

Black Rock Address 1832

Introduction

To the Particular Baptist Churches of the "Old School" [¹] in the United States:

Brethren, It constitutes a new era in the history of the Baptists, when those who would follow the Lord fully, and who therefore manifest a solicitude to be, in all things pertaining to religion, conformed to the Pattern showed in the mount, are by Baptists charged with antinomianism, inertness, stupidity, &c., for refusing to go beyond the word of God; but such is the case with us.

Brethren, we would not shun reproach, nor seek an exemption from persecution; but we would affectionately entreat those Baptists who revile us themselves, or who side with such as do, to pause and consider how far they have departed from the ancient principles of the Baptists, and how that in reproaching us they stigmatize the memory of those whom they have been used to honor as eminent and useful servants, of Christ; and of those who have borne the brunt of the persecutions leveled against the Baptists in former ages. For it is a well-known fact that it was in ages past a uniform and distinguishing trait in the character of the Baptists, that they required a "Thus saith the Lord," that is, direct authority from the word of God for the order and practice, as well as the doctrine, they received in religion.

It is true that many things to which we object as departures from the order established by the great Head of the church, through the ministry of his apostles, are by others considered to be connected with the very essence of religion, and absolutely necessary to the prosperity of Christ's kingdom. They attach great value to them, because human wisdom suggests their importance. We allow the Head of the church alone to judge for us; we therefore esteem those things to be of no use to the cause of Christ, which he has not himself instituted.

We will notice severally the claims of the principal of these modern inventions, and state some of our objections to them for your candid consideration.

¹ In reference to the epithet "Old School," which we have used as a discriminating term, we beg leave to say that we were led to adopt it from it having been applied to us by others; and that in our use of it we have reference to the school of Christ, in distinction from all other schools which have sprung up since the apostles' days.

Tract Societies

We commence with the Tract Societies. These claim to be extensively useful. Tracts claim their thousands converted. They claim the prerogative of carrying the news of salvation into holes and corners, where the gospel would otherwise never come; of going as on the wings of the wind, carrying salvation in their train; and they claim each to contain gospel enough, should it go where the Bible has never come, to lead a soul to the knowledge of Christ. The nature and extent of these and the like claims, made in favor of tracts by their advocates, constitute a good reason why we should reject them. These claims represent tracts as possessing in these respects a superiority over the Bible, and over the institution of the gospel ministry, which is charging the great I Am with a deficiency of wisdom. Yea, they charge God with folly; for why has he given us the extensive revelation contained in the Bible, and given the Holy Spirit to take the things of Christ and show them to us, if a little tract of four pages can lead a soul to the knowledge of Christ? But let us consider the more rational claims presented by others in favor of tracts, as that they constitute a convenient way of disseminating religious instruction among the more indigent and thoughtless classes of society. Admitting the propriety of this claim, could it be kept separated from other pretensions, still can we submit to the distribution of tracts becoming an order of our churches or our associations, without countenancing the prevalent idea that tracts have become an instituted means approved of God for the conversion of sinners, and hence that the distribution of them is a religious act, and on a footing with supporting the gospel ministry?

If we were to admit that tracts have occasionally been made instrumental by the Holy Ghost for imparting instruction or comfort to inquiring minds, it would by no means imply that tracts are an instituted means of salvation, to speak after the manner of the popular religionists, nor that they should be placed on a footing with the Bible and the preached gospel, in respect to imparting the knowledge of salvation.

Again, we readily admit the propriety of an individual's publishing and distributing, or of several individuals uniting to publish and distribute what they wish circulated, whether in the form of tracts, or otherwise; but still we cannot admit the propriety of uniting with or upon the plans of existing Tract Societies, even laying aside the idea of their being attempted to be palmed upon us as religious institutions. Because that upon the plan of these societies, those who unite with them pay their money for publishing and distributing they know not what, under the name of religious truth; and what is worse, they submit to have sent into their families weekly or monthly, and to circulate among their neighbors, anything and everything for religious reading, which the agent or publishing committee may see fit to publish. They thus become accustomed to receive everything as good which comes under the name of religion, whether it be according to the word of God or not; and are trained to the habit of letting others judge for them in matters of religion, and are therefore fast preparing to become the dupes of priestcraft. Can any conscientious follower of the Lamb submit to such plans? If others can, we cannot.

