

1825 Circular Warwick Association

Due to failure on the part of
The one appointed to write
The circular, the **Circular**
Letter of **1819 Delaware**
River was inserted.

[This is the first minute wherein the names of two signers of the Black Rock Address of 1832 is entered: **Gabriel Conklin**, Deerpark Church, and **Gilbert Beebe**, Newfoundland church. Of interest to this transcriber is this **Item 22** “Resolved, that the thanks of the Association be tendered to **the Church and Congregation** of Orange County, for their hospitality during our present session.” Checking Minutes ahead, we find this now becomes a common rule in the Warwick. Both the Church with its Congregation is addressed separately with their expressed gratitude. We do notice, that the association still functions as “associations” according to the Philadelphia Association format. In later years, the group assembled as the “Association” functions as a local church; all baptized participants present in the same faith and order were seated as in one constitute body.

Ministers present this session were: Elders William Warren, P.D. Gillett, William C. Thompson, Isaac Travis, Henry Ball, Amos Harding, William Connelly, Zelotes Grenell, Christopher Suydam, George Dolan, Thomas Powell and Thomas P. Terry.

Associations in correspondence: Philadelphia, New-York, Abington, Hartford, Hudson River, Rensselaerville, New-Jersey, Union, and New-London.

In the past decade, the associations had an accumulating problem of hucksters pretending to be “Baptists preachers,” passing among churches collecting monies for various benevolent projects. Commencing with this session, (1) names and/or descriptions of such characters would be published in the minute to warn others of them. (2) churches were advised not to invite strangers to preach for them, unless they had some valid documentation as being regular Baptists. One recommended method, was, if the could present a recent minutes in which their name appeared.

We will print the Letter of Correspondence of this 1825 session of the Warwick. Historically, by 1825, Associational abuse had growth to fearful degrees. We would wish everyone that are in anywise a part of associations carefully read this Letter of Correspondence. It sets forth the limits of Associational powers, the fear of innovations, which may have triggered the reform that would grow stronger and stronger between this date and 1835. When we arrive at those Circulars, we hope to show the modification in these associations that grew out of this reform movement-SCP]

1819 Delaware River Circular

The Ministers and Messengers of the Warwick Baptist Association, to the Churches they represent, send Christian salutation.

Beloved Brethren.-

Through the tender care which our kind Benefactor has exercised over us in the year

that has past, we are permitted again to meet in an association; and, agreeably to our usual practice, we present you our Circular letter. The subject on which we shall address you is the **Liberty of the Sons of God.**

1. This liberty consists in being made free from sin- from the state of bondage in which all men are held; and not a liberty to sin, which is contrary to the Gospel, the precepts of which, if obeyed, lead to holiness: but it is a freedom from the power which sin exercises over men while in their natural state. Rom. 6:14. The saints do not make themselves free: this is out of their power; it is an act of Jesus Christ – “*If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*” John 8:36. They are not made free from the *being* of sin; it remains in them, and causes them many sorrowful seasons when they are fearful that it continues to reign; “*but sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace;*” Rom. vi. 14-18, they are made free from the guilt of sin and condemnation which all men are under while living in sin.

2d. Saints are made free from Satan, who usurps a power over the children of men, and leads them “captive at his will”; but the strong man armed is dispossessed by a Stronger, and they being brought from the power of Satan unto God, delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, are no more his subjects, but are Christ’s free men. Nevertheless, though they are free from the power of Satan, they are not free from his temptations; for his *desire* is to destroy their peace and comfort; he is, as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour, but with all the art and power he is capable of using, he cannot pluck a person from the kingdom of Christ.

3d. Saints are free from under the law, which, in the hand of Moses, demanded sinless and perfect obedience. They being unable to render that obedience, in consequence of its purity and their weakness, were exposed to its curses; but Christ has been made a curse for them, for it is written, “*cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,*” Gal. 3:18; and while, in His state of incarnation He obeyed the law, and at His death satisfied Divine Justice, becoming the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x.4. and they who believe on Him are no more under the law, but under grace; Rom. vi.14; So that they are not obliged to look to it for their justification, but to God who justifies them through the imputed righteousness of Christ. This law, however, still continues in force as a rule of conduct.

4th. The saint’s liberty lies in the use of Gospel ordinances, which it is their privilege to attend to; in which they frequently find it is good for them to be engaged, seeing the commandments of the Lord are not grievous but joyous; His fruit being sweet to their tastes, and to them He breaks the bread of life. These ordinances were instituted by the great Head of the Church for her benefit, and are to continue in her while she remains in her militant state; for which reason all that profess to love the Lord should keep His commandments, by which their love will be manifested. It is by no means inconsistent with Gospel liberty to attend to the ordinances of the Gospel, for they only

have a right to them.

