



CIRCULAR LETTER.

(concluded from last paper)

Our limits, dear brethren, forbid us pursuing the regular history of the first apostolic churches in regular succession as they rose into existence under the ministry of the apostles. We, therefore, must select a few apostolic churches to prove that the first churches were Baptist churches, composed of baptized believers. The second church we name was the church at Philippi. Paul in his travels having passed through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, came down to Troas where he had a vision to come over to Macedonia and help them. He set sail and came to Philippi, where he was in that city several days. On the Sabbath he went to the river side, where prayer was wont to be made. Lydia, a seller of purple, attended to the prayers and things spoken of by Paul, Acts, xvi. 15: "And when she was baptized and her household," &c. After this the jailer said, Sirs what must I do to be saved? And they (Paul and Silas) said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house—verse 32: "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord—33: And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes and was baptized, he and all his household." Thus we see that Lydia and house, and jailer and house, were Baptists, and formed the first members of the church at Philippi. For Paul's epistle to the Philippians proves there was a church at that place, and the opening of Lydia's heart, the jailer's enquiry what he should do to be saved, their preaching the word of the Lord and belief in the Lord Jesus for salvation, and being baptized after all this, proves beyond contradiction, that the church at Philippi was a Baptist church, and that of believers both the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles prove. Some have made their quibbles, saying, these must have been sprinkled as they were baptized in the night. We answer, was there not a river hard by the city, where Paul went to pray, & where Lydia attended to the things spoken by Paul? And was it not as high to baptise there, as to pray and preach there? Such foolish quibbles are not worth answering. Thus there was a Baptist church at Philippi, and such an one too as those that compose the Kehukee Association.

The third church we name is the church at the city of Ephesus. That there was a church in this city, both Paul's epistles and John's Revelations prove; and that it was a Baptist church, is clear also. While Apollous was at Corinth—Acts, ix. 1—Paul having passed through the upper coast, came to Ephesus. There he found twelve of John's disciples, these were Baptists of John's make; he gave them the Holy Ghost by laying his hands on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied. Verse 18: "And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds"—burnt their books, &c. Verse 20: "So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." You, dear brethren, cannot help seeing here that John's twelve Baptists were the first materials of this church; and that the character of those that were added to them by Paul's two years preaching at Ephesus, were such men that confessed and shewed their sins, &c. baptised in Jordan. And such success Paul had here in preaching, that it drew from the historian Luke these expressions; "So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." We cite you as further proof of this fact, Paul's epistle to this church, and several items found in the Acts. So then, this was a Baptist church of men that confessed their sins, shewed their past bad deeds, believed, &c. just such are the churches of the Kehukee Association.

The fourth church we shall name is that at the city of Corinth. Paul's two epistles prove that there was a church at this place. Acts, xviii. 4: "And he (Paul) reasoned in the synagogues every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks"—verse 8: "And Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized." Now this is so plain that it needs no comment, that the church at Corinth was a church of baptized believers, and that they became so by Paul's preaching in this city, and that they first believed and then were baptised on a profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus—this is as clear as noon day. To prove which, read first epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, i. 13: "Or were ye baptised in the name of Paul?"—verse 15: "Lest any should say, I baptised in my own name"—16: "And I baptised also the household of Stephanus." With abundant other satisfactory proofs in both the epistles, that the church at Corinth was a Baptist church of baptized believers. Of these four being Baptist churches there can be no doubt, and that they were just such as now compose the Kehukee Association. Our limits forbid our further particularising individual churches; and as there is satisfactory evidence that these four were all Baptist churches of baptized believers, so it necessarily follows all the rest of the churches must be; as we can hardly think that the apostles baptised more than one way, and that was with John's baptism; which was the same baptism that they had been baptised with as well as their divine master, and in the same way, with much water.