Sunday Schools

Sunday Schools come next under consideration. These assume the same high stand as do Tract Societies. They claim the honor of converting their tens of thousands; of leading the tender minds of children to the knowledge of Jesus; of being as properly the instituted means of bringing children to the knowledge of salvation, as the preaching of the gospel that of bringing adults to the same knowledge, &c. Such arrogant pretensions we feel bound to oppose. First, because these as well as the pretensions of the Tract Societies are grounded upon the notion that conversion or regeneration is produced by impressions made upon the natural mind by means of religious sentiments instilled into it; and if the Holy Ghost is allowed to be at all concerned in the thing, it is in a way which implies his being somehow blended with the instruction, or necessarily attendant upon it; all of which we know to be wrong.

Secondly, because such schools were never established by the apostles, nor commanded by Christ. There were children in the days of the apostles. The apostles possessed as great a desire for the salvation of souls, as much love to the cause of Christ, and knew as well what God would own for bringing persons to the knowledge of salvation, as any do at this day. We therefore must believe that if these schools were of God, we should find some account of them in the New Testament.

Thirdly. We have exemplified in the case of the Pharisees, the evil consequences of instructing children in the letter of the Scripture, under the notion that this instruction constitutes a saving acquaintance with the word of God. We see in that instance it only made hypocrites of the Jews; and as the Scriptures declare that Christ's words are spirit and life, and that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, we cannot believe it will have any better effect on the children in our day.

The Scriptures enjoin upon parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; but this, instead of countenancing, forbids the idea of parents entrusting the religious education of their children to giddy, unregenerated young persons, who know no better than to build them up in the belief that they are learning the religion of Christ, and to confirm them in their natural notions of their own goodness.

But whilst we thus stand opposed to the plan and use of these Sunday Schools, and the S.S. Union, in every point, we wish to be distinctly understood that we consider Sunday Schools for the purpose of teaching poor children to read, whereby they may be enabled to read the Scriptures for themselves, in neighborhoods where there is occasion for them, and when properly conducted, without that ostentation so commonly connected with them, to be useful and benevolent institutions, worthy of the patronage of all the friends of civil liberty.

Bible Society

We pass to the consideration of the Bible Society. We are aware, brethren, that this institution presents itself to the mind of the Christian as supported by the most plausible

pretext. The idea of giving the Bible, without note or comment, to those who are unable to procure it for themselves, is in itself considered, calculated to meet the approbation of all who know the importance of the sacred Scriptures. But under this auspicious guise, we see reared in the case of the American Bible Society, an institution as foreign from anything which the gospel of Christ calls for, as are the kingdoms of this world from the kingdom of Christ. We see a combination formed, in which are united the man of the world, the vaunting professor, and the humble follower of Jesus; the leading characters in politics, the dignitaries in church, and from them some of every grade, down to the poor servant girl, who can snatch from her hard-earned wages fifty cents a year for the privilege of being a member. We see united in this combination all parties in politics, and all sects in religion; and the distinctive differences of the one, and the sectarian barriers of the other, in part thrown aside to form the union. At the head of this vast body we see placed a few leading characters, who have in their hands the management of its enormous printing establishment, and its immense funds; and the control of its powerful influence, extended by means of agents and auxiliaries to every part of the United States. We behold its anniversary meetings converted into a great religious parade, and forming a theatre for the orator who is ambitious of preferment, either in pulpit, in the legislative hall, or at the bar, to display his eloquence, and elicit the cheers of the grave assemblage. Now, brethren, to justify our opposition to the Bible Society, it is not necessary for us to say that any of its members have manifested a disposition to employ its power for the subversion of our liberties. It is enough for us to say,

1st, That such a monstrous combination, concentrating so much power in the hands of a few individuals, could never be necessary for supplying the destitute with Bibles. Individual printing establishments would readily be extended so as to supply Bibles to any amount, and in any language that might be called for, and at as cheap a rate as they have ever been sold by the Bible Society.

2nd, That the humble followers of Jesus could accomplish their benevolent wishes for supplying the needy with Bibles, with more effect, and more to their satisfaction, by managing the purchase and distribution of them for themselves; and such will never seek popular applause by having their liberality trumpeted abroad through the medium of the Bible Society.

3rd, That the Bible Society, whether we consider it in its monied foundation for membership and directorship, in its hoarding up of funds, in its blending together all distinctions between the church and the world, or in its concentration of power, is an institution never contemplated by the Lord Jesus as connected with his kingdom; therefore not a command concerning it is given in the decree published, nor a sketch of it drawn in the pattern showed.

4th, That its vast combination of worldly power and influence lodged in the hands of a few renders it a dangerous engine against the liberties, both civil and religious, of our country, should it come under control of those disposed so to employ it. The above remarks apply with equal force to the other great national institutions, as the American Tract Society, and Sunday School Union, &c., &c.

