

## 1848 Circular Delaware River

Prepared by Elder G. Conklin and a committee made up of  
Wilson Thompson, Joseph L. Purington and Conklin

[This session of the Delaware River was attended by the following ministers: Elders Joseph L. Purington, Gilbert Beebe, Wilson Thompson (who preached the Introductory Sermon), Ephraim Rittenhouse, George Conklin, and William Curtis. The association then in correspondence were: Warwick, N.Y., Delaware, Delaware River, Salisbury, Ketocton, Corresponding Meeting, Va., Rappahannock, Ebenezer, Chemung, Allegany, Maine O. S.. Predestinarian Association, and Conference.

We note that Wilson Thompson was on this committee, and also the Ketocton Association of Virginia was seated, and that this circular even this early set forth the doctrine of eternal vital union. Neither Thompson or the Ketocton walked out.]]

*The Elders and Brethren convened in Association with the Kingwood church on Friday and Saturday the 2d and 3d of June 1848,*

*To the several churches (whose messengers we are) composing the Delaware River Association send greetings.*

*Beloved Brethren:-* The custom of writing circulars on occasions like the present has been so long and so scrupulously observed, that it would seem to be acting the part of wisdom to be guarded against *mere formality* in it as much as possible. That it is proper and profitable for Christians both individually and collectively – as brethren and as churches to write to each other, there can be no doubt. That the people of God have ever been a poor and afflicted people is fully demonstrated by the same testimony, namely, the Bible and Christian experience, and that this people trust in the name of the Lord is equally established from the same source. For their annual edification and comfort therefore, and for the encouragement of each other in their afflictions, they are privileged in the Providence of God with opportunities of writing and speaking.

In ancient times they spake often one to another, and it is hoped and believed that this good, though very ancient practice, has not become entirely obsolete. That there are those yet, who, notwithstanding, the improvements in society, the refinements of the age, of a professedly religious character, (in all of which they have made little or not real progress) desire to be found speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts unto the Lord. The Lord's

people are poor literally or in reference to worldly possessions, at least in a comparative sense; for though many of them possess a competency for a comfortable subsistence in the world, and some of them something more, yet when compared with others they are poor; and a vast portion of them are in reality the “poor of this world.”

*This people the Lord has chosen.* What an honor this to be chosen of God of infinite wisdom, the favorites of heaven, who would not endure the inconvenience and disgrace of being poor in this world, for a few days or years, possessing an evidence of being chosen of God. True, the saints are poor in spirit and poor as to any thing of themselves, so that in fact they have nothing; but beside, they are ten thousand talents in debt. But what evil can betide, what harm can come of all this poverty and indebtedness since God has chosen them? The simple fact of being chosen to some responsible station, to fill some important place, to sit at the banquet of Him (the King) who chose, to ride in the second chariot, to be second only to the King, yea to be **one with Him**, a partner, a joint heir &c., speaks volumes of itself, surely then, though this people are poor they are rich, though in themselves they have nothing, *in* Christ they possess all things.

As Jesus became extremely poor, so that He had not where to lay His head, we should not repine though it be ours to pass through poverty’s vale, but rather consider it among the *all things that work together for our good*, the things needful to keep us humble and mindful of our dependence, as also for the trial of our faith. And what though the people of God are afflicted, yea chosen in the very hot bed or furnace of affliction, will this do them any essential injury? Can it deprive them of the enjoyment of their inheritance? Will they not rather receive the accomplishment of the promise, “*My grace is sufficient for thee*”? yea, of all the promises in Christ to the full extent of them? If God chooses, though it be in the furnace, the elements are under His control, when the form of the fourth person is there, no hurt can be done; but on the other hand much good, a burning off and breaking loose of His people’s bonds. Though the bush be enveloped in flames, the angel is there, and it cannot be consumed.

Again, God has chosen His people *in Christ*; hence an everlasting bond, an **eternal union**, an indissoluble connection exists between Him and them; consequently the Scriptures speak of a **oneness in their poverty** and in their riches, in their joys and sorrows. In their afflictions and in their comforts; not a trial or temptation of which His people are subjects, but

Jesus has felt the same; “*in all their afflictions therefore He was afflicted,*” Being the High Priest of their profession, having an unchangeable Priesthood, and ever living to make intercession for them, He is able to save them to the uttermost. They are therefore *chosen to salvation* and not to condemnation; no, for “*there is not condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit;*” or as expressed by the Apostle again, they “*are not appointed unto wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” They are not only *chosen in Christ to salvation*, but to obtain it *through Him*, and not through themselves, or through their fellow men, or any creature agency whatever; but through the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Again they are chosen to salvation “*through sanctification of the Spirit **and** belief of the Truth.*” Here are **two ideas expressed** touching their salvation, worthy of special consideration. As the term *sanctification* is used to denote, “a setting apart,” as applicable to the people of God, so in *this case*, the work of the Spirit is judged to have reference to a preparation for the enjoyment of that which they are set apart for and to, namely, the inheritance of the saints in light, or the mansions in glory prepared for them. This preparation is the work, not of men, or of the will of man or of the flesh, but of the Spirit only. Secondly, a **belief of the truth** is sure to accompany or follow the work of the Spirit in regeneration. In vain therefore do we talk of Christianity or of being Christians without a belief of the Truth; and this belief being coupled with love will cause its professors to practice or walk in the truth, to endeavor to walk as Christ Himself also walked, and thus give evidence of being His disciples.

Finally, we are taught that the people of God were *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world*. The doctrine set forth in this sentence is ridiculed by the wise and prudent of this world, it is denied by Arminians, it is disputed by very many professors of religion, it is spoken reproachfully of, by some who profess to believe it is a dangerous doctrine, a doctrine tending to licentiousness though they admit it is true, that its influence or effect on society is bad, of a demoralizing character, and therefore it ought not to be publicly proclaimed; like its Author, it is despised and rejected of men. But, brethren, let God be true and every man a liar, what He has done is done forever in righteousness and truth, what He has promised He will perform though earth and hell oppose, ‘Tis a blessed eternal truth, that God has chosen His people thus, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love, chosen to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit &c.*, and though all others reject and disbelieve this poor and afflicted people believe it; though it be proclaimed by no

others, the ministers of Jesus will proclaim it; though all others hate it, the people of God love it; to them it is life and light, joy and consolation, meat and drink, food and raiment; in a word it is the sure foundation upon which they rest their all for time and eternity. May we dear brethren, as churches and as individuals, be enabled to receive the truth in the love of it; so preach it and believe it, that there may be a confirming of our hope in Christ, and renewing, from time to time, of the evidences of our interest in Him, as chosen of God to salvation, and that our sins for Christ's sake are forgiven and may we endeavor to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service, and thus glorify Him in our body and spirit which is His.

William Curtis, *Moderator*.

Ephraim Rittenhouse, *Clerk*.

[Additional notation. Elder Wilson Thompson's Introductory sermon was on Ephesians 1:7 "*In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*"

The above circular letter "item 11. The committee to whom was referred the circular letter, recommended its adoption, whereupon it was **read and adopted.**"

"Also Brother Wilson Thompson preached from Luke 24: 26, "*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into glory.*"

Transcribed by Stanley Phillips, December 25, 2008.]