

1834 Circular Warwick Baptist Association

by

Gabriel Conklin

[During this session (1834) the Association reprinted its original Constitution and Articles of Faith (See 1791 Circular) and modified a portion of the London Confession of 1689 and Philadelphia Baptist Confession. Beginning with Item 11:

“But as no composition of uninspired men is to be considered as perfect, it ought to be carefully examined by the Scriptures, and received and approved only so far as it agrees with them. **There are some things directed to in this Confession of Faith which are held differently as scriptural by the churches of this Association in general: we therefore think proper to mention them.**

“The Recovery of fallen men: God from all eternity did decree for the manifestation of His own glory, chose some men, not all to everlasting life; gave a **gave a people to be the seed of Christ**, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, and finally glorified; their number so certain and definite that it cannot be increased or diminished; wherefore they that are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called by His grace working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved **but the elect only**. To all those for whom Christ hath obtained redemption by His blood He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe, governing their hearts, and overcoming all their enemies by His Almighty Power. God justified, not by infusing righteousness in their natural flesh, nor for any thing wrought in them; but **by imputing His own obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them** – Christ by His obedience and death actually discharges the debt of all those that are justified, and did by the sacrifice of Himself, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make proper real, and full satisfaction to God’s Justice in their behalf. Evangelical faith in its least degree is different in the kind and nature of it from the faith of common grace of temporary believers.

Here we have the great doctrines of the Christian religion easily and familiarly expressed; as the transgression of our first parent Adam – The imputation of his sin to his posterity – the inability of natural man to recover himself – eternal election in Christ, – particular redemption – effectual calling by free and sovereign and efficacious grace – the efficacy of the atonement of Christ, implying in it a discharge from the penalty annexed to the sins of the elect, by which the certainty of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, comes **upon all the seed of Christ**. These doctrines fully and jointly asserted, by the foregoing Confession of Faith are held by this Association.

The Baptist Confession of Faith is **preferred to all other human composition**, being more uniform with the Gospel respecting the qualifications of persons for Gospel privileges – The nature of the authority of the Church, - its absolute independence – keeping the ordinances as they were first delivered. In order that the churches of Christ be guarded from all snares, and walk in all well-pleasing before God, it is essentially necessary to keep the ordinances as they were first delivered; that no person be received into the church except by giving personal satisfaction of their being subjects of effectual calling by efficacious grace, and that by personal profession; and that the same person on such profession be Baptized, *i.e.* dipped or immersed, which is essential to the scriptural administration of

that ordinance and church communion. Let all churches take particular care that persons admitted, support in life and conduct, a character agreeable to their profession.

Signed in behalf of the Association.

Ebenezer Ferris, *Moderator.*

Marmaduke Earle, *Clerk.*

CIRCULAR LETTER

The Warwick Baptist Association, convened with the Church at Hardeston, N.J., the second Wednesday in June, 1834, according to previous appointment; to the several churches of which she is composed; Greeting.

Beloved Brethren-

Having been permitted, under the smiles of a Kind Providence, to assemble again, and receive as expression of your mutual fellowship, the Letters sent by your Messengers, we in return address you by this our Epistle, wishing you grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. The fellowship of the several churches being of importance to them all, and especially at the present; we therefore present it for your consideration. By the term *fellowship*, we understand agreement, union, harmony, communion, concord, friendship, and where neither of those principles exist there can be no fellowship. First, we observe that the fellowship of the Saints is *in the Gospel*; Hence the Apostle declares to his brethren, that in every prayer of his for them, he made request for their fellowship in the Gospel, Philippians I,4, and 5. Second, *the fellowship of the Saints* being in the Gospel, it is therefore, the fellowship of the Apostles. Hence we read, they *continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine, fellowship, etc.*, Acts ii.42. They who thus cherished, were those that “*gladly received his* (the Apostle’s) *word*; Second, those that were baptized, and Third, those that were added to the church. Here was then, a church of the Saints, which not only had the Apostles fellowship, but continued in it, and steadfastly too. Let us endeavor, Brethren, to follow the example of the ancient Baptist, in continuing steadfastly in the Apostles’ faith and practice, doctrine and ordinances, and consequently their fellowship. If the fellowship of the Apostles, is the Standard, it necessarily follows that the fellowship of Jesus Christ, is theirs. Hence it is recorded, “*God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ.*” 1st Cor. 1st. Ch. 9th verse. The fellowship of the Saints is also the “*fellowship of the Spirit.*” See Phil. ii,1. Because it is produced in them by the Spirit of adoption whereby they are led to cry, Abba Father – the Spirit of God also bearing witness with theirs, that they are born of God.