Missions

We will now call your attention to the subject of Missions. Previous to stating our objections to the mission plans, we will meet some of the false charges brought against us relative to this subject, by a simple and unequivocal declaration, that we do regard as of the first importance the command given of Christ, primarily to His apostles, and through them to his ministers in every age, to "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and do feel an earnest desire to be found acting in obedience thereunto, as the providence of God directs our way, and opens a door of utterance for us. We also believe it to be the duty of individuals and churches to contribute according to their abilities, for the support, not only of their pastors, but also of those who go preaching the gospel of Christ among the destitute. But we at the same time contend, that we have no right to depart from the order which the Master himself has seen fit to lay down, relative to the ministration of the word. We therefore cannot fellowship the plans for spreading the gospel, generally adopted at this day, under the name of Missions; because we consider those plans throughout a subversion of the order marked out in the New Testament.

1st. In reference to the medium by which the gospel minister is to be sent forth to labor in the field. Agreeable to the Prophecy going before, that out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, the Lord has manifestly established the order, that his ministers should be sent forth by the churches. But the mission plan is to send them out by a Mission Society. The gospel society or church is to be composed of baptized believers; the poor is placed on an equal footing with the rich, and money is of no consideration, with regard to membership, or church privileges. Not so with Mission Societies; they are so organized that the unregenerate, the enemies of the Cross of Christ, have equal privileges as to membership, &c., with the people of God, and money is the principal consideration; a certain sum entitles to membership, a larger sum to life membership, a still larger to directorship, &c., so that their constitutions, contrary to the direction of James, are partial, saying to the rich man, sit thou here, and to the poor, stand thou there. In Christ's kingdom, all His subjects are sons, and have equal rights, and an equal voice, as well in calling persons into the ministry, as in other things. But the mission administration is all lodged in the hands of a few, who are distinguished from the rest, by great swelling titles, as Presidents, Vice Presidents, &c. Again, each gospel church acts as the independent kingdom of Christ in calling and sending forth its members into the ministry. Very different from this is the mission order. The mission community being so arranged that from the little Mite Society, on the State Conventions, and from them on to the Triennial Convention, and General Board, there is formed a general amalgamation, and a concentration of power in the hands of a dozen dignitaries, who with some exceptions have the control of all the funds designed for supporting ministers among the destitute, at home and abroad, and the sovereign authority to designate who from among the professed ministers of Christ, shall be supported from these funds, and also to assign them the field of their labors. Yea, the authority to appoint females, and school-masters, and printers, and farmers, as such, to be solemnly set apart by prayer, and the impositions of hands, as missionaries of the

cross, and to be supported from these funds. Whereas in ancient times the preachers of the gospel [were called] by the Holy Ghost. - Acts xiii. 1,4.

2nd. In reference to ministerial support. - The gospel order is to extend support to them who preach the gospel; but the mission plan is to hire persons to preach. The gospel order is not to prefer one before another, and do nothing by partiality. See 1 Tim. v. 17,21. But the Mission Boards exclude all from participation in the benefits of their funds, who do not come under their direction and own their authority, however regularly they may have been set apart according to gospel order, to the work of the ministry, and however zealously they may be laboring to preach the gospel among the destitute. And what is more, these Boards by their auxiliaries and agents, so scour every hole and corner to scrape up money for their funds that the people think they have nothing left to give a preacher who may come among them alone upon the authority of Christ, and by the fellowship of the church. Formerly not only did preachers generally feel themselves bound to devote a part of their time to traveling and preaching among the destitute, but the people also among whom they came dispensing the word of life, felt themselves bound to contribute something to meet their expenses. These were the days when Christian affections flowed freely. Then the hearts of the preachers flowed out toward the people, and the affections of the people were manifested toward the preachers who visited them. There was then more preaching of the gospel among the people at large, according to the number of Baptists, than has ever been since the rage of missions commenced. How different are things now from what they were in those by-gone days. Now, generally speaking, persons who are novices in the gospel, however learned they may profess to be in the sciences, have taken the field in the place of those who, have been taught in the school of Christ, were capacitated to administer consolation to God's afflicted people.

The missionary, instead of going into such neighborhoods as Christ's ministers used to visit, where they would be most likely to have an opportunity of administering food to the poor of the flock, seeks the more populous villages and towns, where he can attract the most attention, and do the most to promote the cause of missions and other popular institution's. His leading motive, judging from his movements, is not love to souls, but love of fame; hence his anxiety to have something to publish of what he has done, and hence his anxiety to constitute churches, even taking disaffected, disorderly, and as has been the case, excluded persons, to form a church, in the absence of better materials. And the people, instead of glowing with the affection for the preacher as such, feel burdened with the whole system of modern mendicancy, but have no resolution to shake off their oppression, because it is represented so deistical to withhold and so popular to give.

