

1798 Circular Warwick Association

Written by
John Stanford

[The Circular letter written by John Stanford was called for and a committee of Brethren John Dodge, John Caton, William Bishop (a visitor), John Williams, James Burt and Humphrey Martin, were appointed with the author to revise the same. Note: we note again, the visiting brethren seated with the local church brethren all form themselves into a local church to function together in the worship of God.

Item #6 is interesting: "In reading the letters from the Churches, we notice, that notwithstanding in the Constitution of the Association, we agreed, to state the doctrines we held, some of the Churches have omitted it, and would with that our Brethren would, in this, be very particular, that we may appear to be one. **Note:** Throughout these associated bodies, they held very important a common sentiment on the faith as desirous; until 1886-1890, after which they united with the Means, or Conditional brethren. From that time on, they were filled continuously with discord, and eventual decline. –SCP.

Item # 10. "With pleasure we announce to the Churches, particularly those belonging to this body, our consolation in the close of this anniversary; that union, peace and love, abounded through the whole, and should have been happy, that more of our brethren had shared with us in our joys, and the Zion of God, in equal unanimity."

CIRCULAR LETTER

The Warwick Baptist Association, convened at Warwick, Orange County, in the State of New-York, May 29, 1798, to the Churches they represent.

Grace be unto you, and peace from God

Our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved in the Lord,

AS you have long been accustomed to expect from us an annual epistle; and as they have a tendency, not only to draw the attention to a particular subject; but to enlarge our fellowship with Christ, and with each other; we now, in much affection, address you on **THE FULLNESS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**; being persuaded that a subject, so interesting and important, will not fail to claim your most solemn attention. We pray that our investigation, the Spirit of Jesus, may lead us into His own Truth, and make us instrumental of increasing your faith and joy in our most glorious Redeemer !

Fullness is a term used by the New Testament writers to express the glory of the GODHEAD, the purity of the MAN-HOOD, and the MEDIATORIAL SUFFICIENCY of our LORD MESSIAH, as Head, Bridegroom and Redeemer of His spouse, the Church.

1st. In this great Personage, se see resplendent, all the attributes, honors and

productions that ever were, or ever can be ascribed to the self-existent and eternal JEHOVAH; *He is, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the Almighty.* Isaiah 41.4. Rev. 1. 11,17. *The God of the whole earth,* Isaiah 54.5. *God, and none else.* Isaiah 9.5. The works of nature were created by His Word; and the wheels of Providence are turned at His pleasure; *for, He was before all things, and by Him all things consist.* Col. 1.17. The winds and seas obey His voice; Angels worship at His foot-stool; Devils tremble at His presence; the dead arise at His command! *The voice of the Lord is full of Majesty.* Psalm 29.4. *His right hand is full of Righteousness.* Psalm 48.10. *The whole earth is full of His glory.* Isaiah 6.3. *Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints; who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee, for Thy judgments are made manifest.* Rev. 15. 3,4. These are Scripture testimonies of Messiah; acknowledged as such by all Christian writers; and are demonstrative of His eternal power and God-Head.

2^{ns}, HUMANITY, in its highest degree of perfection, was possessed by Jesus of Nazareth. His body, soul, parts, passions, life, were the complete measure and scale of human beings; the requisitions of law and justice were fully answered in Him and by Him; Truth, love, benevolence, holiness, magnanimity; constituting the fullness of human excellence, in its highest luster, so shone through all His private and public character, as confounded His adversaries; compelled Satan to retire without a possibility of finding evil in Him; and confirmed the Scripture testimony concerning Him, that *He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.* Heb. 7.26. As such, Messiah was represented by all the perfect animals appointed for ancient sacrifice; and by the pure bodily qualifications, necessary to constitute the Hebrew High-Priest. Thus, according to the prediction of Isaiah, we see in Jesus, *the man more precious than gold, and the golden wedge of Ophir.* Isaiah 13.12.

