



KEHUKEE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

The annual session of this Association was held at Lawrence's meeting house, in Edgecombe county, N. C. commencing Saturday before the first Sunday in October, 1837. Elder William Hyman was chosen moderator, and Elder Joseph Biggs clerk. Letters from 31 churches were read, from which it appeared that during the past year, 6 members were added to the churches by baptism, 5 received by letter, 17 dismissed by letter, 13 excommunicated, 46 deceased, 3 restored—whole number, 1546. Petitionary letters for membership were received from the churches at Sappony, Nash county; Rocky Swamp, Halifax county; and South Quay, Southampton county, Va. The next Association is to be held at Spring Green meeting house, Martin county, to commence on Saturday before the first Sunday in Oct. 1838. The following is the

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The ministers and delegates composing the Kehukee Association for 1837, to the several churches they represent, send greeting; and this epistle, to all the brethren and sisters composing the several churches of that Association. Wishing grace, mercy and peace, with love and union, to abound among you, in the strongest bonds of Christian fellowship, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ his Son, by the influence of his holy and blessed Spirit on your every heart, working in you to will and to do of God's good pleasure while here on earth; that you may thereby be prepared for the enjoyment of his eternal glory in heaven, when this suffering life shall cease and you all enter on eternity's everlasting shore.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN IN THE LORD: You will certainly expect a Circular attached to our Minutes, when you receive them; forasmuch as many of you know that there was an appointment to write one for this Association; but not coming to hand, we are under the necessity of drafting one in a short time, in order to meet your expectations. And we know of nothing at present that more concerns the churches than that of some remarks on A VALID BAPTISM. For the devil in a thousand forms has through the instrumentality of man attacked the word, doctrine, and ordinances of Christ; which it becomes the duty of the churches composing the Kehukee Association to defend, if they think they are churches of Christ. For Christ has committed all his gospel goods to his church and ministers, and we ask you who shall take care of them if his church and ministers do not? Will the world take care of the word, doctrine, and ordinances of Christ? Surely not. Will the devil, or anti-christ? Surely not. Will Mahometans? Surely not. Then the responsibility of the churches composing the Kehukee Association is very great, if they be Christians, to transmit to the next generation of Christians and ministers with truth, faithfulness and clearness, the holy word, doctrine, and ordinances of Christ; without the alloy of hypocrisy, tradition, or human inventions of any kind added thereunto; as they have received them from their forefathers, and proved by the word of God, otherwise void and of none effect.

For you know, dear brethren, that the devil through false teachers has attacked even the person of Christ; calling and endeavoring by many sophistical arguments to prove him a mere man, and not God, our Son of God. And equally so they have attacked the doctrine of his gospel, and shaped it in ten thousand forms, adding and diminishing its various truths to suit their lust of getting money thereby; and to shape the gospel doctrine that it might either suit the taste of hypocrites, false professors, or the men of this world. And also you know that devilish false teachers have attacked the Lord's Supper; an ordinance laid down so plain in the New Testament, both by precept and example, that he that runs may read the manner of it and the end for which it was instituted by Christ, the head and lawgiver of his church. Yet the priests have twisted and turned this to suit their coveting, money-getting dispositions; as well as the Corinthians did to drunkenness and full bellies at their church meetings, and not at home.

Equally so, dear brethren, you know that the ordinance of baptism has been attacked by false teachers; and warped in various forms from its original to sprinkling, pouring, &c.; which was not the original manner nor New Testament form, as practised by John, or Christ, or the apostles, as laid down in the New Testament; to which we now invite your attention in this our epistle. Not that we intend to go fully into an investigation of this subject, but to make a few remarks on two parts of it, and on the third to dwell somewhat; for you know our limits will not admit it in the short contents of a Circular letter.