The Saints having the fellowship of the Apostles, of Jesus Christ, and the Spirit, the irresistible conclusion is, they **cannot** have fellowship with devils. Consequently the Apostle cautions his Breth’n against the sacrifices of the Gentiles (or heathen) because,

the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God and he would not that they should have *fellowship* with devils; and as fellowship implies, a participation or partaking; the Apostle adds: “*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s Table and of devils,*” 1st Cor. x. 20,21.- Again, the Saints are not to have fellowship with unrighteousness, for all unrighteousness is sin, and they are righteous, because, Christ has been made unto them, wisdom and righteousness &c. Hence the Apostle charge them, “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?*” Neither are they to have communion (or fellowship) with *darkness*, for they are *light* in the Lord, and the Apostle enquires, “*What communion hath light with darkness?*” The Saints are to have no communion (fellowship) with Belial, for they are Christ’s. Hence the Apostle enquires, “*What concord hath Christ with Belial?*” They are to have no part (fellowship) with the Infidel, for they are believers in Christ, “*And what part hath he that believeth with the Infidel?*” Neither any agreement (fellowship) with Idols, for they are the temple of God; “*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, ‘I will dwell in them, and walk in them and I will be their God, and they shall be My people,’*” 2d Cor. Chap. Vi, verse 14 and 16. The Saints are to have no fellowship, with the *unfruitful works of darkness*; although they, “*Were sometimes darkness, yet, being now light in the Lord, they are to walk as children of the light: proving what is acceptable unto the Lord; having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprovng them.*” Eph. -10-11. The works of darkness are the works of the flesh, and all flesh having corrupted his way on the earth, “*darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people:*” so that their works are works of darkness.”

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wickedness, strife, sedition, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like, the which I tell you before. I have told you in times past that they that do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. The above class is the work of the flesh (darkness) and cannot please God. The Apostle says to have no fellowship with these; for he adds, “*They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*” They are not to have fellowship with disorderly others. Hence the Apostle’s admonition to the Thessalonians 2d Epistle iii.5: “*Now I command you, Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that we withdraw yourselves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which you received of us.*” Again; “*if any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man and have no company (or fellowship) with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet treat him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a Brother.*” Verse 14, 15.

The Saints are not to fellowship those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which they have learned. Hear Paul’s directions on this subject to the Galatians, xvi,17,18. “*Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause divisions*

and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simply.”

Brethren, let us be careful that our conversation be as becometh the Gospel: that our walk be orderly and circumspect, as wise, and not as fools, taking the word of God as the rule of our practice, regarding at the same time, the injunction of the Apostles in respect to *those who do not* obey their [the Apostles’] word, or walk after their tradition who are consequently disorderly – and while he thus enjoins on his Brethren a withdrawing of *fellowship* from those who are disorderly in *walk and practice*, he does not fail to set forth their duty towards those who were so in doctrine! “*Knowing that the time would come when they would not endure sound doctrine; (which time has come upon us) but after their own lusts should heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: and that they should turn away their ears from the Truth unto fables.*” And again, “*that after my departure, grievous wolves should enter in among you, not sparing the flock, and even of themselves, men should arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;*” therefore he admonishes them (the Elders at Ephesus) to watch: he cautions them to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock, over the which, the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, to feed the Church of God which He had purchased with His own blood. He beseeches his Brethren at Rome, to mark and avoid [have no fellowship with] those that cause divisions *contrary to the doctrine* which they had learned.- That *doctrine*, is the doctrine of the Father, “*Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me,*” it is the doctrine of the Son, for I and My Father are one.” It is the doctrine of the Apostles, for they (the Church) continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine. It is unquestionable then, “*sound doctrine*” embraces the purpose and grace of God given to His Saints, in Christ Jesus before the world began, and their calling according to that purpose and grace – the choice of God the Father, of His begotten children in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world, that they (in time) should be holy and without blame before Him in love – the predestination of them, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many Brethren and of the adoption of the children by Jesus Christ, to Himself – their justification freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus- their final deliverance from all their sufferings, and victory over all their enemies, “*Through the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony,*” and their everlasting glorification with Christ their eternal Head and elder Brother.

In a word, Brethren, the doctrine of the Father, of the Son, of the Spirit, of the Apostles, and of the Church’ the “*sound doctrine*” which the Church at Rome had learned was, that salvation was of the Lord, and not of men, nor by men – that it was of grace, and not of works of any kind- not of corruptible things, as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ. Having learned this doctrine in the school of Christ, being taught of God by His Spirit, (for His children are all taught of the Lord) and by His word through His Apostles – the unavoidable consequence of a doctrine, or *doctrines* being

