truth of Christ—namely: first to prove from the New Testament that all the first apostolic churches were Baptist churches, and such as ours precisely that compose the Kehukee Association. And secondly, to show in a short way, that no other church has a right to be called the Christian church, and their religion the Christian religion, but a Baptist church, organized according to the apostolic plan as laid down in the New Testament and provable therefrom.

And in order to do this let it be first observed, that John the Baptist and Jesus Christ were cotemporary, and are the two first founders of the Christian church, and propagators of the Christian religion; the narration of whose history, acts, progress, and lives, is set down in the four Evangelists. And further let it be observed, that the Acts of the Apostles is the first ecclesiastical history that ever was written of the Christian religion and of the Christian church in all the world, and contains the history of the Christian church in its origin, rise and progress for about 31 years; and is the most ancient and authentic history of the Christian church on the face of the earth. Then by these five books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the Acts of the Apostles, we shall try to prove that all the apostolic churches were Baptist churches, that the Kehukee Baptist churches are just such as they were, and that no other church but a Baptist church has a right to be called a Christian church.

These things, dear brethren, being premised as a standard of decision to try by, we proceed to comply with the task before us, according to these books as therein contained, as the best guide to the truth of the matter proposed.

John the Baptist and Jesus Christ are properly the subjects of Roman history; because the fact is, that Judea at the time of their births and during their lives and ministry, was a province of Rome. Yet it may be said that their lives belong to Jewish history, because they were natives of Judea. It is evident from Roman history that Jesus Christ was born, according to the common reckoning, in the 25th year of the reign of Augustus Cesar, on the 25th day of December, in the year of the world 4004; and that John the Baptist was born six months before him, about the 24th of June; & that the New Testament has the aid of Roman history to prove the birth of Christ, by the taxing decree of Augustus, when Joseph and Mary went up to be taxed, at which time Christ was born. Augustus Cesar died 14 years after the birth of Jesus Christ; in this interval of 14 years, Archelaus was king of Judea, appointed to that office as the New Testament mentions, after the death of Herod. Augustus, in part of his 14 years, associated with him Tiberius in the management of the empire. Augustus dying 14 years after the birth of Christ, left the will the empire to Tiberius. In the third chapter of Luke's gospel and first verse we have the following: "Now in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Cesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene—2d verse: Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." Now add the 14 years that Augustus lived after the birth of Jesus Christ and the 15 years of the reign of Tiberius, when the text says the word of God came to John the Baptist, and that will show us how old both John the Baptist and Christ were when they began to preach; for 14 and 15 makes 29, so that Christ and John were 29 years old when they began their ministry, and John began his about six months before Christ. And thus says the iii. of Matthew, 1: "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea—2d verse: And saying, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand—prepare ye the way of the Lord, make the paths straight." Thus John the Baptist commenced his ministry about six months before Christ, to prepare the minds of the people to receive him as the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world. This preaching of John the Baptist, Mark calls the beginning of the gospel, and the Christian church and Christian religion—in the 15th year of Tiberius Cesar, Pontius Pilate governor of Judea, and Herod tetrarch of Galilee. Here let it be observed, that there were three Herods, one at the birth of Christ before the reign of Archelaus, this Herod the second, and the Herod that killed James with the sword the third, if we are not mistaken.

Then John commenced his ministry in the 29th year of his age in the reign of the second Herod, governor of Galilee, in the wilderness of Judea—Mark, i. 4: "John did baptise in the wilderness and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; verse 8: "I indeed have baptised you with water, but he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost." Then John was the first baptiser tho' he himself was not baptised, but his commission was sufficient authority for him to baptise others. Who gave him a commission? Read John, i. 33: "But he that sent me to baptise with water," &c. And the Saviour says: "Was the baptism of John from heaven or of men? And again: he calls the baptism of John the counsel of God. Then John's com-

mission to baptise was from God, therefore the Saviour submitted to it as a command of God; and thus it was righteousness in John to administer it, and righteousness in Christ to submit to it as a command of God. Then Jesus Christ was a Baptist and of John's order. Let us have the scripture. Luke, iii. 21: "Now when all the people were baptised, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptised and praying, the heaven was opened." Then Christ and John's disciples received the same kind of baptism—verse 23: "Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age." Mark, the text don't say he was thirty years of age—but about. Then this proves all we have said, that John and Jesus began their ministry in the 29th year of their age, for Jesus commenced his ministry about forty days after his baptism, on coming out of the wilderness from his temptation. Where did this first Baptist preacher baptise? Mark, i. 4: "In the wilderness—verse 5: And there went out to him all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptised of him (John) in the river of Jordan confessing their sins"—verse 9: "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptised of John in Jordan—verse 10: And straightway coming up out of the water." &c. John, iii. 23: "And John also was baptising in Aelon near to Salim, because there was much water there, and they came and were baptised.