Now, dear brethren, we have told you that the Acts of the Apostles was the first history of the Christian church and of the Christian religion for 31 years. So then during this 31 years there are self-evident proofs in this history, that the gospel was preached and had spread throughout Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and by far the greater part of Lesser Asia; throughout Greece, and most all the islands of the Aegean sea—Cyprus, Crete, Salamis, &c.—good part of the sea coast of Africa, at Rome in Italy, Antioch in Syria, Ephesus, Joppa, Thessalonica, Berea, Iconium, Derbe, Corinth, at another Antioch which was in Pysidia, at Saran and Lydia, &c. &c. Disciples are mentioned at Damascus, Lystra, Troas, Athens, Tyre, and Caesarea, while the church at Jerusalem remained the principal seat of Christianity, where thousands are said to believe. And this first history furnishes us with facts to prove that there was a Baptist church at Jerusalem, and a church at Rome; for Paul says their faith was spoken of throughout the world—a church at Antioch, at Corinth, at Galatia, at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Colosse, at Thessalonica, at Crete—the church in Geneva, the church in the house of Priscilla and Aquilla, at Sardis, at Philadelphia, at Smyrna, at Pergamos, at Thyatira, and at Laodicea. Here are eighteen churches of which the history of the Acts of the Apostles, and the Revelations of John the divine, prove existed at those places; and there are hundreds of items and coincidences scattered in this first history of the Christian church, to prove that all these were churches of baptized believers—such as now compose the Kehukee Association.

But it may be asked what kind of Baptists these were? We answer, Paul says, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." And the scripture again mentions the baptism of water, and the baptism of

the Holy Ghost. Water baptism was the commission of John—Holy Ghost baptism was the commission of Christ; this last ceased with the apostolic ministry. Then during the ministry of John water baptism was the one baptism; for the first time Christ administered Holy Ghost baptism was on the apostles after his death—then gave he them power to administer it by laying on their hands. Now the Quakers say, that Holy Ghost baptism is this one baptism. This is not so—Acts, xix: there you can see twelve men baptised by John's baptism, who received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands of Paul, after water baptism. This agrees with John's testimony of Christ. But here is a text that scatters all before it, Acts, x. 47: "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we—verse 48: And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus." Then it is as plain as the nose on your face, that Holy Ghost baptism was not necessary nor never intended to make Christians, whether it went before or come after water baptism; but was only intended to give gifts, tongues, prophecies, working of miracles, and as a sign of the mission of Christ and his apostles, &c. &c. For the apostles were Christians and preachers before they were baptised with the Holy Ghost, all which in all cases you will see clear by consulting and comparing the scriptures. So then the Quakers are mistaken, and water baptism is the one baptism alluded to by Paul, whether going before or following after Holy Ghost baptism. And he calls it one baptism because it is the one baptism given of God to John to administer; he calls it the one baptism because it is the one mode given by God to John, for if God did not give John the mode, how would he have known how to administer it, since he had never seen it nor heard of its ever being practised before since the world began? It is called the one baptism because the baptism of John, Christ, and the apostles were all the one and same mode—much water, certain water, and river water baptism; and therefore the apostle calls out one faith and one Lord also, because one faith and one Lord were required both by John and the apostles in order to baptism. Then John's baptism, the apostolic baptism, and the Kehukee baptism are the same—one water, one faith, and one Lord baptism, as the whole tenor of the New Testament will show; and although there may be baptised unbelievers in the Kehukee churches, yet this don't alter the case, for there was an unbelieving Simon Magus baptised by Peter, yet Peter (see the scripture) baptised him on the profession of his faith; but he lied, as some do in the Kehukee churches—yet God did not give it to Peter to know men's hearts but by their fruits, nor to know Simon was an unbeliever; nor has he given it to the Kehukee ministers. It has been said by an enemy, that there are drunkards, fornicators, and unclean persons in the churches composing the Kehukee Association—we could heartily wish that all other churches and sects were clear of them and we too; but we would say, put all such men from among yourselves and then throw stones at us, but for the present abstain from such calumnies, such self-righteous and self-concern. Read Paul's epistles to the Corinthians, and see if there were not drunkards, fornicators, unclean and incestuous persons in that church; which is a good proof that the Kehukee churches are just such as this apostolic Baptist church at Corinth, and not sister to the churches of the pharisaical order, who strut in broadcloth begg'd by hirelings, who love the feathers more than the goose, and cry, I thank God I am not as other men. Such a man John the Baptist, or the apostles, would not let in their churches; and we don't want them in the Kehukee churches, for they are not of the old Baptist breed, but dogs and sorcerers that bark at and lick the sores of God's people, that are to be left out of the city when Christ comes to make up his jewels of penitent, broken hearted, sin confessing, obedient baptised believers.