And first, all we have to say on this subject is couched in a few words: *What is a valid scriptural baptism?* To which we answer, baptism may be divided into three parts; first, the mode or manner of doing the act of baptism; second, the subject on whom the act of baptism is performed; and third, the administrator that performs the act and his authority to do so. To the two first heads we design to speak but short, as so much has already been written, to which we refer you; but on the third part or head we design to dwell at some length, as but little has been said or written on this part of baptism, to make a valid baptism according to the New Testament.

And first, as to the mode we will say a few things. We challenge the world to show from any history, book, or record, any administrator, or mode or practice of baptism before the days of John the Baptist, as recorded in the New Testament. Then this administrator and his mode and subjects are the origin of baptism. Although some have gone back to Abraham's covenant of circumcision, and to the Jewish tabernacle and temple, for sprinkling, this is all fudge; saying, that baptism was in lieu of circumcision. If this be true, then we brethren, are right; for Abraham was a believer before he was circumcised, and circumcision only a sign of the faith he then had. For Paul makes circumcision only an outward sign, so is baptism an outward sign of the inward work of grace and faith on believers, as Abraham's circumcision was of his inward grace and faith. And Paul settles all this in these words, saying: He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God. Romans, 2, 28, 29. And now to gospelize these verses it would read thus: He is not a Baptist who has outward wa-

ter baptism, neither because he is baptized by water; but he is a Baptist who has been inwardly renewed by the Spirit in the heart, and then baptized after his renewal and faith as was Abraham circumcised. But it is sufficiently clear from the New Testament, that all Jewish types, shadows and ceremonies, were put to an end by the dispensation of the gospel; and circumcision with the rest, as Paul's epistles to the Galatians and Hebrews fully shows, for which proof read.

Then as John's baptism was the origin of baptism, as to mode, subject, and administrator; to the account of it as recorded in the New Testament as to mode we shall go, for our proof of this fact. John, 3, 23: And John also was baptizing in Aenon, (not at, or near about, but in,) near to Salim, (and why?) because there was much water there; and they (the people) came and were baptized. Now this verse shows plainly that the first administrator and mode of baptism required much water in order to perform the act of baptism, by the administrator John, who was the first that ever performed this rite of the church; and that tub fulls, pail, pitcher, or gourd fulls, could not have been here denominated much water, because the place is mentioned, Aenon, and much water there, is the reason given why John baptized in this place. Then baptism performed without much water in the place where the act of baptism is performed, is not valid nor a scriptural baptism, even enough to immerse the whole body is required in the place where the act of baptism is performed. We cite you Corinthians, 10, 2. Romans, 6, 4, as proof.

Next we cite John, 1, 9, 10: And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John in Jordan. (Mark that word, in Jordan; also, in Aenon—see how these verses agree both as to mode, in, and not at or about.) 10th verse: And Jesus straightway coming up out of the water. Mark this verse also proves he had been in the water, while the mode was performed or act of baptism. Then here are two ins, to prove the mode or act of baptism was performed in much water; for Jordan was a river, and of course there was much water there.

Again: we cite you Acts, 8, 38, 39. And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him. Then this verse shows again the mode of baptism was in the water, and that the subject and administrator must both be in the water, in order to perform the mode of a New Testament water baptism; and we challenge the world to show by the New Testament that baptism was ever performed out of the water. We have produced three ins, the water, for the mode of baptism; now, if you can, produce three outs, of the water, from scripture, or even one. Now we know, dear brethren, that no man can produce one baptism in the New Testament, where the mode and act of baptism was performed out of the water, not founded on supposition; much less by express scripture, out of the water. Then we say to you, dear brethren, that any thing called baptism, the mode not being performed in the water, is not a valid and scriptural baptism.