Brethren, we cheerfully acknowledge that there have been some honorable exceptions to the character we have here drawn of the modern missionary, and some societies have existed under the name of Mission Societies which were in some important exceptions from the above drawn sketch; but on a general scale we believe we have given a correct view of the mission plans and operations, and of the effects which have

resulted from them, and our hearts really sicken at this state of things. How can we therefore forbear to express our disapprobation of the system that has produced it?

Theological Schools

Colleges and Theological Schools next claim our attention. In speaking of Colleges, we wish to be distinctly understood that it is not to colleges, collegial education, as such, that we have objection. We would cheerfully afford our own children such an education, did circumstances warrant the measure. But we object, in the first place, to sectarian colleges, as such. The idea of a Baptist College, and of a Presbyterian College, &c., necessarily implies that our distinct views of church government of gospel doctrine and gospel ordinances, are connected with human sciences, a principle which we cannot admit: we believe the kingdom of Christ to be altogether a kingdom not of this world. In the second place, we object to the notion of attaching professorships of divinity to colleges; because this evidently implies that the revelation which God has made of himself is a human science, on a footing with mathematics, philosophy, law, &c., which is contrary to the general tenor of revelation, and indeed to the very idea of a revelation. We perhaps need not add that we have for the same reason strong objection to colleges conferring the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and to preachers receiving it. Thirdly, We decidedly object to persons, after professing to have been called of the Lord to preach His gospel, going to a college or academy to fit themselves for that service. 1st. Because we believe that Christ possesses perfect knowledge of his own purposes, and of the proper instruments by which to accomplish them. If he has occasion for a man of science, he having power over all flesh, will so order it that the individual shall obtain the requisite learning before he calls him to his service, as was the case with Saul of Tarsus, and others since; and thus avoid subjecting himself to the imputation of weakness. For should Christ call a person to labor in the gospel field, who was unqualified for the work assigned him, it would manifest him to be deficient in knowledge relative to the proper instruments to employ, or defective in power to provide them. 2nd. Because we believe that the Lord calls no man to preach his gospel, till he has made him experimentally acquainted with that gospel, and endowed him with the proper measure of gifts, suiting the field he designs him to occupy; and the person giving himself up in obedience to the voice of Christ will find himself learning in Christ's own school. But when a person professedly called of Christ to the gospel ministry, concludes that, in order to be useful, he must first go and obtain an academical education, he must judge that human science is of more importance in the ministry, than that knowledge and those gifts which Christ imparts to his servants. To act consistently then with his own principles, he will place his chief dependence for usefulness on his scientific knowledge, and aim mostly to display this in his preaching. This person, therefore, will pursue a very different course in his preaching, from that marked out by the great apostle to the Gentiles, who determined to know nothing among the people save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

As to Theological Schools, we shall at present content ourselves with saying that they are a reflection upon the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost, who is engaged according to the promise of the great Head of the church to lead the disciples into all truth. See John

xvi. 13. Also, that in every age, from the school of Alexandria down to this day, they have been a real pest to the church of Christ. Of this we could produce abundant proof, did the limits of our address admit their insertion.

Protracted Meetings

We now pass to the last item which we think it necessary particularly to notice, viz.: four days or protracted meetings. Before stating our objections to these, however, we would observe that we consider the example worthy to be imitated which the apostles set of embracing every opportunity consistently with propriety for preaching the gospel wherever they met with an assembly, whether in a Jew's synagogue on the seventh day, or in a Christian assembly on the first day of the week; and the exhortation to be instant in season and out of season, we would gladly accept. Therefore, whenever circumstances call a congregation together from day to day, as at an association or the like we would embrace the opportunity of preaching the gospel to them from time to time, so often as they shall come together; but to the principles and plans of protracted meetings, distinguishingly so called, we do decidedly object. The principle of these meetings we cannot fellowship. Regeneration, we believe, is exclusively the work of the Holy Ghost, performed by his divine power, at his own sovereign pleasure, according to the provisions of the everlasting covenant; but these meetings are got up either for the purpose of inducing the Holy Spirit to regenerate multitudes who would otherwise not be converted, or to convert them themselves by the machinery of these meetings, or rather to bring them into their churches by means of exciting their animal feelings, without any regard to their being born again. Whichever of these may be considered the true ground upon which these meetings are founded, we are at a loss to know how any person who has known what it is to be born again can countenance them.

