

1881 CIRCULAR Delaware River

Written by

Philander Purington

[Elders seated in this session were: William L. Beebe (the son of Gilbert Beebe), B. Bundy, and Benton Jenkins of New York; Silas Durand, Pa.; William J. Purington, Wilson Housel and A. B. Francis, NJ.; T. M. Poulson, Va.; P.W. Sawin, Ind.; I. N. Vanmeter, Ill.; and G. M. Fetter, Licentiate, N.J.]

Associations seated or recognized were: Baltimore, Delaware, Delaware River, Warwick, Chemung, Conference Western NY, Corresponding, Va.; Lexington, N.Y.; Maine Conference, Maine Association; Licking Particular, Ky; Salisbury, Md.; Oconee; Euharley; Yellow River. Ocmulgee; Kehukee; Contentna, NC.; Western Corresponding of Mo.; Covenanted Particular Baptist Church of Canada.

This is the first time the appellation "Primitive" has appeared in the Minutes of the Delaware River Association. It is also the year Elder Gilbert Beebe died, and his son, William taking over the Signs of The Times.]

MEMORIAL: As our God, in His inscrutable providence, has called our dearly beloved and highly esteemed brother and father in Israel, **Elder Gilbert Beebe**, the veteran editor of the Signs of the Times, from the scenes of his labor, to his heavenly home, we, as an association, would offer this feeble tribute to his memory, and desire to give expression to some of the feelings of our hearts in connection with this sad dispensation. While, with bleeding hearts, we contemplate death's work, we would not murmur, nor repine, but bow submissively to the will of our God. Our dear brother is gone; we shall not hear his voice again on earth, lifted up like a trumpet, against error and in defense of the Truth, to the comfort of the saints, but we know our loss is his gain. We feel assured that he is now at rest; no more can the malignant darts of the enemy or the treachery of professed friends again wound his heart. He was faithful in all things committed unto him by our heavenly Father, and it can be said of him in truth, "He fought a good fight; he kept the faith."

We tender our heartfelt sympathies to his dear, sorrowing family, to the churches of his late charge, and to our sister association, (the Warwick) of which he was for many years a member.

May the God of all grace sanctify this dispensation of His providence to the good of all, and while we mourn the loss of a dear, faithful fellow-soldier and fellow-laborer in the Gospel, teach us to look unto Him to raise up others to occupy the places made vacant by the calling away of those he has discharged from the war.

The foregoing was reported, read, and adopted. Wm.J. Purington.

CIRCULAR

The Elders and messengers composing the Delaware River Association of Old School or Primitive Baptists, in session with the Southampton Church, Bucks Co. Pa., June 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 1881, to the several churches whose messengers we are, send love in the

Lord.

Beloved Brethren:- Through the abounding goodness and watchful care of our unchanging and covenant-keeping God we are spared to meet again, according to our previous appointment, for which great privilege we surely ought to render thanks to Him who keepeth Israel in safety, and supplies all our needs, bestowing every blessing, both temporal and Spiritual.

As it has been our established rule, from our organization to the present time, to present an annual address by letter, we now would call your attention to the subject of:"

BROTHERLY LOVE

And we have chosen as our text the following declarations of Jesus:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." - John 13:34,35.

The Scriptures clearly and unequivocally teach that unless the professed followers of Christ have the love of God in their hearts, there can be no true worship by them, nor genuine fellowship amongst them; for said the apostle Paul, *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."* The preceding quotation from the apostle positively shows that the love of God in the hearts of His children is the *causal principle* which produces all true obedience, and if love be wanting, all outward formalities of worship are but hypocrisy. Though a person may be well indoctrinated in the letter of the word, and manifest much tenacity for the cardinal principles of the Gospel, if unfeigned love be not in the heart, all his outward zeal avails nothing.

"No big words of ready talkers,
No dry doctrine will suffice;
Broken hearts and humble walkers,

These are dear in Jesus' eyes."

No man can cause the love of God to be shed abroad in his own heart, for the inspired penman says, "*The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us;*" therefore no mortal can create and shed abroad the love of God in his (or her) heart, any more than by his finite wisdom or power he could create a world. But if the Savior's love **be in the heart**, then the commandment applies with sweetness and power, for "*if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His;*" and without the Spirit of Christ there is no divine love, consequently no holy principle, no love to God, His written word, His church and His people. The apostle Peter says, "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit unto **unfeigned love** of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*" There certainly must be times in the experience of the heaven-born and heaven-taught when the heart-searching and reins-trying God causes them to say, like David, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" At such seasons, when the Lord is thus dealing with any of His children, and they are brought down into the valley of humiliation, such know and feel that "*The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a **discerner** of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*" In the time of fiery trial, if the love of God be in such one, he can say, with Job, "*Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.*"

