

1835 Circular Warwick Baptist Association

[Pages 2 and 3 are missing from this copy of the Warwick, so we have no list of ministers for you. Relative to corresponding associations, however, we can gather that information from the following items.

“Item 3. In regard to our correspondence, the Committee unanimously agree in recommending the following resolution: *Resolved*, That, inasmuch as a number of associations with whom we have for many years corresponded, entertain views which are at least favorable to the *New Schemes* of the present day, and such as we believe are not in accordance with the Word of God, by reason of which there is not that pleasant union which formerly did exist between them and us when they occupied the same ground on which we were constituted and on which we still remain; we therefore think it advisable to discontinue our correspondence with them for the present. The Report of the Committee on the above subject, was, after due deliberation, *adopted*.”

“Item 5. Appointed Messengers to the following Associations, viz.: *Lexington*, Brethren Gilbert Beebe, Harding, Murray, Doland and Conklin; *Delaware* Brethren Harding, Beebe, Conklin and Murray.

CIRCULAR LETTER

“On Obligation”

By

Elder Ball

The Elders and Brethren composing the Warwick Association, assembled at Brookfield, June 10th and 11th, 1835 – To the Churches of which it is composed, Greetings:

Dear Brethren Beloved of God, called to be saints, Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all Spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we **should be holy and without blame before Him in love** –having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. We are always bound to give thanks to God for you, Brethren, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth; and may the Lord enable you to stand fast in that Truth from which so very many have swerved and turned aside to vain jangling.

It is our present design to enter briefly into an investigation of the subject of **Obligation** – in approaching which we feel our insufficiency, and consequently the indispensable necessity of the Spirit to bring all things to our remembrance whatsoever Christ has told

us. The obligation resting upon the Church of Jesus Christ, is two-fold: first, as His creatures, and secondly as His children. The former including all the posterity of Adam or **the natural seed**, the latter confined to the posterity of the Second man, the Lord from heaven, or **the Spiritual seed**. In taking this view of the subject, we are very sure of opposition from at least three-fourths and perhaps sever-eighths of professed “Christians;” be that as it may, if we are so happy as to have the approbation of God, in His word, and consequently of a good conscience, we shall be abundantly satisfied. **Law** at once implies *obligation* – consequently the Law of God imposes an obligation upon all such as are under it; but who are under it? We answer, all the posterity of Adam the natural man, or head and representative of all the natural seed, descending from him by ordinary generation.

In tracing the history of man, including his origin, as recorded in the Bible, we find him included in the “every thing” that God had made and pronounced very good; hence Paul quotes as follows: “*Thou madest him a little lower than the Angels; Thou crownedst him with glory, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands,*” Hebrews ii.7. Again it is written, “*Man being in honor abideth not,*” – Psalms viii.5; “*He is like the beast that perish,*” Psalm xlix. 12. Whence this departure from that original uprightness in which he was created, the glory with which he was crowned, and the honor conferred upon him? It was by sinning against the God that had thus created and crowned him with glory and honor; and so it is written, “*by one **man** sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death has passed upon all men, for all have sinned,*” – Romans v.12. But what is sin? “*Sin is the transgression of the Law,*”- 1st John iii.4. Now the Law was not given until about 2,500 years after the creation; and we are informed that “*where no Law is, **there is no transgression,***”- Romans iv. 15; “*yet death reigned from Adam to Moses,*” Romans v. 14, or from the creation to the giving of the Law; bearing in mind that death entered by sin as above quoted, it must of necessity follow that sin was in the world *before* the Law entered. Hence we read, “*For until the Law sin was in the world,*”- Romans v. 13.

It was the prerogative of the Eternal God to restrict the creatures He had made; hence He commanded the Man, saying, “*Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,*”- Genesis ii. 16,17. Hence the man became a transgressor when he had done what his Maker commanded him not to do, consequently the sentence is pronounced against him, as recorded in the 3rd Gen. iii. 17,18, 19, by God the Judge, and that according to law; the imputing or charging sin to him is an evidence of Law, for “*Sin is not imputed where there is no law,*” – Romans v.13. “*Nevertheless,*” saith the Apostle, “*death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgress,*”- Romans v. 14. All the posterity of Adam down to Moses, or the giving of the Law, are undoubtedly embraced by the Apostle in the passages above quoted. In what sense have they not sinned after

the similitude of Adam's transgression? First, in that Adam transgressed an express command, or Law of Jehovah, to him personally delivered' whereas his posterity down to Moses did not, for they were without law as respects the revelation of it; and yet they were all sinners, for they all died. Second, They did not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression, because he was their head, and as such they were all created in him, for there never has been a creation since; and though ages upon ages have rolled away, and millions after millions have appeared and disappeared, they were all created in him, consequently as he fell they being in his seed, all fell in him, as it is written, "*In Adam all die.*" – 1 Cor. 15.22. In this last peculiar sense none of his posterity ever have or ever will sin after the similitude of his transgression; in confirmation of this truth, the Apostle observes, "*By the offence of one (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation,*"- Romans v.18, Again, "*By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.*"- Romans v.19.

