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GEORGIA BAPTISTS
ORGANIZATION AND DIVISION:
1772-1840

Emerson Proctor
GEORGIA BAPTISTS
ORGANIZATION AND DIVISION: 1772-1840

By

Emerson Proctor

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the History Department of Georgia Southern College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History

August 1969

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Committee

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Committee
PREFACE

That segment of Georgia Baptist history culminating with the division over the missionary movement has had no adequate treatment. These events had a deep influence on the subsequent development of Georgia Baptists. It is hoped that this thesis will make a small contribution to that phase of Georgia Baptist history.

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of a number of people who contributed to the completion of this thesis. Dr. Jack Nelson Averitt, Dean of the Graduate School of Georgia Southern College, who directed my research, supplied much encouragement in the selection of this topic and the completion of the thesis. He also made invaluable suggestions to improve the manuscript. I would like to acknowledge the fine suggestions made by Dr. George A. Rogers, who served as second reader. Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Robert D. Ward who served as the third reader. I wish to acknowledge the kindness and assistance of the staff of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tennessee in locating and procuring much of the source material for this thesis. I am also indebted to Mrs. Mary Overby, Special Collections...
Assistant at the Eugene W. Stetson Memorial Library, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia.

I must acknowledge the contribution made by the members of the Jesup Primitive Baptist Church where I was pastor during the period of the research and writing of this work. For their patience and understanding while I devoted so much time to this work, I am deeply grateful. Perhaps most of all, I am indebted to my wife, Uldine S. Proctor, who labored with me through this graduate work, and who typed the thesis. Without her help, I could not have completed it.

Emerson Proctor
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. BAPTIST BEGINNINGS IN GEORGIA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. BAPTIST GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, 1783-1835</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE BAPTISTS ADOPT PROGRESSIVE MEASURES</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. OPPOSITION AND DIVISION</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX I. CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE GEORGIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
BAPTIST BEGINNINGS IN GEORGIA

Individual Baptists were in the very first settlement of the Georgia colony in Savannah in 1733, but there was no organized Baptist church in Georgia until 1772. The first attempt to hold organized worship under Baptist auspices was in 1759 when a group of Seventh-Day Baptists from Prince William, Virginia settled at a place the Indians called Tuchusokin (later called Tuckaseeging) forty miles north of Savannah. This group held services for a while, but no church was ever organized. The members soon became discouraged because of sickness and other misfortunes, and most of them moved to South Carolina.

Another group held services for a short period of time at George Whitefield's Orphan House near Savannah following the conversion of Nicholas Bedegood to Baptist principles in 1757. Bedegood was Whitefield's agent at the Orphan House at the time. He was baptized in 1757 by Oliver Hart, pastor of the

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2 Edwards, Materials for Georgia, pp. 2-3.
Charleston Baptist Church in Charleston, South Carolina and became a member of that church. He was ordained to the ministry by the Charleston Church in 1759. Afterward, in May of 1763, he baptized several people at the Orphan House. For a time, this group held regular services, and Bedgegood administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to them, though there was no church organization. Although this group was organized into a branch (more properly termed an arm) of the Charleston Church, it never became an independent church due to the dispersion of the people. Some of them went back to England, others moved away from the area, and Bedgegood himself returned to South Carolina.3

Benjamin Stirk who worked for a number of years at the Orphan House was one of the individuals baptized by Bedgegood. In 1767 he moved to Newington, Georgia, twenty miles north of Savannah. Shortly thereafter he began holding meetings in his home and other places where he preached although he was not an ordained minister. He soon discovered the remaining Seventh-Day Baptists at Tuckaseeking, a place located twenty miles north of Newington. Stirk was licensed to preach,

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3Edwards, Materials for Georgia p. 4; Jesse Mercer, A History of the Georgia Baptist Association (Washington, Georgia, 1838), p. 13. (Hereinafter cited as Mercer, Georgia Association.) There is some question as to the dates of Bedgegood's ministerial work at the Orphan House. Edwards states that these baptisms occurred in 1763. However, Bedgegood became the pastor of the Welsh Neck Church in South Carolina in 1759. See Leah Townsend, South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1804 (Florence, South Carolina: The Florence Printing Company, 1935), pp. 65-68. (Hereinafter cited as Townsend, South Carolina Baptists.)
an intermediate step before ordination, by the Charleston Church. This practice of the Baptists granted permission to preach, but not to baptize or administer the Lord's Supper. Stirk held regular services at Tuckaseeking and the small congregation became an arm of the Eubaw Baptist Church across the Savannah River in South Carolina although never an organized church.  

The impetus which brought about the organization of Baptist churches in Georgia came from activities outside the colony. The expansion of the Baptist Church in Georgia resulted from the missionary endeavors of the two most influential groups of Baptists in the United States at that time, the Regular Baptists and the Separate Baptists.

The older of the two was the Regular Baptists who had their origin in the northern colonies in the late seventeenth century. However, the name Regular was not applied until the development of the Separate Baptist movement in 1755. Prior to this, they were known generally as Particular Baptists and were closely related to the Particular Baptists in England.

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4 Edwards, Materials for Georgia, p. 3; History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia, compiled for the Christian Index (Atlanta, Georgia: Jas. F. Harrison & Co. Printers and Publishers, 1881), p. 12. (Hereinafter cited as Index, Georgia Baptists.)

The Particular Baptists organized the first Baptist association in the United States. This was the Philadelphia Association organized in 1707 and composed of five churches, two of which were located in Pennsylvania, two in New Jersey, and one in Delaware. This was the only Baptist association in the country prior to 1751. Most of the churches organized during this time either affiliated with the Philadelphia Association or had some correspondence with it. The Philadelphia Association had a direct influence on churches from Virginia to New York. From this body came the leadership and the influence that gave direction to the major incidents in Baptist history in the United States.

The Particular Baptists were Calvinistic in their theology. In 1742, the Philadelphia Association adopted and published the London Confession of Faith of 1689. This confession was formulated by the Particular Baptists in England in 1677 and was approved by a General Assembly of English Particular Baptists in September of 1689. It was based on an earlier confession, that of 1644, but was greatly expanded and bore a marked resemblance to the Presbyterian Westminster Confession of Faith. The Calvinistic tone was much stronger

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6Benedict, Baptists, I, 273. The churches were Pennepeck, and Piscataqua in Pennsylvania, Middletown and Cohanse in New Jersey, and Welsh Tract in Delaware.

7Ibid., I, 595-596.
than that of the 1644 Confession. This doctrinal position of the Philadelphia Association laid the foundation for American Baptist theology.

In the South, however, Baptists were conspicuously few in number before the beginning of the Great Awakening in 1726. This is accounted for in part by the fact that the South was the stronghold of the Established Anglican Church. It was a territory unfriendly to the Baptists who were looked upon as a group of ignorant enthusiasts. Not only this, but the earlier Baptists in Virginia and North Carolina were General Baptists who were Arminian in theology. According to David Benedict, this group of Baptists was negligent in its worship and organization and was the least spiritual of all the Baptist groups. The establishment of Particular Baptist churches in the South, then, came about in two ways; one by emigration of members from other colonies and the other through the program of evangelization implemented by scores of missionaries.

The Charleston Baptist Church, known as the first Baptist church in the South, came into being by the first of these methods. The church was actually organized in Kittery, Maine on September 25, 1682 under the leadership of William Screven. Though there were some Baptists already in South Carolina,

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8 Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions, pp. 235-236, 347-349.
9 Benedict, Baptists, II, 98.
the continuity of this organization was preserved when a large part of this congregation immigrated to South Carolina. Perhaps one or two of this group moved to South Carolina between 1682 and 1696. It is true that there was some form of worship being carried on, either as private individuals or as an unorganized church, before Screven arrived. However, Screven and a large number of the Kittery congregation moved to South Carolina, in the area of Somerton, in 1696. The Kittery church organization was retained, and Screven immediately assumed the pastorate. The Baptists who were already in Charleston united with this group, although it is not certain when. The church evidently moved to Charleston in 1698.10 Under the leadership of Screven, who was a Calvinist, the church adopted the London Confession of Faith in the early years of its organization. Wood Furman says that the Charleston Church held to this statement of faith from the beginning of the eighteenth century. Thus, this body of Baptists was, for the most part, Particular Baptist from the beginning. This is particularly significant since this church furnished leadership for organization of most of the other Baptist churches in South Carolina.11

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Four of the Baptist churches in South Carolina, Charleston, Ashley River, Welsh Neck, and Euhaw, united to form the Charleston Baptist Association in 1751, the second such body to be organized in the United States. Of the four, only one, the Welsh Neck Church, did not spring directly from the Charleston Church. The latter group was a branch of the Welsh Tract Church in Delaware, a member of the Philadelphia Association.  

This movement in South Carolina was spearheaded by the leadership of Oliver Hart, who became pastor of the Charleston Church in 1749. Hart came to South Carolina from Pennsylvania where he had a close connection with the Philadelphia Association. He became convinced of the utility of such an organization and believed a union of this kind would benefit the churches of South Carolina. This was the first association organized in the South and it exerted a significant influence on the development of the Baptist denomination in the whole southern region. Through this association, the Particular Baptists established a strong bridgehead in the deep South.

In Virginia and North Carolina, the introduction of Particular Baptist doctrines came about in quite a different

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12 Townsend, South Carolina Baptists, pp. 5-11, 28-32, 36, 61-63; Benedict, Baptists, II, 134. Although the messengers from the Euhaw Church were unable to attend the first meeting, this church should be considered a charter member of the association.

manner. The Baptists in this area prior to 1750 were General Baptists. Not only were they Arminian in theology, as opposed to the Calvinism of the Particular Baptists, but they were lax in their church organization and discipline. In the decade from 1750 to 1760, almost all of these churches were transformed into Particular Baptist Churches. This movement was initiated by Robert Williams of Welsh Neck, South Carolina, who had a sizable following in North Carolina. Soon after Williams began this evangelical work, he requested the aid of the Philadelphia Association. John Gano was sent by the Philadelphia group in 1754, and later Peter Van Horn and Benjamin Miller came to assist in the missionary efforts of re-forming these churches.14

What was involved in the reorganization of these churches will give a good description of the Particular Baptists. The old church organization was dispensed with and a completely new church was organized. The Eighteenth Century Baptists used the term "constituting" for organizing a church. The ministers from the Philadelphia Association found that many people in these churches had been baptized without being able to give satisfactory evidence of the possession of "vital religion."

The old churches had exercised laxity in discipline over the members and the church organization was weak. The new organization meant that a more closely organized body would take strict account of the conduct and life of its members. Finally, the new church organization involved the acceptance of a Church Covenant which included a statement of the Calvinistic theology of the Philadelphia Association and an outline of strict discipline. This covenant was based on the principles of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. Thus, the reorganization of these churches was termed establishing them on the "Philadelphia" or "Calvinistic" plan.  

This transformation or reorganization touched almost all of the former General Baptist churches in the region and that body of Baptists almost disappeared, giving way to the established doctrines and practices of the Particular Baptists. Their stern discipline also profoundly influenced the lives of those whose creed it came to be.  

Through the work of the ministers from the Philadelphia Association, the Particular Baptists became firmly established in Virginia and North Carolina between 1750 and 1760.  

While this transformation was going on in Virginia and North Carolina, another Baptist group was developing in the


16 Paschal, North Carolina Baptists, pp. 219-220.
same area which had a far-reaching influence on the shape of the Baptist denomination in the entire South. This group came to be called the Separate Baptists and placed emphasis on the doctrine of the "New birth," "believers baptism," and the autonomy of each congregation. The Separate Baptists sprang from the religious "fire" kindled by the Great Awakening under the remarkable ministry of George Whitefield. It was often referred to as the "New light Stir." It had its origin in New England about 1744 where the people involved were originally Presbyterian. They came to believe that the church with which they were associated did not measure up to New Testament Christianity, and they separated from the church, hence the name "Separates." Some of them soon adopted the belief that one should be able to give an account of definite religious experience and make a suitable profession of faith before the church prior to baptism. Shubal Stearns was one such person who was baptized according to this plan in 1751 by Rev. Wait Palmer in Tolland, Connecticut and was ordained to the ministry in that same year. Many others followed a similar course and they became known as Separate Baptists. 17

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Stearns became convinced that God was directing him to leave New England and "move far to the westward, to execute a great and extensive work." In response to this revelation, he and a few of his members journeyed to Berkeley County, Virginia in 1754, where they discovered the Mill Creek Baptist Church whose minister was Samuel Heton.

Shortly before Stearns' arrival, his brother-in-law, Daniel Marshall, another of the "Separates," settled in this area of Virginia. Marshall, who was born at Windsor, Connecticut in 1706, first heard Whitefield in 1742. As a result, he not only became a Separate but he became so aroused with the missionary fervor that he was inspired to preach to and attempt the conversion of the heathen Indians. In 1751, he left his home, along with his wife and three children, on an evangelistic crusade to the Mohawk Indians. After some eighteen months, he was forced to terminate this work because of the Indian wars. Following a stop in Pennsylvania, he went to a place near Winchester, Virginia, where he located the Mill Creek Church. His son Abraham, in a sketch of his father in 1802, related, "(A)s a result of a

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18 Semple, Virginia Baptists, pp. 2, 366-367; Benedict, Baptists, II, 37-38. There is a question as to the identity of the minister in this church when this group came. In a note Semple says, "one of our documents represent the Opeckon (Mill Creek) Church as under the care of John Garrard; and we have so represented in our second page. But in a paper since come to hand and thought to be taken from Mr. Marshall, by Rev. John Williams, Mr. Heton is said to be minister."
close, impartial examination of their faith and order, he and my dear mother were baptized by immersion in the forty eighth year of his life.\textsuperscript{19}

When Stearns and his followers came, Marshall met them and they settled for a short time in Hampshire County, thirty miles from Winchester. They were not successful in the locality and soon became dissatisfied. Many of Stearns' associates had already moved into North Carolina, and they wrote him that "preaching was needed there." Once more Stearns and Marshall set out, this time moving to Guilford County, North Carolina. In November of 1755, they organized the Sandy Creek Baptist Church with sixteen members, the first Separate Baptist Church to be established as such in the colonies.\textsuperscript{20}

Here begins a movement that profoundly changed the direction of all Southern Baptist history. The Separate Baptists spread westward to the Mississippi, southward to Georgia, and northward to Virginia. After this movement began, the Particular Baptists began referring to themselves

\textsuperscript{19}Abraham Marshall, "A Sketch of Daniel Marshall," *The Georgia Analytical Repository*, Henry Holcombe, editor, (1802), 23. (Hereinafter cited as Marshall, "Sketch"). See also Semple, *Virginia Baptists*, p. 369; Benedict, *Baptists*, II, 351. Mill Creek Church was a member of the Philadelphia Association at that time and became a member of the Ketocton Association when it was organized in 1766.

as Regular Baptists. It should be noted that though the Separate Baptists were a distinct group from the Regular Baptists, they did not split off from them. They had a separate origin and they simply declined to unite with them for a long time.

The Separate Baptists were much more evangelistic than the Regular Baptists. The Regular Baptists tended toward "Hyper-Calvinism" and this kept them from strenuous efforts to gain converts. But the Separate Baptists were aflame with missionary zeal. They went everywhere preaching the gospel. It was that evangelistic ardor that spread the Baptist cause all over the South, something that might not have occurred had the Separate Baptists not come to Virginia and North Carolina. 21

It was generally believed in this period that the Separate Baptists tended to subscribe to Arminianism in their doctrine. The Regular Baptists on the other hand were orthodox Calvinists. There was not as much Arminianism among the Separate Baptists as some Regular Baptists thought, for many of the Separate Baptists were strong Calvinists. This conception was due in some measure to the fact that the Separate Baptists refused to adopt a confession of faith. The Separate Baptists were content to take the Bible as the only basis for their beliefs, because they feared that a

confession of faith would come to usurp the place of the Bible. The Regular Baptists, on the other hand, could see no reason for not stating to the world their beliefs. One early Baptist historian explained this difference by saying,

The regular Baptists were jealous of the separate Baptists, because, as yet, they never formed nor adopted any system of doctrine, or made any confession of their faith more than verbally; and it was thought unreasonable, that if they differed from all other denominations, why they should not in a fair, open and candid manner, make known their principles to the world, and in so doing, act as the children of light; and on the other hand, the separate Baptists supposed the adopting a confession of faith would shackle them; that it would lead to formality and deadness, and divert them from the Bible. . . .

The Separate Baptists had distinct characteristics in their pulpit mannerisms. They practiced something of a whine in their voice which resulted in a musical intonation. This along with rather wild gestures made the pulpit performance quite engaging. As Semple put it, "Being often deeply affected themselves while preaching, correspondent affections were felt by their pious hearers, which were

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23Semple, Virginia Baptists, p. 4; Gewehr, The Great Awakening, pp. 110-111.
frequently expressed by tears, tremblings, screams, shouts and acclamations."^23

The manner of dress and regulations pertaining to the reception of members also tended to keep the two groups apart. Incidents that kept the Separate Baptists from commuting with the Regular Baptists are described by Lemuel Burkitt and Jesse Read in the History of the Kehukee Association:

1. They complained of the Regulars not being strict enough in receiving experiences, when persons made application to their churches for baptism, in order to become church members.

2. They refused communion with Regular Baptist churches because they believed that faith in Christ Jesus was essential to qualify a person for Baptism, yet many of the Regular churches had members in them who acknowledged they were baptized before they believed.

3. The Separates found fault with the Regulars for their manner of dress, supposing they indulged their members in superfluity of apparel.^24

One other characteristic of the Separate Baptists, in the period before efforts to merge the two groups were successful, is important. Their missionary activities were confined to the backcountry area of the colonies in which they worked. Settlers were streaming into these areas in

^23 Semple, Virginia Baptists, p. 4; Gewehr, The Great Awakening, pp. 110-111.

