

1809 Circular Warwick Association

Written by
Lebeus Lathrop

[Ministers seated this session were: Lebeus Lathrop, Silas Southard, Luke Davies, John Dodge, Ebenezer Ferris, Ezra Fountain, Jonathan Sturdevant, Henry Ball, Benjamin Montanye, Levi Hall, Henry Charlock, Reuben Garrison, William Connell, Isaac Rhodes, Job Foss, and Ebenezer Jane.

Associations in correspondence were: New-York Association, Abington Association (newly formed), Philadelphia, Union Association (newly formed), Ransellerville Association, and Danbury Association.

CIRCULAR LETTER:

“IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST”

The Warwick Baptist Association met at Bedford, in the county of Westchester, on the 1st Wednesday in June, 1809; to the Churches they represent:

Beloved in the Lord,

It is our sincere desire to promote your spiritual happiness in the cause of Truth. We think of no subject more interesting than the certainty of all the chosen vessels of mercy, arriving to eternal glory. How painful the thought to a poor soul that loves God, that in the final issue the foundation of their hope should fail, and they sink to hell. Is it possible that it was the will of God, in choosing a number of Adam's race as vessels of mercy, in Christ to secure their happiness and to glorify them at His right hand, and at the same time fix His plan on such conditions that it was possible to fail, and all for whom the Savior bled, sink in eternal disappointment? for if one of God's children can possibly fall and perish, it follows that all might. It therefore behooves us, dear brethren, to be careful, and see that we do not impeach the character of God, in contending for error in the name of Truth. The Lord saith He will do all His pleasure, Isaiah 46:10. It is evident that it is the good will of God to save sinners by free grace: who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, and He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy: whose Sovereign will it was to choose a number out of all nations under Heaven in Christ, before the foundation of the world. Who were made accepted in the Beloved: and that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love, Ephesians 1:4,6. The absolute will of God is the governing principle of all of His actions: and all His enemies are so far dependent on it that not one can move in opposition without His

permission; and He will not let them do any thing, that He will not over-rule for the good of His people and His own glory. *“The wrath of men shall praise Thee, the remainder of wrath Thou shalt restrain.”* Psa. 70.10. The wrath of men shall praise God, and the remainder of wrath that causes men or devils to desire to over throw His purposes, He will restrain. God has inseparably connected the eternal happiness of His people with His own glory, and they must stand or fall together. Another stream of this “broad river,” which is as clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and the Lamb is the glorious act of sovereign grace, imputing the sins of the many that will be saved to Christ, and His everlasting righteousness to them, which He wrought out in His perfect obedience when He was in the fashion of man, and became obedient unto death; even the death of the cross. Here we behold the foundation that standeth sure, having this seal, *“the Lord knowth them that are His”* unto whom He imputeth righteousness without works, unto whom He will not impute sin. Romans 4: 5,8; Isa. 53: 11,12. It is impossible for Justice to demand satisfaction at the hand of those to whom Christ died, for He bore their sins in His own body on the tree: and in the behalf of all that were given to Him in the Covenant of grace before the world began, He made complete satisfaction. It was then that the Father commended His love to us, in that Christ would die for us, while we were yet sinners. Christ did not die for an *indefinite number* in His view, and suspend their salvation upon *the condition of man’s so-called “free will,”* whose hearts were at enmity with God – who would not come to Him that they might have life, but He suffered for sins the Just for the unjust, that He might bring all for whom He suffered to God, 1 Peter 3.18, their names were already written in the Lamb’s book of life, and the hairs of their head all numbered by Him who is the Lord our Righteousness. Here we see how a sinner can be justified in the sight of God, and accepted in the Beloved, not having on his own righteousness, which is of the law but the imputed righteousness of Christ, made over and given wholly by free grace: therefore they are justified by grace, Romans 3:24. Here we behold the mystery of the cross which is a stumbling block to all who like the Jews, depend on their own works to commend themselves to God: but it is the power and wisdom of God, to all who are the called of God and made wise unto salvation. It is nothing strange that those who deny the imputation of Christ’s righteousness should contend, that those who are *believers* may fall into condemnation and sink to hell: for there is not a just man on earth *“that doeth good and sinneth not,”* and if we say we *“we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is no in us,”* Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8. It is a wonder that such people should think any will be saved, for if they have any just views of God or of themselves, they differ much from the inspired apostle, who challenges all accusers to lay a charge *“against one of God’s elect, for it is God that justifieth”* them: who dare condemn: *“it is Christ that died and is risen again,”* interceding at the right hand of the Father. Romans 8:33,34. The justification of God’s elect insures glorification for whom He justifies, them He also glorifies, Romans 8:30. When God is pleased to reveal His love and manifest Himself unto His people as He does not unto the world, they learn of Christ that they love Him because He first loved them, and they enjoy that true love that casteth

out fear that hath torment: and one saith, “*though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him:*”
“*for nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.*”

What have the little flock of Christ to fear? He has conquered all their enemies, He has atoned for all their sins, all power is in His hands, and all things committed to His charge, who must reign until all His enemies are put under His feet. He is the rock of ages on which His church is built – a spiritual house, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and when Christ, who is their life shall appear, they shall appear with Him in glory. The everlasting love of God is manifest to all that are born of the Holy Spirit, in uniting them experimentally as one in their eternal inheritance for all are joint heirs with Christ; and as sure as He enjoys the inheritance, given by the Father, they must. Jesus prayed that they all might be with Him, and that it might be known to the world that the Father loved them as He loved Him, John 17: 23,24. It is evident that God was well acquainted with all hearts and actions of His creatures from eternity; and all that ever professed to be His children were viewed by Jehovah’s omniscient eye in the same light that they will ever appear in; and if the sins of any will cause Him to hate them it is evident He never loved them in the way of grace; for they must have had the same effect as it respected the determination of the divine Mind, before they were brought into action, as afterwards. Is it not easy to discern, which cause manifest the most love, wisdom and power, that which has so connected the foundation, means and end, that all is sure, or that which is built on the sand, and liable every moment to fail, to the disgrace of the Author, and the destruction of all the subjects? May you dear brethren, be strong in the Lord, and teach all around you that the grace of God teacheth you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and love soberly, righteously and Godly, in this present evil world.

Lebeus Lathorp, *Moderator.*

Luke Davies, *Clerk.*