The plans of these meetings are equally as objectionable; for, in the first place, all doctrinal preaching, or in other words, all illustrations of God's plan of salvation, are excluded professedly from these meetings. Hence they would make believers of their converts without presenting any fixed truths to their minds to believe. Whereas God has chosen his people to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the TRUTH. - 2 Thess. ii.13.

Secondly. The leaders of these meetings fix standards by which to decide of persons' repentance and desire of salvation, which the word of God nowhere warrants, such as rising off their seats, coming to anxious seats, or going to a certain place, &c. Whereas the New Testament has given us a standard from which we have no right to depart, viz: that of bringing forth fruits meet for repentance.

Thirdly. They lead the People to depend on mediators other than the Lord Jesus Christ to obtain peace for them, by offering themselves as intercessors for them with God; whereas the Scriptures acknowledge but the one God and one Mediator.

Some may be ready to inquire whether protracted meetings, as such, may not with propriety be held, providing they be held without excluding doctrinal preaching, or

introducing any of these new plans. However others may judge and act, we cannot approve of such meetings for the following reasons:

1st. Because by appointing and holding a protracted meeting, as such, although we may not carry it to the same excesses to which others do, yet as most people will make no distinction between it and those meetings where all the borrowed machinery from Methodist campmeetings is introduced, we shall generally be considered as countenancing those meetings.

2nd. Because the motives we could have for conforming to the custom of holding these newly invented meetings are such as we think cannot bear the test. For we must be induced thus to conform to the reigning custom either in order to shun the reproach generally attached to those who will not conform to what is popular, or to try the experiment whether our holding a four days' meeting will not induce the Holy Ghost to produce a revival among us commensurate with the strange fire enkindled by others; or else we must be led to this plan from having imbibed the notion that the Holy Ghost is somehow so the creature of human feelings that he is led to regenerate persons by our getting their animal feelings excited; and therefore that in the same proportion as we can by any measure get the feelings of the people aroused, there will be a revival of religion. This latter motive can scarcely be supposed to have place with any who would not go the whole length of every popular measure. But 1st. We do not believe it becoming a follower of Jesus to seek an exemption from reproach by conforming to the schemes of men. 2nd. We believe the Holy Ghost to be too sacred a being to be trifled with by trying experiments upon him. And 3rd. We believe the Holy Ghost to be God. We would as soon expect that the Father would be induced to predestinate persons to the adoption of children by their feelings being excited, and the Son be induced to redeem them, as that the Holy Ghost would be thus induced to quicken them. These three are one. The purpose of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, must run in perfect accordance, and commensurate, one with the other.

Conclusions

Brethren, we have thus laid before you some of our objections to the popular schemes in religion, and the reasons why we cannot fellowship them. Ponder these things well. Weigh them in the balances of the sanctuary; and then say if they are not such as justify us in standing aloof from those plans of men, and those would-be religious societies, which are bound together, not by the fellowship of the gospel, but by certain money payments. If you cannot for yourselves meet the reproach by separating yourselves from those things which the word of God does not warrant, still allow us the privilege to obey God rather than man.

There is, brethren, one radical difference between us and those who advocate these various institutions which we have noticed to which we wish to call your attention. It is this: they declare the gospel to be a system of means; these means it appears they believe to be of human contrivance; and they act accordingly. But we believe the gospel

dispensation to embrace a system of faith and obedience, and we would act according to our belief. We believe, for instance, that the seasons of declension, of darkness, of persecutions, &c., to which the church of Christ is at times subject, are designed by the wise Disposer of all events; not for calling forth the inventive geniuses of men to remove the difficulties, but for trying the faith of God's people in his wisdom, power and faithfulness to sustain his church. On him, therefore, would we repose our trust, and wait his hour of deliverance, rather than rely upon an arm of flesh. Are we called to the ministry, although we may feel our own insufficiency for the work as sensibly as do others, yet we would go forward in the path of duty marked out, believing that God is able to accomplish his purpose by such instruments as he chooses; that he hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things, &c., hath God chosen, that no flesh should glory in his presence. Though we may not enjoy the satisfaction of seeing multitudes flocking to Jesus under our ministry, yet instead of going in to Hagar to accomplish the promises of God, or of resorting to any of the contrivances of men to make up the deficiency, we would still be content to preach the word, and would be instant in season and out of season; knowing it has pleased God, not by the wisdom of men, but by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. And that his word will not return unto him void, but it shall accomplish that which he please, and prosper in the thing whereunto he sends it. Faith in God, instead of leading us to contrive ways to help him accomplish his purposes, leads us to inquire what he hath required at our hands, and to be satisfied with doing that as we find it pointed out in his word; for we know that his purposes shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. Jesus says, ye believe in God, believe also in me. Ye believe in the power of God to accomplish his purposes, however contrary things may appear to work to your expectations. So believe in my power to accomplish the great work of saving my people. In a word, as the dispensation of God by the hand of Moses, in bringing Israel out of Egypt, and leading them through the wilderness, was from first to last calculated to try Israel's faith in God, so is the dispensation of God by his Son, in bringing his spiritual Israel to be a people to himself.