Notwithstanding the Law had not been given in form, in its jots and tittles, until Moses – although it had not been said "thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thou shalt not kill, steal, covet, or take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"- yet the substance of these things were contained in the message delivered to the first natural man in the Garden: "thou mayest; and thou mayest not." Besides the Apostle, speaking of the Gentiles, says, "*These having not the Law, are a law unto themselves, which shew the works of the Law within their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.*"- Romans ii. 14,15. The law of God as revealed in the Scriptures, is an eternal standard of right, and exhibits the holiness and perfection of His character – it is Spiritual.

We have already intimated an obligation arising out of the Law; the question returns: Who are under the Law? We answer again, all the posterity of Adam in their relation to him, both Jews and Gentiles, consequently they are all under the curse, for it is written, "*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them.*" Again, When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, "*made under the Law, to redeem them that were **under the Law**,*"- Galatians iv. 4,5. The conclusion is, that unless Gentiles as well as Jews were under the law, none of them can be saved by Christ; Now we know that "*what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God.*" – Romans iii.19. Christ in His prayer to the lawyers, summed up the whole of what the Law says, in love to God and our neighbor; a requirement like this was perfectly in harmony with the perfections of God and the scheme of salvation. It was proper and fit, and right, and rational, and reasonable in the nature and fitness of things, that God as the Creator and Preserver, should require of His creatures obedience to His will and such is the nature of His law – 'tis inflexible, it will not allow the smallest or slightest failure, for he that fails in one point, is guilty of all, and in consequence of not continuing in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them he is cursed. It reasons not only to actions, but words and

even thoughts and intents of the heart; it is so rigorous in its requirements that only for one offence, the die is cast; no reversion, no repentance or pardon, but down to hell the creature must go in spite of all he can do – for the Law will accept of nothing short of perfect and perpetual obedience; hence the idea that it requires men to give up their hearts to God is **incorrect and absurd**, for that would be something short of perfect obedience. The idea supposes the heart is not right with God. This is true; but that the law of God requires it given up **is absurd**; it falls far below that perfect standard.

The moral law of God can never be satisfied in its requirements and obligations by us, and like the criminal under sentence of death by the law of the land, he is only waiting the day of his execution, and will assuredly receive the punishment due to his crimes, unless pardoned or reprieved. But says an objector, although repentance is not a requisition of the law, does not an obligation upon all the human family to repent and believe, grow out of the Gospel? We answer not in a Scriptural point of view. But as the creatures of God, standing in relation to Him as their Creator, and from whom they receive all the common blessings of life, they are certainly under obligation to Him; and as rational beings it is their duty to *reform or turn away from all wicked practices* – which reforming or turning away from, is evidently the import of the term “repentance” (frequently used in the Bible: witness in the case of the Ninevites, and Luke xiii in relation to those whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, and those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell.) Lastly, Acts xvii, Paul goes to prove from creation, nature and reason the impropriety and inconsistency of worshipping an image of wood, or stone, or silver, or gold, and observes, “*The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commands all men every where to repent;*” that is, *reform and turn away from* such an irrational, superstitious and abominable practice.

The letter of the Bible clearly indicates what is generally denominated among men morality, as obligatory on all men, both Jews and Gentiles. But that it is the duty of all men or all the posterity of Adam to repent and believe the Gospel, as His children, or to the salvation of their souls, we do not believe; and to which we have serious, we have strong, we have decided objections ! One or two of which we will name: first, faith, and repentance as respects the great salvation, are the **gifts of God**; for “*every good gift and every perfect gift*” – and surely these are good and perfect – “*comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is neither variableness or shadow of turning.*” – James i:17. Again Jesus is exalted a Prince and a Savior to “*give repentance*” &c. Secondly, if God has not designed the eternal salvation of all His creatures, (and He has not according to His word) He has not designed they shall all believe unto salvation; neither will He give them that godly sorrow for sin which works repentance unto life never to be repented of; the idea is open hostility to the doctrine of Election in Christ or salvation by Grace – distinguishing grace. Or all creatures under heaven, the children of God are under the highest and strongest obligations; and they sometimes not only feel but realize it. They are not only under obligation as the creatures of God (as we hinted in the commencement) for the blessings of His Providence in common with their fellow men,