3rd., In a peculiar manner, the Scriptures direct our attention to the fullness of Christ, as the Messiah, Bridegroom and Redeemer of His Church; in the constitution of His person, in the union of His two natures, GOD and MAN. As the body and soul form the perfections of a human being; so the God-Head and the Man-Hood of Jesus in union constitute His personal fullness as, *the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,* John 1.14. *Emmanuel, God with us,* Matt.1,23. *God manifested in the flesh,* 1 Tim. 3.16. *The Son, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily,* Col. 2.9. *The brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person,* Heb. 1.3. He is the ALMIGHTY GOD, in His divinity; the CHILD, born in His humanity; the SON given as mediator, Isaiah 9.5. O how inconceivably great, wonderful and glorious, is the person of our Emmanuel! Possessed of all the fullness of God-Head, and all the fullness of Man-hood; - truly God, and truly Man; each nature distinct, with their attendant attributes; yet so united, as neither of them are confounded; constituting one glorious Person! Herein exists Christ's ability to redeem His Church, and to render the divine attributes illustrious. In the humanity of Jesus, His bride is found in Himself from

eternity, even as was Eve in the person of Adam: flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone. His natural body and rational soul, were constituted, or accounted guilt, and became the substance of the one offering for sin; and also forms the channel, through which, all the fullness of righteousness, pardon, grace, holiness and happiness, with every other glorious excellence, flows to His Church from the pure, underived fountain of His eternal God-Head. *Christ is all in all*, Col. 3.11.

By this method of contemplating the Person of our blessed Redeemer, we consider ourselves Scriptural; and, on that solid ground which will neither conduct our feet into an *Arian*, nor *Socianian* path,- We are hereby in no danger of reversing the acts of a God, for the transactions of a creature; nor of committing idolatry, by worshipping the Savior. What is human, and what is divine, are deeply distinguishable; yet in all the acts of the Son of God, we see them gloriously united, as the performance of the One Mediator.- The Scripture doctrine of the TRINITY, or personality of JEHOVAH, is also maintained and rendered intelligible and glorious. The Divine Essence we are disposed to believe is neither communicated to, or derived from, nor dependent upon the personality; but all the attributes of the God-Head, are equally attributed to, and predicated of the Father, the Word and the Spirit, as the ONE GOD. Of course, they each are objects of our faith, worship and adoration; - farther to penetrate into the profound deep of Jehovah's existence, or profess to be wise above what is written, we dare not, neither will we presume.

We therefore rejoice in believing that our Lord Jesus Christ, God-man Mediator, whose delights were with the children of men before the world began, and who was set up from everlasting; possessed a fullness of love, wisdom and power, to engage as our Surety.- In the acts of His humiliation He had sufficient merit to obey, suffer, bleed and die for our justification to eternal life.- As our glorified Head, at His Father's right hand, all fullness of grace is deposited in Him, for the constant use of His believing family; answerable to all their sins and sorrows, until they are brought through the wilderness and placed before the Savior's face in glory; *of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace*. John 1:16. And it is with pleasure we add, this grace is not drawn from the well of the Savior's fullness, by the bucket of human merit or effort: but by the HOLY SPIRIT, who is given to the elect for that important purpose; and who is thereby, the AUTHOR of their regeneration, conversion, pardon, peace, comfort, obedience, perseverance unto glory. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His*. Romans 8:9.

It is impossible for us to estimate the value, variety and depth of the fullness of Jesus! Exalted on His Throne as King in Zion, He hath a fullness of *light* to illuminate Jew and Gentile from pole to pole.- In the afflictions and persecutions of His Church, He hath been *her dwelling place in all generation*; stored with *unsearchable riches* for her unbounded consolation.- Not a PROMISE in the Bible; not an OFFICE which the Son of God sustains; a relation which He bears; nor an ordinance which He hath appointed: but proclaims the inconceivable excellence and glory of His fullness! – Who knoweth the

number of immortal souls, which, in every age, of every tongue, and of every clime, for near six thousand years, have derived virtue from the Redeemer's fullness, and were made whole? By the fullness of His *power*; what revolutions hath the world recently undergone; and with the prophetic page in our hand, what vast events are still anticipated? What blessedness is now enjoyed by the spirits of the just made perfect in Heaven; and what glories shall the Bride receive; *who is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all!* Eph. 1:23. ZION BEHOLD YOUR KING! This is He of whom the Prophets wrote; and this is He on whom we believe. Met as His ministers and churches, in solemn assembly, we bear our humble testimony to His glorious Person, and shout in this our camp, *Hallelujah, FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH !*