Thus by the above three verses we can see what sort of Baptists John's were—that they were river Baptists and not bason Baptists, that they were much water Baptists and not picher nor porringer Baptists, and that this first Baptist preacher required much water in order to baptism, and that much water made it a convenient place for baptism—therefore it is said, the people came there and were baptised. And also the river of Jordan was a place of much water, as the history of Joshua shews, when Joshua crossed it with Israel. Thus the scriptures prove that the first Baptist preacher, who had his commission from God, required a place of much water in order to administer baptism. Then this proves immersion must be the mode he practised, and not sprinkling nor pouring, since it does not require much water to sprinkle or pour. Nor does it require a river in order to perform these rites of human and devil invention, to sprinkle or pour; and these words, much water, to prove that John baptised by immersion, outweighs every argument that Peco-Baptists ever did or ever can offer. Then John's Baptists were precisely such Baptists as the Kehukee Baptists now are—all baptised where there is much water. Then Christ and John's disciples were river and much water Baptists, and not little water Baptists. This being cleared, we proceed to show what kind of persons John baptised.

Matthew, iii. 2: "And saying, Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"—verse 6: "And were baptised in Jordan confessing their sins." Thus we see John taught repentance before baptism, and we also see what kind of persons he baptised—those that confessed their sins. And we also see where he baptised—in Jordan, and not with a bason, or pouring from a picher—this is also clear. Verse 7: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism," &c. Verse 8: "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." The scriptures show us that the Pharisees do not confess sins; for one said, I thank thee, O God, that I am not as other men. The scriptures also show us that the Sadducees deny the resurrection of the dead, angel or spirit—then of course these men neither repented nor confessed sins, and therefore, were rejected by John as not fit subjects of baptism; and that God was able to give repentance and confession of sins to publicans and harlots, or the most hardened sinners. And this is what he means by God's being able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. So then repentance and confession of sins were two pre-requisites required by John before he would baptise a person. Then this shows that John's Baptists and the Kehukee Baptists are precisely the same; both require repentance and confession of sins before baptism. John baptised in the water, so do the Kehukee Baptists; and not out of the water, as sprinklers and pourers do.

Luke, iii. 3: "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." This proves that John required repentance in order to baptism; for confession of sins is the fruit of repentance, and these were the characters he baptised—such as confessed their sins. And further, he required faith in the promised and coming Messiah, that he then taught by his preaching was just ready to appear. Acts, xix. 4: "Then said Paul, John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which was to come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus." So then we see that John required repentance, confession of sins, and faith in Christ which was to come, before he would baptise a person—so do the Kehukee Baptists, and all the difference between John's Baptists and the Kehukee Baptists is this: John said they must believe in Christ which was to come, in order to baptism; and the Kehukee Baptists say a man must believe in Christ which has come, in order to baptism. Then John's Baptists and the Kehukee Baptists are precisely the same, requiring repentance, confession of sins, and faith in Christ before baptism. This matter being cleared, dear brethren, we think to your satisfaction, we proceed to show that the baptism of John and the apostles were one and the same baptism, and that the apostles practised no other water baptism but that of John's, and the same way.

Jesus Christ was a Baptist of John's make and a river Jordan Baptist you will not dispute. And it does not appear from scripture, that John ever congregated his disciples into a church or churches, for his ministry hardly lasted more than three and a half years; but that he left his disciples as so many scattered materials to build into the gospel church after his death. Then who baptised the twelve disciples is a question for consideration? We answer, that it was not the commission of Christ to baptise with water, but John's commission; and the commission of Christ to baptise with the Holy Ghost. And here we offer proof that Christ did not in any instance baptise with water. John, iv. 1: "When therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John"—verse 2: (Though Jesus himself baptised not, but his disciples.) That is, that Jesus, himself did not baptise with water, but his disciples did baptise with water is clear. Then, say you, his disciples were not Baptists; for if he did not baptise them, who did? We answer, from John i. 35: "Again the next day, after John stood and two of his disciples"—verse 36: "And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God"—verse 37: "And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." Here then we see two Baptists of John's make following Christ as his disciples. Verse 40: "One of the two which heard John speak and

followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother." Then we clearly see from scripture, that here is two of John's Baptists among the twelve apostles; for by examining the list of the names of the twelve, we find Andrew was one of the apostles. And Christ, the scripture shows us, ordained the twelve and sent them out. So then we may justly, fairly, and satisfactorily conclude, that these two Baptist disciples of John baptised the other ten, and then they all baptised, after being baptised by these two, and ordained by Christ. This being cleared, we proceed to show that the apostles baptised in the same way and the same sort of persons John did, and that they practised the same mode of baptism as John had administered to them, and that the mode of John and the apostles were the same mode.