preached among them, contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ, which they had learned of the Father; would be offences and divisions the Apostles well knew, and have frequently noticed this object in his Epistles to the different churches. The Galatians had a natural propensity to the observance of circumcision and ceremonies of the Law, as observing days and months, and times and years, etc., he declares that he is afraid of them, and marvels that they are so soon removed from Him that called them into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel. Besides the propensity, they were troubled with some that *promulgated* that doctrine, and would subvert the Gospel of Christ. Paul had preached to them the *Gospel of Christ*, of salvation by grace and they had received it, and rejoiced in it; for they did run well, but now had been hindered- they had not marked and avoided those who preached, "*that they were to be circumcised and kept the Law of Moses or they could not be saved.*" Consequently they were *troubled*, and bewitched, the Apostle would, that they who deceived them, were cut off; for said he, "*Though we or an angel from Heaven, preached any other Gospel (save that of free grace) unto you, than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*"- mark and avoid him! Have no fellowship with him, lest with his good words and fair speeches he deceive the hearts of the simple, and thereby cause offences and divisions. Another reason why the Saints should not fellowship those who are disorderly in doctrine and practice, consequently causing offences and divisions, is given by the Apostle – they serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, in spite of their feign words to the contrary, but their own bellied: in doing this, like the Grievous Wolves, that spare not the flock, but in the language of the Prophet, they kill them that are fed and eat the fat, and clothes themselves with the wool, by their fruits, they are to be known, not so much by their external and pious appearance, for in part they resemble Sheep; but let their spirits be tried, saith the Apostle, "*for many false Prophets are gone out into the world.*" "*If any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.*" Consequently he will not serve our Lord Jesus Christ; cannot preach sound doctrine or walk according to sound practice; but his main interest, and worldly aggrandizement, by pursuing a worldly religious policy, and preaching doctrine suited to the world is to enhance his own belly. Thus the admonition to the Saints to take the admonitions and instructions of the Apostles to beware of, mark and avoid them; let the Elders of the churches, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, not only :feed the flock;" but as faithful watchmen and good shepherds, under Christ "the chief Shepherd," watch for the Wolves in sheeps' clothing, who divide and scatter the sheep; watch for the thief who come but to steal, to kill and destroy. Yea, watch in all things, according to Paul's admonition to Timothy: so that, as Elders and Brethren, as ministers and Churches, we are found "*observing all things what soever He has commanded in His word,*" and rejecting all things not commanded in His word in reference to doctrine, practice and order, as but the commandments, traditions, and inventions of carnal men; remembering that the Lord our God will take vengeance of those inventions. Psalm xcix. And as the Lord enable us Brethren, to walk in the light, [Christ] so that we may "have fellowship one with another." Thus evincing, that, "truly our fellowship is with the

Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” John 1st Epistle, 1, 3-7.

While we are thus found, endeavoring to follow Christ according to His teaching and examples, we shall hardly expect to escape the lash of persecution, much less the tongue of slander; in order that we may “*know, something at least, of the fellowship of His suffering.*” We, (the Warwick Association) are charged with being “strenuously opposed to the practice of preaching the Gospel to impenitent sinners;” though it has been that we are “willing that it should be preached to the Elect in their hearing.”- We certainly need to say strongly, the charge is utterly false. So far from being opposed to, we glory and rejoice in the preaching of the true *Gospel of Christ*, rather than that of man; at any time in any place, and to whosoever the Lord in His Providence may bring together and give a disposition to hear, and our ministers are habitually in the *practice of trying to preach it*- we have never known them to refuse, although the hearers might have been one-half, two-thirds, three-fourths or even **all** unrepentant sinners. Neither can a solitary instance, either of Michael the archangel, or our opponent, acting upon this principle be able to so charge us for withholding the Gospel from any among us. It is true, we are labor, yea, very desirous that the Gospel of Christ should be preached to the Elect, and to the church, even in the extent of the world; but we are not desirous, nay, we oppose the present practice of preaching “*another Gospel, which is not another, but a perversion of the Gospel of Christ;*” either to saint or sinner. This we see and this we oppose. We are represented as being opposed to preaching “the necessity of faith and repentance;” whereas we **constantly affirm** the necessity of “*repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,*” in order to happiness here and hereafter. But we do not tell impenitent sinners, that they are penitent, and therefore the promises of the Gospel are for them – that they are mourners, therefore they shall be comforted – that they are weary and heavy laden, and therefore they shall find rest – that they hungry and thirsting after righteousness, therefore they can see, hear, and understand – that they are alive, either in whole or in part and that nominal faith and natural repentance being conditions of salvation, they are therefore to perform those conditions. Neither do we tell them, that although they are dead in trespasses and sins – yet they possess natural powers, with which they can perform spiritual things. Nay, but we tell them, that they are deaf, and dumb, and blind, yea dead- that they have no power whatever to perform spiritual things; no will; for Christ said, “*Ye **will not** come unto Me that ye might have life.*” No ability; “*for no man **can come unto Me**, except the Father which sent Me **draw him.***” We tell them, “*they were conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity,*” that “*the whole head is sick and the whole heart faith; that, from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.*” – that, “*destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known, and that there is no fear of God before their eyes.*” – that “*they are under condemnation already, and the wrath of God falling on them.*” Therefore in this condition, there is not a comforting promise for them in all the Word of God – but on the contrary the woes and threatening, the thundering and curses of the Word of God are