Next we come to make a few remarks on the valid and scriptural subjects of baptism. What sort of persons did this John, the first performer of baptism baptize, as the subjects of baptism for God who sent him to baptize? Certainly let him know the proper valid subjects of baptism, as well as the mode; or how else would he have went about performing baptism, a thing he never saw practised nor had been done since the world began. And had he have asked all the wise of the world put together, they could not have told him either the mode or subjects of baptism. Then God made known to John both the mode and subjects of baptism. In the same way he made known to him the Lamb of God that took away the sin of the world, and to reject the pharisees and not baptize them. So then the subjects of baptism are a peculiar kind of people, forasmuch as John refused baptism to the pharisees it shows all men are not the proper subjects of baptism, but a particular kind of persons only. And in order to prove which, to the book. Mark, 1, 5: And there went out unto him all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in (mark that word in, again, that makes four ins) the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. Thus you can see by this text the persons John baptized, such as confessed their sins; these were his subjects of baptism, and of course John then did not admit children to baptism. Nor were they subjects of his baptism, because they could not confess sins; for those he baptized confessed their sins. Then we say, brethren, children are not valid scriptural subjects of baptism.

Acts, 19, 4: Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus. So then, from the above text, according to Paul's exposition of John's baptism, John required faith in Christ Jesus which was to come in a subject before he would baptize him; which clearly proves three characteristics in the subjects of John's baptism, to make them subjects of valid baptism—repentance, confession of sins, and faith in him that was to come; that is, Christ Jesus. These were the prerequisites required by John to make a valid subject of baptism, which neither children, nor the pharisees, nor scribes, nor men in a state of nature possess; therefore neither of these are valid and scriptural subjects of baptism.

And further, the whole tenor of the gospels and all the epistles show, that repentance and faith were required by Christ and his apostles to fit any person for baptism; such as, repent and believe the gospel—except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish—repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand—he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved—go teach all nations, baptizing them, &c.—and many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized, &c. &c. &c.—with a hundred other proofs that it is the man that repents of his past sins, amends his life, and confesses his sins with a broken and contrite heart, and believeth in Jesus Christ with all his heart as did the Eunuch, that are only the valid and scriptural subjects of baptism; any thing and every thing said to the contrary notwithstanding. In this truth of the mode and subjects of the ordinance of baptism for validity, dear brethren, stand fast; and let no man spoil your faith through vain philosophy, tradition or deceit, that any other person is a scriptural subject of baptism but the man or woman that repenteth, confesses their sins, amends their lives, and with the heart believeth in our Lord Jesus Christ, and confesses the same with their mouth as did the Eunuch to Philip, saying, I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. We have only made these remarks on the mode and subject of baptism, merely to refresh your memories and put you in mind of what we have heretofore written you on the subject of baptism.

We now, dear brethren, come to our third head, and that is, to show who the man is that is a valid and scriptural administrator of

baptism, according to scripture; for we conceive there is as much in the administrator to make a valid baptism, as there is in the mode or subject. For the mode of baptism and the subject of baptism can't make a scriptural baptism, without an administrator to perform the mode; for the subject can't perform the mode on himself. For it takes both Christ and John the Baptist—it takes Philip and the Eunuch—it takes Ananias and Paul—to make a valid baptism with the mode beside. Then here in the three above cases you can plainly see the three things proposed, essential to make a valid baptism; not is the administrator the least of the three in making baptism valid. For without the administrator, and he vested with proper authority to perform the rite of baptism, there can be no such a thing as valid or scriptural baptism.