^24 Elder Joseph Biggs, A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association (Tarborough, North Carolina: George Howard, 1834), pp. 35-36. This work contains the text of Burkitt and Read's history.
large numbers, and the religion expounded by the Separate Baptists appealed to the independent frontiersman.²⁵

Such was the route taken by Daniel Marshall as he moved to the colony of Georgia. Shortly after the Sandy Creek Church was organized, Marshall began preaching at Abbott's Creek, thirty miles north of Sandy Creek, where many people were baptized under his pastoral activities. As was the usual practice, this group became a branch of the Sandy Creek Church, but they soon desired an independent church. The greatest obstacle to this was the fact that they had no ordained minister, since Marshall had not yet been ordained. Shubal Stearns was the only ordained minister anywhere in the area, and at least two such ministers were needed for an ordinational service. After a Regular Baptist minister in South Carolina refused to aid in this service, saying he had no fellowship with Stearns' party, Henry Ledbetter, who was both Stearns' and Marshall's brother-in-law, came from Lynche's Creek in South Carolina to assist in ordaining Marshall. Marshall became pastor of

²⁵Townsend, South Carolina Baptists, pp. 122-125; Paschal, North Carolina Baptists, pp. 392-394, 413.
Abbott's Creek Church in the period 1756-1758.\footnote{Semple, Virginia Baptists, pp. 4-5, 370-371; Benedict, Baptists, II, 38-40, 35; Marshall, "Sketch," 25; Paschal, North Carolina Baptists, pp. 177-178, 290-292, 389; Townsend, South Carolina Baptists, pp. 95-96, 124-125, 158-159. There is some question as to the date of Marshall's ordination. Abraham Marshall says his father was ordained in the fifty-second year of his age. This was 1758. Paschal, however, believes that the Abbott's Creek Church organization and Marshall's ordination took place as early as 1756. His reason is that John Gano became pastor of the church at the Jersey Settlement, closer to Sandy Creek than the place in South Carolina, not later than 1757. If he had been available, Stearns probably would have asked him since he and Gano were on cordial terms.}

Marshall moved to Beaver Creek in South Carolina in 1760 with a number of the members of the Abbott's Creek Church. The Beaver Creek congregation grew rapidly. Marshall, however, did not long remain at Beaver Creek. In 1762, he and a few of his members moved to Stephen's Creek, ten miles north of Augusta, Georgia. At that place a large congregation soon came together.\footnote{Paschal, North Carolina Baptists, pp. 389; Townsend, South Carolina Baptists, pp. 158-159; Marshall, "Sketch," 25. Paschal says that when Marshall came to Beaver Creek, the Abbott's Creek church organization may have been kept intact. Later many of these people went with Marshall to Stephen's Creek. This place is called Horn's Creek in Abraham Marshall's sketch of his father.}

During Marshall's pastorate at Stephen's Creek, he made his first visit to Georgia. It is not known exactly when he first preached in Georgia, but in January of 1771 he moved to Georgia settling in what is now Columbia County on Kiokee Creek. He lived there for the rest of his life. The remarkable evangelistic zeal of the Separate Baptists reached into Georgia in the person of Daniel Marshall, where it was
to have a profound and lasting influence on the history of Georgia Baptists.

Marshall's fervor did not abate upon his coming to Georgia. He continued to preach in all the surrounding areas on both sides of the Savannah River. Many of Marshall's followers moved to this area and these, along with many others who were baptized, organized a church in the spring of 1772. The Kiokee Church was the first distinct Baptist church to be organized in Georgia. It was a remarkable church in that it served as the mother church of Baptist churches and from the congregation came a sizeable number of Baptist ministers.  

At the very time that Marshall was beginning his work in the upper part of Georgia, incidents in the Coastal region were transpiring which would lead to the organization of the second Baptist church in Georgia. The congregation which Benjamin Stirk brought together as an arm of the Euhaw Church suffered a setback when Stirk died in 1770. However, the little congregation set out to obtain another minister.

Edmund Botsford, who was to be that minister, was born in Bedfordshire, England in 1715. He came to Charleston in 1766. The following year he was baptized by Oliver Hart and united with the Charleston Baptist Church. When Botsford

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29 Edwards, Materials, pp. 5-6.
acknowledged that he felt a call to the ministry, the church asked him to enter upon a course of study. This he did in Charleston under the supervision of Oliver Hart. The church licensed him in February of 1771.

Botsford went on a preaching tour to the Euhaw Baptist Church in South Carolina in 1771. The little congregation at Tuckaseeking, hearing of his presence, invited him to preach to the congregation. He accepted their invitation and preached his first sermon at Tuckaseeking on June 7, 1771.

After his first visit to Tuckaseeking, the congregation asked him to remain as their minister. This he consented to do for a year. Botsford, being a very energetic fellow, was not content to confine his endeavors to one location. He preached throughout the surrounding area in both Georgia and South Carolina. He visited the Kiokee Church in 1772 and became acquainted with Daniel Marshall. They became close friends which produced a united effort to expand the Baptist denomination in Georgia.

Botsford terminated his services at Tuckaseeking during the closing months of 1772 in order to devote all of his

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31 Edwards, Materials, p. 5; Mallary, Botsford, p. 39.

32 Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 19-20.
energies to missionary activities. Travels took him as far South as Ebenezer and as far North as Kiokee in Georgia. In all of these activities, Botsford was quite successful and as a result, the Charleston Church decided to ordain him. This was done on March 14, 1773 with Oliver Hart and Francis Pelot conducting the service. In all of these activities, Botsford was quite successful and as a result, the Charleston Church decided to ordain him. This was done on March 14, 1773 with Oliver Hart and Francis Pelot conducting the service.33

Throughout the years 1773 and 1774 Botsford continued the missionary and evangelistic work. In August of 1773 he wrote, "I rode 650 miles, preached forty-two sermons, baptized twenty-one persons, and administered the Lord's Supper twice."34 One result of this work was the gathering of a congregation at New Savannah, twenty-five miles south of Augusta. These people were organized into a church in November of 1773 by Botsford who was assisted by Oliver Hart and Francis Pelot. The New Savannah Church was the second Baptist church to be organized in Georgia. The building was moved about ten miles from its original location after the Revolution and assumed the name Botsford's Meeting House.35 In 1774 the church became a member of the Charleston Association and was an active participant in that organization until 1779.36

33Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 19-20; Mallary, Botsford, pp. 39-45.
34Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 20.
Botsford moved to Burke County in 1774 after his marriage to Miss Susanna Nun, a native of Augusta who was baptized by Daniel Marshall. He lived there until 1779 when he was forced to leave because of the American Revolutionary War. 37

It was during this period when the first Baptist churches were established in Georgia that the distinctions and the friction between the Separate Baptists and the Regular Baptists disappeared. 38 Indeed, these differences were never great in Georgia, and were not a subject of great controversy in the colony. The organization of Baptist churches in Georgia occurred relatively late as compared to their development in other colonies. By that time, the unresolved differences were well on their way toward solution in Virginia and North Carolina. In those two colonies there was a formal merger, but in South Carolina and Georgia the distinctions were put aside in an informal way. 39

The distinct terminology was never widely used in Georgia. There were "certain slight differences" between them when Botsford and Marshall first came to the colony,

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37 Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 21.
38 Semple, Virginia Baptists, pp. 74-75; Benedict, Baptists, II, 181-103.
but their acquaintance and friendship contributed greatly to the fact that differences between Regular and Separate Baptists were not voiced. Of this, Jesse Mercer says,

Though there were at their first acquaintance, certain slight differences between these ministers with respect to externals, Mr. B. being of what was then called the regular, and Mr. M. of the Separate order. A more intimate acquaintance soon destroyed these distinctions, and these devoted servants of the Most High, became perfectly united in their efforts to disseminate the truth, and to build up the Redeemer's kingdom.40

As the Baptist denomination developed in Georgia, the distinctive features of both the Separate and Regular Baptists were amalgamated to an advantage. The denomination developed theologically along orthodox Calvinistic lines of the Regular Baptists, which gave it a solid and historical foundation. It also caught the missionary fervor of the Separate Baptists and this contributed to its rapid spread and increase. Marshall and a group of licentiates in the Kiokee Church laid the foundation for large growth in the northern sector of the state before the Revolution. Sanders Walker, first Baptist minister ordained in Georgia, Abraham Marshall, son of Daniel, Silas Mercer, Loveless Savidge, Charles Bussy, and several others all went out from the Kiokee Church.41 The influence of the Kiokee Church can be

40Mercer, Georgia Association, p. 16; See also Mallary, Botsford, p. 43.

41Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 23-32.
seen in the development of all the Baptist churches organized in Georgia before or during the Revolution except the New Savannah Church.

The Baptist beginning in Georgia was rather nebulous prior to the Revolution. By 1777, only four churches existed in the colony. During the war, all of the ministers fled the colony except Daniel Marshall. Further growth of the denomination came after the American Revolution when Baptists grew to be one of the largest church organizations in America.\(^{42}\)

\(^{42}\)Mercer, Georgia Association, p. 18. The churches were Kiokee, New Savannah, Red's Creek in 1774, and Little Brier Creek in 1777.
CHAPTER II

BAPTIST GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, 1783-1835

Daniel Marshall and a few licentiates, who remained with him in the upper part of Georgia through the period of the American Revolution, managed to continue their work and to hold the Baptist churches together. As a result of this, the Baptist denomination in Georgia was able to move ahead rapidly in development following the Revolution. The Baptists scattered during the war united and the ministers who fled the state during the war returned. The most notable of the ministers who returned were Silas Mercer and Abraham Marshall and both men settled in Wilkes County. Shortly thereafter new churches were organized, and plans were made to organize an association.¹

Representatives from five Baptist churches; Kiokee, Red's Creek, Brier Creek, Upton's Creek, and Fishing Creek, met at Kiokee Church in the fall of 1784 to make plans for the organization of the Georgia Baptist Association. This was a fitting climax to the outstanding ministry of Daniel Marshall who attended this historic meeting. He had been a great force in bringing Baptists in Georgia to that point

¹Mercer, Georgia Association, p. 18; Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 27.
of development, and this organization influenced the shape and direction which the Baptist denomination in Georgia would take. Marshall died in November, 1784.²

At the time of the organization of the association, there were six Baptist churches in the state. In addition to the four churches mentioned earlier, Fishing Creek Church was established immediately after the war in 1783, and Upton's Creek Church was organized in 1784. While the records leave much to be desired in naming the charter members of this association, evidence points to the fact that all of the churches in Georgia at the time participated in the organization of the Georgia Association except the one which Botsford organized at New Savannah.³ The churches which did participate were in close proximity to each other, located in the area north of Augusta in what was then Richmond and Wilkes Counties.⁴

The New Savannah Church apparently was not in the organization of the Georgia Association, although the early writers do not agree on this point. Since the early records were not

²Mercer, Georgia Association, p. 19; Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 27-28.

³Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, p. 12; Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 27-28.

⁴John Asplund, The Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination in North America (1790), pp. 14-16. (Hereinafter cited as Asplund, Baptist Register.) Georgia Baptist Association Minutes, 1783, 1790, 1792, 1793. (Hereinafter cited as Georgia Minutes.) Kiokee and Red's Creek were in Richmond County, later Columbia County. Brier Creek, Upton's Creek, and Fishing Creek were in Wilkes County. This is the Brier Creek that was organized in 1777 in what was later Warren County.
preserved, only a suggestion can be given as to why the New Savannah Church did not become a charter member of the association. This church did become a member of the Charleston Association in 1774, because of Edmund Botsford's close ties with the leaders of that body. It ceased to be active there after 1779. This was the year Botsford was forced to leave Georgia, apparently because of the British occupation of the area following the Battle of Brier Creek. It is likely that the members became scattered after this incident and simply did not meet as a church during the remaining war years. The author of the History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia states that the New Savannah Church dwindled away and almost became extinct during the war. This hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that the church was moved to a new location after the war and was given a new name. Assuming that New Savannah was an active church in 1784, it is reasonable to predict that the congregation did not come into the association when it was organized because of the distance from Kiokee. It was a long way from Brier Creek in Burke County to Kiokee Church in those days. This church, later

5Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, p. 12.

6Charleston Minutes, 1775, 1777, 1778, 1779, 1785, 1786, 1787, 1788, 1789, 1790, 1791. It was listed in the Charleston Minutes until 1790. From 1780 to 1790, the same number of members is shown in the statistical table with an indication that no representative was present. This was a common practice when no word was received from a church.

7Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 21, 33.
called Brier Creek, was a member of the Georgia Association in 1788, the earliest year for which records of the association are extant.\(^8\)

The Georgia Baptist Association was immediately recognized by its South Carolina counterpart. At the session of the Charleston Association in 1785, "A letter and copy of minutes were received from an association lately formed, which were brought by the Reverend Messrs. Silas Mercer and Peter Smith, their messengers to us, who were cordially received as such."\(^9\) Georgia Baptists immediately fell into the mainstream of Southern Baptist development and Georgia Baptists were united in a common cause which, from that time forward, showed amazing growth.

From the time of its organization, the Georgia Association showed steady increase. By 1788, the first year for which the Minutes are preserved, there were 30 churches in the association with a total of 2,223 members.\(^10\) The

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\(^8\)Georgia Minutes, 1788. There is no record of this church being given a letter of dismission from the Charleston Association. This is another indication that it was revived after the war.

\(^9\)Charleston Minutes, 1785.

\(^10\)Georgia Minutes, 1788; Benedict, Baptists, II, 189-191. At least four of these churches were located in South Carolina. However, this number did not include a Negro Baptist Church which Abraham Marshall organized in Savannah in 1788. It was listed but was not considered a member. It is also possible that there were some churches in Georgia which were not members of the association. In Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 24, thirty-three churches are given with 2,250 members.
number of churches had grown to 42 with a membership of 3,211 members in 1790.\textsuperscript{11}

The increase occurred for the most part in the up country of Georgia. Twenty-two churches were organized in Wilkes County between the close of the war and 1790.\textsuperscript{12} The growth can be attributed in large measure to the extraordinary evangelistic zeal brought to Georgia by the Separate Baptists and the system which Daniel Marshall inaugurated at Kiokee Church of licensing promising men for itinerant work. This resulted in a number of outstanding ministers going forth from this church. Among these were Silas Mercer and Abraham Marshall who were in the forefront of Baptist activity in the up country. On the other hand, there were simply no ministers in the Coastal region to take the initiative in establishing new churches. The location of the churches in 1790 will give an indication of where the preponderance of Baptist activity took place. There were twenty-two churches in Wilkes County, thirteen in Greene County, one in Franklin County, three in Washington County, two in Richmond County,

\textsuperscript{11}Asplund, \textit{Baptist Register}, pp. 44-47; Benedict, \textit{Baptists}, II, 177. The figures in the text are Asplund's. The Minutes list thirty-five churches, of which four were in South Carolina, and 2,377 members.

\textsuperscript{12}Index, \textit{Georgia Baptists}, p. 31; Asplund, \textit{Baptist Register}, pp. 44-46.
eight in Burke County, two in Effingham County, and one in Chatham County.  

The Baptist growth paralleled that of the rate of increase of population of the state. There were 50,000 people living in Georgia when the Revolution broke out. This number had increased to 82,584 by 1790. The influx of settlers who came to Georgia settled mostly in the up country, and this accounts in part for the rapid Baptist growth in that region of the state.

The Georgia Association had reached such size and included such a large geographical area that it was thought best to organize another association by 1793. When the association met that year, fifty-six churches sent representatives. It was agreed that "all the churches in the lower part of our union who see fit to form another meeting of this nature have our consent; and that the one be called The Upper District Georgia Baptist Association, the other The Lower District Georgia Baptist Association."  

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13 Asplund, Baptist Register, pp. 44-46; Merton Coulter, Georgia A Short History (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960), p. 150-151. (Hereinafter cited as Coulter, Georgia History.) Under the constitution of 1777, eight counties were formed. They were Burke, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Richmond, and Wilkes. Two more were added from the Creek cession of 1753, Franklin and Washington. Greene was created out of Washington in 1786.

14 Coulter, Georgia History, pp. 13, 196.

15 Georgia Minutes, 1793.
The records of the new association prior to 1808 are non-existent, thus the difficulty in reporting the number of churches in the organization of this association with any degree of accuracy. The historian of that body, Washington L. Kilpatrick, wrote that there were at least nineteen churches and eight hundred members in its organization. Some twenty-two churches were released from the Georgia Association in 1794 to unite with the new association and it is likely that two of these were South Carolina churches that chose to unite with the Bethel Association, a body organized in that state in 1789.16 The new association included the present areas of Effingham, Burke, and the lower parts of Washington and Warren Counties. In its first session this association adopted the name Hephzibah rather than the one suggested by the parent body.17

There was one other Baptist association organized in the state prior to 1800. The Georgia Association released nine additional churches to organize a new association in the northern part of the state in 1798. These churches met

16 Mercer, Georgia Association, pp. 28, 34; Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 34; Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, pp. 15, 30; Townsend, South Carolina Baptists, pp. 160-161, 229-230. Kilpatrick had the records back to 1804 when he wrote his work in 1894.

17 Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, pp. 13-14; Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 34.
at Shoal Creek Meeting House in Franklin County in May of 1799 to organize the Sarepta Association. In its first regular session in 1800 this association reported 14 churches and 797 members. 18

The Baptist denomination in Georgia was organized in three associations by 1800. Although the records of the Georgia and Hephzibah Associations are not in existence for the year 1800, there is evidence to support the report of sixty-five to seventy churches in the state with an aggregate membership of five thousand. 19 In the decade between 1790 and 1800, while Baptists experienced this kind of growth, the population of the state grew to 162,686. 20 Baptist development continued to keep pace with the growth of the state.

The Baptist denomination as a whole experienced a remarkable revival of religious fervor in the period 1800 to 1803. In the territory of Kentucky alone, over ten thousand persons were baptized in the three years. Georgia

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18 Sarepta Baptist Association Minutes, 1799, 1800. (Hereinafter cited as Sarepta Minutes.) Mercer, Georgia Association, pp. 37-38; Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 34-66.

19 Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 65-66; Sarepta Minutes, 1800. The Georgia Association contained fifty-six churches in 1793, the year before the Hephzibah Association was organized. According to Mercer, the Georgia Association contained 32 churches in 1795 and 40 in 1798, the year the Sarepta was formed. The Sarepta grew from 9 churches in its organization to 14 in 1800. There must have been 31 churches in the Georgia Association in 1800.

20 Coulter, Georgia History, p. 196.
Baptists underwent a similar revival. In 1802, the Georgia Association reported 732 persons baptized and the Sarepta recorded 1,050 baptisms. 21

Baptist activity in the Coastal area increased during the closing years of the eighteenth century. The first Baptist congregation constituted in Savannah was a Negro church, organized by Abraham Marshall in 1788, being the first Negro Baptist church to be organized in America. 22

The Newington Baptist Church was organized in 1793 and consisted of some of the Baptist families who had lived in the area for about fifty years. John Goldwire, who came from South Carolina, became its first pastor. The Savannah Baptist Church was organized subsequent to the arrival of Henry Holcombe in the city in 1799. His ministry was quite successful there, and the church was organized in 1800. These three churches united to organize the Savannah Association in 1802. According to Holcombe, these churches, with a membership of eight hundred, were located in a geographical area of about forty miles. 23

21 Georgia Minutes, 1803; Sarepta Minutes, 180; Mercer, Georgia Association, pp. 4-43; Benedict, Baptists, II, 188, 51; Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 43-45.


23 Benedict, Baptists, II, 183-185; Georgia Analytical Repository, Henry Holcombe, editor, (1802), 75-76; Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 66.
This association also experienced rapid growth during the first years of the nineteenth century. Although some churches in South Carolina joined this body, the number of Georgia churches grew to 8 by 1804 with a membership of 1,418.

The earliest year for which figures are extant for all of the associations in the state is 1804. The Georgia Association contained 36 churches with 3,544 members, the Hephzibah recorded 23 churches with 1,492 members, and the Sarepta had 35 churches with 2,903 members. The associations had a total of 102 churches with 9,357 members. These figures reveal the truly remarkable growth of Georgia Baptists during the first five years of the nineteenth century. Well over three thousand members were added to these churches by baptism alone.

