

Dear Brothers and Sisters, this is a very important Circular of that area among Old School Baptists. This helped bring to a public head the growing conflict between the Clark Baptists and the Beebe Baptists. This involves the split that eventually grew into the present day division between the Absoluters and the Conditionalists.

I have highlighted a few statements below that I take exceptions to, but have not listed our reasons for these exceptions as I did not want to take away from the contents of the letter. I think it should be evident why we differ on some of these points.

I must remark that I seriously doubt that many of the contemporary Primitive Baptists in America are conscious of what this issue involved in this early state. I think they believe it was an issue over regeneration, or eternal union, or absolutism and they have no clue that it involved the major points of Christology.

Certainly Beebe, Trout and the others of their fellowship, *were not* Arians. Clark clearly misrepresented the brethren on this point. The issue THEN was not over the Deity of Christ nor even over the humanity of Christ, but over a supposed *THIRD NATURE OF CHRIST*.

Beebe, at this time seemed to follow Wilson Thompson, a Sabellian who denied the true and proper eternal Covenant of Redemption, as all Sabellians must do, and affirmed that Christ had *three natures*, one human, one divine and one mediatorial.

You will note that Beebe maintained that Christ's sufferings were *not* in His human nature, and *not* in His deity, but in His *Mediatorial nature*. This is of course error. But the position was so new, being circulated anew, so it seems, from Wilson Thompson, that the brethren then did not know what Beebe, Trout, and Thompson were talking about. I must confess, I still do not. I find nowhere in the Scriptures that Christ had three natures, one Divine, one Human, and one Mediatorial. I do find that Christ had and still has two natures, *and was called forth in the union of both natures as one person, into His MEDIATORIAL OFFICE. I do not find that Christ's Mediatorial Office was a nature, but an office.*

I read from the Scriptures that Christ suffered in His flesh, shed His blood and died. I find this relates to His human nature and not to His divine nature. I find nowhere that He had a *third nature* called His *mediatorial nature*. However, I do find in the Scriptures that He had a hypostatic union between His Divine and His Human natures, *but that His work in the atonement was clearly and only in His Human nature.*

These brethren were not Arians and this is very clear. That they were innovators and brought forth some sort of new doctrines totally out of line with the historic Particular Baptists' concepts of the past, to me is evident. *However, I may be incorrect and will be happy to be corrected if anyone can show that Particular Baptists before William Thompson held that Christ possessed a third nature called His Mediatorial Nature and that He died and suffered in His third nature.*

Unless I am misreading Beebe, I conclude that He denies that Christ existed in any human nature, either in His first form as the Divine Equal or in His second form as the Servant, before the Incarnation, see Phil 2, and my review of this in my work, The

Forms of Christ.

However, Trout seemed to hold to the true and proper pre-existence of the God-Man though Beebe did not. There are many other doctrines involved in this, but the idea of Christ's having THREE natures rather than TWO natures is, in my opinion, contrary to the Word of God.

I m very thankful brother Stanley was able to find this and has published it for us all to study.

I hope others will speak to this issue. Ron.

This is the "lost" Circular of controversy, wherein Gilbert Beebe was charged with being an Arian. I did not take the time to actually count the number of times the writer refered to the Godhead, and of Jesus in the Godhead, but they are numerous. If anyone can show me how this Circular proves him to be an Arian, I'd love to pick your mind and concepts on Arianism. In fact, I find nothing in the Circular that should have triggered such a violent reaction relative to the Eternal Godhead and relation of Christ therein. But I know I'm not the brightest boy on the block. I hope you enjoy this. Also, many, many thanks to everyone who jumped in to help me locate this Circular. I also hope the Libraries will save this, so it will not be so hard to find again. Stanley Phillips.

1852 CIRCULAR WARWICK BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The Warwick Baptist Association, To the churches composing the same, sends greetings of love and fellowship.

Beloved Brethren:- The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is *replete* with instruction and consolation to the children of God, and although it is to the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness, it is shall be unto all who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power and wisdom of God. It embraces so many sublime and heavenly considerations, that we are some times at loss to select from the divine cluster, any particular theme for special meditation or comment, still as it contains nothing uninteresting or unprofitable, we will endeavor to present for your consideration a few thoughts on the subject of the

FOUNDATION WHICH GOD HAS LAID IN ZION.

"Behold" saith the Lord, *"I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner, a sure foundation, he that believeth shall not make haste."*- Isaiah xxviii, 16. And the Apostle says, 1 Cor. iii, 11,- that this foundation is Jesus Christ, and other foundation than Christ no man can lay.- Upon this, this Rock, the Redeemer hath

pledged Himself to build the church and make her battlements so invincible that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.-

