

## 1843 Circular Letter

### Of The Baltimore River Association

#### Subject: God's People a Peculiar and Unique People

[Note: In the previous Minutes (1842), the Middleton Church, served by Elder Gilbert Beebe was admitted to this association. In this year, a *committee* was given responsibility to write the Circular Letter printed below.]

*The Delaware River Association, to the churches of which she is composed, sends love in the Lord.*

Beloved Brethren:- Through the amazing goodness of Him who dwelt in the burning bush, we have been permitted to assemble once more in our associate capacity and we rejoice to learn from your letters and messengers, of your steadfastness in the faith and order of the Gospel of our blessed Redeemer. We are bound to give thanks unto God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; and, that notwithstanding the floods of error, the winds of doctrine and the fires of persecution, which you are called to encounter, it has been the pleasure of our heavenly Father to keep and preserve you, as He preserved the bush which Moses saw: for, like that bush the Church of God is now, and has for ages been enveloped in flames;- but, to the astonishment of men, admiration of angels and confusion of devils, the presence of God in her midst makes her invincible. Truly the God of Jeshurun rideth upon the heavens in her help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is her Refuge, and underneath her are the everlasting arms. Who is like unto her? A people saved by the Lord, the Shield of her help and the Sword of her excellency: her enemies shall be found liars unto her, and she shall tread upon their high places. Unto this challenge of the man of God who is prepared to respond? Where can a people be found like unto Israel? Saved by the Lord! We are not at a loss to find those who claim to be saved by themselves, by their efforts, their decisions, their use of means, compliance with terms, their resolutions, efforts, self-wrought faith, natural repentance, &c. But such a people as Moses has described, Deuteronomy 33, can only be found in that Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood. As among all the gods there is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, so neither can there be

found among all the workmongrel tribes of religious speculators, any people who are, or expect to be saved by the Lord, who rely alone on Him, and discard all other hopes for life and salvation. Israel is not represented as a people *to **be saved***, but a people **already saved**, not by their own power or goodness, but by the Lord, and that in a manner in which she stands absolutely alone. The contemplation of this subject presents the following important considerations, viz:

1<sup>st</sup>. That the *people of God* comprise all the election of grace and consequently all that ever will or can possibly be saved: for “*The Lord’s portion is His people, and Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.*”

2<sup>nd</sup>. That God’s people are in and of themselves utterly lost, helpless and wretched. “*O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help.*” The Lord found Jacob in a waste howling wilderness, in a desert land, in a pit wherein there was no water and in the open field, left to the loathing of his own person, where there was no eye to pity nor arm to redeem.

3<sup>d</sup>. That this people of God is a *saved* people, and the **only saved people** on earth or in heaven, perfectly, positively, irrevocably and everlastingly saved, and saved in a way reflecting glory and immortal honor to God, honor and majesty to His law, satisfaction to His divine justice, security to the Church and disappointment and everlasting confusion to wicked men and devils.

4<sup>th</sup>. That this great salvation is **all of God**. “*By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that (faith) not of yourselves, it (the faith) is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast, for ye are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*” (Ephesians 2: 8-10). “*Who hath saved us, and called us, with a holy calling, not according to our works; but according to His own purpose and grace which was **given us in Christ Jesus before the world began***” (2 Timothy 1:9).

5<sup>th</sup>. That the salvation of God’s people secures to them deliverance from the curse and dominion of the Law, by which they were justly condemned; freedom from bondage and the guilt and consequences of sin, and the hope of a glorious resurrection and happy immortality beyond the grave, together with all the privileges of the sons of God here and in the world to come.

In all the foregoing particulars God’s chosen redeemed, are a *peculiar people*, for there are no other people like unto them. Nor are these all the particulars wherein they differ essentially from all other people. He that has wrought them for this self-same purpose is God, “*Who is the Shield of their help.*” As in a shield, their help is secured unto them, so that they have ever

found their God to be a Refuge unto them in their distress, and a very present help in time of trouble. He is the Shield (or defense) of the help of His people, and in this particular also they are a peculiar people: for the help relied upon by Pharisees and Arminians has no such shield. The hope of hypocrites shall perish; it is like the spider's web or the cockatrice egg, a composition of poison materials furnished from their own bowels without protection in God. Like the former it shall be swept away and like the latter it shall be crushed, and when crushed it shall break out into a viper to sting their guilty souls when God shall pour out His wrath on them that make lies their refuge and hide themselves under falsehood.

God is also the Sword of their excellency. His own right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory. A sword proceedeth out of His mouth to destroy the enemies of His people, and to avenge His elect. His word is quick and powerful and sharper than a two-edge sword, to the dividing of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is *a discerner* of the thoughts and intents of the heart. By the decree of Heaven also the enemies of Zion shall be found liars unto her, and God will subdue them under the feet of His saints and cause them to tread upon the high places of anti-Christ.

Well may the people of God challenge the world to produce the likeness of God's inimitable spiritual Israel: as there is none in heaven like unto God, there is none on earth can bear a just comparison with His Church. In view, dear brethren, of the Strength of Israel which cannot lie, and the Munition of rocks in which God has encircled you, it is your privilege to rejoice and be glad in the God of your salvation. We exhort you therefore to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free; trust in no other name, lean upon no other arm, worship and acknowledge no other god, seek counsel at no other oracle, and the God of Israel shall shortly bruise Satan under your feet. While others are disposed to trust in gods which have come newly up, to seek their help, and their gain, every one from his quarter, and while they worship their *net*, and burn incense unto their *drag*, they only make it the more apparent that their god is not as our God, themselves being judges. Let us take courage then, inasmuch as we know in whom we have believed, and that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him, and to keep us also from falling, and preserve us unto His heavenly kingdom, and give us an inheritance with the saints in light. Let us contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called of God. For we are assured that they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, shall mount up on wings as eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not be faint.

Finally, brethren, be strong in the Lord and in power of His might, and seeing that we have received a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may worship God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

John L. Thompson, *Moderator*

John T. Risler, *Clerk.*

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