The activity of the Baptists generally followed the course of settlement in Georgia. Lands in the central part of the state, between the Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers, were opened to white settlement by the Indian cessions of 1802 and 1804. Settlers, many of whom were Baptists, rapidly converged upon these lands, and many new Baptist churches were organized in this area. Most of them united with the

24Georgia Minutes, 1804; Sarepta Minutes, 1804; Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 66-67.
Georgia Association. The number of churches in that body increased from thirty-four to fifty-two in the years between 1805 and 1810.25

In November of 1810 twenty churches, released from the Georgia Association, along with four others, organized the Ocmulgee Baptist Association at Rooty Creek Meeting House, near Eatonton, Georgia. These churches were located in the counties of Randolph, Morgan, Putnam, Baldwin, and Jones.26

The population of Georgia reached 252,432 in the census of 1810.27 The growth of Georgia Baptists continued to keep pace with the ever-expanding population. In 1813, there were five Baptist associations in the state. The Georgia Association had 35 churches with 3,428 members; the Hephzibah, 36 churches with 2,037 members; the Sarepta, 44 churches with 3,140 members; the Ocmulgee, 39 churches with 2,850 members; and the Savannah River had 10 churches with 4,300 members. This made a grand total of 164 churches and 15,755 members at the close of the first decade of the nineteenth century.28

25Georgia Minutes, 1805, 1810; Coulter, Georgia History, pp. 218-219.
26Ocmulgee Baptist Association Minutes, Bound Volume, 1810, p. 4; (Hereinafter cited as Ocmulgee Minutes.) Benedict, Baptists, II, 179; Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 66; Coulter Georgia History, pp. 18-24. Randolph County later became Jasper County. These counties were laid out mostly from the original Baldwin County.
27Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 65.
28Ocmulgee Minutes, 1813; Sarepta Minutes, 1813; Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 66-67. Note that the name of the Savannah Association was changed to the Savannah River Association in 1806. This was to reflect the fact that churches in both South Carolina and Georgia were in this body.
In the decade between 1815 and 1824, the rate of growth for Baptist churches declined considerably. Despite the fact that five new associations were organized, the numerical growth was not half what it had been the previous ten years. Much was reported about the "low state of religion" in the various associations during these lean years. In most of them, days of fasting and prayer were appointed. In 1816 the Hephzibah Association agreed to observe "a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer" that God would "bless our country, revive religion, and pour out a plentiful effusion of His Holy Spirit upon all the churches of His saints."\(^{29}\)

Georgia lived in a state of turmoil during the greater part of the period 1808 to 1815. The difficulties of the United States and Great Britain caused economic hardships in Georgia. All of the frontier of Georgia was menaced by Indian Attacks until the Creeks were finally subdued in 1814. From 1814 until the end of the war in 1815, Georgia faced the great probability of an invasion from the English. Only the end of the war saved the state from widespread destruction. Most of these threats were ended by 1815, but it took a while for religious life in the state to recover.\(^{30}\)

The author of the History of the Baptist Denomination in

\(^{29}\)Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 65.

Georgia gives this assessment of the influence of these events on religion in Georgia: "These wars cast over the religious spirit of the day a pall of gloom and discouragement that lasted for years."\(^3\)

The first of the associations organized during this period was the Ebenezer Association created by churches in the Hephzibah and Ocmulgee Associations, eight in the former and six in the latter. The organizational meeting took place at Cool Springs Meeting House, in Wilkinson County, in March of 1814.\(^3\) These churches were located generally in Wilkinson, Laurens, Twiggs, and Pulaski Counties.

The Piedmont Association was organized in the southeastern part of the state in 1815. The first meeting was held at "Little Canoochie," however, only Sarepta Church, Jones Creek, and Wesley's Chapel became charter members. These churches were located in Tattnall and Liberty Counties. The Piedmont Association remained small in number throughout the nineteenth century.\(^3\)

\(^3\)Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 89.

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 88-89, 126; Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, p. 31.

\(^3\)Piedmont Baptist Association Minutes, 1815; Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 89. The Index author states that the Piedmont was organized in 1817. This is an error. The manuscript minutes of this body, now at Mercer University, show that it was organized on October 20, 1815. It is not clear whether any of these churches had been in other associations prior to this time. Two other churches, Upper Black Creek and Beard's Creek, were present but did not join at the time.
The Tugalo Association was organized in the northeastern part of Georgia in 1817. Eleven churches, some of which were in South Carolina, were given letters of dismission from the Sarepta Association to form this association.\textsuperscript{34} In 1824 two other associations were organized. These were the Flint River and the Yellow River Associations. Each of them had twenty churches in its organization. The churches composing the Yellow River Association were located in Walton, Newton, Hall, Gwinett, and Dekalb Counties. Those in the Flint River Association were found in Pike, Henry, Monroe, Fayette, Crawford, and Bibb Counties.\textsuperscript{35}

There were 10 associations in Georgia in 1824 composed of 264 churches with a membership of 13,108.\textsuperscript{36} The location of these associations indicates that the Baptist denomination was organized throughout the state of Georgia.

After this rather slow period in Baptist growth during the period of the second war with England, another period of rapid growth for the Baptists occurred in the 1820's. Beginning in 1827, at Eatonton, Georgia, a new religious fervor took hold of scores of people. Within two years, the author

\textsuperscript{34}Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 89.

\textsuperscript{35}Yellow River Baptist Association Minutes, 1824. (Hereinafter cited as Yellow River Minutes.) Flint River Baptist Association Minutes, 1824. (Hereinafter cited as Flint River Minutes.)

\textsuperscript{36}Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 130; Minutes of the General Association of the Baptist Association in Georgia, 1825. Figures vary in these sources. The last named source here gives 260 churches with 18,484 members.
of the History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia relates, approximately sixteen thousand persons were baptized. In 1828 the Georgia Association reported 1,761 baptized and in the Flint River 1,869 persons submitted to baptism. The Yellow River Association reported an increase of twenty churches from 1824 to 1829. The membership increased from 662 in 1824 to 2,712 in 1829. In 1829 there were 16 associations in the state, 356 churches with 28,268 members.

This movement did not soon abate. Eighteen associations had been organized by 1831. In the years between 1824 and 1831 the following associations were formed: the Columbus, the Houston, the Washington, the Western, the Chattahoochee, the Canoochee, the Echeconnee, and the Ochlochonee. In 1831 there were 486 Baptist churches in the state boasting 37,072 members.

Six additional associations had been organized by 1835. These were the Bethel, the Central, the Chattahoochee River, the Hightower, the Coosa, and the Mountain. At that

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37Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 177.
38Georgia Minutes, 1827, 1828; Flint River Minutes, 1828.
39Yellow River Minutes, 1824, 1826, 1829.
40Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 180-181.
41Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 180-181; I. M. Allen, The United States Baptist Annual Register for 1832 (Philadelphia: Printed by T. W. Ustick, 1833), pp. 16-165. Again figures vary from one source to another. The Index compiler gives 506 churches and 37,490 members.
time, the latest period covered in this study, there were 572 Baptist churches in Georgia which had a total membership of 42,949. Thus, in the decade from 1825 to 1835 the number of Georgia Baptists more than doubled growing from 18,108 to 42,949. This growth from the very nebulous beginning of one church in 1772 to more than forty thousand members in the state by 1835 was remarkable. The conditions which existed during that period, although far from ideal, were well suited to the hardy Baptists. Their deep personal convictions coupled with an enterprising spirit made a combination which fitted them to face the rigors of the frontier, for it was there that they flourished.

The Baptists in Georgia, as elsewhere, were wholeheartedly devoted to the ideals of religious freedom and liberty of conscience. They believed that God dealt with the individual directly, without the aid of any intermediary whatsoever. Each individual, therefore, should be free to worship according to that which he perceived to be the will of God. The Baptists insisted that no institution or church was necessary to interpret the will of God, but each individual possessed the capacity to determine it for himself. This

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42I. M. Allen, The Triennial Baptist Register (Philadelphia; Baptist General Tract Society, 1836), pp. 19-03. (Hereinafter cited as Allen, Triennial Register.) The index compiler gives 583 churches and 41,810 members.
explains why men like Daniel Marshall and Shubal Stearns simply struck out through the wilderness under the direction of no man. They believed that God communicated directly with individuals thus giving rise to the expression the "immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit."

Believing this, it is understandable that the early Baptists were devoted to liberty for the individual conscience. What they claimed for themselves, they were generally willing to grant to others. Since they felt it an inalienable right to form their own ideas of the will of God, they also recognized that right for others. The Circular Letter of the Georgia Association in 1792 spoke of this liberty in this way:

And while we have endeavored to communicate our sentiments freely to each other, and to contend earnestly for the faith that we each one conceived to be once delivered to the Saints, we thank the Lord for the light that we hope is diffused thereby.

We always think it is expedient to signify that Jesus Christ is King in Zion, and that every Subject ought to obey him as Lord, according to what in his own conscience he believes to be contained in the Sacred Word: yet will it be necessary to possess great Submission, and take heed of being self-willed.43

It is important to note that they spoke of the need of "Submission" and warned against being "self-willed."

Naturally, there was some diversity among them, particularly

43Georgia Minutes, 1792.
in their modes of expression. This was a natural outgrowth of this liberty of conscience. The Circular Letter called upon them to be tolerant of the ideas of others. The removal of the differences between the Separate Baptists and Regular Baptists attests to their tolerance.

Very closely related to liberty of conscience was the Baptist belief that a religion established by civil law and supported by the state led to the subversion of religious freedom. Baptists opposed any interference by the state in matters of religion. Their attitude is clearly shown by the way they reacted to a law passed by the General Assembly of Georgia in 1785 providing for the financial support of religion. By this enactment, a minister was to be supported out of public funds in each county for each thirty heads of families. Though the act provided that all sects and denominations of the Christian religion should have "free and equal liberty and toleration," the Baptists vigorously opposed it. The Georgia Association sent a remonstrance to the legislature outlining their reasons for opposing it. This is a very cogent statement of the Baptists' reasons for opposing all mingling of church and state. They believed such a law, rather than supporting religion and serving the interests of the state, would be injurious to both. Baptists insisted that religious societies were not formed by, nor were they the creatures of, the legislatures in places where Christianity happened to be professed,
"(R)eligion," they said, "does not need such carnal weapons as acts of assembly and civil sanctions, nor can they be applied to it without destroying it." Christians recognized a duty to obey magistrates and give them honor, "but to give them the honor due to Christ would be the readiest way to ruin them: Christ is the King and Lord of the conscience, and it is an encroachment upon His prerogative for civil rulers to interfere in matters pertaining thereto." Furthermore, they felt that when legislators presume to make laws to govern the church, they were acting beyond their province. When they make one regulation, they declared, "they (may) make others; your remonstrants, therefore, look on the legislators assuming the headship of the church and making provision for its support, as a stepping stone to the establishment of a particular denomination in preference and at the expense of the rest."

They believed that the practice of making regulations for the church would soon lead to the state's determining "who shall preach, where they shall preach, what they shall preach."44

It is certain that this remonstrance did have an influence on the legislature. Although the act was not repealed, there is no evidence that it ever went into effect. The obnoxious law was finally repealed by the Constitution of 1789.45

44Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 260-263. Both the act and the remonstrance are printed in this source.

At the state convention when the Georgia Constitution of 1798 was written, Jesse Mercer, son of Silas Mercer and one of the most important Baptists of the nineteenth century, was present and took a very active part in the proceedings. The author of the History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia states that Mercer wrote the section dealing with liberty of conscience in matters of religion.\textsuperscript{46}

The purely theological views of the early Baptists in Georgia were predominantly Calvinistic. While no extensive record remains of the beliefs of the early ministers, some of them have been preserved. Nothing of a precise nature is known of the specific belief of Daniel Marshall, but the views of Edmund Botsford are well known.

His biographer, Charles Dutton Mallory, describes him as a "truly evangelical preacher, neither an antinomian, nor a legalist; neither an armenian (sic), nor a high-toned calvinist. . . . Though a firm believer in predestination, yet he put such a construction upon the doctrine as to leave all men in a state of strict accountability."\textsuperscript{47} In a letter to a Mr. Inglesby, Botsford described his own theology in these terms:

> For my own part (he wrote) I am what is called a stiff predestinarian, as I think

\textsuperscript{46}Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 263.

\textsuperscript{47}Mallory, Botsford, p. 220.
the Bible is full of it, but in such a manner as leaves every person inexcusable, who neglects the great salvation, and calls sinners, in general, to come to Christ, and promises relief to those who come. True I also believe that all who come to Christ are drawn by the Father, and given to him by the Son, who will receive them, grant them every grace, uphold them under all their trials, sanctify them by his spirit, and prepare them for glory.

When I preach, I do not preach to sinners as elect or non-elect, but to them as sinners; and as such invite them, even the vilest, to the marriage feast, and assure them no qualification is necessary to introduce them to the notice of Christ, if they feel themselves sinners.48

Other strong Calvinists among the early Baptist preachers were Jeptha Vining and Silas Mercer. Of Vining, Jesse Mercer wrote, "He preached the doctrine of election without reserve—it was his theme—and yet few have been more successful in the conversion of sinners to God, and in promoting practical godliness in the churches."49

Silas Mercer's devotion to the Calvinistic system is illustrated by his encounter with Jeremiah Walker. Walker came to Georgia sometime after 1785 from his native Virginia. After being active in Baptist denominational affairs, he became an Arminian and a big controversy resulted. He was separated from the Baptists sometime after 1788, when he

48 Mallary, Botsford, p. 220.
49 Mercer, Georgia Association, 385-386.
is listed as pastor of the Hebron Church and clerk of the association.\(^5\) He then formed a small group, known as General Baptists, with several churches in Georgia and South Carolina.\(^5\)

Both Silas Mercer and Walker attended the 1791 session of the General Committee of Virginia, which followed the theological controversy in Georgia. Semple says that the two men were "much at variance upon doctrine of free will, and free grace; or as they are sometimes, by way of distinction called, Calvinism and Arminianism. Mr. Mercer was a decided Calvinist, and Mr. Walker, as decided an Arminian." Both preached at the Virginia meeting, each presenting his doctrine. The result was an acrimonious debate. After the meeting, they both remained in Virginia and preached in a number of places throughout the state. Semple says that the result of this episode was "a decrease of Arminianism among the Baptists of Virginia, and

\[^5\textit{Georgia Minutes, 1788, 1790. After 1788, his name disappears from the roll of the association.}\]

\[^5\textit{Benedict, Baptists, II, 391; Mercer, Georgia Association, pp. 27, 34-35; Townsend, South Carolina Baptists, pp. 193-194; Charles Dutton Mallary, Memoirs of Elder Jesse Mercer (New York: Printed by John Gray, 1844), pp. 201-202. (Hereinafter cited as Mallary, \textit{Mercer}.) Walker adopted the idea of what was then called "universal provision," which meant that the death of Christ provided for the salvation of all men, but did not actually procure the salvation of any. When Jesse Mercer wrote of this incident in 1836, many years later, he said that no division occurred in the controversy until Walker espoused the doctrine of "final apostasy," which meant that some for whom Christ died would fall away and finally be lost. The point Mercer makes is that Walker was tolerated until he took this final step.}\]
a much greater uniformity in the doctrines of Grace."  

Mercer was evidently an able defender of the Calvinistic doctrine.

There were some others among the early Georgia Baptist ministers who were not strong Calvinists. Among these, according to Jesse Mercer, was Abraham Marshall. Of Marshall, Mercer says, "(He) was never considered a predestinarian preacher. To use his own figure; he use to say, 'he was short legged and could not wade in such deep water.' He, with several others, was considered sound in the faith, though low Calvinists."  

There were no formal declarations of faith to state the doctrines adhered to by the Baptists when the first churches were organized in Georgia. Evidently, the first articles of faith adopted by Georgia Baptists were those approved by the Georgia Association in the session in 1790 which was based on the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.  

This Confession of Faith was a significant document because it became the model and stated the fundamental beliefs for Georgia Baptists for years to come.

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52 Semple, Virginia Baptists, pp. 81-83. Of course, the Calvinists were in the great majority anyway.

53 Mallary, Mercer, pp. 201-202. A low Calvinist was one who was not so strong on such doctrines as God's decrees, predestination, and unconditional election.

54 Georgia Minutes, 1790. This Confession of Faith was written by a committee appointed at the 1789 session of the association. See appendix I for the full text of this document.
When the Sarepta Association was organized in 1799, the membership adopted this same Confession of Faith. The Comulgee and the Yellow River Associations did likewise.

When the Savannah Association was formed in 1802, the London Confession of Faith of 1689 was adopted, along with the Summary of Church Discipline of the Charleston Association.

A number of other associations agreed to an abbreviated form of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, which was called an "Abstract of Principles." 

Likewise in the individual churches, there was no standard Confession of Faith. The members either formulated their own or chose the one which best suited them. The articles of faith of many local churches show the influence of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. For example, the Hebron Church in Bulloch County, constituted as Scull Creek Church in 1801, adopted the Articles of Faith and Constitution of the Georgia Association. The Nevils Creek Church in

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55 Sarepta Minutes, 1799.
56 Comulgee Minutes, 1810, p. 4; Yellow River Minutes, 1824.
57 Georgia Analytical Repository, Henry Holcombe, editor, (1802), 76-77.
58 Asplund, Baptist Register, pp. 53-54. Asplund quotes all of this "Abstract of Principles" here. This was adopted by the Flint River, Ebenezer, and Echocconnee Association.
59 Hebron Church Record Book. In 1843 this church sought to give an account of the period from 1804 to 1818, for which period the records were lost. It is stated, however, that the original church covenant had been preserved.
Bulloch County had articles of faith based on the "Abstract of Principles" of the Philadelphia Confession.60

The Articles of Faith of the Little Ogeechee Baptist Church, organized in 1790, are particularly interesting in that they show the independent character of the early Baptists. This confession is a good deal longer than the others referred to, and does not show the direct influence of either the Philadelphia or London Confession. The language used and many of the spellings employed indicate that it is the work of a rustic frontiersman. It was, however, just as Calvinistic as any of the others. It has detailed articles on unconditional election and particular redemption. It contains articles dealing with more practical subjects such as ministerial support, teaching children and servants, and the singing of psalms.61

There was always some skepticism among the Baptists regarding the utility of confessions of faith. It will be remembered that this was one of the reasons the Separate Baptists declined a union with the Regular Baptists. This

60Nevil's Creek Baptist Church Minutes. The pages are not numbered.

61Little Ogeechee Church Record Book. The record book does not date back to the organization of this church, but the Articles of Faith are said to be the original ones. It should be noted that the Philadelphia Confession contained an article on the singing of psalms and hymns as a church ordinance. The Little Ogeechee Church left it to personal choice.
continuing hesitation was demonstrated in a series of events in 1808-1810, years after the Georgia Association had adopted a declaration of faith. In 1808, Jesse Mercer introduced a resolution in the Georgia Association calling upon the body to "examine the Confession of Faith adopted by the Charleston Association, with a summary of discipline annexed, with a view to its adoption." That same year a resolution was put forward in the Hephzibah Association "to obtain the Philadelphia Confession of Faith and summary of discipline, to be inspected at our next meeting, in order for publication, if adopted." The next year Jesse Mercer brought a copy of the Philadelphia Confession to the association. It was then pointed out that the Hephzibah Association had appointed a similar committee and that they desired to work in concert. The Georgia committee, "the bre. Marshall, Matthews, Baker, and Mercer, were appointed to meet said committee on Saturday before the first Sabbath in May next for that purpose."