We now in a short way, beloved brethren, come to the last thing proposed; to show that no church according to the scriptures has a right to be called the Christian church, but a Baptist church of baptized believers—and that none have, according to the scriptures, a right to claim to be of the Christian religion, but a Baptist who has repented and confessed his sins, and been baptised on the profession of his faith in Christ. We have fully shown that the first Christian churches were Baptists, of baptized believers; this you are forced from the scripture proofs to give up. If so, can you say, dear brethren, how you now can form and build a Christian church in this day, like those of old time, but by making use of the same kind of materials, of the same kind of tools and workmen, and the same plan by which the former apostolic workmen worked by? We say it cannot be done, for in this day if any man will build a Christian church he must build on the same foundation, use the same materials, same kind of workmen, same plan, and construct in all things according to the first pattern showed in the mount, or else the tabernacle or temple will not be like the former. As proof we offer, 1 Peter, ii. 4, 5: "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men but chosen of God and precious." This coming here mentioned means believing in Christ, by which he (Christ the stone) gives a sinner life; and then, 5th verse: "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house (not a natural house) and holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ—verse 6: Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him (on this stone, (Christ) shall not be confounded." Read the whole chapter. Read 1 Corinthians, iii. 11, 12: "For other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ—12: Now if any man build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay stubble," &c. Now in the above verses we are shown (as in twenty more we could cite) the manner of building Christian churches by the apostles; Jesus Christ the foundation, the sinner coming to him for life by faith, and then after receiving that life from him built up a spiritual house, &c. Then all the materials put in this house are, men made spiritual by the operation of God's spirit on them, then holy priesthood, then spiritual men, then able to offer spiritual sacrifices; so that natural men were not, and now cannot, be fit for the church of God; and a Christian church cannot be built out of natural men, and they have no right there while in that state, for they are not plants of God's planting, and therefore shall be rooted up. Paul is plainer. The Christian church is builded according to his plan, Christ the foundation and the materials gold, silver, precious stones; by this he intends sinners, melted in the fire of repentance and softened into penitence and compliance to God's will in the work of God's grace on their hearts, and stamp with king Jesus' image to make them current and passable in all God's dominions in earth and heaven, as gold or silver, suitable also to be put in any building to beautify, enrich, and adorn it; and precious stones, polished by the hand of God, "for ye are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good work." "ye are God's building;" "I will refine them as silver is refined;" "and try them as gold is tried." For further proof read Revelations, that Paul by

gold, silver, precious stones, meant believers in Christ as the only fit materials for the church of God, and that by wood, hay stubble, he meant children, women and men in their natural state, as unfit for the Christian church. So then national churches are not Christian churches; nor is a church that is composed of children and believers, for children are not lively stones, have never come to Christ the life-giving stone, but are dead stones and therefore not fit for the Christian church. Nor is a church composed of believers and seekers, and natural men and women and children, a spiritual house; nor can such natural persons offer up spiritual sacrifices, being natural and dead in trespasses and sins, and without faith cannot please God in that state. So then none but believers have spiritual life, none but they are lively stones, none but they have come to Christ the life-giving stone, none but they have been refined as silver and tried as gold, and polished as precious stones by the hand of God, and so were the only materials in the apostolic age to build the Christian church; and even so now, the same and the same only, fit materials for a Christian church; all others are no more fit in the apostle's esteem than wood, hay stubble, to build the Christian church out of. Then a Baptist church composed of believers has the only rightful claim to be called the Christian church; because it is now what the former Christian church was, according to the New Testament. And such are the churches composing the Kehukee Association, as we have shown heretofore. The text shows us that the Christian church was a stone building, built of lively stones; and can you make a stone building out of wood, hay stubble? No, you know it cannot be done. Then no more can you make a Christian church out of natural men, women and children. Then if Moses and Solomon had built the tabernacle and temple out of wood, hay stubble, how would God have liked it since he gave the plan of both, for both were built as a dwelling place for God? So is the Christian church, she is built on earth as a house, tabernacle, and temple of the living God; a host of scriptures prove this. Then if God would not have liked it at the hands of Moses and Solomon to have dwelt in a straw tabernacle and temple, how will he now like to dwell in a hay stubble church? Consider of this, ye hay and stubble builders, and learn to go by God's plan, or else he will burn up your work; as he would no doubt have done that of Moses and Solomon, had they not gone by his plan.

