

1854 Circular of Delaware River

Written by

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***** This Minute gives the reason for the initial separation of the Kettocton Association from the Warwick and Delaware River Associations and that connection.**

[Ministers present at this session were: The above writers of the Circular – as a committee, R.C. Leachman, Gabriel Conklin, Philander Hartwell, S. H. Stout, William Housel, J.W, Walker, and J.L. Purington.

The associations seat in this session were: Warwick, Delaware, Delaware River, Baltimore, Salisburg, Kettocton, Rappahannock, Ebenezer, Lexington, Chemung, Allegeny, Corresponding, Va, Maine O.S. Association, and Maine O.S. Conference.

TWO items of business is noted: Item 15, “The committee to whom the minutes of corresponding associations were referred report as following:

“The Kettocton association having as we are informed suspended correspondence with us, so long as we shall continue to correspond with the Warwick association, which she charges of having set forth, in her circular letter of 1852, *a Mediator without divinity or humanity*, &c., as we find nothing in the said circular to justly the charge, we recommend that this association discontinue her correspondence with the Kettocton, and that we continue to correspond with the Warwick association. *(IS THIS CIRUCLAR LETTER AVAILABLE TODAY???? Ron)*

The report was received, and Kettocton Association was accordingly dropped from our correspondence.”

The 16th Item: “On motion, it was unanimously resolved, that we concur with the Baltimore and Delaware Ass’ns in the following preamble and resolutions,

Whereas. Three thousand clergy of New England, for whom it is claimed that **they embrace the Gospel Ministers of all the religious sects and denominations of our country**, have, in the name of the Almighty God, protested against the passage of what is called the “Nebraska Bill,” by the Senate and House of representatives of the United State, and threatened Congress with the vengeance of God if they should pass the said bill, *therefore,*

Resolved, That we consider it due to the churches and ministers of this association, to the Old School Baptist denomination of professed Christians, and to the cause of God and Truth, in which we are deeply interested in, or fellowship for the said protest. And while we wish not, as a religious association, to meddle with the political

bearings of that, or any other subject before Congress, we cannot withhold a decided disapproval of the presumptuous and in our judgment, blasphemous assumption and desecration of the sacred name and divine prerogative of the Almighty God, by the self-styled "Clergy" of our country.

Resolved, That a copy of our minutes containing this Preamble and Resolution be sent to the President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives. [**Stan's historical notation:** The Kansas- Nebraska Bill created two separate States in the western territories to provide for the Transcontinental railroad; and was thought by its opponents to overturn the Missouri Compromise of 1820 (??), by allowing slavery therein. However, the bill on that issue, only allowed the States themselves (10th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution) to decide the slavery issue for themselves.]

Circular Letter

To the several churches known as the Delaware River Association the following Circular is addressed.

Beloved Brethren:- The aim in writing, as well as preaching should undoubtedly be the edification and establishment of the body of Christ. And the counterpart being distraction and confusion, as much as in us lies., we should scrupulously avoid the utterance of such things, either with tongue or pen as have the latter tendency. God is not the author of confusion but of peace. In the clear and forcible demonstration of His Truth we may hope for peace to result in all the churches. Among the prominent points that present themselves in the inspired writings we are accustomed to select one and endeavor to trace and apprehend something of the perfections of the Author of our holy religion as they may discover themselves in the particular point or subject we have in hand.

Perhaps we may safely say that Jehovah has not revealed a single attribute of His character in which His church, the members of His body, is not immediately interested. Hence every name and characteristic that is given of Him are of vital interest to His people. It follows then that we are not under necessity of selecting some point or points that appertain especially to us; for we shall not find an attribute of the divine character in the whole revelation He has made of Himself, which has not been revealed to them as *their portion* ***in*** Him. He, as *their* God, in this possessive case embodying all the perfections of ***the eternal underived Godhead is the inheritance of His church. The nature and extent of this inheritance must of necessity be at all times and under all circumstances an absorbing theme. (In this you will note the denial of Nicenism, REP)***

These promises lead to a declaration of divine Truth concerning the church which we propose now to contemplate, in which she is spoken of as "having the glory of God." This expression will certainly embrace all that we have intimated above. But nevertheless we approach the subject with much diffidence, lest we should tarnish and obscure rather than exhibit and illustrate.

What know we brethren of God, or His glory? Have we any knowledge or conception of either, only as He has been pleased to develop Himself in and reveal Himself to His church? We think not. And shall we go further and say that every perfection of the divine nature, every attribute of His character, every member of His mystical body, yea the as yet hidden unapproachable glory that invest His great white throne, must ultimately be exhibited and exemplified in His saints?

Let us mark the emphatic expression, "*Having the glory of God.*" His glory whatever it may be, and how much soever it may transcend our utmost conceptions, will be found here – will lie in full development here. And not only so, but all other glory must be excluded. The complete and perfect disclosure of God to and in His church will depend measurably at least upon this exclusion of all other glory of whatever kind. Well what are we to understand by the term *glory*? What idea do we get of God in the use of this term?

We understand His glory to consist in those eternal excellencies and untarnished perfections that continually increase in luster by comparison. Among these we may select for a moment's contemplation, His Truth. How intimately connected with the minute and trivial circumstances that can ever occur in the world, (that is, as we view things,) is the development of the Truth of God. How slight a circumstance could mar, and thereby destroy the perfection of this truth; and consequently rather than glorify Him, detract from the divine glory. No less His power than His Truth the development of it depends upon the state in which His church is placed and what she has to encounter in the world. And the more power which is arrayed against her, the more formidable her foes, the greater the combination of interest, wealth, numbers, zeal, wisdom, talents and the like, that organize in opposition to her, the greater must consequently be the display of the power of God in her final triumph. The mystery of iniquity, the man of sin with all its power, with all its numbers, with the united arms of ten kingdoms, with all the rage and malice of the prince of darkness will in the end have accomplished no more with regard to the church of Christ than to exhibit gloriously the wisdom, power and Truth of God.

For this purpose the Lord has raised up the enemies of His cause and people to power and place and given them to exercise their best wisdom in opposition to His; and arrayed all their forces against the church, in order to the taking of them in their own craftiness and a declaration in them of His own eternal power and Godhead. Or, in other words, He suffers them to use their boasted wisdom and supposed power just to bring about the accomplishment of His own purpose and their own defeat; and if there ever should occur a circumstance in which His cause was not advanced, and from which the good of His children was not derived, and by which His word was not accomplished, it would derogate from His perfections and tarnish His glory.

According therefore as the declaration of His wisdom, power and Truth is continually affected by the most minute circumstances to which we are ever introduced, let us understand that we are brought in contact with these circumstances for the very purpose that a revenue of glory may be derived from them. Unnumbered and innumerable

events continuing through all coming time to exemplify the divine attributes with new and additional luster.

The Redeemer's Kingdom moreover will be composed of just such materials, and receive and enjoy just such gifts as shall tend to cut off all glorying in the flesh, and sever and sunder from Zion all other glory that she shall in verity, have the, glory of God, and His alone.

Philander Hartwell, *Moderator.*

E. Rittenhouse, *Clerk.*