This committee made its recommendation in 1810. Jesse Mercer reported:

That after carefully and thoroughly examining the subject, they were of the opinion that, (though the fathers might under peculiar circumstances, have reasons requiring them to make a

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62 *Georgia Minutes*, 1808.

63 *Hephzibah Minutes*, 1808.

64 *Georgia Minutes*, 1809. The *Hephzibah Minutes* for 1809 are missing.
confession of faith) under the present state of free inquiry, light and liberty it is unnecessary to make or adopt any. In which the association unanimously concurred.\textsuperscript{65}

The Hepzibah committee gave a similar report the same year, and went farther to say, "\textit{t} is further the opinion of this association that the Scriptures are alone sufficient for our rule and guide in Church Discipline."\textsuperscript{66}

While this may lead to the conclusion that Georgia Baptists repudiated the principle of making formal declarations of faith, this was not the case. The Georgia Association already possessed one. Many of the other associations adopted their own as they were organized. The fear expressed here was probably that of establishing a rigid, uniform Confession of Faith for all Georgia Baptists, particularly with regard to church discipline. Baptists believed it better to leave this matter to the discretion of each local church and new association.\textsuperscript{67}

This again points up the independence of the early Baptists and their regard for liberty of conscience.

The views held by Baptists on the subject of baptism contributed most to a uniformity of views. Baptists required baptism by immersion or dipping only after a

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Georgia Minutes}, 1810. These peculiar circumstances may have been the apostasy of Jeremiah Walker.

\textsuperscript{66}\textit{Hephzibah Minutes}, 1810.

\textsuperscript{67}Kilpatrick, \textit{Hephzibah Association}, pp. 25-26, 56.
suitable profession of faith. Anything less than this was not considered baptism. As a result, they rejected infant baptism and any mode other than dipping. When a person came to unite with the Baptists who had been baptized in infancy or sprinkled, he must be baptized according to the Baptist belief. This, among other things, gave a congregation an opportunity to judge the total qualifications of the person for church membership.

This policy of baptizing again led to Baptists being called Ana-Baptists by their enemies, although the Baptists themselves rejected this name. This term signified re-baptism or baptizing a second time and the Baptists felt that they were baptizing such applicants for membership for the first time according to the Scriptures. If a person had been sprinkled or baptized in infancy, or even immersed, but in unbelief, the Baptists contended this did not constitute baptism.68

In the process of time, the Baptists came to put stricter construction on what constituted valid baptism. In the formative years of the denomination in America, the tendency was to accept baptism on a profession of faith by dipping, even by ministers of other faiths. The time came when this was frowned upon in Georgia, as well as elsewhere.

68 Benedict, Baptists, I, 46-135. Benedict here gives a short history of baptism, showing the origin of the terms Anabaptist, and also the use of the word Baptist as a name of a religious society.
An episode which occurred in Georgia, beginning in 1788, illustrates this change in attitudes.

A Methodist preacher, one James Hutchinson, became dissatisfied with the discipline and faith of that society and joined the Baptist Church at Clark’s Station, where the Georgia Association met in 1788. He had been immersed upon his profession of faith by a Methodist minister and did not wish to repudiate this baptism. The Clark's Station Church received him on these grounds, and the Association concurred in this, for the Minutes state that he was "admitted a Help." 69

However, this was not the end of the matter. Mercer states that many were not pleased with such a course, and that it led to confusion. 70 Hutchinson soon made a trip to his native Virginia, where he began preaching as a Baptist. He baptized a large number of people who soon organized into a church. When the church applied for admission in the Ketocton Association, the validity of Hutchinson’s baptism was questioned, and consequently those whom he had baptized. The association decided that all the baptisms were invalid and refused to admit the church into the association. 71 At this point, Hutchinson agreed to be

69 Georgia Minutes, 1788.
70 Mercer, Georgia Association, p. 23.
71 Mercer, Georgia Association, p. 23; Semple, Virginia Baptists, p. 302.
re-immersed on terms set by the Baptists, as did most of the people he had baptized, and the problem was solved. Although this action reversed the decision of the Georgia Association, most Georgia Baptists probably concurred with the Ketocton Association by the time this incident took place. Mercer expresses his approbation of this action by the Ketocton Association by saying, "So much for admitting a Pedobaptist administration of the ordinance of baptism."

In commenting on this case and the general practice among the Baptists at the time, Robert B. Semple says:

This proceeding on this occasion, was more strict than that of any other association upon the same subject. The question has been before most of the associations, at one time or other; and in every other instance they either deemed it unnecessary to rebaptize, or left it to the conscience of the party to be rebaptized or not. The arguments were: That the most important prerequisite to baptism was faith in the subject. That, although it was expedient to have a fixed rule for qualifying persons for the administration of the ordinances, yet the want of such qualifications in the administrator, ought not be viewed as having sufficient weight to invalidate the baptism. On the other hand it was argued: that if such baptism was sanctioned, everything like ordination might be dispensed with: That, ordination was not only expedient, but an institution of the bible, and therefore indispensible: That such proceedings, if allowed, might go to great lengths, and, ultimately produce confusion.

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72 Mercer, *Georgia Association*, p. 23. Pedobaptists were those who practiced infant baptism.

This latter view became the general practice in Georgia. Baptism then became more closely linked to the organization of the church. It was seen more as an ordinance of the church than a ministerial one. All baptisms not administered under the authority of a Baptist church were regarded as invalid, regardless of any other considerations. This position was stated by Jesse Mercer in the Circular Letter for the Georgia Association in 1811. He argued that the apostolic church, the church instituted by Christ, had maintained an uninterrupted succession from apostolic times. The authority for administering the ordinances comes from Christ through this church. Thus, he says, "All churches and ministers, who originated since the apostles, and not successively to them, are not in gospel order; and therefore cannot be acknowledged as such." The reason for rejecting Pedobaptist administration of baptism, then, was "That they are connected with churches clearly out of the apostolic succession, and therefore clearly out of the apostolic commission." This required the establishment of a direct line of succession back to the apostles. That such a succession could not be historically ascertained did not deter Mercer, who declared, "Say that the loss of the succession (historically ascertained) can never prove it futile, nor justify anyone out of it. The Pedobaptists, by their histories, admit they are not of it; but we do not, and shall think ourselves entitled to the
claim, until the reverse be clearly shown.\textsuperscript{74}

Closely akin to baptism was the matter of the communion or the Lord's Supper, for the right to this service was restricted to those who were regularly baptized. The Baptist position on this question was clearly stated by the Georgia Association in 1788.

Quere: What are the reasons why the Baptists will not hold communion with churches of other denominations? Answer, 1. Because all churches who make the Lord's Supper the badge of communion, suppose baptism ought regularly to precede it. The primitive practice compounds therewith. And as we conceive infant baptism to be null, because unscriptural, we would as soon commune with persons professedly unbaptized as with those baptized only in infancy. 2. No churches of other denominations contiguous to us, are strictly congregational; and the manner in which their members are admitted, and their discipline exercised, is so lax & unscriptural, that were we to commune with them, our own excommunicated members might meet us at their tables, to the subversion of all order and discipline. 3. The sentiments of some churches with respect to the necessity of human literature, would nullify the ordination of most of our ministers, and the practice of others in confining their preachers to a sameness of doctrine would exclude our ministers their pulpits; so that only the shadow of communion would remain in such cases.\textsuperscript{75}

The Baptists adhered to a rigid personal discipline. The churches kept tab on the lives of their members, and if they did not measure up to the standard set by the church, they were excluded. Most of the entries in the record books

\textsuperscript{74}Mallory, Mercer, pp. 146-148; Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 270-272.

\textsuperscript{75}Georgia Minutes, 1788.
of the early churches were devoted to this matter. For example, in a conference at Nevil's Creek Church, Bulloch County, 1810" the case of Sister Swet was taken into consideration and for her hard speeches and for ridiculing the brethren she was cut off from the church. . . . "76 A similar notation was made in the record book of Beard's Creek Church, Tattnall County, on February 10, 1810. The church "Received a few lines from brother Wm. Whiddon which laid in an accusation against brother Hobbs for swapping horses on the Lord's day, and for getting drunk. brother Hobbs confessed his faults and the church forgave him."77 These illustrations could be multiplied many times, which shows that the Baptists made diligent efforts to maintain a high standard of conduct and morality.

The Baptists held tenaciously to the independence of each local church. This idea was not wholly congruous with the development of a large religious society with homogeneous doctrines and practices. The Baptist answer to this difficulty was the development of the associational principle. In this development, the Georgia Baptists followed the lead of their brethren in other states where associations were already established. The association was the predominant organization through which interchurch relations were carried on during the period of this study.

76 *Nevil's Creek Church Record Book*, June 10, 1810.
77 *Beard's Creek Church Record Book*, February 10, 1810.
What Baptists intended when they began organizing associations is probably emphasized best in an essay presented to the Philadelphia Association in 1749 by Benjamin Griffith. He first pointed out that an association "is not a superior judicature," but each church has the power to carry on all aspects of worship "independent of any other church or assembly whatsoever." "Such independent churches," he said, "... may, and ought, for their mutual strength, counsel, and other valuable advantages... to enter into an agreement and confederation..." Such a confederation was not to be deemed "a superior judicature, as having a superintendency over the churches, but subservient to the churches...."\(^78\)

This was the underlying concept which brought completely independent churches together in confederation. The Georgia Association was organized because, as the association Covenant states, they were "Convinced from A Series of experiences of the necessity of a combination of churches for preserving a federal union among all the churches of the same Faith and Order." They further stated in the Plan or Form of Government that it would be the business of the Association:

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1st. To provide for the general union of the churches.

2nd. To keep up a correspondence with those associations of the same faith & order that a chain of communication may be preserved amongst the churches.

3rd. To give the churches the best advice they can in matters of difficulty -- and if the communion shall be broken between any of the Sister churches in the union to inquire into the causes of the breach, and use their best endeavors to remove the difficulty: but if the breach cannot be healed, to withdraw from any church or churches whom they shall look upon to be unsound in principle or immoral in practice, till they be reclaimed.79

In freely joining themselves together for their mutual benefit, these churches did not view themselves as giving up any of their independence. One article in the Constitution of the Georgia Association declares that the association would have "no power to lord it over God's Heritage, nor could it "infringe upon any of the internal rights of the church."80 The association was designed to deal with those matters which touched the welfare of the churches in general. It was not to interfere with the internal operation of the individual church.

While disclaiming any intention of ruling over the churches, the association did claim certain powers, and it did exercise a wide influence. It was a common practice for the association to act in settling difficulties in a local church, despite their rhetoric about not infringing

79 Georgia Minutes, 1790; Mercer, Georgia Association, p. 33.
80 Georgia Minutes, 1790.
upon internal rights. Often the association appointed committees to visit a church or churches to help settle their troubles. \(^{81}\) The association also claimed the prerogative of judging the orthodoxy of each church as it petitioned for membership. \(^{82}\) This carried with it the power of withdrawing from a church if it became unorthodox or disorderly. When the association withdrew from a church, it amounted to that church being excluded from the association. However, they preferred the term withdrawing, because it smacked less of excommunication.

The Baptists did not see this as conflicting with the independence of each church or its promise not to interfere in the internal affairs of the church. Becoming unorthodox apparently was not looked upon as an internal matter. That they did not believe this to be inconsistent arose from the fact that churches freely and voluntarily entered into this union in the first place and understood these matters. The association, said Jesse Mercer in a dissertation on the relationship of the respective powers and authority of the church and the association, is a creature of expediency. As such, he said, "(w)e concede it may be a necessary and useful

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\(^{81}\)See Georgia Minutes, 1792. A committee was appointed to visit the Ebenezer Church to settle a difference in that church.

\(^{82}\)Georgia Minutes, 1790.
institution. But since it was a matter of expediency, the only authority the association has is that which the churches composing it give to it.

In this context, the association could and did exercise considerable power. It is true that the association could not exercise what was called "church powers." That is to say, it could not deal with individual members of a church. This was strictly the domain of the local church. It also meant that the association could not assume the power of ordination. The association could not excommunicate or "unchurch" a church. It could take cognizance of any departure from the faith or disorder in morals or practice in a church, and it could "withdraw" from a disorderly church. But this withdrawal was a negative thing. It consisted only in desisting from acts of fellowship which subsisted before the withdrawal. The capacity of acting as a church in all aspects of worship could not be taken from a church by the association. When the association withdrew from a church, the church was left where it was when it came into the association.

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83 Minutes of the 12th Anniversary of the Baptist Convention of Georgia, 1833, pp. 11-12.

84 Griffith, "Association Power," 49; Georgia Baptist Convention Minutes, 1833, pp. 11-12.

However, in this regard the association did exercise great power, probably more than the founders of the association envisioned. To withdraw from a church could be remarkably persuasive. One had to have a very liberal point of view to see no conflict between the relative powers of the local church and the association. When the time came that issues began to divide the Baptist denomination in Georgia, these ambiguities were real enough for persons of different viewpoints to appeal to them in order to support their own views.
CHAPTER III

THE BAPTISTS ADOPT PROGRESSIVE MEASURES

The first decade of the nineteenth century marked a
significant turning point for Georgia Baptists in the ap-
proach they took to the maintenance and extension of the
church. The period prior to 1800 was the formative stage
in the development of the Baptist denomination in Georgia
and was accomplished by a group of self-sacrificing men who
were devoted to the spread of Christianity. These men acted
as they felt personally directed by the Holy Spirit, and
the whole effort toward evangelism was based on the indivi-
dual initiative of such men.

The early ministers were "farmer-preachers." The Bap-
tists believed in a divine call to the ministry and that
this call came to men in all walks of life. They believed
that if a man possessed this fundamental qualification, he
could function well in the ministry although lacking in
other desirable qualities. As a result of this belief, most
of the early Baptist ministers had little formal education
although they were well versed in the spiritual needs of
frontier people. This was a quality the Baptists saw lacking
in the ministers of the Anglican Church, and for this reason,
they looked with suspicion on an educated ministry.¹

¹Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, pp. 22-23.
When this call came to a man, he simply began to preach. Since most of the Baptists were farmers, the ministers were also farmers. A minister usually continued in this vocation as a means of livelihood and did not expect to be supported by the churches. The minister was an equal among many and was not considered as one of a class separated from the average person. These ministers lived in a frontier society, and it was this spirit which underlay much of the early evangelism. It was common for large segments of congregations to move to new locations in groups. A good example of this was the movement of Daniel Marshall from Virginia to Georgia in the company of many of his converts.

There was therefore no organized support of the early development of the Baptist denomination in Georgia. The only tie binding Baptists together on a level beyond the local church was the association and, except in rare cases, this did little more than encourage the ministers in their evangelistic endeavors. The primary object of the early evangelistic interest was the destitute areas adjacent to the association. At the association meeting, the ministers were encouraged to spend a part of the year in this type of evangelistic work, which was called the "itinerant" method. Plans were made for the ministers to travel in pairs during times in the year when work on the farm was not pressing.
As a new century began, conditions in the Baptist denominational seemed to demand a more organized method of church extension. A number of the more influential and educated citizens were joining the Baptists and this focused attention on education as a concern to Baptists. An example of such a person was Joseph Clay, son of the famous Revolutionary War hero, who united with the Baptists in 1802 and gave up his position of United States District Judge in Savannah to become a Baptist minister. Other men of quality and education who cast their lot with the Baptists and became leaders among them were Jesse Mercer, Henry Holcombe, and Charles O. Screven.

The leadership of such men led to a new era of progress and development in the Baptist denomination. A new emphasis began to be placed on missions, the qualifications of the missionaries, and the need for a more united effort to support them. This led the Baptists to adopt, during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, a number of progressive measures. These measures fall generally under three headings. First, there was an increasing awareness of the need for ministerial education. Secondly, it was felt that a more organized system of missions was needed to more effectively spread the gospel. Thirdly, it was immediately recognized that, in order to reach these objectives

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2Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 38-39.
an organization would be needed to bring together the efforts of the Baptists throughout the state. Incidents related to the development of these progressive measures and the opposition to them dominate the history of Georgia Baptists during the first third of the nineteenth century.

Among the leaders who advocated these progressive measures was Henry Holcombe, pastor of the first white Baptist church in Savannah. He was well educated himself and saw the need for Baptist ministers to be educated if they were to be successful in their missionary aims. He established the first religious periodical in the South in 1802, The Georgia Analytical Repository, and was a moving force behind an effort to establish a Baptist College in Georgia in the first decade of the nineteenth century. 3

The attitude of Jesse Mercer, perhaps the most influential Georgia Baptist leader in the first half of the nineteenth century, was typical of a new generation of Baptist ministers with regard to these progressive measures. He was a leader in the organization of the General Committee of Georgia Baptists in the years 1800-1803 and was a strong advocate of education. Charles Dutton Mallary, Mercer's biographer, described his attitude in these words:

Especially was he impressed with the importance of a well educated ministry. The progressive intelligence of society furnished,
in his view, a strong reason why there should be a corresponding improvement on the part of those who were to be the public instructors of the people in sacred things; and he plainly foresaw... that the superior intelligence in the ministry of other denominations, would give them the decided ascendancy in many of the most important places in the country, and that many of the children of Baptist parentage, preferring the ministrations of educated men, though less inclined at first to their sentiments, would gradually attach themselves to their congregations...4

Many Baptist leaders felt that, in order for the Baptists to keep pace with other religious bodies in influencing a large segment of society, an organized movement in the areas mentioned was a necessity. This organization would provide financial support for both education and missions.

Such financial support was not completely without precedent among the Baptists. In South Carolina the Charleston Association, with which Georgia Baptists had strong ties, had taken steps to support both endeavors long before this time. Wood Furman, writing in 1811, stated that the association considered the expediency of raising a fund to aid men who were entering the ministry to obtain "a competent share of learning" in 1755. A society was organized for this purpose and Furman said, "Several young men were furnished by it with the means of pursuing studies preparatory to the ministry. Of this number were messrs. Samuel

4Mallary, Mercer, 161.
Stillman and Edmund Botsford. The same society aided Jesse Mercer in his education, contributing both money and books to enable him to pursue his studies in 1792.

At the same time that this society was organized in 1755, the Charleston Association, seeing the destitute condition of many settlements in the interior, recommended to the churches that they "make contributions for the support of a missionary to itinerate in those parts." Oliver Hart was authorized to obtain the services of a suitable person. The following year he went to Pennsylvania and New Jersey and persuaded John Gano of the Philadelphia Association to undertake this work. He did so, making several trips under the auspices of the association.