There being, then, this radical difference between us and the patrons of these modern institutions, the question which has long since been put forth, presents itself afresh for our consideration in all its force. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" We believe that many who love our Lord Jesus Christ, are engaged in promoting those institutions which they acknowledge to be of modern origin; and they are promoting them too as religious institutions; whereas if they would reflect a little on the origin and nature of the Christian religion, they must be, like us, convinced that this religion must remain unchangeably the same at this day, as we find it delivered in the New Testament. Hence that anything, however highly esteemed it may be among men, which is not found in the New Testament, has no just claim to be acknowledged as belonging to the religion or the religious institutions of Christ.

With all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, in truth, and walk according to apostolic traditions, to gospel order, we would gladly meet in church relation and engage with them in the worship and service of God, as he himself has ordered them. But if they will

persist in bringing those institutions for which they can show us no example in the New Testament, into the churches or associations, and in making them the order thereof we shall for conscience sake, be compelled to withdraw from the disorderly walk of such churches, associations, or individuals, that we may not suffer our names to pass as sanctioning those things for which we have no fellowship. And if persons who would pass for preachers, will come to us, bringing the messages of men, &c., a gospel which they have learned in the schools, instead of that gospel which Christ himself commits unto his servants, and which is not learned of men, they must not be surprised that we cannot acknowledge them as ministers of Christ.

Now, brethren, addressing ourselves to you who profess to be in principle, Particular Baptists, of the "Old School," but who are practicing such things as you have learned only from a New School, it is for you to say, not us, whether we can longer walk in union with you. We regret, as so do you, to see brethren professing the same faith, serving apart. But if you will compel us either to sanction the traditions and inventions of men, as of religious obligation, or to separate from you, the sin lieth at your door. If you meet us in churches to attend only to the order of Christ's house as laid down by himself; and in associations, upon the ancient principles of Baptist Association, i.e., as an associating of the churches for keeping up a brotherly correspondence one with another, that they may strengthen each other in the good ways of the Lord; instead of turning the associations into a kind of legislative body, formed for the purpose of contriving plans to help along the work of Christ, and for imposing those contrivances as burdens upon the churches, by resolutions, &c., as is the manner of some, we can still go on with you in peace and fellowship.

Thus, brethren, our appeal is before you. Treat it with contempt if you can despise the cause for which we contend, i.e., conformity to the word of God. But indulge us, we beseech you, so far at least, as at our request to sit down and carefully count the cost on both sides; and see whether this shunning reproach by conforming to men's notions will not in the end be a much more expensive course than to meet reproach at once, by honoring Jesus as your only King, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. And rebellion, you know, is as the sin of witchcraft.

May the Lord lead you to judge and act upon this subject as you will wish you had done when you come to see the mass of human inventions in connection with the Man of sin, driven away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and that stone which was cut out without hands alone filling the earth. We subscribe ourselves your servants for Jesus sake.

***Minutes of the Proceedings and Resolutions
Drafted by the Particular Baptists, Convened at
Black Rock, Maryland, September 28, 1832.***

A meeting of Particular Baptists of the Old School convened agreeable to a previous appointment at the Black Rock meeting-house, Baltimore, Maryland, on Friday 28th September, 1832.

The introductory sermon was preached by Elder Samuel Trott, of Delaware, from Daniel ii 34, 35: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands," &c.

The meeting was then called to order by Elder John Healy, of Baltimore.

Prayer by Elder Thomas Barton, of Pennsylvania.

Elder Wm. Gilmore, of Virginia, was elected Moderator, and Elder Gabriel Conklin, Clerk.

A brief statement of the object for which the meeting had been called was made by the Moderator, and thereupon it was:

Resolved, That a committee of seven brethren, viz.: Trott, Healy, Poteet, Barton and Beebe, together with the Moderator and Clerk, be appointed to prepare an Address expressive of the views of this meeting, touching the object for which it was convened.

Brethren Scott, Cole, Ensor and Shaw, were appointed to make the necessary arrangements for preaching during this meeting.

Prayer by brother Trott.

Adjourned to 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

SATURDAY MORNING, 9 o'clock

Met, pursuant to adjournment.