In the execution of this promise, Peter says, “*Unto whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious.*” And also that, “*As lively stones ye are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*”- 1 Peter ii, 4-8. Hence we learn the subject and design of God in providing and laying this foundation in Zion, is the security and up-building of His church, and also the union and fellowship of the foundation and the stones which are built upon it. The foundation is stone, and these builded and also set up, the foundation is a living stone, and these builded are *lively* stones, and as Jesus Christ is the Life of His church, and as “*He only hath immortality,*” the life of Christ as a foundation and the life of His members, as lively stones is but one life. This life is “*The only Begotten of the Father.*” It dwelt in His bosom from everlasting, and when it was made manifest in the flesh, it proceeded forth and came from God; neither came it forth of itself, but God made it, - John viii. 42. Thus in the light of divine revelation we are enabled to trace the vitality both of the foundation and the spiritual building to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The head of Christ is God even as the head of the church is Christ, and the union vitality and relationship between the church and Christ is co-existent and co-eternal with the union and relationship of Christ in His *Mediatorial* character and His Godhead. The life of the church is in His life as the Son of God and Mediator between God and man, the sonship of all the heirs of glory is in the sonship of their spiritual Head, for if He is “*the only begotten of the Father,*” we see not how any can be the son of God vitally unless their spiritual life, was begotten in Him, and He is really and vitally the embodiment of all His church. He the Vine, they the branches; He the Head, and they the body; members, flesh and bone. In this relationship, He is not ashamed to call them brethren, or to say to them, I go unto My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God. And as the heirship depends on this vital relationship, it is joint. He is the Heir of all things, consequently, all things are theirs, and they are Christ’s and Christ is God’s. The fullness of the eternal Godhead dwells in Him bodily, and the church is complete in Him, and she is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. This we regard as the foundation of the church, if it be removed we know not what the righteous shall do. In the absence of His relationship and union of life, we see not how the near kinsman, possessing a legal right to bear her sins, or how His sufferings and death could cancel the demands of law and justice for the sins of His people, justice would rather be outraged by laying the sins of the guilty on, the immaculate Lamb of God, if He were not so identified with them, that His sufferings could be *legally* regarded as the execution of the sentence of the Law upon them. In this union the love of Christ constrains the apostle and primitive saints, and why should it not constrain us, so to judge that if one died for all, then were all dead. In His death the life of the church was laid down; and in His resurrection, the life of the church came up from the dead. They “*were quickened together with Him, were raise up together, and*

*made to sit **together** in heavenly places.”*

If, as has been contended, Christ did not exist in His *Mediatorial headship* of the church, is her life and immortality before His assumption of flesh and blood, in His incarnation, how could the church have been chosen, predestinated, and secured in Him before the world began? Was it in His Godhead, or in Him as the Christ, the Mediator, that they were chosen and ordained to salvation? If in His Godhead, by whom were they so chosen? As God, He is without derivation, self-existent and eternal; but *as a Son, begotten by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; as a Son He was *sent* unto the world, and came not of Himself as before proved by His own words, “*For I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me.*” John viii. 42. And in this very chapter He asserts, that His existence, in His *Mediatorial subordination to the Godhead*, was anterior to Abraham’s day, (verse 58). In this He was not speaking of His Godhead, for in His Godhead He was in **no sense subordinate, or dependent on an other to send Him into the world**, neither was He speaking in regard to His humanity, for in that He was “*not yet fifty years old.*” But as the Mediator He did come in subordination to His Father, to do not His own will, but the will of **Him that sent Him** and to finish His work.

Again, It has been contended that Christ has not existed in His Eternal Godhead and in His humanity, and that all titles and terms applied to Him in the Scripture which imply derivation or subordination, have reference only to His humanity and that the combination of these two natures constitute Him the *Mediator*. *If this theory be correct, it involves to our mind two insuperable difficulties, viz.*

*First, That there could no mediator have existed, prior to the existence of His humanity, and therefore not until the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, only as contemplated in a purpose as something that should afterwards be, whereas the Scriptures plainly assert that His Mediatorial goings forth have been “of old even from everlasting;” that God made the worlds by Him, and chose His people in Him **before** the foundation of the world; and that “He hath saved and called us, according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Him before the world began.”*

Second, It would involve the idea, either that the Godhead of Christ suffered, and a part of the sacrifice which was made for sin; or else that we have to depend alone upon a mere human sacrifice, for our redemption. Neither of these two positions can be sustained, because the Godhead could not be sacrificed – it withdrew when Jesus hung bleeding on the cross, and in evidence thereof Jesus cried, “*My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!*” And if nothing but humanity suffered, then the life of the church was not

laid down, the church did not die, was not “*buried with Him by baptism into death,*” nor “*raised up together with Him, to sit together with Him in heavenly places,*” unless it be contended that the life of the church was in the *humanity of Christ*, and if that was the case, we are only represented in a human life, and depend only on a human sacrifice, which would leave us still under the curse of the law, for, “*for cursed is man that trusteth in man, or that maketh flesh his arm.*” But we are assured that God sent forth His own Son, His only begotten Son, and spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. It is therefore clear that what event constituted Him the “Son of God,” was delivered up for the offences of the people. And if, as we think none will contend that His Godhead died, and something more than humanity was delivered up, *the conclusion seems to us unavoidable that Christ, in His Mediatorial life, and headship of the church suffered, died, and arose from the dead, ascended up into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, and that He ever liveth to make intercession, for, and in all those for whom He acts as Mediator.*

Brethren, this is the foundation on which we build, and on which we hope that we are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. This is the Rock, the Tried Stone, the Sure Foundation, and He knoweth them that are His. And we rejoice in the assurance given that when the storm shall come, the winds blow, and the rain beats, when the flood shall sweep away all refuges of lies, this Building shall stand because it is builded on Christ, the Rock of Ages.

Be not then discouraged because of the trials of the way. Your life is hid with Christ in God, and when He who is your life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.

Gilbert Beebe, *Moderator.*

Wm. L. Benedict, *Clerk.*