

HISTORY OF SOUTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS 1670 to, 1805

Ebenezer Baptist Church, Jeffries Creek. In 1803 the church recommended Ezra-Courtney for assistance in securing ministerial education.. In 1803 when he received assistance to secure ministerial training Mississippi Association records him as pastor at Ebenezer Church in Miss in 1813. Benedict, Baptist History 11, 548

SOUTH CAROLINA BAPTIST HISTORY

The history of the early Baptists of South Carolina will be of special interest to lovers of history among Mississippi Baptist. More of the early Baptist settlers in the Mississippi Territory migrated from South Carolina than any other region. The preponderant majority of those who established the first churches in what is now Mississippi traveled overland by pack-horses and on foot, and some by flatboats down the Holston, Tennessee, Ohio and Mississippi rivers as early as 1780.

We hope our readers will enjoy the following brief historical sketch on South Carolina Baptists by William Cathcart, 1826-1908. -- L. S. Walker

The First Baptist church of Charleston, S. C., the first in the colony, was probably founded in Kittery, Maine, by Eld. William Screven, Deacon Humphrey Churchwood, and eight other brethren, with some sisters, in September, 1682. Persecutions in Maine, it is said by some, dissolved the community, and it is certain that they drove away the leaders and others from the territory. In the same, or in the following year, Eld. Screven, with a number of his Kittery brethren, arrived in South Carolina, and either regarded their Eastern church organization as still in force or formed a new one. They settled first on the west side of the Cooper River, and soon after removed to Charleston, then a village.

The second, the Ashley River church, was formed in 1736, with Eld. Isaac Chanler as pastor.

The third, the Pee Dee, now

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So. Carolina Baptists

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the Welsh Neck church, was organized in 1738. James James, Esq., was the leader in the movement, whose son Philip soon after became the pastor.

The fourth church was the Enhaw, founded in 1746 as an independent body, having for some years been a branch of the Charleston church. The old building was burnt during the war. The old barrel-like pulpit and the sounding board were still preserved because Whitefield had once preached there. The writer saw them shortly before they were consumed.

THE CHARLESTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1751, the first meeting being held in Charleston, Oct. 21. Eld. Oliver Hart was the moving spirit. They obtained from the Philadelphia Association Griffith's "Essay on the Nature, Power, and Duty of an Association" as the basis of union. The object was declared to be the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom by the maintenance of love and fellowship. The independence of the churches was asserted, and the power of the body restricted to an advisory council.

MISSIONS

In 1755 they began to collect funds to supply the destitute places with preaching in their own and in the adjoining provinces, and the next year Eld. John Gano was sent by the Philadelphia Association to the Yadkin settlement, in North Carolina, and wherever Providence might direct his steps and his labors were eminently successful.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

In 1767 the Association adopted the Confession of Faith published by the London Assembly in 1689. That year there were eight churches, with 390 members, in South Carolina.

CONTRIBUTIONS

In 1774 a resolution was adopted by the Association recommending the churches to contribute

funds for the Rhode Island College, now Brown University. The body also urged the churches to send funds to the brethren in Massachusetts, then suffering for righteousness' sake.

The Religious Society and, afterwards, the General Committee were the agencies through which funds for missions and the education of young ministers were collected and disbursed. Probably nearly one hundred young men have from time to time shared in its benefactions. Among these were the Elder Brantly, Eld. J. L. Brooks, the venerable Jesse Mercer, and the writer, who most gratefully acknowledges his obligation to the same source.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

It is pleasing to find here, as everywhere else, our brethren contending for religious liberty. In 1779 the Charleston Association appointed a standing committee for several purposes, and "particularly to treat with the government in behalf of the churches" for complete freedom from political control.

NEW ASSOCIATIONS

Churches having sprung up here and there in the "backwoods," the distance sometimes traveled to reach the Association, and the want of facilities for traveling, led to the formation of the Bethel Association in 1789. In 1800 the Broad River was constituted. In 1802 the Savannah River, the Saluda in 1803, the Edgefield in 1808, and the Moriah in 1815. Thus did our Zion "lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes," until, in 1819, the letter of the High Hills church suggested to the Charleston Association the formation of

THE SOUTH CAROLINA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION

From their settlement in South Carolina its Baptist people took an active interest in ministerial education and missions. In colonial times they gave a large sum to aid in establishing Rhode Island College, now Brown University. "The Religious Society" was founded, in 1755, in the First Church of Charleston, to aid missions and ministerial education. This society rendered efficient

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help to ministers preaching among the Indians, and it sustained, in whole or in part, a number of candidates for the ministry who were under the instruction of Eld. Oliver Hart and others.

In 1819 both the Charleston and High Hills churches suggested to the Charleston Association the propriety of forming a more general union of the churches for this double purpose. The plan had been drawn by Eld. R. Furman, then pastor in Charleston. This led to the meeting of delegates from the Charleston, Savannah River, and Edgefield Associations, in Columbia, in December, 1821, who formed the Baptist State Convention. Eld. Richard Furman was its first president, and held that position until his death, Aug. 25, 1825. His successors have been W. R. Johnson, Basil Manly, J. C. Furman, J. B. O'Neall, E. T. Winkler, J. P. Boyce, J. L. Reynolds, J. A. Broadus. No convention can show a more distinguished list of presiding officers.

The convention founded the Furman Theological Institute, which has grown into both Furman University and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The State Board of Missions employed last year (1880) about thirty missionaries, and not only paid them, but reserved sufficient funds to pay the first quarter's salary for 1881 in advance.

There are now 28 white associations in the state co-operating with the convention.

There is great harmony and hearty effort in sustaining the convention. The present officers are Col. B. W. Edwards, president; T. P. Smith, vice-president; Capt. A. B. Woodruff and Eld. Luther Broadus, secretaries; and Prof. C. H. Judson, treasurer. Executive Board: Eld. Charles Manly, D.D., president; Eld. A. W. Lomax, vice-president; Eld. W. H. Strickland, corresponding secretary and treasurer.

In 1880, according to the "Baptist Year Book," there were in South Carolina 44 Baptist Associations, 1,126 churches, and 140,442 members. The white and colored Baptists are included in these statistics.

(BAPTIST ENCYCLOPEDIA,
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