[We wish to make a note here: In all these circulars, they each close with exhortations and admonitions. Notice them, and ask: Are these ever predicated upon conditionalism – on works of the creature?] Suffer us now, dear brethren, to exhort you as INDIVIDUALS, to realize your happy union with this glorious Redeemer, and to live by faith and prayer upon His soul-satisfying fullness. It is your privilege to view your souls, pardoned in His blood, justified in His righteousness, and entitled to His grace. Empty in yourselves, come constantly to this well of living water to quench your thirst and enliven you in the way. Employ Jesus in every thing; make Him your *Alpha and Omega*, and as the branch maintains its life, by union with the vine, and thus bears the richest clusters, so may you incessantly receive from the fullness of Jesus, to maintain your profession with honor; be laden with the fruits of righteousness; advance in *the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto perfect men, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.* Ephesians 4:13.

As MINISTERS, we wish to animate each other to live upon the fullness of Christ our glorious Master, as the only source of encrease in knowledge, enlargement of heart, support under sorrow, and success in our labor. In ourselves, we are empty *earthen vessels*, and if we are filled with Gospel *treasure* it must be from the fullness of our Lord. Let us remember, dear fellow-laborers, that *he that waiteth upon his Master shall be honored.* Proverbs 27:18. And no greater honor do we desire, than a sight of His glory, a sense of His love, the reception of His orders, and usefulness in Zion. Let our studies, our houses, our pulpits and our churches, bear witness that *we have been with Jesus.* Languish not in so glorious a cause; there is much to do by God in His Church and in the kingdom. Although Israel be not gathered, and we work in the dark night of affliction, or, in the cloudy day of discouragement; our glorious Master is worthy of our service; a bright morning shall discover the work of His grace, and we receive an ample reward in regions of glory. (see 2d Cron. 15:17, 2d Sam. 10,12.) Yet a little while and our serving time shall be over; let therefore the solemnities of eternity impress our souls, and the preciousness of Christ spiritualize our lips. A few more sermons – a few more trials – then – comes death! Come Angels ! come judgment ! come Lord Jesus ! Transmitted beyond this vale of tears, *we shall be forever with the Lord, in whose presence there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for*

evermore.

As CHURCHES in Gospel fellowship, we direct you to the fullness of Christ from whence alone you can receive grace to preserve you from the vast errors of the day; maintain your profession without wavering, enjoy the pleasures of communion, be supplied with a succession of evangelical Teachers and Pastors, and encrease with men as with a flock. Remember, you are in the *Sardian Church state*, Revelation 3.1,6. bearing more the image of death than of life, and your works are very far from being perfect before God. Our day is neither clear nor dark; pure, nor wholly corrupt. Though error and luke-warmness abounds, there are a few names that are worthy, and walk in white robes of purity, in doctrine and in life. Be watchful and strengthen the things that are ready to die; hold fast that thou hast received; repent of thy sins, lest the Lord come with correction in an unexpected hour, No greater encouragement can we offer to you than the fullness of Christ, which is adequate to pardon and to restore. If you panty after a revival of religion and an harvest of souls; both must flow from this fountain of grace. This moon light, *Sardian State*, will, in a very few years be succeeded by the *Philadelphian*. Rev. 3.17, 13, when the Lord Jesus shall reign in all His fullness in a more spiritual, glorious manner; Jews shall be converted; the fullness of the Gentiles shall be brought in; and the kingdoms of this world, become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. A period this, which, probably, your children, whom you now lead by the hand to worship, may happily enjoy! Then, after the short period of the *Laodicean State*, Rev. 3.14.22; shall commence the grand MILLENIUM, when conversion work shall be complete; the Bride shall have made herself ready; Jesus the glorious Bridegroom shall reign a thousand years, before His Ancients gloriously, and then, receive His Bride into inconceivable bliss of eternity ! *Even so, come Lord Jesus.*

Benjamin Montanye, *Moderator.*

Thomas B. Montanye, *Clerk.*