And that the mode of John's baptism was where there was much water, and in the river Jordan—and when he had come up straitway out of the water—now you know all this has already been proved. Then to prove the apostles practised the same mode as John, take the following scripture, Acts viii. 36: "And as they went on their way they came to a certain water, and the Eunuch said, see here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptised?" verse 37: "And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God—38: And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptised him—39: And when they were come up out of the water," &c. Now here the whole manner of baptism is so plainly set down, that he that runs may read; for in these texts we have the administrator, Philip; here we have the subject on profession of faith, the Eunuch; here we have the mode, in the water. So it is said of Christ, when he was baptised by John, that when he had straitway come up out of the water. And it is said of Philip and the Eunuch, —and when they were come up out of the water. So then it is fairly proven that John and the apostles both baptised in the water, and not out of the water, as sprinklers and pourers do. And further, John baptised on profession of faith, saying unto the people, they should believe on him which was to come; that is, on Christ Jesus. And here we see Philip requiring a profession of faith in Christ Jesus before he would baptise the Eunuch, and on this profession of faith in Christ Jesus he did baptise him. Then John's baptism and apostolic baptism agree in all things; both required faith, both went into the water to baptise, both baptised in the water, both came up out of the water. This matter we deem so plain, we refuse to quote more scriptures because of the shortness of our limits; for although baptism were mentioned ten thousand times in scripture, and neither the subject nor mode mentioned, yet it is in all places to be referred to this plain pattern given, as being in all places and on all occasions by the apostles performed this way. For as some of the disciples had been baptised by John, and they knew Jesus Christ their master had been baptised by John, of course when they baptised they followed John's practice in a river or much water where they themselves were baptised. So then there is no valid baptism but in much water, or in a river, or in a certain water, and that in the water and not out of it; then baptism cannot be performed out of the water, according to John's and apostolic practice, as provable from the New Testament. Now the Kehukee Baptists are just such as these—some of them were like John's baptised in a river; some of them were baptised in mill ponds, where there was much water; some of them were baptised in creeks, which is a certain water, &c. So that John's Baptists, and the apostolic Baptists, and the Kehukee Baptists, precisely agree—baptised on repentance, confession of sins, and profession of faith in Christ, in much water. And we say again, dear brethren, there is no such thing as performing a scriptural baptism out of the water; but it must be done in the water, to come up to the mode of John and the apostles; and that it cannot be performed with a picher, gourd, or bason—this is clear from scripture.

Thus in a short way having cleared our path of the brush and chunks that have been cast there for ages, we proceed to prove that all the apostolic churches were Baptist churches. And first, it is clear that Jesus Christ formed the first church of the twelve; for what is a church? It is a congregation of faithful men and women, baptised after repentance on a profession of their faith in Christ; and in which the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is duly administered, and the word of God preached to them; and who maintain a scriptural discipline. So then, the twelve disciples were, we presume, Baptists; we are sure that Christ and two of them were, and there is no proof the rest were not—they met on the eve of the Saviour's death, and he preached to them and administered the Supper to them—this is clear from scripture. About forty days after this, on the evening of his ascension, we find them assembled, and that Peter stood up and said over the number of the names of the disciples, and that they were about 120; these had joined themselves to the twelve, for it is said of them all, Acts, i. 14: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." This church then of baptised apostles in Jerusalem, was the first Christian church and for a long time remained the head and centre of union of all the rest; and gave laws and rules to all the rest, for so had Christ ordained the apostles to do. Now about ten days after this came on the great day of Pentecost, when Peter the fisherman stood up and preached to the vast multitude of the Jews that had attended at this great feast, from all the tribes of Israel and devout Jews from all nations under heaven; and three thousand were by the preaching of Peter pricked in their hearts. Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. Then they that gladly received his word were baptised, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Thus we can see what kind of persons were received as members of the first Baptist apostolic church—such as heard Peter preach, such as by his preaching had been pricked in their hearts, such as gladly received his word of preaching, such as were baptised after gladly receiving the word. Then this proves that they were all persons capable of hearing preaching, capable of gladly receiving the word; and that additions to this first Christian church was by baptism, and that of such as were pricked in heart and capable to so hear and feel as to cry, men and brethren