Now we know that the first Christian church is called the bride, the Lamb's wife; and we further know, that love is the ground work of man and wife—do children love Christ? Do natural men and women love Christ? Have they given their hearts and their all up to him in love? Have they taken him as their all, the chief object of their affections, and become willing to suffer for his sake, and yield obedience to him, his laws, rule and government, and make his will theirs, and in all things say—husband, thy will be done? No, brethren, we know better than this—that the carnal mind is enmity against God. Then children, and natural men and women, while in that state, are no part of the Christian church; nor are they the bride, the Lamb's wife; but the believers are taught to love him, because they see he first loved them, and have been made willing in the day of his powerful love to give up their all to him, and yield obedience to him; and so to love and serve him all the days of their life, and suffer with him and bear his cross through good and evil report as their lot may fall. And thus when Christ wins the sinner's heart by his overpowering love, at the day of conversion the match and promise of marriage is made; yet this sinner has no right to be called a Christian, nor his religion the Christian religion, until the baptismal rite of matrimony is administered to him; then he loses his maiden name sinner, and puts on from that day the name of his husband Christian, and then is entitled to be called Christian and his religion the Christian religion; and such men and women congregated together the Christian church and their religion the Christian religion, according to the New Testament, and is fully provable therefrom by the whole tenor.

But if a wife goes a whoring and prostitutes herself to another man, and takes up with him as her husband, and is governed by his laws and rules, and owns him her head, she forfeits her claim as a wife of the first husband by the law of the gospel, and he may put her away. So any Christian church that owns any head but Christ, and is governed by the laws and rules of such a head, whoever he may be, whether king or Pope, forfeits her claim to Christ her former husband, and becomes a prostitute and a committer of fornication with such kings, Popes, and heads. This is the idea that runs thro' the whole book of the Revelations of John the divine, concerning the church of anti-Christ, and he gives it as a distinguishing mark of the church of anti-Christ—read that book as proof. Thus the Roman Catholic church, which was once a Christian church, has gone a whoring and married the Pope in 606, and has since owned him as the head of that church, has yielded herself to obey his rules, laws and canons, and the laws and rules of kings for her doctrines, ordinances and discipline, and rejected those of Christ her former husband; and thus she is said to be a whore, and a committer of fornication with the kings of the earth, and to make herself drunk with the blood of the saints. And thus for these and a hundred other scripture reasons we could give, has the Catholic church forfeited her claim to be scripturally called the Christian church; and her scripture name since that date has been *Mystery—Babylon the great—the mother of harlots—and abominations of the earth.* This is truth, for she has committed whoredom with near 200 Popes, and fornication with not much less than 300 kings of different nations. Then Christ has put her away as a whore, and given her in the scripture her name, and disowns her as his wife, and given her up to her paramour—and the saints shall in a short time from this burn her flesh with fire, as she has burned many thousands of them—this we seal as truth of prophecy.

Suppose a Christian church should take a decanter of water, instead of wine, and administer that in the Lord's Supper—would she not forfeit her claim to be a Christian church, by thus perverting the ordinance of her Lord, since water used in the sacrament could not show any semblance of the blood of Christ, shed under the New Testament for the remission of sins; nor show the Saviour's death until he come; nor bring to the remembrance of the communicants his bloody passion and love for them? For in so doing the whole design of that solemn ordinance would be perverted, and the Lord's request of his church violated and her disobedience manifested. This we say, dear brethren, to you to fortify your minds against some publications which we have seen of water communion Baptists, tending to such a state of things. We say such a church would be unworthy of