their portion, and without repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, they must perish – that a mere external repentance or turning, however socially good in its place, is by no means sufficient – that there is nothing short of that repentance which flows from a Godly sorrow for sin, “*which is eternal life,*” and “*needs not to be repented of,*” – that will answer. We tell them that this repentance **is the gift** of God, for “*Jesus is exalted a Prince and a Savior to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins,*” and that **faith** also, **is the gift** of God, for says the Apostle, “*ye are saved by grace, through faith, and that **not of yourselves,** it is the gift of God.*” Again, “*every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning.*” But, Brethren, it is not our present purpose, neither will our limits allow us to enter our protest to all the false charges preferred against us; - the base calumny heaped upon us, - and the slanderous reports concerning us; - among the many, but have, in closing our Epistle, noticed only one or two, and very briefly stood upon our defence. We are aware, that “*The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: that it deceives the whole body, and sitteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fore of hell. . . . Every kind of beast, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and have been tamed of mankind. But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly member, full of deadly poison,*” James iii, 6-8. Let us remember Brethren, the words of our Redeemer, “*In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace.*” Let us rejoice that He has overcome the world, for as sure as He has overcome, so the Saints in Him have, and by Him shall overcome. Oh! Brethren let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not; and may the Lord enable us, as churches, and as individuals by a firm, constant, and strict adherence to the precepts and examples of our Lord Jesus Christ: in doctrine, in faith, in practice, in life, in conduct, in conversation, yea, in all things, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation shine as lights in the world. God forbid that we should suffer as evil doers, but if we suffer, let it be as Christians, for the Truth’s sake, and that alone. Thus the Saints may, and shall be made to know the power of the resurrection, but also the fellowship of His sufferings. And now Brethren we commend you to God and the word of His grace which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. Amen

James Burt, *Moderator*

Gabriel Conklin, *Clerk.*

CORRESPONDING LETTER

Warwick Baptist Association, convened agreeably to appointment, with the Church at Hardeston, June 11th and 12th, 1834. To our Sister Associations with whom we

correspond: sends Christian love.

Dear Brethren:-

Through the abounding goodness of our Covenant God we are permitted to assemble once more in our associate capacity, and we rejoice that the Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth, and that a sparrow cannot possibly fall to the ground, nor an hair from our head without Him. It is indeed a source of great consolation to us, amid the commotion which to an alarming extent, at this day agitates Zion, that we can read and believe that God's "*Counsel SHALL stand, and HE will do ALL HIS pleasure.*"

As an Association we continue to maintain inviolably that form of Bible Doctrine on which we were as an Association originally constituted, a brief summary of which you will find on the title page of our Minutes, and more fully expressed in the Constitution herein published. We do not feel disposed to turn either to the right hand or to the left from the well beaten and blood marked path of the primitive Saints of our Lord Jesus whose we are, and whom we serve, counting the afflictions of the dear people of God greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. It is true we have as an association been called to endure some persecution and reproach for our steadfastness in the ancient and Biblical Order of the House of God; but we have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, now would we complain of persecution, but rather rejoice in being accounted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of His dear name Who endured the cross and despised the shame, and has led the way to Glory:- "*God is gone up with a shout! The Lord with the sound of a Trumpet.*"

We have no confidence in any of *the newly invented* schemes of the day for promoting the cause of God, or meliorating the condition of corrupt man. We believe the provisions made in the everlasting Covenant of grace are amply sufficient to answer all the purposes contemplated by Jehovah and as we cannot conceive that *our plots or schemes* are wanted either for helps or for ornaments, we chose rather to sit low at the Footstool of our Lord, and learn of Him, than to attempt to teach Him the better or more expeditious way to convert the "world" or to build up His cause upon the earth. We desire carefully to maintain every good work, but to all these we are thoroughly furnished in the Scriptures of Truth; and while we cautiously avoid these ostentatious parades which seems to engross the zeal of the popular professors of benevolence, we rejoice in that system of benevolence which brought the precious Savior into the world, and which when it is shed abroad in the hearts of the people of God, will make them kindly affectionate one toward another.

By reference to our Minutes you will learn what have been our alterations the past year and find also our present state. The present session is distinguished by the peculiar harmony of sentiments manifest both in regard to the preaching of the word and the transaction of our business.

Our next annual meeting, will by divine providence, be held with the Church at Brookfield, orange county, N.Y. on the second Wednesday of June, 1835, at 10 o'clock A.M. We seek your continued correspondence, done by order of the Warwick Association,

James Burts, *Moderator*

Gabriel Conklin, *Clerk.*