Prayer by Brother Choat.

The committee appointed to prepare an Address, submitted the following, which was unanimously adopted.

Black Rock Address

We acknowledge with pleasure the reception of an affectionate letter from the Muskingum Association, expressive of their warm attachment to the ancient order of the

Baptist Church; and also an interesting epistle from our venerable brother, John Leland, disclaiming any connection with the popular schemes of the day.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted, viz.:

Resolved, That our next meeting be held with the church of Pleasant Valley, Washington Co., Md., on the Monday after the third Lord's day in May, 1833, at the close of the business of the Baltimore Association.

Resolved, That we cordially invite our ministering and other brethren from all parts of the United States, who accord with our views as expressed in our address, to attend our next meeting. Also, that we recommend our address to the consideration of such Baptist Churches as profess to adhere to the ancient faith and order of the Particular Baptists requesting those of them who are disposed to unite with us in the stand which we have taken to give us an expression thereof by messenger or otherwise.

Resolved, That brother Henry Moon be our messenger to the Muskingum Association, and that brother Gilmore write them an affectionate letter on our behalf.

Resolved, That we consider the receiving persons into Baptist Churches upon any ground whatever short of an evidence of their having been born from above, to be a subversion of the ancient principles of the Baptists, of the apostolic example, and of the declaration of the Master that His kingdom is not of this world. Therefore we will not administer baptism to any without receiving the specified change; and we beseech the churches of our faith and order to guard against persons getting in among them through the excitement of their animal feelings, with as much caution as they would watch against receiving persons upon the ground of their receiving baptism as regeneration.

Resolved, That brother Healy superintend the printing of our Minutes, and that he be authorized to print 500 copies.

Resolved, That brethren Samuel Trott, Newark, New Castle Co., Del., Wm. Gilmore, Leesburgh, Loudon Co., Va., Thomas Poteet, Golden, Baltimore Co., Md., Edward Choat, Golden, Baltimore Co., Md., Eli Scott, Golden, Baltimore Co., Md., John Healy, Baltimore City, Md., Thomas Barton, Strakers Ville, Pa., Gilbert Beebe, New Vernon, Orange Co., N.Y., Stephen W. Wolford, Washington City, D.C., Gabriel Conklin, Slate Hill, Orange Co., N.Y., be a Committee of Correspondence.

We beg leave to recommend to the patronage of our brethren a paper published by our brother Gilbert Beebe, entitled "The Signs of the Times."

As some have misunderstood certain expressions in the latter part of his Prospectus relative to the popular institutions of the day, we would say that the views of the editor are such as are expressed in the Address published by us.

We desire at the close of our meeting to acknowledge the kind hand of God, which has been manifested in bringing us together, and permitting us to sit and consult together in harmony and fellowship, and for the affectionate manner in which we have been received by our brethren and friends in this vicinity.

After an affectionate address and prayer by the Moderator, the meeting was adjourned to the time and place above mentioned.

Wm. Gilmore, Moderator
Gabriel Conklin, Clerk

We, the undersigned, do hereunto set our names, as cordially uniting in all the proceedings of this meeting.

Elders:

John Healy	Wm. Gilmore	Edward Choat
Samuel Trott	Thomas Poteet	Thomas Barton
Edward J. Rees	Gilbert Beebe	Gabriel Conklin
Henry Moon	William Wilson*	James B. Bowen*

Brethren:

Araham Cole, Sen.	Lewis R. Cole	Samuel Shawl
Luke Enson	Shadrack Bond	John Ensor
Richard English	Edward Norwood	Joseph Perigoy
Joseph Mattem		

*Elders Wilson and Bowen were not present at the meeting, but having examined the Minutes and Address, have authorized the insertion of their names.

Minutes of the Second Black Rock Meeting

The Elders and Brethren of the Old School Baptists, met agreeable to appointment with the Church at Black Rock, on Monday the 19th day of May 1834, at 9 o'clock a.m.

1. Preaching introductory to business by Brother Beebe, from Rev. 22:11, and also by Brother T.P. Dudley, of Ky. from Acts 20:24.