Though it was not entirely novel among Baptists that efforts be made in the areas of education and missions, it was not the common practice among Georgia Baptists. Whatever education a minister got was by his own initiative and effort. The missionary work was generally left to the predilections of individual ministers. However as the new century dawned, a new interest was taken in both education and missions. Some Baptist leaders felt the need of an

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5 Furman, Charleston Association, pp. 11-12.
6 Mallary, Mercer, p. 34.
organization to support these objectives. A movement began which eventually led to an overall organization of Georgia Baptists.

The first step in this direction was taken by the Georgia Association in 1800 when the following resolution was passed:

That, as the spirit of itineracy has inflamed the minds of several ministers, who are desirous to enter into some resolutions suitable to carry into effect a design of travelling and preaching the gospel, a meeting be, and is hereby, appointed at Powel's Creek, on Friday before the first Sunday in May next, for that purpose.

This meeting was held, and the principal thing discussed was the formation of a society to send missionaries among the Creek Indians. A letter was addressed to the session of the Georgia Association in 1801, "which called the attention of the association to the propriety and expediency of forming a missionary Society in this state, for the purpose of sending the gospel amongst the Indians, bordering on our frontiers, which was unanimously and cordially approbated." Another meeting was scheduled at Powelton (Powel's Creek) in 1802 to make plans for carrying out the suggestions of the first assembly.

Henry Holcombe and Jesse Mercer submitted a report at the meeting in 1802 citing the need for a more intimate

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8Mercer, *Georgia Association*, p. 34.


10Index, *Georgia Baptists*, p. 41.
union among Baptists "in order the more effectively to con-
centrate their powers for any particular purpose." They
proposed that a general committee of Georgia Baptists be
organized composed of three delegates from each of the four
existing associations in the state. A third meeting was
scheduled to be held at Powelton in 1803 to work toward that
end.\footnote{Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 41.}

This plan was approved by the Georgia Association and
the Savannah Association, and delegates were chosen to re-
represent both associations at the Powelton meeting. Delegates
from the Georgia Association were Abraham Marshall, Sanders
Walker, and Jesse Mercer, and those from the Savannah Asso-
ciation were Henry Holcombe, Aaron Tison, and Thomas Polhill.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 42-43.}
This assembly met at Powelton on April 29, 1803 according
to the arrangement of the previous year. It was attended by
a large number of interested Baptists in addition to the
deleagates named by the two associations. Although the Heph-
zibah Association and the Sarepta Association did not appoint
deleagates, ministers from these two associations attended.
On April 30, 1803, The General Committee of Georgia Baptists
was organized with the appointment of twelve members. After
the appointment of this committee, the conference was dis-
solved. In order to make the committee permanent, it was
resolved that delegations be appointed each year by all of the Georgia associations.¹³

One of the first actions of the committee was the adoption of a resolution which set forth the objectives of the organization. It read, "Resolved, That the encouragement of itinerant preaching, the religious instruction of our savage neighbors, and the increase of union among all real Christians, which were the leading objects of the late conference, shall be zealously prosecuted by the Committee."¹⁴

A Circular Letter, attributed to the authorship of Henry Holcombe, was addressed to the associations in the state and to all ministers stating that the General Committee would act "as a bond of union, centre of intelligence, and advisory council."¹⁵

Among the things proposed at the second meeting of the General Committee in 1804 was the organization of a school for the Creek Indians. Joseph Clay was appointed to communicate with the Indian Agent to determine the best method of establishing this school. At the same meeting it was

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¹³Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 43-44. There were twenty-six Baptists ministers who attended this meeting. This first committee was composed of Francis Ross, John Ross, Miller Eledsoe, William Green, Henry Holcombe, Abraham Marshall, James Matthews, Jesse Mercer, Robert McGinty, Edmund Talbot, and Sanders Walker.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 44. This "late conference" refers to the conference which preceded the appointment of the General Committee.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 54-55.
decided to take immediate steps to establish a Baptist College in Georgia. However, this plan met with opposition in the state legislature, principally because of the fear of competing with the state university which opened in 1801, and a charter for the proposed school could not be obtained.

A charter was granted for a grammar school, Mount Zion Academy, which was opened in 1807 under the direction of Charles O. Screven. The school operated for five years, but then encountered financial difficulty and closed in 1812.16

Georgia Baptists in general never supported the General Committee of Georgia Baptists. Only two of the four associations in the state sent delegates to the first meeting, and there was widespread opposition to some of the objectives of the General Committee. This opposition centered around the objective of increasing union with "all real Christians" and of providing a school for ministerial education. The General Committee was dissolved in 1810.17

The first effort to provide a means of united action among the Baptists of Georgia ended in failure, in the sense that it did not galvanize enough support to continue. However, the experience gained by those involved in this effort doubtless aided in later attempts to organize the denomination.

16Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 56-60; Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, p. 23.
17Ibid., pp. 44, 58-60.
By 1812, however, events were transpiring in the Baptist denomination which provided more propitious circumstances for the advocates of the progressive measures. This year marked the beginning of the missionary movement in the Baptist denomination.

Perhaps the most significant factor in the origin of the organized missionary movement among the Baptists was the conversion of Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice to Baptist views. The two Congregational missionaries were on their way to Burma in 1812 when they became convinced of the correctness of the Baptist position on baptism. Upon their arrival in Burma, they made their views known and were baptized thus severing connection with their sponsor, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Rice returned to America to encourage the Baptists to support Judson, who remained in Burma, and the entire foreign missionary movement. The Baptists welcomed him with enthusiasm, and Rice was successful in his campaign to create interest for this cause. He traveled widely in the United States and his activities eventually led to the organization of the Baptist General Convention for Foreign Missions. Delegates from eleven states met in Philadelphia in May of 1814 for that purpose. This body agreed to support Judson and his wife as its first missionaries. Rice was to continue his efforts "to excite the public mind more generally to engage in missionary exertions and to assist in organizing
societies and institutions for carrying the missionary design into execution. 

Rice's activities served as an impetus for Georgia Baptists to move ahead in organizing a movement which actually was already underway in Georgia. As early as 1812, contributions were sent to the meeting of the Savannah River Association for the support of missionary efforts. At the same meeting William B. Johnson of Savannah was appointed to head a committee to propose a plan "for the more permanent and effectual prosecution of itinerant and missionary efforts contemplated by the body." In 1813 he proposed a plan for a General Committee of the Savannah River Association. The plan was adopted and a committee of thirteen delegates was appointed, thus establishing the first associational organization for a missionary program in Georgia. That year the churches sent "$230,26\frac{1}{4}" for expanding the program of missions. 

After the adjournment of this association a Baptist Foreign Mission Society was formed in Savannah. This society was the first of several such groups to be formed in Georgia. The objectives of this society were set out in its constitution. 

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19 Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 76-77. Luther Rice attended the 1813 session of the Savannah River Association according to this source.
Believing it to be the duty of Christians as circumstances in Divine Providence shall enable them, to adopt measures for effectuating that grand command of Christ, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." and particularly encouraged to this duty by present indications of a providential and propitious nature, we, whose names are subjoined, do for this purpose, cordially associate ourselves as a society, and agree to be governed by the following constitution./.

The constitution provided for officers, for the expenditures of monies, and established the requirements for membership in the society. 20

This missionary spirit spread rapidly among Georgia Baptists. At the session of the Georgia Association in 1814, the circular and constitution of the Savannah Baptist Society for Foreign Missions was read and received the approval of the association. Luther Rice was present at the Georgia Association in 1815 and gave a report from the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions for the United States in which the Board requested the aid of the Georgia Association "in their laudable exertions, to spread the Gospel of Christ among the heathen in idolatrous lands." The association agreed to co-operate in this effort and immediately "resolved itself into a body for missionary purposes." The members of the Georgia Association adopted a constitution setting up the Mission Board

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20 Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 77-80. The requirement for membership was the contribution of any sum of money not under $2.00 into the treasury. This was a major target of the Old School Baptists.
of the Georgia Association in 1816. According to this constitution,

This board shall be a component member of 'the general missionary convention of the Baptist denomination in the United States of America for foreign missions,' and the organ of domestic ones, according to the openings of providence, the means had, and the instructions of the association, or their own judgment may direct from time to time. 21

At the same meeting, a letter from Dr. William Staughton, the corresponding secretary of the Foreign Missionary board was read and ordered printed in the minutes. In this letter he spoke of the great strides made in establishing missionary and Bible societies throughout the country. He reported that a great portion of this "mission ardour" that was felt by "thousands" could be traced "to the influence of the spirit of God on the heart of our excellent brother Dr. William Carey." He also spoke of the conversion of Judson and Rice, and particularly the part Rice was playing in generating "a missionary flame" and aiding in the formation of "auxiliary institutions." 22

This "missionary flame" soon spread over most of Georgia. In July of 1815, the Ocmulgee Missionary Society was organized in the Ocmulgee Association. 23 The movement toward the

21 Mercer, Georgia Association, pp. 54-59.
22 Ibid., pp. 59-62. William Carey was one of the founders of the missionary movement among the Baptists of England. He was the prime leader in the organization of the first missionary society of Kettering in 1792. See Armitage, History of Baptists, pp. 530-581.
23 Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 84-85.
organization of such a society in the Hephzibah Association began in 1815 when copies of the First Annual Report of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions were received. This resulted in two steps being taken by the association relating to the missionary movement. A subscription was opened to raise funds to aid ministers who "may feel a willingness to itinerate in destitute parts within the limits of this association." Also, a meeting was called at Bark Camp Meeting House in Burke County in February of 1816 "to endeavor to form and organize a Society for the encouragement and aid of sending and continuing the Gospel in such destitute parts and elsewhere, when ever God in providence shall open a door." The result of this meeting was the organization of the Hephzibah Baptist Society for Itinerant and Missionary Exertions in February of 1816. Similar efforts were made in the Sarepta Association. An address from Luther Rice and the report of the Baptist General Board of Foreign Missions were read at the session of the association in 1815 in which cooperation in the missionary movement was solicited. It was recommended that a meeting be held at Moriah Meeting House in Madison County in June of 1816 to consider this proposal. At that meeting, a missionary society was organized in the Sarepta Association.

24 Hephzibah Minutes, 1815.
26 Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 85.
The Baptists of Georgia organized to become a part of the missionary movement in the period 1812-1820. Although it was a time of war for the country and retarded growth for the churches, much was accomplished in the organization of missionary societies which laid the foundation for great changes in the Baptist denomination in Georgia.

After a number of missionary societies were organized in Georgia, the need for an organization of a more general nature became clear. The societies organized in the period of 1812 to 1820 were regional and associational and did not include the whole state. This pointed up the need for an organization to co-ordinate and unite the efforts of the Baptists throughout the state. This organization was the General Baptist Association of the State of Georgia, later to be named the Georgia Baptist Convention. It was similar to the General Committee of Georgia Baptists which ceased to exist in 1810. It was composed of delegates from each of the associations in the state.

The suggestion for the General Association came from Adiel Sherwood, and was made to the Sarepta Association meeting in 1820. Sherwood was a native of New York and came to Georgia in 1818. He was a zealous advocate of the missionary movement and a great believer in education. Sherwood exerted considerable influence upon Georgia Baptists. He was the author of a resolution asking the Sarepta Association, as well as the other associations in the state,
to consider the propriety of organizing a "general meeting of correspondence." The association endorsed the proposal and adopted the resolution. Following the lead of the Sarepta Association, both the Ocmulgee Association and the Georgia Association passed resolutions favorable to the organization of a general association in 1821. In the resolution of the Georgia Association, it was agreed that a meeting be held at Powelton in June of 1822 for the purpose of organizing a general association.

According to this arrangement, the meeting convened at Powelton on June 27, 1822. Official delegates were present from only the Ocmulgee and Georgia Associations since there was considerable opposition in many of the associations in the state. The Ephzibah Association decided against coming into such an organization and the Ebenezer, Piedmont, and Tugalo associations joined the opposition. Strangely enough, having passed the initial resolution calling for such a meeting earlier, the Sarepta Association in 1821 decided, "We do not conceive that there is a necessity for such a meeting." Although the Sunbury Association (successor to the Savannah River Association)


28Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 103; Mercer, Georgia Association, p. 77; Georgia Minutes, 1821.
did not send delegates in 1822, it joined the following year. Out of the eight associations in the state, only three were favorable to a general association.\(^{29}\)

Despite the opposition, a large number of the leading Georgia Baptists attended this meeting and all present were invited to take part. Adiel Sherwood, author of the resolution calling for such a meeting, was present and was invited to preach the second day of the meeting. In his sermon, he "portrayed the evils of a want of union; and the advantages of United action."\(^{30}\) Following this sermon, Jesse Mercer led the congregation in prayer which profoundly affected the people. The author of the *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia* said of this incident, "Indeed, it was a matter of doubt which contributed most to effect the purposes of the Convention, the prayer of Mercer or the sermon of Sherwood."\(^{31}\)

The meeting was organized by electing Jesse Mercer as President and Jabez Pleiades Marshall as Secretary and a committee was appointed to draw up a proposed constitution. William Theophilus Brantley, Sr. presented the proposed constitution to the assembly on June 28 and 29, 1822, and after an article by article consideration of the proposal, the

\(^{29}\) Sherwood, *Memoir*, pp. 203-204; *Hephzibah Minutes*, 1822; *Index, Georgia Baptists*, pp. 103-104, 112.

\(^{30}\) Sherwood, *Memoir*, pp. 204-205.

\(^{31}\) *Index, Georgia Baptists*, pp. 104-105.
constitution was adopted. The name of the organization was the General Baptist Association of the State of Georgia and was made up of delegates from the associations in the state, each having from three to five delegates.\textsuperscript{32}

The purposes and objectives of the General Association were outlined in the constitution and a circular letter prepared at the first meeting. They may be classified under three general headings. First, it was to be the means of uniting the efforts of the Baptists throughout the state in all worthwhile projects. They said in the preamble to the constitution:

Whereas, it is highly expedient that a more close and extensive \textit{union} among the churches of the Baptist denomination in the state of Georgia should exist, and that a more perfect consent and harmony and good understanding cannot be established without stated meetings of delegates from the several associations, to confer together on subjects of general interest and plans of public utility; and to devise and recommend schemes for the revival of experimental and practical religion; for the promotion of uniformity in sentiment, practice, and discipline. . . .

The constitution gave as one of the specific objects of the body, "To unite the influence and pious intelligence of Georgia Baptists, and thereby to facilitate their union and co-operation."\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32}Index, \textit{Georgia Baptists}, pp. 104-105.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., pp. 105-106.
The General Association would encompass all Georgia Baptists. The founders envisioned this body as a medium through which all the activities above the local church level could be co-ordinated. They felt that such an organization was needed for the denomination for best results in the missionary movement. Insisting that this was not the introduction of a new idea of organization among Georgia Baptists, they said,

All of the reasons which may be applied to the support of associations, separate and local, will evence the utility of one more general and comprehensive. If it has been found profitable to bring together the piety and wisdom of a given compass; and if the United intelligence and zeal of that limited space have been found to possess a happy result, would it not seem desirable to increase the effect by enlarging the extent of the field and strengthening the means of operation?34

The second reason given for such an organization was support for the missionary movement. This was "the" project which called for the co-operation of all Georgia Baptists. The preamble to the constitution went on to say that the General Association would exist "for the extension of the gospel by missions and missionaries, by Bibles and tracts. . . ."35 This organization would serve as the co-ordinator of all the missionary activities sponsored by Georgia Baptists as there were many small societies in the state whose activities needed to be brought together.

34Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 107.
The third objective of this body was the improvement and education of the ministry. The author of the History of the Baptist Denomination described the Baptist ministry in this way: "Faithfulness to history requires the statement that, with few exceptions, the ministers of our denomination during the third decade of the century, were unlearned men, and most of them were ignorant men." 36

Such men as Adiel Sherwood, who received a good education before coming to Georgia, looked upon the unlearned ministers as blind leaders of the blind. He was very desirous that steps be taken to improve the educational qualification of Georgia ministers.

The General Association took part in a number of efforts to further the cause of education. Efforts were made to establish a "seminary of learning" by working with the South Carolina Baptist Convention in the years 1824-1826, but this effort failed. The General Association took up the question of a school for ministers in 1823. This plan also met a rather negative response from Georgia Baptists generally, who did not feel that their ministers needed great quantities of learning. 37 The General Association, however, continued its efforts and contributed much to the education cause.

36 Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 136.
37 Ibid., pp. 136-139.
It was also believed that the General Association could help in calling forth more ministers into the work. The Circular Address of the first meeting declared,

Nor is it too much to hope that this General Association may be the instrument of calling forth more laborers into the Lord's harvest. The present small number of devoted laborers is rapidly becoming more reduced. . . It is the Lord's work to qualify men with talents and grace for the holy employment of the ministry; but it is our work to pray for the sending forth of such. . . But, to speak without a figure, it is most evident that our churches have only themselves to blame for the fewness of their ministers. And if the fault is chargeable upon them, and not upon God, is it not time for them to be roused to a sense of their deficiency, and begin to do that which they have left undone? Let pious men receive the aids of learning; let their dormant faculties be drawn out by the light of science; let the burden of poverty be taken from the shoulders of those who already labor in word and doctrine. . .

The General Association was slow in galvanizing support from Georgia Baptists even though many people recognized the need for it. Only two associations were charter members of the organization and it was not until 1824 that additional support was given when the Sunbury Association became a member. 39 It was decided to change the constitution in 1826, so as to allow the auxiliary societies to become members of the association, because so few of the associations responded to pleas of support. The author

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38 Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 108.
39 Ibid., p. 112.
of the History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia says of this state of affairs, "almost alone with the aid of these Auxiliaries the noble old Georgia Association for at least ten years carried on the business of the convention, promoting its interests and maintaining in our state among Baptists, an interest in every good word and work." 40

The General Association had more support among Georgia Baptists than the number of associations represented in it would indicate. Even in those associations which were not members, there was strong support for the General Association. It became the acknowledged medium through which Georgia Baptists made their contributions for all benevolent purposes in 1826 when the Georgia and Cemulgee Associations transferred all their funds for missionary purposes to the General Association. 41

It was decided to change the name of the organization to The Baptist Convention For the State of Georgia in 1827, probably to conform to the practice of other states. This organization prosecuted with zeal the objectives stated in its constitution. Although the attempt was made to dispel fears about the dangers to local church independence, the Convention moved forward to unite the Baptists of Georgia.