but for the blessings of the New Covenant peculiarly to them, which covenant is “*ordered in all things and sure;*” the love of God fixed upon them as the objects of His choice from all eternity; the Grace given them in Christ Jesus, even before the world began; Christ appearing in the fullness of time, in fulfillment of the purposes going before, according to the eternal purpose and counsel, in order to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; fulfilling the Law in all its jots and tittles for *them*; bearing *their* sins in His own body on the tree, and thus becoming a curse for *them*; suffering, bleeding, groaning and dying in order that *they* might live; rising the third appointed morning for *their* justification; ascending on high leading captivity captive; receiving gifts for men, even the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them; teaching them by His Spirit; bringing the commandment home, causing sin to revive and them to die, while realizing themselves under the sentence of death, and just ready to be executed; behold at this critical period a pardon is brought to their own senses, a reprieve is read in their hearing directly from the Court of Heaven, from the King of kings and Lord of lords.

“Now the soul at freedom set,
His Surety’s paid the dreadful debt.”

The language is, “*O magnify the Lord with me!*” None but Jesus can answer the requirements of that Law, by which is the knowledge of sin- none but Jesus can fulfill that Law, and He has done it on the part of His people; for He came not to destroy it but to fulfill it. None but Jesus can obey that Law, and He has already obeyed it perfectly. Is the Law spiritual? So is Jesus; is the Law holy? So is Jesus; is it strong? So is Jesus; every thing in Him and about Him that Justice asked, and every thing that His people need, He has done all things well and all that He has done has been done for His Father, Himself and His people – His Church, His Bride, His body. The language of Jesus is, the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, that they may be ***one, even as we are one, I in them and they in Me, that they made be made perfect in one.***

In conclusion, Brethren, Instead of telling what we have done and what we intend to do for ourselves or others – as do hundreds of professed ministers of the so-called “Gospel”- let *us tell* what Jesus has done; and in doing this do we make void the Law? Are we *Antinomians*? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law; and while there are “lo’s here and lo’s there,” believe them not. Remember the words of our Master to His immediate disciples, “*For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; inasmuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, behold He is in the desert go not forth; behold He is in the secret chambers; believe it not.*” ‘Tis a good thing that the heart be established with grace and not with meats. Therefore may the Lord enable you and us, to leave the beggarly elements of the religious world and come to Christ, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious; and in coming to Him we shall come to His word and His ordinances. “*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the*

Kingdom of God;” let us go forth then, without the camp, bearing His reproaches – refusing to be called the sons of Pharaoh’s daughter – choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season – esteeming the reproach of Christ, greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

And “now unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever; Amen.”

James Finch, *Moderator*

Gabriel Conklin, *Clerk.*

CORRESPONDING LETTER

Warwick Baptist Association convened agreeable to appointment with the Church at Brookfield, June 10th and 11th, 1835 – To our sister associations with whom we correspond, send Christian love.

Dear Brethren:- Through the abounding goodness of our Covenant God, we are permitted to enjoy another anniversary of our Association; and we desire with grateful thanks to acknowledge the kindness of God in preserving us from mingling with the numerous newly man-made and invented societies, and forms of the day- for the support of which no authority can be found in the precious Word of God.

We desire to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints. It is **not** our privilege to tell you of great additions to our Churches, as you will discover by reference to our Minutes, but we are glad that we can tell you that we are at peace and in fellowship among ourselves, and we are now looking only to God to revive us again that we may rejoice in Him. We solicit a continuance of friendly correspondence by Messengers or Minutes, with such as remain with us in the fellowship of the Gospel of Christ, and who, apart from the traditions and inventions of men, hold with us the doctrine and order of the Church of God, as laid down by Christ and His apostles, and as understood and received by our fathers in the Constitution of this association – a copy of which will be found in our Minutes of last year, Our present session has proved peculiarly interesting and comfortable, upon the ground of our union of sentiments in the doctrine and practice of the Gospel.

James Finch, *Moderator.*

Gabriel Conklin, *Clerk.*