2. Appointed Brother Thomas Poteet, chairman, and Wm. Wilson, Clerk.

3. It was moved that the Brethren of the Old School who are with us in heart, and who wish to be publicly known as sustaining our views, as published in a former Address, be

invited to come forward and subscribe their names, whereupon the following Brethren subscribe:

Elders:

Edmond J. Reis	Edward Choat	William Wilson
Thomas Poteet	James B. Bowen	Samuel Trott
Wm. K. Robertson	Eli Scott	Thomas Barton
Thomas P. Dudley	Gabriel Conklin	Charles Polkenhorn
Gilbert Beebe		

Brethren:

James W. Allen	Wm. Sellman	Joseph Perigoy
Edward Norwood	Nathan S. White	James M. Dawson
John H. Worthington	John De Voe	Samuel Shawl
Bazel Kelley	David Lowe	Lewis R. Cole
John Griffiths	Luke Ensor	Edward Grice
James L. Pearse	Abel Alderson	James Harrison
Herod Choat	Clement T. Coote	John Ensor

4. On motion resolved, That all our proceedings be done unanimously.

5. Received letters approving of our views, from the church of Old Seneca, the church of Welsh Tract, Del. the Church called Mount Zion, in Hampshire Co., Va. and the Church of Mount Hope, in Chester Co., Pa.

6. Resolved, That we advise our Brethren, generally of the Old School, who may be disposed of address communications, to any future meeting, which as at this time been, or may hereafter be called, expressing their accordance with us, in the stand we have taken relative to the schemes of the day, as declared in the Address we have formerly published, whether these communications be addressed by individuals, by several brethren uniting or by churches as such, that we rejoice to hear from them, by letter when they cannot attend personally, that they stand fast with us, striving together for the faith and order of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But, dear Brethren, permit us to request, that in addressing any such meeting you will avoid those forms used in your letters to Associations, such as appointing Messengers to sit with us in council &c. for we disclaim being an Association of churches or an organized body of any kind; We simply meet as Brethren of one faith, one order and one heart, those brethren who are thus with us, are one with us when we meet; others cannot be invited to a seat with us though sent by churches.

7. Appointed a committee consisting of Brethren Barton, Trott, and Wilson, to prepare an Address.

8. Resolved, That we recommend another meeting of the Baptists of the Old School, to be held with the Ebenezer Baptist church in the City of Baltimore, on the Monday after the 3d Lord's day in May 1835, to commence at 10 o'clock A. M. and that Brother Barton, preach the introductory sermon, and in case of failure Brother Trott.

9. Resolved, That Brother Beebe, be requested to publish the proceedings of this meeting, in the Signs of the Times.

The following Address reported by the committee, was adopted, after which our meeting was closed with prayer and praise.

Concluding Address

The Elders and Brethren, convened at Black Rock, to the Old School Baptists throughout the United States, send Christian salutation.

Dear Brethren:

We have pursuant to appointment again met, through the kind providence of God, and our hearts have been warmed and our spirits cheered by communications both written and verbal from various parts of our beloved country, in relation to God's Zion. With regard to our views of Gospel faith and order as expressed in a former address we still stand fast with increased encouragement and zeal, believing that the various institutions of men, dubbed with the appellation benevolent, and which are the order of the day, will, if not checked, result in any thing other than the real peace and prosperity of Zion. We should profit from the history of past ages, and guard against Priest-craft or the corruptions of that order of men wishing to be distinguished as the Clergy; which order now wield all the machinery, and have a governing influence over all the funds and movements of the various institutions of the day. As they are in a great measure irresponsible, in the appointing of their Agents, and in the expenditure of the vast sums of money collected from a liberal but misguided public, it requires but little knowledge of human nature to divine the consequence. It lays a strong temptation for speculation, and will in the hands of selfish men become a political engine to subvert our civil rights, and the dearer rights of conscience. As the church of Christ is merely an administrative body entrusted along with the application of the laws of her King, it is an arrogant assumption of power to set up any standard of religious action or test of religious obedience not sanctioned by his word; she has not the authority in herself to enact rules for the government or direction of Zion's children, much less, can she delegate this power to others. Has it, Brethren, come to this that our Lord will not or cannot accomplish the purposes of his grace without his people's exerting all their powers to obtain money? Is it so, that there is a necessity for those whom he has called into the gospel ministry, to leave the preaching of the word and the care of the churches over which they have been made overseers, to ravage the country and in the language of the

horse leech's daughters to cry give, give, without ever being satisfied? Could not He who once turned water into wine prevent the necessity of this perversion of the ministerial office, and at the same time provide at once the means, pretendedly so necessary for accomplishing his purpose, by transmuting the native granite of our mountains into gold?

Beloved Brethren, may we ever be kept from imbibing notions so reproachful of the God of our salvation, as these which suspend the purpose of God the efficacy of a Savior's blood and the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, in relation to a great proportion of the human family, upon money, the love of which is the root of all evil.

Brethren, while we rejoice in the glorious truth that salvation is of the Lord, may it be manifested by our lives that we are under the influence of that grace which teacheth that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

Thomas Poteet, Chairman
William Wilson, Clerk