When love *controls* the children of God they can say from the heart, "*Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;*" for then they are made to sweetly feel that "*Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*" As love controls our actions, we feel with much satisfaction the sweetness of the Savior's words, for said He, "*And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.*" When love predominates in the heart a brother or sister will not be made "*an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought?*" but when hatred is in the ascendancy every trifling fault is *magnified*, and a disposition clearly manifested to injure the usefulness of them against whom we have ill feeling. But when individuals or churches are under the control of their carnal, depraved natures, there will be no *real* spiritual prosperity, neither are they in a proper frame of mind to deal with any matters pertaining to the discipline of the church in a proper manner; but if such professors of the religion of Jesus Christ are the children of God, they will certainly pass under the rod and be humbled thereby, and made to see their unrighteous course, for the words of our God are, "*If His children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer*

My faithfulness to fail.” The apostle John, in addressing Gaius, said, “*The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayst prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*” The apostle also says, “*He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.*” Why should inspired penmen dwell so much upon love, if it be not the *real* principle from which all true worship arises, and upon which all genuine fellowship is founded? Again, says John, “*My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.*”

All who truly love God have blessed seasons of meditation given them; and although many times in their experience they are made to realize that their motives have been misunderstood, like Job they are enabled to say, “*Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record on high.*” When love actuates the saints a calmness and cheerfulness are so sensibly felt by them that they feel to “*endure all things for the elect’s sake,*” knowing that their heavenly Father says, “*Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*”

The inspired apostle, knowing that he had a Dijudicator (Judicator ??? SCP) who would avenge every wrong, said, “*But with me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord; therefore judge nothing **before the time**, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the **hidden things** of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart.*” Much more Scripture testimony might be adduced, were it necessary, to show that our God deals with His children not according to the outward appearance amongst men, but takes awful and searching survey of the hearts of mortals; and He said to certain characters, “*But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*” Also, the dear Redeemer said, “*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*” And He also told the fault-finding Jews, “*I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill Me, because My word hath no place in you.*” If the Savior’s word had no place in them, they had no love to God, consequently were not His disciples.

Brethren, we will not call attention again to the portion of Scripture taken as the foundation of our remarks: “*By this shall all (men) know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*” When the apostle enumerates the fruit of the Spirit, Love stands first in the divine cluster growing on the tree of Life; also, He speaks of three holy principles, on this wise, “*And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*” Said John, “*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love.*”

“Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above;
And he’s an heir of heaven that finds
His bosom glow with love.”

When the members composing a church, and the churches composing an association, are actuated by love in contending for and upholding any principle of the doctrine of God our Savior, they will then openly manifest that they are His disciples, for inflexible firmness will be shown; but the spirit of rashness, bitterness, evil speaking and vindictiveness will not be allowed to predominate, for if “*faith, which worketh by love,*” be in lively exercise, the desire will not be for the mastery, but that everything may “***be done decently and in order;***” and such being the case, a spirit of meekness will cause an ardent desire to do all things with an eye single to the honor of God, the glory of the dear Redeemer, and the well-being of the followers of the Lamb. When such a state of love manifests itself, things pertaining to the kingdom of Christ will be of **paramount importance**; also a heart-felt desire to “*walk in the Spirit,*” and not to “*be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*” Paul said to his Philippian brethren, “*Be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*” When the saints are prompted by the love of God shed abroad in the heart, great interest will be felt in the welfare of all who love the Truth as it is in Jesus; and if in a time of excitement the carnal passions have predominated, and an unrighteous course has been pursued, love having again *taken control*, repentance will be manifested, and a desire arise in the heart to make amends for all wrongs, for then we shall understand something of the true, spiritual import of the tax-collector, Zaccheus’ words, for said he, “*Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold.*” The name of that servant of God has a wonderful signification, meaning, *pure, clean, just*, and when he uttered those *wonderful words* he had been made the recipient of divine life; but “*when they*” (the Pharisees there present) “*saw it they all murmured, saying that He (Jesus) was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.*” That man, after being called by Jesus, did not say, “*Lord, I have been a shrewd, calculating and careful man, and although I have obtained some of my worldly treasure by false accusation, I will now make a good use of it in your kingdom here on earth, for the **end** will sanctify **the means;***” but on the contrary, went directly to the *root* of the matter, where the love of God shed abroad in the heart, not sometimes, but *always*, leads, and if he had taken anything wrongfully he would simply restore the exact amount? No! He would restore four fold. One of the inspired judges says, “*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man*

soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” Here we learn that what is sowed produces its own kind, and he or they who sowed shall reap. Would there be any danger of sowing to the flesh, were there not a fleshly mind left in the believer? Certainly not. These awfully solemn declarations apply not only to individuals, but to churches and associations of churches together, for it was said to the church of Ephesus, “*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy **first love**. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick (lampstand) out of his place, except thou repent.*” Are not these admonitions of awful import to us in this day, as well as in the apostles’ day? Our God in His infinite wisdom has determined that His children shall not pursue an unrighteous course and escape the rod; and what was said to the church at Ephesus remains true today; and if any organized church *heed not* the divine injunction after leaving her first love, and repent, the candlestick will be removed.

