

1853 Circular of Delaware River
Written by
C Suydam

[Ministers present this session were: Samuel Troot (preached Introductory sermon from Col. 1:27,28), E. Rittenhouse, Gabriel Conklin, C. Suydam, Philander Hartwell, William Curtis, William Sharp, Thomas Barton, William Housel, P.C. Brome, Gilbert Beebe, and J.L. Purington.

Of special note: item 14, “*Whereas*, the Second Hopewell church has requested that this Association drop her Associational Compact in the following words, viz.: ‘For ourselves, as a church, after deliberation, and, we trust, prayerful reflection, we have come to the decided conclusion that associations with or without written constitutions are unwarranted by Scripture, either expressed or implied. But although we would be glad to see associations dispensed with, and enjoy the privilege of meeting with brethren without the perplexities which such associations so often bring in their train, we are by no means disposed to break any Gospel bands. And should you see fit still to continue your Associational Compact, we cordially invite you to meet with us next year. And should you see cause to discontinue, still meet with us at the same time, or another time, if more convenient, and let us hold a three day’s meeting, and pray the Master to meet with us.’

Therefore, *Resolved*, That we are not prepared to act upon this question at present, but refer it to the several churches composing this body, and request them to act upon it in their church capacity, and send their views in their letters next year.” Note: The 1854 minute does not indicate whether the association met with Second Hopewell Church or not. However, Second Hopewell was seated in the Association.

Associations seated at this session were: Warwick, Delaware, Delaware River, Baltimore, Salisbury, Kettocton, Rappahannock, Ebenezer, Lexington, Chemung, Alleghany, Corresponding Meeting, Va., Maine O,S. Association, and Maine O.S. Conference.

CIRCULAR LETTER, 1853.

The Delaware River Baptist Association, to the Churches composing the same, send Christian salutation,

Dear Brethren:- In addressing this epistle of love to you, we feel constrained to say to you, that the highest praise and gratitude are justly due to the God of all grace and comfort, for His unspeakable mercies unto us. If we survey the past, we cannot fail to discover the sovereign hand of the all-wise and ever merciful God, which has skillfully led and mercifully upheld us in all our journey; and if we contemplate the future, our contemplations are swallowed up in the great ocean of immutable promises, which promises are sealed with the blood of the everlasting covenant. Seeing then we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. But notwithstanding in the great covenant of grace there is ample provision for every child of God, in each and every circumstance of life, and no one of these shall fail, yet we, through the infirmities of the flesh, are often found manifesting unbelief and ingratitude, and are compelled to adopt the language of Paul, and say, “*In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*”

When we find ourselves thus beset with sins, temptations and fears, are we left without any cheering ray of consolation, or a sure prop to prevent our falling? Are we the only ones who have ever been thus circumstanced? Let us turn our attention for a moment to Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and David, and in fact to all the children of God, and we shall find an entire family subject to like passions, temptations and fears, and we shall find, also, that God is at all times the very present help of His people. He will never leave nor forsake them. He will help them, and that right early. This help will never come too late. Does the tempter threaten and throw his influence about you? Remember the he tempted and endeavored to flatter your Master before you; but at the command of Jesus, Satan left, and angels ministered unto Him.

Remember, therefore, dear brethren, that Christ having been tempted, it was for your sake, and for you He overcame all his temptations; and having been tempted Himself, He is able to succor you who are tempted also. Are you mourning on account of your vileness, corruption, and ingratitude? May the Lord enable you to look away from yourselves, and behold Him, who of God is made unto you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption. May the Lord enable you to behold that perfect fullness there is in Christ, and that that fullness is yours. For all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Are you mourning on account of your sins? Remember that you have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus the righteous. Do you at times feel lonely and cast down, disconsolate and gloomy? Remember your relationship to God and Christ, and a Father's interest in the safety and welfare of His children, and that Christ has, in language which moves every power of the spiritual mind, and lifts every power of the soul to the highest strains of gratitude to God, owned and proclaimed this relationship, or union to His brethren here below. Said He to Mary, "*Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.*" Have you the evidence that you have Christ within you the hope of glory? Then it is an unfailing Truth, that Christ's Father is your Father, and that His God is your God. And if He is yours, is there anything lacking in all the multitude of your wants, salvation and glorification? Not a single want can be found but what is provided for, and there is not a single provision made but what will be manifested to you at the proper time, and in the proper place. We have therefore the assurance, that God hath done all things, and hath done them well; and He is merciful to our unrighteousness, and remembers our sins and iniquities no more. And instead of murmuring, we should rejoice. He bears with us, and deals kindly and softly, and we are oftentimes led to wonder that He manifests so much forbearance. Is it not reasonable that we should bear with one another also? May the God of mercy give us the spirit of forbearance, love, brotherly kindness, and may we bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. And may we have grace given us, that our conversation may be as becometh the Gospel of Christ, and may we stand fast in one mind and one spirit, and strive together for the truth of the Gospel.

Gabriel Conklin, *Moderator.*
E. Rittenhouse, *Clerk.*