5th. The saints have a liberty of worshiping God according to His word and the dictates of their own consciences. They worship Him in Spirit and in truth, which none can do but they who have received the Spirit. This God that they worship is the God of all grace, and is worthy of their highest adoration, and who is pleased with their service through His Son. They worship Him now through faith, but hereafter they shall worship Him in His presence. In this act of worship, there is no human power should be concerned any further than for the purpose of keeping order; for the law of God is sufficient to govern every act of worship, and every man should therein have the liberty of acting according to the word of God, (but let him be careful to guard against the prejudice of education.)

6th. Another part of the saints' liberty consists in a freedom of access to God through Jesus Christ and the influence of the Holy Spirit, Eph.2.18. They do not approach to Him as seated on a throne of justice, demanding satisfaction from them for their offences, (for this has been obtained,) but they approach unto Him as to a God standing in a Covenant relation to them, and as one who has made an everlasting covenant with them, in which there is treasured up an ample store of blessings for them, to be dealt out to them according to their wants. It is their unspeakable privilege to come with humble boldness to a throne of grace, that they obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need. Heb. iv. 18, Eph. iii. 12. It is their privilege to address Him under the endearing appellation of "Father;" and, in every circumstance, they have access to Him, and are encouraged to plead His promised blessings.

7th. The saints are also delivered from the fear of death, both corporal and eternal. Christ, through His incarnation and suffering has delivered them, who, through the fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage, and now death is to them no king of terror – it only strikes the blow that separates the soul from the body, releasing or freeing it from its prison of clay, and setting it at liberty, so that, while viewing their interest in Christ, they may sing, "*O Death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!*" With regard to an eternal death, they are assured that it shall not hurt them, nor have any power over them, notwithstanding it is the just demerit of their sins; for they, being justified by the righteousness of Christ, have free access to God, and stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

8th, There is a liberty which the saints shall be called to enjoy in glory hereafter, when they shall have finished their warfare. This will consist in a perfect deliverance from the very being of sin, while the soul, in its separate state from the body, will be with God, and behold His face without an intercepting veil. There will they behold the glory of their Redeemer, and, with the spirits of just men made perfect, unite their voices, and sing unto Him that hath loved us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood; to Him be praise and dominion for ever and ever. In the glorious morning of

the resurrection, when soul and body shall be re-united, their glory shall be complete. Then shall they be called to dwell for ever in the New Jerusalem, where the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick;" they shall know even as they are known- shall cease from their labor, and enjoy a perfect rest; and this glory shall continue for ever.

Now, brethren, under these considerations let us be *steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord; and let us not be weary in well doing, for in due time we shall reap if we faint not.*"

Henry Ball, *Moderator.*

James Finch, *Clerk.*

CORRESPONDING LETTER

Written by

Elder Charles Mais

The Warwick Baptist Association to Corresponding Associations"

Beloved Brethren.-

The rapidity of time, and the fluctuation of human opinion, are subjects of vast importance. To use that well, and **guard against the ill effects** of this, are objects worthy of our best efforts.

Like a vision of the night, one year has passed away since we transmitted our last Epistle of Correspondence; and through the mercy of our common Parent, we are allowed to renew our testimony of His great goodness, in preserving us – though much of that period, we fear, has been lightly esteemed. Oh! That we may not dream away our precious moments; but, whilst we are permitted to retain a station in Zion, employ them in devotion to her interests.

To ascertain the **nature and duties of an association**, is desirable; that, in an endeavor to use time and act well for the purpose of **guarding against innovation**, we may not **encroach upon that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.**

An association, is a union of Churches to strengthen effort for the glory of God, without **weakening the liberty or independence** of the component parts; a circular chain, in which no link has the pre-eminence, either in composition or importance. The duties of an association are simply: such as a friend may exercise. To caution, to advise, to assist, are lawful; but, **to dictate, either directly or indirectly, it cannot without laying an axe to the root**, either of the independence of the Churches, or of its own existence.

We remind you of three things, because you have both known and regarded them, and doubtless, with us, desire that **future generations of Baptists may not charge the present with laying the foundation of Hierarchies and Ecclesiastical *despotism***; but that they may bless the Lord for having given us a jealousy for His glory in attempting to preserve that **Freedom**, which is the inheritance of all the churches of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We tender this communication, under the hope that it will receive your usual indulgence; and are anxious that it may find you in the enjoyment of that blessing which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow. May we receive from our messengers, on their return, the refreshing intelligence that God, our Father, has visited you in showers of grace – added to your enjoyments in good news from the churches of which you are composed, and preserved you in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel.

Henry Ball, *Moderator*

James Finch, *Clerk*.