

1873 Circular Letter of the Yellow River Primitive
Baptist Association in north Georgia

Written by
W. H. Gullede

[Associations in correspondence this 48th Annual Session were: Warwick, and Delaware River, Ocmulgee, Primitive Western, Euharley, New Hope, the Marietta.

Ministers seated this session: Elders J. Pate, I. Hamby, William D. Almond, D. L. Hitchcock, William W. Carroll, W. D. Chandler, J. T. Jordan, William L. Beebe, F. M. McLeroy, W. D. Patman.

The Statistical Table indicates there were twenty-three churches in the Yellow River this session, with a combined membership of 837. – SCP]

Circular Letter

The Yellow River Association convened with the church at Bethel, Newton county, to the churches composing the same.

Dear Brethren in the Lord:- As a foundation for our Circular, we will call your attention to Ephesians ii,1. “*And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*”

This language of God by the Apostle brings to our minds our relation to a fallen and sinful parent, our standing or identity being **in** him as the creatures of God, and not as the *children of God*. The man and woman both being in **one body until developed**, then not a part but all of his posterity fell under the law in him, and sinned then and there; and when time developed us we are nothing more than Adam expanded or multiplied upon the earth; in possession of a wicked and depraved nature, dead in trespasses and sins – not half dead and half alive so that we can work ourselves into the love and favor of God. For “*sin is the transgression of the law,*” and all are transgressors.- Rom. v.12, “*Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*” We understand the Apostle to mean all that had their standing in their federal or creature head; and not that we have to sin to become sinners, but the fact that we do sin proves the truth of the condition that we were in as in a state of nature dead under the law. There is no difference in that sense, no big sinners and little ones. All sinned and fell as one man, and we have no power to extricate ourselves from this doleful condition; for we can do nothing above what we are ourselves. Then our deliverance lies somewhere else, and not in what poor, sinful man can do.

“*And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*” This language was spoken or written to the *children of God*, the Ephesian brethren, who had been

quicken into life by the Spirit and power of God, upon principle, and not by any merit of their own whatever. As we fell into a state of death by the *relation* we bore to a sinful parent, it is upon the *relation* that the church of Jesus Christ bears to Him as her spiritual Head, as the bride, the Lamb's wife, she was ever the beloved of God *in Him*.

As Adam's bride lived *in him* before she was developed visibly, and the life she lived was the life **of her husband**, so in a spiritual point of view, the Life of the church was "*was hid with Christ in God.*" He says, "*I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.*" Upon this principle she is as clear and free from sin as though she never had fallen in sin, by His righteousness being imparted her – 2 Cor. v.21. "*For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*" – Not out of Him, but *in Him*, His bride stands justified before God the Father. Then the angel could come to His earthly father with the glorious news, "*Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.*" It was not to make them His by His coming into this low ground of sorrow, but because **they were His**, was the principle upon which He became a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief – Isaiah liii.5. "*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.*" The people that are characterized by "our" and "we," are the church of God. Isaiah liv.5, "*For thy Maker is thine husband. The Lord of Hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called.*" There is no such thing as a *husband* without a *bride*. Praise be to our God for the riches of His grace given *in* Jesus the Head of His church to such poor sinners as we are.

The last one that He came to redeem will be brought manifestly to a knowledge of the salvation that was given them *in Him*, Jesus Christ before the world began. Isaiah liv.10, "*For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.*" In connection with the prophet, Paul says, "*But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: by grace are ye saved.*" And when the time comes according to His purpose for one of His children to be brought to a knowledge of their inheritance they are quickened into life by the Spirit and power of God; not for any thing they have done, but according to His will and purpose, and where life is there is a *moving* and *feeling* sensation that the individual never felt before, and there is an uneasiness within. And where there is life there is light, and by that light they are enabled to view themselves in their true condition as sinners before God. Lost and undone. Then they view God in His character as a just and holy God. They now try their own works they once believed they could do. They try to pray to God for mercy, but instead of getting better, they feel that they are getting worse. The weight of guilt and condemnation like mountains weighs them down, and the very breathing of their soul is,

“Lord, have mercy on me a sinner!” They view themselves to be much worse than every body else. They see a chance for every one else, and none for themselves. They are led on in this way until they view their condemnation just, and every thing looks dark and seems to speak their banishment from God forever. They believe they shall soon die, and to be condemned that they are afraid to even bow to their God for mercy; but in an unexpected time and way for them the weight of guilt and condemnation is gone, and their soul is filled with love to God. Everything looks new and they love every body, and can exclaim, *“Peace on earth, good will toward men! Glory to God in the highest!”* Here is a sinner saved by grace; and the Apostle Paul says of such that *“We are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh”* – Philippians iii,3. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, *etc.*, and this principle of love is begotten in them, for God is love, and he that loveth is born of God.

So, dear brethren, in conclusion, let us exhort you unto good works. Let us walk in love and in the footsteps of our Lord and Master, taking His example and following Him in all of our acts. Let us take the word of God for the “man of our counsel,” and follow it just as it is laid down. Finally, brethren, farewell! Be of one mind, live in peace; and may the peace of God be with you is our prayer for Christ’s sake. Amen.

Isaac Hamby, *Moderator.*

J. T. Jordan, Clerk.