40 Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 124-126.
41 Ibid., pp. 124-126, 135.
Charles Dutton Mallary gives this account of the activities of the Baptist Convention for the State of Georgia in his Memoirs of Jesse Mercer up to 1844:

Eternity alone will reveal the good which has already resulted, and is yet to result from the labors of this active and useful body; yet it might not be improper, in this connection, to glance hastily at some of the more obvious fruits of its exertions. A permanent fund of about $25,000 has been gathered up for education purposes; about the same amount has been collected and disbursed for the support of Foreign Missions; a considerable number of Domestic Missionaries have been employed in destitute sections of the country. . . . by whose instrumentality many churches have been established. . . . Many hundred volumes of valuable theological works have been put in the hands of our ministering brethren by the funds of the Convention; between twenty and thirty beneficiaries have been sustained for longer or shorter periods at different institutions of learning.42

In furthering the objectives of the missionary movement in Georgia, the Georgia Baptist Convention was the leader. The author of the History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia states that it more "than any other one cause, has harmonized and combined the efforts of the Baptists of Georgia, and effected those beneficial results which have made Georgia one of the leading and most benevolent Baptist States in the South."43

42 Mallary, Mercer, p. 157.
43 Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 106.
CHAPTER IV
OPPOSITION AND DIVISION

The missionary movement in Georgia resulted in the formation of several organizations designed to aid in the spread of the gospel. These organizations fall into three groups: first, the General Committee of Georgia Baptists, usually referred to as the General Committee, organized in 1803; second, various missionary, tract, Bible, and temperance societies organized in the period 1813-1820; and third, the General Association of Baptists in the State of Georgia organized in 1822. As these organizations developed, a strong opposition to them emerged. The ensuing controversy resulted in a division of Georgia Baptists in the period 1836-1840.¹

The reasons for opposition to the missionary movement and the subsequent division resulting from the controversy over this movement are not easy to explain. This controversy cannot be attributed to a single cause, but to a multiplicity of causes which originated in both groups. The various factors

¹During the period of controversy, those who favored the missionary movement and those who opposed it were referred to by different names. In this manuscript the author has chosen to identify those who favored the missionary movement as Missionary Baptists and those who opposed it as Old School Baptists.
were often overlapping and interrelated, and they often became entangled with local disputes which had nothing directly to do with the real issues.

One of the most important factors causing dissension was the fundamental difference between Missionary Baptists and Old School Baptists in the conception each had toward the function of the church. The Old School Baptists believed that the church as it existed before the development of the organizations which supported the missionary movement conformed most closely to the ideal system outlined in the New Testament. The Baptist denomination in Georgia was established by the method of evangelism employed under this system. They believed this general system should be perpetuated and carried on without change. Consequently, they looked upon any deviation from this system as a departure from the recognized faith of Baptists.

The Missionary Baptists held a more flexible view of change in the church. They believed that change was inevitable and that some adjustments should be made to meet that change. Jesse Mercer supported the idea that opposition based on resistance to change was unfounded. He said, "These benevolent institutions are considered evil, not only in themselves, but because they are new." Mercer insisted that the idea of something new is not necessarily contrary to the Bible. He used quotations from the Bible to show that God intended change to come and that men should take steps to meet the "exigencies of the times."
And it must be evident to any sober bible reader that new things will be transpiring in every generation of men until the final consummation of all things. And it will be readily seen, that as new dispensations succeed each other, and as changing vicissitudes arise, it will be indispensable to concert plans of action to suit the exigencies of the times and accomplish those things which may be requisite for carrying forward the cause of Christ in the earth.2

The Missionary Baptists felt this a sufficient justification for engaging in the missionary movement. They felt no sense of departing from God's established standard. In formulating new ways of spreading the gospel, they believed they were aiding the "cause of Christ."

The Old School Baptists believed in aiding the "cause of Christ," and they believed in the spread of the gospel but they believed it should be done in the old way, the "Bible way" as they understood it. These men argued that the Missionary Baptists were deliberately twisting the Scriptures to fit changing times and circumstances. While the Missionary Baptists believed there was sufficient latitude in the Bible to adopt such plans without violating its precepts, the Old School Baptists admitted no such latitude. They did not feel free to adapt themselves to the "exigencies of the times," but felt they must restrict themselves to plans they considered explicit in the Bible. Mark Bennett, editor of the Old School Baptist periodical, The Primitive Baptist, stated the position

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2Mallary, Mercer, pp. 193-197; The Christian Index, Volume IV, Number 4 (February 18, 1836), 51.
of the Old School Baptists in this way:

The Old School Baptists try to preach the gospel in the way first and last ordained for the gospel church—praying God to bless it to saint and sinner—without adding ought by concerting plans, and without deviating to the exigencies of the times. . . . But they will have nothing to do with that religious enterprise /sic/ for which the New Testament has nothing to say. 3

This basic difference in interpretation of the Bible created a wide gulf between the two groups which later proved to be incapable of solution.

Opposition to the missionary movement began in Georgia with the lack of support given to the General Committee upon its organization in 1803. Of the four associations in the state at the time, only the Georgia Association and the Savannah Association participated in its organization. The Hephzibah Association sent delegates to the second and third sessions in 1804 and 1805, but this group became disenchanted with the General Committee and dropped out. In a session in 1805 they voted against sending delegates to the next meeting. 4 Because of lack of support, the General Committee disbanded in 1810. 5

3 The Primitive Baptist, Volume I, Number 7 (April 9, 1836), 105. This periodical began publication late in 1835 in Tarboro, North Carolina.

4 Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, p. 22.

5 Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 60.
The major reason that Georgia Baptists did not support this first attempt at denominational organization was widespread opposition to the establishment of a Baptist college in Georgia. This opposition arose because of the bias against an educated ministry held by many Georgia Baptists. This was a major issue between Missionary Baptists and Old School Baptists, and it persisted throughout the period of this study.

Most Baptist ministers, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had very little formal education. The education they possessed was obtained by individual effort. Besides this, there were grave doubts in the minds of many Georgia Baptists that an educated ministry could have any good influence on the Baptist denomination. It was debated that the lack of education itself contributed to the success of Baptist ministers in that they were able to identify themselves more closely with the common people. The education of the Anglican clergy tended to set the clergy apart from the people, it was argued, and the Baptists reported what they considered spiritual deficiencies among the Anglicans. This they attributed to formal education. Washington L. Kilpatrick, historian of the Deephzibah Association, described this early opposition to education in this way:

6There was also opposition to the objective of the General Committee of "increasing union among all real Christians," but this opposition cannot be termed "anti-missionary."
They seemed to fear that young men by virtue of their literary attainments, might be tempted to enter the ministry when they had not been called of God to the work. Such as these were not opposed to education, nor to an educated ministry, but they were jealous for the purity of the ministry, and were unduly suspicious of denominational schools. They would point across the waters to the younger sons of English gentlemen educated for the ministry, though not called of God, and installed in the pulpit without any spiritual fitness for such position. Some of these parties who were called upon to vote just now on this question, had in the not distant past, as colonial subjects of Great Britain, been brought face to face with such a ministry both in Virginia and in Georgia. 7

While there was general opposition to an educated ministry at the beginning of the missionary movement, many of its advocates realized the need for a better trained and polished ministry. This tended to merge education with the missionary movement. As the desirability of a more educated ministry gained favor, the "old fashioned preachers" felt that they would be cast aside. They saw that the whole complexion of the church, as they had known it, was changing. This they regarded with grave concern as they saw the church retreating before the onslaught of the "new schemes."

It was in this context that the Old School Baptists opposed a theological education and the seminaries through which such education was provided. The Resolutions of the Kehukee Association of North Carolina, adopted in 1827,

7Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, pp. 22-23. The vote he refers to here is that of the Hephzibah Association deciding against sending delegates to the General Committee in 1805.
which disassociated that body with the entire missionary movement, declared, "We are convinced that the Theological Seminaries are the inventions of men... introducing a proud, pompous and fashionable ministry, instead of an humble, pious, and self-denying one." The Old School Baptists believed that the ministry produced by these schools was undesirable and would corrupt the church. The Towaliga Association, at its organization in 1838, said of these schools,

We believe that Theological Seminaries are calculated to aid, and abet, in the corruption of the church, by offering inducement to designing characters to seek after and obtain the advantages derived from the same; and through their exertions as false teachers, corrupt the church, of whom our Lord bids us beware.

The Old School Baptists also believed that seminaries were not only unnecessary but a reflection on the wisdom of God. A divine call to the ministry was all that was needed to function best in the ministry, they insisted. Further efforts to qualify oneself for a pastoral post were looked upon as a lack of dependence upon God. The authors of the Black Rock Address, an address stating the Old School Baptist position which was prepared at a meeting of Old School Baptists in Baltimore, Maryland in 1832, declared, "As to

8Quoted in Nehemiah, Strictures on the Sentiments of the Kehupee Association (Milledgeville, Georgia: Gawah & Ragland, printers, 1829), pp. 14-15. (Hereinafter cited as Nehemiah, Strictures.)

9Towaliga Primitive Baptist Association Minutes, 1838. (Hereinafter cited as Towaliga Minutes.)
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 disciples into all
truth."

Those who favored the seminaries denied all these alle-
gations. They believed that God required them to improve
themselves through their own exertions. The seminaries were
designed to aid in this improvement. No more was intended
in the seminaries than this. Jesse Mercer said of those
who objected,

But, if they intend to object to all learning
which is received by human instrumentality,
then we most sincerely pity them as ignorantly
opposing the institution of God; for we think
no man can read the scriptures and not see that
God requires knowledge to be imparted from the
parents to the children, and from the wise to
the simple.11

The advocates of seminaries declared that such schools
would no more introduce a "proud and pompous" ministry than
the method employed by the Old School Baptists. According
to one author, writing under the pseudonym of "Nehemiah,"

These rules /for admitting one to a seminary/
are stricter than those in the churches which
compose the Kehukee Association; for any one

10Gilbert Beebe, editor, The Feast of Fat Things
(Middletown, N. Y. G. Beebe's Sons), pp. 18-20. (Here-
inafter cited as Beebe, Fat Things.) The Black Rock Address
is printed in this booklet.

11Mallary, Mercer, p. 182.
of these churches can license a man and send him abroad to preach—but, to be introduced into a Seminary, he must be licensed by a church, and also have the approbation of neighboring churches and community.

As for what constituted pride, he said,

Does learning or ignorance engender the most pride? We admit that a Seminary tends to produce that urbanity of manners so desirable in a minister (rather than that clownishness and vulgarity which drive refined people from their company,) and many persons have construed this into pride and pomposity.12

The proponents of a trained ministry denied that such an education was aimed at adding to the work of God. Rather than being a reflection on God's wisdom, they believed that God required one to improve himself by study. According to the position taken by Old School Baptists, any effort to prepare oneself to preach would reflect on God's ability. Carried to its logical conclusion, this position would require that one do nothing to prepare for the ministry. This the Missionary Baptists rejected. Jesse Mercer described it in this way:

Education is not, in the least, designed, so far as we know, among Baptists, by any who are engaged to promote it in the ministry, to usurp the place or take the power of any of those gifts, talents, or mental endowments which God by his holy Spirit imparts, and without which no man has any right to pretend to be a minister of God. But only to assist him, in those qualifications which it becomes him to possess, in order to discharge the duties incumbent on him by the gifts and appointment of God.13

12 Nehemiah, Strictures, pp. 14-16.
13 Mallary, Mercer, p. 185.
After the disbanding of the General Committee of Georgia Baptists in 1810, only a short time elapsed before the movement to organize missionary societies began under the leadership of Luther Rice. This movement provided another confrontation between Missionary Baptists and Old School Baptists and was the source of a great controversy. The first missionary society was organized in Georgia in 1813. The opposition to these societies and their goals was revealed in the Hephzibah Association as early as 1814 when the association agreed specifically to continue the old "Itinerant" method of evangelism. In 1815, the Hephzibah Association received the report of the first annual meeting of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, the mission board of The Baptist General Convention for Foreign Missions. This resulted in an animated discussion on the subject of "foreign missions," and the association took the following action:

With reference to certain communications taken into view yesterday, relative to foreign missions, but left unfinished, the association resumed the subject, and upon deliberation, agreed, that it is more expedient that this body turn its attention to such parts within our own limits as are destitute of preaching.

This opposition in the Hephzibah Association became more and more pronounced each year. The association agreed not to

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14 Hephzibah Minutes, 1814.

15 Ibid., 1815; Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, p. 38. According to Kilpatrick, this was the first time that the term "foreign missions" appeared in the records of this association.
contribute any funds to the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in 1817.\textsuperscript{16} Finally, in 1819 the association voted not to take part in the missionary movement at all.\textsuperscript{17}

There was also strong opposition to the missionary movement in the Piedmont Association. Organized in 1815, this body had strong reservations about the missionary societies from the beginning. This association, in 1819, disavowed any connection with the missionary movement. The participants voted "unanimously that they have nothing to do with missionaries..."\textsuperscript{18}

The Ebenezer Association furnishes another illustration of the development of opposition to the societies organized during the period 1813-1820. At first this association favored the activities advocated by the various societies. Members were in correspondence with the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in 1818 and the next year approved of an institution for the "education of young men called by the churches to the ministry." But in 1820, this association retreated from support stating,

\begin{quote}
We are of the opinion that such an institution appears laudable, but as we are unable to foresee any special benefit arising from it to the churches generally, we can therefore only say, we are willing that our brethren who are in favor
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Hephzibah Minutes}, 1817.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, 1819.

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Piedmont Minutes}, 1819.
of such a plan should pursue that object, and if at any future period we get more fully convinced of its utility, we shall the more cheerfully come into the measure.19

Opposition to the missionary and kindred societies, which included Bible, tract, and temperance societies, developed from the views held by the Old School Baptists on the manner in which the church should carry out the commands of God and from their strict constructionist views of the Bible. They simply believed that there was no Bible authority for the societies. Opposition was registered in the initial meeting of the Towaliga Association when that body declared "non-fellowship" with all the "institutions of the day."20

We find neither precept nor example in the word of God, by which the institutions are supported. And if the Lord was so particular after exhibiting to Moses, the pattern by which the Tabernacle was to be made, as to say, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount." And if we believe revelation is complete, the argument then is, every direction necessary for our good, and his glory, in carrying forward of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth is found in the word of God. And to introduce things professedly for the carrying forward the Redeemer's kingdom; for which there is no authority in the Bible; is a departure from our own articles of faith, and a direct reflection upon the infinite wisdom of God.21

19Ebenezer Minutes, 1818, 1819, 1820.

20Declaring "non-fellowship" meant that they would have no further church affiliation with those who favored these activities.

21Towaliga Minutes, 1838.
The Old School Baptists believed that if God had intended that these institutions exist, there would have been directions for their use in the Bible. That no such instructions were in the Bible was sufficient reason to oppose them.

Opposition to the societies included several specific objections. Membership in these societies was not restricted to church members, but included those who contributed to the funds of the societies. The Old School Baptists believed that such an amalgamation of believers with unbelievers had no warrant in the Bible. This objection is stated in the Black Rock Address.

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 principle 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.22

The Old School Baptists also argued that the societies were given equal ranking with the church by those who favored them. Only the church had Bible sanction as a religious society, they said, and no other society should be organized. The members of one church declared in a letter to the Flint River Association,

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If these institutions (Benevolent, so-called) had been introduced into our country as a means of improving the moral condition, or in aid of the physical energies of man, abstracted from all amalgamation with the churches; we should pass them unnoticed, as we do many other institutions existing in our country. But these are enforced from the pulpit, by the press, by associations, as well as by churches, as a means of grace; consequently should become part and parcel of the business that should be attended by every church of Christ. Here we split. To these things we cannot yield our assent.23

The Missionary Baptists with an opposing view believed the missionary societies were the means of fulfilling the command of Christ to preach the gospel in all nations. They contended that enough latitude existed in the Bible to allow the formation of various plans to carry out this command. Jesse Mercer argued

If Christ has constituted his people the light of the world, and commanded them to let their light so shine; or to make known the riches of his grace among all nations for obedience to the faith; and at the same time to wage an interminable war with the powers of darkness; it follows as a matter of necessary consequence, that they must meet in convention, and by wise counsel adopt such plans as shall be judged best adapted to effect the objects in view.24

To the charge that there were no specific directions to organize the various societies in the Bible, the Missionary Baptists replied that many activities of the Old School Baptists also could not be supported by direct Scriptural

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23"Letter of Ephesus Church, Monroe County--To the Flint River Association," The Primitive Baptist, Volume I, Number I, Number 6 (March 26, 1836), 84-85.

authority. One author, writing under the pseudonym of "Nehemiah" in a pamphlet entitled *Strictures of the Sentiments of the Kehukee Association*, condemned the inconsistency.

Let us see: The first article in their Declaration is as follows. "Our body shall be known by the name of the Reformed Baptist Association of Churches!!" Now our Georgia Bibles know nothing about "Reformed Associations." Where is the scripture for the publication of a scurrilous pamphlet, which condemns the practice and impugns the motives of a commanding majority of all denominations of our country? . . . The authors of the pamphlet before us, are informed that we have the same warrant for Missionary and other Societies, that they have for Associations, meeting on a stated day, a clerk and book for their churches, & c., & c.\(^{25}\)

If the Old School Baptists required every practice of the Missionary Baptists to be spelled out in the Bible, they were called upon to be consistent and adhere to the requirement themselves. One correspondent of *The Christian Index* said, "They are doing the very thing themselves on account of which they condemn and denounce us."\(^{26}\)

The new emphasis placed on money to support the missionary movement generated opposition from the Old School Baptists. In the past, the "old fashioned preachers" went about their work as a labor of love, and they did not expect large monetary support from the people. It was not that the people were selfish with their money, but the conditions in the late eighteenth century were such that no emphasis was placed on financial

\(^{25}\)Nehemiah, *Strictures*, pp. 3-4.

\(^{26}\) *The Christian Index*, Volume IV, Number 9 (March 10, 1836), 133.
support for the ministry. As the missionary movement began early in the nineteenth century, it was natural that much more emphasis would be placed on money. It was needed to support missionaries in far away places and at home too. The "old fashioned preachers" did not understand why the modern missionaries should have fine financial support when many of them could remember their own missionary labors on the frontiers of a new country without any financial support. At the very time that the churches were called on to give for "distant objects," many of the pastors were receiving little or nothing for their labors at home.

Because strong emphasis was placed on money in the missionary movement, the Old School Baptists came to believe that the whole movement was based on money. It seemed to them that the gospel was being corrupted by this constant plea for money. Gilbert Beebe, a prominent Old School Baptist and principal author of the Black Rock Address, in an editorial in 1833, acknowledged that the liberality of the churches "in support of the ministers of the gospel of Christ has not been extravagantly large." The extravagance was expended, he said, on those "who teach for filthy lucre's sake... who while receiving thousands by contract for preaching, are at the same time setting on foot every conceivable devise for swelling their income, by preaching what they call Missionary sermons."
Education, Tract, Temperance or other kinds of sermons; any kind except gospel sermons. . . ."27 Joshua Lawrence, staunch opponent of the missionary movement in North Carolina, said,

Missions have corrupted the pulpit, from pure gospel to—go ye into all the world and preach money to every creature; and he that giveth shall help save the world, and he that giveth not, in effect, helps to damn the world. . . .28

The Old School Baptists came to believe that the Missionary Baptists were preaching for money, and for no other reason. This had a strong influence on their idea of ministerial support. While contending that they believed in ministerial support, the Old School Baptists condemned any method which remotely resembled paying a minister for his work and any systematic method of ministerial support. No one, they said, should preach for a stipulated sum. Joshua Lawrence explained it in this way: "/The/ minister is to preach freely as a mother suckles her child, and the churches are as freely to support him." However, he went on to observe, "Have you a preacher that has promised to serve you for so much a year? Then hold back your money, and you will see whether he serves you for Jesus' sake or moneys' sake."29 While the churches were instructed to support their ministers, the only way to be sure that he was not preaching for money

27Gilbert Beebe, "Remarks on Ministerial Support," A Compilation of Editorial ArticlesCopied from the Signs of the Times (Middletown, N. Y., 1868), pp. 60-63. (Hereinafter cited as Editorial Articles.)
28The Primitive Baptist, Volume I, Number 1 (January 9, 1936), 6.
29Ibid., Volume I, Number 2 (January 23, 1836), 18-21.
was to withhold it. The only way a minister could prove that he was not preaching merely for financial remuneration was, not only to be willing to preach without support, but actually to do it. It was believed that only by preaching without any financial support could a man prove that he was not in it for the money.