The followers of the Lamb of God, as a general rule, do not seem very well calculated to vie with the cunning devices of natural men, for their minds are occupied with matters of more awful moment; and especially is it so with the servants of the church, who stand as watchmen upon the walls of Zion, and they generally leave this world of sin and sorrow “the poor of the world,” but “rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him.” Often there are those who pass away from this mortal state having great worldly possessions, but during their natural lives gave no evidence that the love of God was in their hearts. The Redeemer said, “*The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*” Also, “*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*” Now is it not conclusive that the love of the world is found in our flesh? And if we have not any other than worldly love, we are not the disciples of Christ. We will right here quote from the inspired apostles some declarations which are a “touchstone” in this momentous question of that kind of love which is “*in word and in tongue.*” “*Whosoever hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*” “*If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not of those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?*” There certainly is some of such *heartless or skeleton* kind of love yet, as well as in the apostles’ day. But the love of God causes a very different course to be pursued, for the outward acts will then show the inward principles, which will be true benevolence. On one occasion the inspired psalmist said, “*But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth?*” (Notice, it is in the *mouth*, not in the *heart*, that the covenant is here taken,) “*Seeing thou hatest instruction,*

*and castest My words behind thee.” The apostle, in addressing his dearly beloved son, Timothy, said, “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, **love**, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou are also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”*

The apostle tells what the root of all evil is, **not money**, but the **love of money**, and the consequences of that *kind of love* are clearly described; but he exhorts Timothy to flee those things, and points him to divine things, which he, as a servant of God, is to follow. We dare not give a tropical or figurative meaning to the term *money*, because it means what it says, **money**, or worldly possessions and treasures purchased therewith. In the expression, “money changers,” recorded four times in the New Testament, the original word is from the same root, *argurion*, money; and in the Old Testament the word is recorded more than one hundred times from the same Hebrew root, *keseph*. We have been thus particular with this word because there has been caviling at times as to what the word means; and when was the day in church and State that the *corrupting influence and effects* of the love of money were more clearly seen than now?

Brethren, if we have been made the recipients of the love of God, and have been made to understand that all our earthly blessings are bestowed upon us freely by our heavenly Father, and that “*we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out,*” realizing that “*every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving,*” using “*this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away,*” are we not bound by the Gospel rule to inculcate love, so far as our God may enable us thus to do, show openly that we have love one to another, and *thereby* manifest that we are the disciples of Christ? When love is exhibited in our walk in all matters pertaining to the church, as well as our dealings in the world with the children of men, we then give diligence to make your (our) calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.

And what are these things? We are not left to judge, as men, what they are, for the apostle has enumerated them thus, “*And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness **brotherly kindness**, and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these be in you*” (mark, not external and outward only, but **in** you) “*and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” When the love of God predominates we shall certainly in our measure fulfill the following declarations: “*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these*

things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” The apostle Paul, notwithstanding his ardent devotion to the Truth and faithful vindication of the Gospel, enabling him to say, *“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God,”* did not escape sore trials and violent persecution; but that was a part of the legacy given him by his heavenly Father, for the Lord said to Ananias (who baptized Paul), *“I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”* He recorded some of the things he suffered for Jesus’ sake, and in his epistle to the Corinthians he says, *“Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches;”* in all those sore afflictions the apostle’s undying love to his true and faithful brethren continued until the last, which manifested him a true disciple of Christ, for said he, referring to his afflictions and persecutions, *“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy; and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.”* For he knew, *“that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”*

During the year now past, or since we were last convened as an association, many of our dear brethren and sisters, not only in this association, but of sister associations, have been called away from their cares, toils, sorrows and afflictions in this life to their home in heaven, and others are standing as it were on the brink of the eternal state, and soon their counsel we shall have no more. There are a number of our dear brethren in the ministry who have stood like *“an iron pillar and brazen walls”* against the innovations made in these last days upon the doctrine and order of the church of Christ, but soon the last of these *“links,”* connecting the past with the present, will be severed; but our heavenly Father in His loving-kindness has given us some promising young gifts in the ministry, and it is the duty of the church to encourage them in a proper manner, but avoid everything that savors of flattery; and should those young gifts have seasons of discouragement, if we love them, and show that we are the disciples of Christ, in their times of despondency we shall show brotherly love and a tenderness for them. Should we discover any erroneous views concerning the atonement, regeneration, the birth of the spirit, church discipline, and their deportment, we are to deal with them in loving-kindness, in gentleness, with an eye single to the honor and glory of God; and if spiritual love actuates us, such will be our course, manifesting thereby unto them that we love them and have a deep interest in their welfare. May our heavenly Father enable us to act in His fear, and His love actuate us in all things pertaining to us in this life, so that it

may be clearly seen that we *believe* what we profess, and *love* what we believe, and our deportment be such that neither Jew or Gentile can justly reproach us for our course of life while here upon earth.

“Now unto Him that is able to you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

William J. Purington, *Moderator.*

A. B. Francis, *Clerk.*