Then we presume no man will deny but John was the first administrator of a valid and scriptural baptism. From whence was his authority, from heaven or of men? John, 1, 33: And I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34th verse: And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God. Now the above verses show that John was sent to baptize—who sent him? why God the Father sent him to bear witness to the light. He sent him that Christ Jesus might be made manifest to Israel. He sent him to baptize with water—all which the chapter proves. So then John, the first administrator of baptism, had his authority from heaven; and it was this heaven-commissioned authority that made him a valid administrator, otherwise his baptism would have been invalid. Of this we offer as proof—suppose Jesus Christ had baptized a person with water, would such a person's baptism been valid or not? We pause for you to think. We answer, no; because Jesus Christ had no commission from heaven to baptize with water. God had given him no such commission, therefore if he had baptized with water without the commissioned authority, such a baptism would have been invalid; forasmuch as it was John's authority from heaven that made his baptism valid, having a right mode and right subject. Then all baptisms are invalid by any man that is not divinely commissioned from heaven; thus it takes God's prescribed mode, God's prescribed subject and God's authorised minister to make a valid and scriptural baptism. And this further appears from the following reasons: John was sent of God to baptize with water, and not with the Holy Ghost; John could not, nor did not, baptize with the Holy Ghost; nor did he even confer nor could he confer the Holy Ghost, or could he work miracles, nor ever did he work a miracle. Then John was just such a Baptist preacher as those in these days, without the gift of the Holy Ghost; which gift alone qualified men to work miracles. But Jesus Christ was sent of God not to baptize with water, as was John, but to baptize with the Holy Ghost; and had he baptized with water, he had no authority to do so. Then his baptism would have been invalid, for he had no commission to baptize with water; therefore the scriptures show us Jesus baptized not, but that his disciples baptized.

Then from scripture it is clear that John had authority to baptize with water, but not with the Holy Ghost; so from the scriptures it is equally clear, that Jesus had a commission to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and not with water; so then each followed his commission, as the whole tenor of the gospel shows, and neither intruded into the commission of the other. Had they have done so, each baptism would have been invalid. And this further appears from God's call to the priest office. None were called to this office but the tribe of Levi; none commissioned but them; therefore, those who assumed the office and offered incense were burnt with fire from heaven; as no priestly office was valid but he that was called and commissioned by God to that office. Therefore, says Paul, no man taketh this office to himself, but he that was called of God as was Aaron. Because nothing he done was by divine command, or of divine authority; therefore invalid and offensive to God. And Paul applies this to the ministry. And God might say, who hath required this at your hands; for I have not sent you to do so, and by what authority do you these things? So then it takes the divine call and commission to make a priest and his offering valid; so also it takes the divine call and commission of God to make a minister and his office, and act of baptism valid, and nothing short of this can do it. Then if Christ had baptized, and did not baptize because he had no commission to do so, how dare others who have no commission from God to do so? Such are intruders into office, and shall be dealt with by God as such, saying, you run and I sent you not, &c.

Having thus shown that it takes an administrator divinely commissioned to make baptism valid, we pursue our third head further. Jesus Christ, the head of all principality and power, the head of his church, God's king in Zion and lawgiver of his church, and further, the Father vesting him with all power in heaven and earth, after his death assumed the right and authority of calling, qualifying and commissioning men to preach and baptize nations according to the mode he himself was baptized with. For he himself says, baptism was the command of God, and that it was a commandment of God; as it was righteousness in John to administer it, as being sent; and him to obey it, as a command of God, and thus they would fulfil all righteousness as respected the command of God concerning baptism. Nor can we believe that Christ would pervert the command of his Father concerning baptism, either as to mode, subject, or administrator; but enforced the same by commission and his authority on his disciples. And thus he says: Go ye into all the world; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. And thus: Go teach all nations, baptizing them, &c. So then he does not tell them the mode, and why? because they well understood this. But he tells them the subject: He that believeth. Then it follows that all the apostles were commissioned and delegated with power and commission to baptize believers from Jesus Christ, who is the rightful head, sovereign and lawgiver of his church. And thus all they baptized, if believers, by the original mode their baptism was a valid baptism; because they had Christ's commission so to do, and not otherwise.

But we still pursue our third head, as to a legal administrator making a valid baptism. Now let it here be understood that John was authorised by God the Father to baptize with water; and that Christ was only authorised to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and not with water. And here let it also be fully understood, that the apostles, and not the seventy sent out, were fully commissioned to baptize both with the Holy Ghost and water by Christ, the head of his church; and that the seventy had not the power nor commission to give the Holy Ghost, nor work miracles; but that this of giving the Holy Ghost was exclusively given to the apostles for reasons we could easily assign, by the laying on of their hands; but neither John nor the seventy could do so. Then they were just the same as min-