During the period 1813-1821, opposition to the missionary societies, the most prominent manifestation of the missionary movement at that time, grew steadily. By the time of the organization of the General Baptist Association for the State of Georgia, called the General Association, in 1822, there was a well defined opposition to all aspects of the missionary movement. The General Association was designed to co-ordinate and bring together all of the missionary activities of Georgia Baptists, and it eventually became the vehicle through which all missionary funds were channeled. As such, it became the major target of the opposition. The opposition to the General Association is revealed by the fact that of eight associations in Georgia in 1822, only two became charter members of the General Association with a third coming into the organization in 1824. Five of the associations declined to take part.

The feeling against the missionary movement became so strong in the Hephzibah Association that in 1821 it refused

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30 The Primitive Baptist, Volume I, Number 2 (January 23, 1836), 18-21.
to allow a letter from the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions to be read. William Theophilus Brantley was present at the 1822 session of the association and presented the constitution of the General Association. A proposal to join that body was rejected. A similar action was taken by the Ebenezer Association in 1823 when the proposal to join the General Association was "thrown under the table." The Piedmont Association emphatically declined to take part in the General Association in 1824 stating that "this association votes no correspondence with the general association."

The Hephzibah Association was completely controlled by the Old School Baptist advocates during the period 1819-1825. This association went so far in 1825 as to insert an article in its decorum to prevent the subject of missionary activities from being brought before the association. It read,

> This association shall have no right to correspond by letter, or messenger with any general association or committee, missionary society, or board; any brother moving either of the above subjects in this body shall be considered in disorder and therefor reproved by the moderator, but we leave any brother or brethren free to correspond or contribute or not, just as their feelings may be in the case.

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31 Hephzibah Minutes, 1821, 1822.
32 Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 112.
33 Piedmont Minutes, 1824.
34 Hephzibah Minutes, 1825.
The strong anti-missionary sentiment was somewhat tempered after 1825. A new moderator was elected in 1826, replacing Jordan Smith, the leading opponent of the missionary movement in the Hephzibah Association. The opposition to the missionary movement article inserted in the decorum in 1825 was removed at the request of several churches in 1826, and the association came under the influence of men more favorable to the support of missions. 35

The Old School Baptists in that association then moved in a different direction to register their opposition to the missionary movement. A meeting of those who opposed the missionary movement convened at Limestone Church, Washington County, in September of 1828 at which a list of "Grievances" was prepared. These "Grievances" were presented to the association in 1828, and the association refused to consider them. After an acrimonious debate, the representatives of the churches meeting at Limestone left the association. 36 This led directly to the organization of the "United Baptist Conference or Association" in September of 1829, again at Limestone Church. Thirteen churches were represented in the initial meeting of this association, most of which had been members of the Hephzibah Association. They were located in

35 Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, pp. 43-44.
36 Hephzibah Minutes, 1828; Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, pp. 44-45; Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 165.
Bulloch, Tatnall, Emanuel, Burke, and Washington counties. The name of this association was changed to the Canoochee Baptist Association in 1830.37

This was the first association in Georgia which was organized as an Old School Baptist association. The churches did not request letters of dismissal from the Hephzibah Association, thus disregarding any former relationship to that body. This precluded any hope of reconciliation with the Hephzibah Association. Opposition by members of the Canoochee Association to the missionary movement is stated in one article of the constitution adopted in 1829.

As the love of money is the root of all evil and has produced so much distress among Christians, and we wishing to live in peace, therefore this conference shall not engage in nor in any wise encourage any religious speculation called missionary, nor by any other name under the pretense of supporting the Gospel of Christ.38

The course of action pursued by these churches appears to have been influenced by the action of the Kehukee Association of North Carolina. In 1827 that association passed the first non-fellowship resolutions in the United States and initiated

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37 Canoochee Baptist Association Minutes, 1829, 1830. (Hereinafter cited as Canoochee Minutes.) The churches were Limestone, New Hope, Foxbay, Lake Meeting House, Mill Creek, Bethsaida, Upper Black Creek, Haynes Meeting House, Canoochee, Bethlehem, Little Brier Creed, Gum Log, and Hebron.

38 Canoochee Minutes, 1830.
the first step in the division of the Baptist church. The essential part of the resolutions reads,

It was agreed that we discard all Missionary Societies, and Theological Seminaries, and the practices heretofore resorted to for their support, in begging money from the public; and if any person should be among us as agents of any said societies, if under the character of a minister of the gospel, we will not invite them into our pulpits believing those societies and institutions to be the inventions of men and not warranted from the word of God. . . .39

These resolutions were reprinted and circulated in Georgia in 1828 by Jordan Smith. This publication probably influenced the writing of the "Grievances" presented to the Hephzibah Association in 1828. Kilpatrick says that these resolutions had the effect of weakening the bond which held the churches together.40 It probably influenced the churches to withdraw from the Hephzibah Association and organize another association.

Unlike the Hephzibah Association and the Piedmont Association, where reservations about the missionary movement from the beginning had been raised, the Ocmulgee Association initially favored the movement, but later opposed it strongly. It was one of the two associations which organized the General Association in 1822. However, by 1827, the Ocmulgee Association

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39Elder Cushing Biggs Hassell, History of the Church of God. . . Including especially the History of the Kehuhee Primitive Baptist Association, revised and completed by Elder Sylvester Hassell (Middletown, N. Y.; Gilbert Beebe's Sons, Publishers, 1886), pp. 735-737. (Hereinafter cited as Hassell, Kehuhee Association.)

40Kilpatrick, Hephzibah Association, p. 44; Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 164-165.
began to have second thoughts about the missionary movement. In that year a number of letters from the churches revealed a desire to withdraw from the General Association. After determining the wishes of all the churches, the Ocmulgee Association withdrew from that organization in 1830.\footnote{Ocmulgee Minutes, 1822, 1827, 1829, 1830; pp. 105-107, 160, 177, 187-188. It should be noted that the General Association changed its name to the Baptist Convention for the State of Georgia in 1827.}

One of the things which intensified the opposition in the Ocmulgee Association was the doctrinal question brought up by Cyrus White, a minister in that association and an agent for the Georgia Baptist Convention. He stated his point of view in a pamphlet in 1829 that Christ made an atonement for the sins of all mankind by His death. This was contrary to the view of most Georgia Baptists who held that Christ's death procured the salvation of those chosen by God. A major controversy ensued in both the Ocmulgee and Flint River associations that expanded into other areas of the state. Since the missionary movement was being discussed widely at the same time, many people believed that there was a connection between this departure from established doctrine and the missionary movement. The fact that White was closely associated with the missionary movement, being an agent for the Georgia Baptist Convention, added credence to the belief of many Old School Baptists that the Missionary Baptists were deserting the standard Baptist faith.
This was a view held by most Old School Baptists. They became convinced that the missionary movement required a change of doctrine to support it. They believed that it was inconsistent with the established doctrine of the Baptist denomination. An example of this is found in a letter written by Anthony Holloway which appeared in _The Primitive Baptist_ in 1836.

Now, brother, Editor, the greatest evil in all this is that amongst us we have different kinds of doctrines preached. For I tell you that those Convention preachers do not preach the same doctrine that our old fashioned preachers; and we have some preachers among us that say they believe as firmly in the doctrine of election and the Covenant of grace as anybody, but they have found out that it is not best to preach it... 42

This suspicion is also shown by Jesse Mercer's part in the White controversy. Since Mercer was one of the leaders of the Georgia Baptist Convention and a friend of White's, many Old School Baptists believed that Mercer had also departed from the faith. One minister wrote Mercer saying that it was suspected that "he had departed from the faith..." This minister is further quoted as saying, "Upon the whole brother Mercer, I cannot feel my mind fully discharged without letting you know, that you are strongly and generally suspected here, of drinking out of Fuller's spring along with White and Wilson." 43

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42 _The Primitive Baptist, Volume I, Number 10_ (May 28, 1836), 158-159.

It is true that a cleavage developed between the Old School Baptists and their Missionary Baptist brethren over questions of doctrine. But these differences were expanded out of proportion to reality in the heat of debate over the missionary movement. The Old School Baptists generally made little difference in those who differed with them. All of these were identified together and charged alike with departing from the faith. They looked with great suspicion upon those who seemed to be modifying the old Calvinistic doctrines.

Calvinism was the predominant view of Georgia Baptists from the beginning of their existence in the state. However, at the beginning of the nineteenth century the term "Calvinism" had broadened in meaning, and it was necessary to describe one's views in more detail along a Calvinistic spectrum. While all Calvinists emphasized the decrees of God, they began to disagree on the practical application as it pertained to people and to preaching. Those who stressed the decrees of God at the expense of man's responsibility to obey the commands of the gospel and at the expense of addressing the gospel to all men came to be called High Calvinists.

Calvinism took its name from the great reformer and referred to the decrees of God which made the salvation of a certain number of men a certainty. All of the factors contributing to this salvation were embraced in the term "predestination." Arminianism placed the burden of salvation upon man which resulted in salvation being uncertain.
or Hyper Calvinists. Others stressed the responsibility of man to obey the commands of God.

There were those in Georgia who held to varying shades of Calvinism at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Jesse Mercer described Abraham Marshall as one who was "never considered a predestination preacher." "He, with several others," said Mercer, "was considered sound in the faith, though low Calvinists." Edmund Botsford called himself "a stiff predestinarian," but in such a manner "as leaves every person inexcusable, who neglects the great salvation, and calls sinners, in general, to come to Christ..."

As the missionary movement began, its advocates were generally "low Calvinists" stressing man's responsibility and the need to preach the gospel to the heathen. The Old School Baptists, on the other hand, tended toward "High Calvinism" stressing the sovereignty of God.

It is a significant fact that the missionary movement among the Baptists was greatly influenced by the doctrinal thought of Andrew Fuller. Fuller was pastor of the Particular Baptist Church in Kettering, England at the time when the first Baptist missionary society was formed there in 1792 and, along with William Carey, was one of its founders.

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45 Andrew Gunton Fuller, The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, with a Memoir of His Life, Five volumes (London: Holdsworth and Hall, 1831), I, xxv-xxvi. (Hereinafter cited as Fuller, Works.)
46 Mallary, Mercer, pp. 200-201.
47 Mallary, Botsford, p. 220.
Fuller was the author of a book entitled *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, published in 1785, in which he set forth a system which made it consistent with the decrees of God to call upon men everywhere to repent. This book had a profound influence on the missionary movement. David Benedict says that the introduction of the "Fuller system" brought about "very important changes... in their mode of addressing their unconverted hearers on the subjects of repentance and believing the gospel." The Old School Baptists rejected the "Fuller system" believing it was too close to Arminianism. As Benedict explained, "(It) was well received by one class of our ministers, but not by the staunch defenders of the old theory of a limited atonement." These were the Old School Baptists who believed this system was deliberately designed to undergird the missionary movement and to undercut what they considered the true Baptist faith.

In the heat of the missionary controversy the differences in doctrine were emphasized and often exaggerated. The Old School Baptists became convinced that such incidents as the Cyrus White apostasy demonstrated the unsoundness of the Missionary Baptists. This was the principal reason that Jesse Mercer made public his differences with White on the

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subject of the atonement of Christ. Mercer’s pamphlet,
Ten Letters Addressed to the Rev. Cyrus White in Reference
to His Scriptural View of the Atonement, reveals that the
"Fuller system" was far from being the same as White’s. In
refuting the general atonement theory, Mercer quoted ex-
tensively from Fuller and concluded his argument with this
defense of Fuller:

> From the above it appears that Mr. F. is
not so opposed to Dr. Gill (John) as many have thought. All that F. contends for, as to the
infinite worth of the atonement, is comprehended
in Gill’s view of the scheme of redemption. What
Gill placed in covenant transactions, and con-
siders as past and done in the eternal mind, F.
resolves into "the sovereign pleasure of God,
with a regard to the application of the atone-
ment; that is, with regard to the persons to
whom it shall be applied." What then is the
difference? A mere shade—a difference only
in the modus operandi of the great plan.50

Thus, Mercer sought to de-emphasize the doctrinal differences
between the Baptists. However, this did not prevent his
being accused by the Old School Baptists of changing his doc-
trine. He maintained that the Missionary Baptists generally
preached what they had always preached. "But do you preach
as you used to do?" he was asked. To this he answered,

> This question I have answered several times
in the Index; and if it was not believed then, why
is it asked again? But for the sake of those who
may not have given themselves the trouble to read
heretofore; or who may not have noticed it I repeat
that I have undergone no fundamental change in faith
from my forefathers. I believe now, and

always preach in perfect accordance with the faith adopted by the Georgia Association, and from her (so far as I am informed) the other associations in the state. . . . By far the great majority of those engaged in benevolent efforts are strictly Calvinistic.51

This assertion by Mercer is born out by the action at a meeting of Baptist ministers at Forsyth, Georgia in July of 1836. The first item of discussion was initiated by the question, "Do we, as a body, on doctrinal points, hold those sentiments which have characterized orthodox Baptist Churches from time immemorial, and particularly as embodied and set forth in the Articles of Faith adopted by the Georgia, Flint River, Ocmulgee, and Yellow River Associations?" The ministers were called on individually, and, with the exception of those of the United Association, they all answered "yes."52

The doctrinal question did play a significant role in the division of Georgia Baptists, but its contribution to the general dissension should not be overemphasized. Though there were doctrinal differences between the two groups, the Old School Baptists "overreacted" to what they considered to be vast doctrinal deviations among the Missionary Baptists. The extent of this deviation was present more in the minds of the Old School Baptists than in actuality.

51 Jesse Mercer, "Reply to J—No. 3," The Christian Index, Volume IV, Number 7 (February 25, 1836), 101-102. See Also Mallary, Mercer, pp. 200-201.

52 Proceedings of the Ministers' Meeting at Forsyth, Ga., July 1836," The Christian Index, Volume IV, Number 9 (July 28, 1836), 451-453. (Hereinafter cited as "Ministers' Meeting.")
The Cyrus White episode and other disputes of a local nature in the Ocmulgee and Flint River Associations contributed to dissension between the two opposing factions. The organization of the Central Association resulted from these disputes, and it had to do with matters of church discipline. Seven churches withdrew from the Flint River and Ocmulgee Associations, attributing their withdrawal to associational usurpations. However, the Central Association immediately united with the Georgia Baptist Convention and fell into the mainstream of the missionary movement. This illustrates the fact that every difference in the Baptist denomination was made into an issue between the two factions, and the period of 1830-1835 was identified as one of conflict and unrest for Georgia Baptists.

The conflict in Georgia was a part of the overall rivalry between Missionary Baptists and Old School Baptists in the United States. The overall nature of the conflict is pointed up by a convention of Old School Baptists held at Black Rock Meeting House in Baltimore, Maryland in September of 1832. The Black Rock Address was issued by this convention and stands as the fullest expression of the Old School Baptist views with regard to the missionary movement. This

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53 Central Baptist Association Minutes, 1834; Index, Georgia Baptists, p. 169.

54 Signs of the Times, Gilbert Beebe, editor, Volume I, Number 1 (November 28, 1832), 1-16.
incident served to solidify opposition to the missionary movement in that it gave articulation to the Old School Baptist movement.

At the same meeting, plans were made to begin publication of a periodical devoted exclusively to the cause of the Old School Baptists. The Signs of the Times edited by Gilbert Beebe of Middletown, New York began publication in November of 1832. This was one of three such periodicals which played a major role in the final outcome of this conflict in Georgia.

The Christian Index, under the editorship of Jesse Mercer exerted a strong influence on the Missionary Baptists of Georgia. This periodical began publication in 1822 as the Columbian Star in Washington, D. C. and was moved to Philadelphia in 1827 under the editorship of William Theophilus Brantley. Jesse Mercer purchased the press in 1833 and moved it to Georgia. This periodical crusaded for all phases of the missionary movement and often defended it against the allegations of the Old School Baptists.

The Primitive Baptist, as its name indicates, was another Old School Baptist publication which had considerable influence in Georgia. Publication began in 1835, and a specimen copy

55 Signs of the Times, Volume I, Number 1 (November 28, 1832), 1-16.

56 Armitage, History of Baptists, pp. 882-883; Index, Georgia Baptists, Biographical Compendium, pp. 53, 387.
was sent out in July of 1835, prior to regular publication in January, 1836. It was published in Tarboro, North Carolina, although several men from Georgia, including William Moseley, were instrumental in its founding.57

The Primitive Baptist enjoyed a wide circulation in Georgia, as the number of agents who solicited subscriptions indicates. The number of such agents increased from five in January of 1836 to twenty-two in May of 1837.58 The Signs of the Times did not enjoy such wide circulation in Georgia. Beebe reported in April of 1835,

We rejoice to find so many Old School brethren in the State of Georgia where we were not until very recently aware of the existence of any. Since the commencement of this volume we have received advance pay from our spirited brethren in that state for about 120 copies of our paper.59

The reason for the greater popularity of The Primitive Baptist was that it was nearer to the views of the people in Georgia and they felt the close association. One correspondent expressed this idea in a letter to the paper in 1836.

This is the very thing we want. To this publication the Old School Baptists will rally with cheerful hearts and willing minds. I have myself been a subscriber to the 'Signs of the Times' for the last eighteen months, and have been much strengthened in reading it, but the 'Primitive Baptist'

57 The Primitive Baptist, Volume I, Number 2 (January 23, 1836), 26-27.

58 Ibid., Volume I, Number 1 (January 9, 1836), 16; Volume II, Number 9 (May 13, 1837), 144.

59 Signs of the Times, Volume III, Number 9 (April 9, 1835), 137.
comes home to us—it is Southern and will be a rallying point for the Old School Baptists here. 60

This periodical also provided a medium through which the Old School Baptists of Georgia publicized their opinions. Letters from ministers, associational letters and resolutions, and other articles pertaining to Georgia Baptists were published regularly in The Primitive Baptist.

The greatest influence of the Old School Baptist periodicals was in advocating a separation from the Missionary Baptists. Both the Signs of the Times and The Primitive Baptist promoted the idea of division. This sentiment was summarized by A. B. Reid of Monroe County, Georgia in a letter to The Primitive Baptist early in 1836.

There are many sound Baptists in Georgia, who stand pointedly opposed to the new school system, yet are afraid to come out openly and take a decided stand against them. They seem still to live in hope of reconciliation with some and with an expectation that they will be able to reclaim others.

I am clearly of the opinion, that this will never take place to any extent. We might as well undertake to unite soil and water, for we are not only a different people in practice but we also differ in principle. I therefore long to see the time come when the line will be distinctly drawn between us, not to make us a divided people, for we are already that; but that everyone may go where they belong, and that all the churches may be in peace once more. . . . 61


61 Ibid.
The publication of such ideas certainly encouraged the Old School Baptists to pursue the course of separation. In this way, the religious periodicals had considerable influence in the final outcome of the controversy.

A division in the Baptist denomination in Georgia often voiced became a reality in 1836. A wide breach existed between the Old School Baptists and the Missionary Baptists, and the Old School Baptists made no effort to retain fellowship with the advocate of the missionary movement.

One last effort was made to avert a division. A call from ministers in ten different associations was made through The Christian Index for a meeting of all the Baptist ministers in the state "to discuss the divided condition of the churches." This meeting was held at Forsyth, Georgia in July of 1836, and a second one was held later during the year. However, the efforts were initiated primarily by the Missionary Baptists and had little chance of success. The Old School Baptists looked on the efforts with suspicion and most declined to attend.

Jonathan Neel of the Echeconnee Association in a letter of September 5, 1836 said that the true purpose of the meeting was "to draw into the ranks of missionaries all who may yet

62 "To the Baptist Ministers in the State of Georgia," The Christian Index, Volume IV, Number 16 (April 28, 1836), 241-242.

63 "Ministers' Meeting," 451-453.
be undecided on the subject." A similar idea was expressed by Mark Bennett, editor of The Primitive Baptist.

We are forced to think that if any person believes said meeting offered any terms the least conciliating or manifested the least inclination towards a re-union except upon the terms of the Old School becoming united with them upon the practice of missions, or else consenting to be silent and not oppose them; we say if any man believes said meeting has hinted any other terms, that man is certainly deluded. We have read the proceedings of the meetings both of July and October; and we cannot entertain but one idea of their tendency if not design; and that is to catch Old School Baptists, and to silence such as it cannot catch.65

The magnitude of the controversy in the Baptist denomination precluded chances to avert division. There was no authority, no superseding power in the structure of Baptist churches which could arbitrate the matter and resolve the differences. The only avenue open then was a complete division of Baptist churches and the organization of associations by the respective groups.

The process of separation began in Georgia in 1836 when the first association divided specifically over the question of the missionary movement. When the Ebenezer Association met in 1836, the letters from several churches contained questions relating to the "benevolent institutions of the day." That item reads,

64The Primitive Baptist, Volume I, Number 18 (September 24, 1836), 279-280.

65Ibid., Volume II, Number 9 (May 13, 1837), 140.
Whereas, it is inferred from the reading of some of the letters from the churches, that the members of this body which hold to the benevolent Institutions of the day have departed from the Articles of Faith and Constitution of this association. It was therefore ordered that the said articles be read, which were unanimously assented to, and the following query was received to be discussed for the satisfaction of this body: are the Institutions of the day, such as Missionary, Temperance, & C., consistent with the articles of Faith of this association?

After a long debate, this question "was decided in the affirmative." When the vote was taken, delegates from seven churches, "being dissatisfied with the institutions of the day, left the house." These delegates declared themselves to be the "true Ebenezer Association." The churches represented by these delegates, along with others who joined them later, became the Primitive Ebenezer Association on the Old School Baptist side of the division.

In the Ocmulgee Association, Mount Gilead Church in Putnam County, in its letter to the association in 1836, reported that it had found "the systems of the day" to be "unscriptural" and had "declared non-fellowship with them" and asked the association's advice. The association passed a resolution, "That we concur with her in the course she had pursued." The next year the Ocmulgee Association stopped its correspondence with the Ebenezer and Columbus Associations

66 Ebenezer Minutes, 1836.

67 Minutes of the Primitive Ebenezer Association, 1836.

The use of the term "Primitive" will be discussed on pp. 129-131.
because of their correspondence with the Central Association, a group which was aligned with the missionary movement. In addition, the association discussed the question, "Are the institutions of the day, (benevolent so-called,) viz: Convention, Missionary, Bible, Tract, and Temperance Societies, and all other Societies connected with the Mission Board in its operation, now existing in the United States Scriptural?" The answer given was, "We believe them to be unscriptural." This action severed the connection of these churches from the churches of the association who favored the missionary movement.

The division in the Sarepta Association came as a result of the decision of the association to become a member of the Georgia Baptist Convention in 1835. The representatives from five churches requested the association to reconsider this action in 1836. Their objection in part was that, since they opposed joining the convention, they were being forced to become a part of it against their will by the action of the association. Even though they did not contribute money to the convention, these churches believed they would be looked upon as a part of the convention while they remained in the association. The association rejected this allegation and voted

68Comulgee Minutes, 1836, 1837; pp. 242, 251-252. This action did not result in the departure of any churches since the churches who favored the missionary movement had seceded in 1834 in the Central Association controversy.
that the action of 1835 should remain as it was. The protesting churches then seceded from the Sarepta Association and organized the Oconee Association in 1837.69

The Flint River Association, in 1836, referred to the several churches the question of whether or not the association should declare non-fellowship with the churches favoring the missionary movement. The result of this canvas was that a majority of the churches opposed such a declaration by a vote of twenty-three to fifteen. The association adopted the following resolutions: "That we are unwilling to go into any new declaration of fellowship or non-fellowship, but feel disposed to continue in the same old Baptist path of faith and practice which this association has heretofore pursued." The fifteen churches which desired a declaration of non-fellowship then withdrew from the association and in 1838 organized the Towaliga Primitive Baptist Association.70

Declarations of non-fellowship were also passed in the Yellow River Association, the Echeconnee Association, and the Ochlocknee Association. These became Old School Baptist Associations. However, there were churches in the Yellow River and Echeconnee Associations which favored the missionary movement. They seceded from their respective associations.

69Sarepta Minutes, 1835, 1836; Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 169-170.

70Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 171-172; Towaliga Minutes, 1838.
and formed the Rock Mountain Association and the Rehoboth Association respectively.\footnote{Yellow River Minutes, 1836, 1837, 1838; Echeconnee Minutes, 1837; Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 170-171.} A minority of the churches in the Western Association were Old School Baptists, and they withdrew to form an Old School Baptist Association by the same name, later called the Primitive Western Association. In the Columbus Association, three churches of Old School Baptists seceded along with several others, and organized the Apostolic Association in 1837.\footnote{Index, Georgia Baptists, pp. 167-172; The Apostolic Association changed its name to the Upatoie Association in 1839. See Apostolic Baptist Association Minutes, 1837, 1838.}

Two separate Baptist denominations in Georgia emerged from this controversy which covered a period of more than twenty-five years. All church fellowship and church communication was severed by the declarations of "non-fellowship." The Old School Baptists receded into a shell of exclusiveness and refused to have anything to do with any group who had not declared non-fellowship for the whole missionary movement. In 1843, the Canoochee Association refused the request of the Middle Association to open correspondence with them (which meant to recognize them and have church fellowship with them) saying, "/we/, the Canoochee Association, cannot correspond with them unless they declare a non correspondence with the missionary associations, so called."\footnote{Canoochee Minutes, 1843.} This division...
became so complete that eventually all the Old School Baptist churches required persons who came to one of their churches from a Missionary Baptist Church to be re-baptized.74

The division in the Baptist church in Georgia required several years to complete, covering the period 1836-1840. Even after two distinct denominations emerged, a considerable amount of switching took place by churches that found themselves in an association with views incompatible with their own. Also, a significant number of churches and associations refused to be identified with either side, thus compounding the problem of identification of the churches belonging to each side in the division.

Perhaps the best comparison comes from the statistics for 1836, the year the division began, and a year for which records are available after the division was accomplished. The following table identifies the number of associations, churches, and members in 1836.

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74See Flint River Minutes, 1847.
Of the associations, twelve became Missionary Baptist Associations, five became Old School Baptist Associations, and six were classified as neutral in 1846. Only three additional Missionary Baptist Associations were organized by 1846, but twelve additional Old School Baptist Associations were organized in the same period. The associations are listed in these three categories in the table for 1846.

---

**Table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Number of Churches</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bethel</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoochee</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatahoochee</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattahoochee River</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coosa</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebenezer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flint River</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9,87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hephzibah</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hightower</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occonee</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ochlocknee</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocmulgee</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarepta</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunbury</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tugalo</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow River</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Churches</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total--24 Associations</strong></td>
<td>572</td>
<td><strong>42,949</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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75 Allen, Triennial Baptist Register, p. 203.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Number of Churches</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appalachee</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethel</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coosa</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebenezer</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flint River</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hephzibah</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehoboth</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarepta</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunbury</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total—15 Associations</strong></td>
<td><strong>415</strong></td>
<td><strong>37,310</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Florida Association had 32 churches and 1,333 members, but only those listed were in Georgia.

**OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Number of Churches</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alapaha</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoochee</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chestatee</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echeconnee</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ochlocknee</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocmulgee (Major)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocmulgee (Minor)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oconee</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive Ebenezer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive Western</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suwannee River</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towaliga</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uharlee</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upatoire</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow River</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulaski</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total—18 Associations</strong></td>
<td><strong>357</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,852</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>Number of Churches</td>
<td>Number of Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattahoochee</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellijay</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hightower</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Mountain</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallapoosa</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tugalo</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley River</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total—11 Associations</strong></td>
<td><strong>170</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,989</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a total of 942 Baptist churches in Georgia in 1846 with 57,151 members. Out of this total, 4415 churches or 44 percent were Missionary Baptist Churches with 37,310 members, or 65 percent of the total. There were 357 Old School Baptist Churches or 38 percent of the total with a membership of 11,852 or 21 percent of the total membership. Those falling in the neutral category numbered 170 churches, or 18 percent of the total with 7,989 members or 14 percent of their total membership. The analysis supports the interpretation that a majority of Georgia Baptists preferred the missionary movement and a large number were undecided in 1846. It is likely that most of these neutral associations

76Minutes of the Georgia Baptist Convention, 1846; Pulaski Association Minutes, 1845.
eventually supported the missionary movement. These figures also indicate that the larger churches favored the missionary movement, the average size of the Missionary Baptist churches being ninety as compared to thirty-three for the Old School Baptist churches. The city churches tended to favor the missionary movement while the Old School Baptists were centered in the rural areas.

The path that each of the two emerging denominations chose to follow is indicated by the names applied to them. While those who favored the missionary movement were most often called Missionary Baptists or simply Baptists, the Old School Baptists soon adopted a new name for themselves. Within a few years after the consummation of the division, they began to call themselves "Primitive Baptists."

The Old School Baptists appropriated the word "primitive" during this period because it described their position in religious circles quite accurately. The use and meaning of this word has undergone a change since that time. During the period of this study, the word "primitive" meant, original or that which is first. Thus, the Old School Baptists used it in the sense of describing their church as the original one and that it was holding to the pattern of the church described in the New Testament. This was the interpretation employed by religious writers of the early nineteenth century. It was a word often used by Missionary Baptist writers, as well as others, to refer to the Apostolic Church. David
Benedict used it frequently in his historical works on the Baptists. For example, he speaks of "the apostles and primitive preachers" as those who established the early church and he referred to the early adherents to the Christian religion as "primitive christians." 77

With the advent of theories describing the evolution of life from the simple and crudely developed to the complex and more fully developed, the word "primitive" was used to refer to the simple form of life in the early stages of its development. It suggests something crude and not fully developed. Thus, the word has come to have a bad connotation when used as the name of a religious society. But for those who originally adopted it, and for those who use it today, the definitive phrase is original and authentic.

The term "Primitive Baptist" was first used as a name when it was applied to the religious periodical by that name in 1835. While no explanation is given as to why the name was chosen, it is evident that those who founded the paper believed it described their religious sentiments. The influence of this example in the use of this term as a name cannot be determined, but no instance of such use can be found prior to this time.

The churches which seceded from the Flint River Association were the first to use this term "Primitive Baptist"

77 Benedict, Baptists, I, 8, 53.
as a name for a group of Christians. When that association was organized, it was "moved and carried that this association be known and distinguished by the name 'Towaliga Primitive Baptist,' Association." About the same time, the Ebenezer Association and the Western Association both composed of Old School Baptists, began to be known as the Primitive Ebenezer Association and the Primitive Western Association. In a short time, almost all of the Old School Baptists in the United States became known as "Primitive Baptists," and the term continues in use today.

Following the division of Georgia Baptists, Missionary Baptists and Primitive Baptists went in different directions to establish denominational characteristics. The Missionary Baptists followed the trend of adopting expedients suited to changing times and circumstances and went on to become one of the largest denominations in the state. The Primitive Baptists became more and more determined to adhere to the church established by their forefathers. This rigidity in doctrine and extreme exclusiveness led to further contention and division in their own ranks. These characteristics have precluded any significant growth among Primitive Baptists. However, in choosing between numerical growth and adhering to what they considered the New Testament pattern, the Primitive Baptists chose the latter. In many ways, the division of Georgia Baptists was unfortunate. However, the supporters of each group, in the ensuing century and a quarter, have defended the position taken by their forefathers.

78Towaliga Minutes, 1838.
CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE GEORGIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Approved in 1790

The Association Covenant

We, the Churches of Jesus Christ, who have been regularly baptized upon a profession of our faith, are convinced from a series of experiences of the necessity of a combination of churches, for the preserving of a federal union among all the churches of the same faith and order. And as we are convinced that there are a number of Baptist Churches, who differ from us in faith and practice, and that it is impossible to have communion where there is no union, we think it is our duty to set forth a concise declaration of the faith and order upon which we intend to associate, which is as follows:

1. We believe in one only true and living God, and that there is a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and yet these are not three Gods, but one God.

2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God and the only rule of faith and practice.

3. We believe in the fall of Adam, and the imputation of his sin to his posterity—in the corruption of human nature—and the impotency of man to recover himself by his own free-will ability.

4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race to grace and glory; and that there was a covenant of grace or redemption, made between the Father and the Son, before the world began in which their salvation is secured, and that they in particular are redeemed.

5. We believe that Sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them.

6. We believe that all those that were chosen in Christ will be effectually called, regenerated, converted, sanctified and supported by (the) Spirit and power of God, so that they shall persevere in grace, and not one of them be finally lost.
7. We believe that Good Works are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, and that they only justify us in the sight of men and angels, and are evidences of our gracious state.

8. We believe that there will be a Resurrection of the dead, and a General judgment, and that the happiness of the Righteous, and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.

And as for Gospel Order

1st. We believe that the visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful persons, who have gained Christian fellowship with each other, and have given themselves up to the Lord and to one another; and have agreed to keep up a godly discipline agreeable to the rules of the gospel.

2dly. We believe that Jesus Christ is the great Head of this Church, and only Lawgiver—and that the government is with the Body, and is the privilege of each individual; and that the discipline of the Church is intended for the reclaiming of those Christians who may be disorderly in faith or practice; and must be faithfully kept up for God's glory, and for the peace and unity of the Churches.

3dly. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Lord, and to be continued till His Second Coming.

4thly. We believe that true believers in Jesus Christ are the only Subjects of Baptism, and that dipping is the mode.

5thly. We believe that none but regularly baptized Church members have a right to commune at the Lord's Table.

6thly. We believe that it is the duty of every heaven-born soul to become a member of the visible Church, and to make a public profession of his faith, to be legally baptized, to live so as to have a right to, and to partake of the Lord's Supper at every legal opportunity, during the whole course of his life.

Having laid down a Summary of the Faith and Order upon which we intend to associate, we therefore propose to maintain for the Decorum of our association the following Plan or Form of Government.

Article 1st. Those members who are regularly chosen by the Churches in our union Shall compose the association.
2d. The members so chosen shall produce letters from their respective churches, certifying their appointment, together with their members in fellowship, those baptized, received by letter, restored, dismissed, excommunicated and dead, since the last association.

3d. The members thus chosen and convened shall be denominated the Georgia Baptist Association.

4th. The association shall have no power to lord it over God's Heritage, nor by which they can infringe upon any of the internal rights of the churches.

5th. The association shall have a Moderator and a Clerk who shall be chosen by the members present.

6th. If new churches desire to be admitted into the union, they shall petition by letter and Delegates, and upon examination, if found orthodox and orderly, shall be received by the association, and manifested by the Moderator giving the Delegates the right hand of fellowship.

7th. That no church in the union shall have a right to more than two delegates, till she shall exceed one hundred members, and then she shall have a right to an additional delegate for every fifty after the first hundred.

8th. Every query sent to the association by any church in the union shall be read, and put to vote by the Moderator whether it shall be taken up and investigated, but if not, it shall be withdrawn—provided always that those be first considered which affect the union (of) churches.

9th. Every motion made and Seconded shall come under the observation of the association, except it be withdrawn by the member who made it.

10th. Every person who speaks in debate, shall rise from his seat & address the Moderator, & shall not be interrupted while speaking except he departs from the subject.

11th. No person shall speak more than three times, to the same query without leave of the association.

12th. There shall be no talking nor whispering in time of public Speech, nor reflections cast upon the speaker.

13th. No member shall exempt himself from the association without leave from the moderator.
14th. If any member shall break the rules of this decorum, he shall immediately be reproved by the moderator.

15th. It is the business of the association,

1st. To provide for the general union of the churches.

2d. To keep up a correspondence with those associations (which are) of the same faith & order, that a chain of communication may be preserved amongst the churches.

3d. To give the churches the best advice they can in matters of difficulty—and if the communion shall be broken between any of the sister churches in the union, to inquire into the cause of the breach, and use their best endeavors to remove the difficulty; but if the breach cannot be healed, to withdraw from any church or churches whom they shall look upon to be unsound in principle or immoral in practice, till they be reclaimed.

4th. To admit any of the brethren in the ministry as assistants, if they shall judge it to be necessary.

5th. To appoint a Secretary to keep a book and regularly record the proceedings of every association, and to see that he is satisfied for his trouble.

6th. To have the minutes of the association read, (and corrected if need be) and assigned by the moderator and clerk before the association rises, and have them printed if they think proper.

7th. To mend this Plan or Form of Government at any time, when the majority of the union shall deem it to be necessary.

8th. To adjourn to any time or place which they may think most proper.¹

¹Georgia Association Minutes, 1790.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Central Baptist Association Minutes. 1834.

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Echeeconnee Baptist Association Minutes. 1829, 1836-1838.

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Sunbury Baptist Association Minutes. 1818-1824.

Towaliga Primitive Baptist Association Minutes. 1838.

Yellow River Baptist Association Minutes. 1824-1839.

B. BOOKS


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C. CHURCH RECORD BOOKS

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Hebron Church Record Book. Microfilm copy of these manuscript minutes is located at the Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia.

Little Ogeechee Church Record Book. These manuscript minutes are located at Mercer University Library, Macon, Georgia.

Nevil's Creek Church Record Book. Microfilm copy of these manuscript minutes is located at the Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia.

Upper Black Creek Church Record Book. 1815-1830. These manuscript minutes are in the possession of Elder Howard Cox, present pastor of the church, of Statesboro, Georgia.

D. PERIODICALS


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B. Periodical Articles


C. Unpublished Works