

Circular Letter

*The Warwick Association, convened at Mount-Pleasant,
Westchester County in the State of New-York, May 25 and 26,
1802.*

To the Churches they represent, send Christian Salutation.

Dear Brethren,

Through the goodness of our kind Father, we are permitted once more to meet together to consult the welfare of Zion. Every information relative to the churches of Christ in the world must be interesting to all those who have the cause of the dear Redeemer at heart.

We shall embrace this opportunity to address you upon that interesting subject, **The Evidences of An Interest in Christ, And The Blessings Connected With It.** Not one of the followers of the Lamb can doubt, for a moment, the importance of this subject. For, if we are strangers to Jesus, all our profession will not avail in the great day of trial; when nothing then shall help us but genuine religion. But if this is secure, all shall end well. All true believers are equally interested in the precious Savior; but all have not attained the same degree of knowledge and assurance, of their state. Some are weak in the faith, babes in grace, others strong, young men, and fathers. But it is the privilege of all believers to press for the mark of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Full assurance of faith is a rare blessing, which in this life, is attainable by the saints of God at times. Let us pray for it, and press towards it, in the use of all divine appointments; the Spirit may bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

All the subjects of regenerating grace, and who are born of God by the exclusive work of the Holy Spirit, are not only convinced of sin, the evil nature and the consequences of it; their helpless and ruined state by nature and practice: but they are also enlightened to see the glory and sufficiency of Jesus Christ. God, who in the first creation commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The new creation resembles the old: the saints are the children of the Light, called out of darkness into His marvelous light; while the blind sinner perceives neither beauty nor glory in the Divine Savior. The renewed individual beholds Christ's glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely; and, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, he counts all things but dross in comparison of Him, who is all and in all.

Faith in Christ is accomplished with real knowledge of Him, in all His people interested in Him. The unbeliever and the nominal believer are exposed to divine wrath as transgressors of God's holy law, and are "condemned already because they believeth not on the Son of God." Faith is the free gift of God, wrought out in the individual by His Spirit, by the means of the Word; by whom the convinced mind flies to Jesus for refuge, and renounces all dependence upon his own righteousness. He believes in Christ with all his heart; he rests his eternal all upon the Rock of ages; he sets his seal that God is true by believing God's record concerning His Son. This faith is the evidence of things which are not seen with our bodily eyes; and in the nature of it, is holy, purifying the heart, and working by love.

The image of God is **implanted** in the individuals who have interest in Jesus. "*Christ in you, the hope of glory;*" being changed into the same image from glory to glory. Even by the Spirit of God. Love, holiness, humility, patience, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness, all

which dwells in Jesus, dwells also in His Saints. Grace in His members, resembles that in the Head; it is of the same substance, though different in degrees, as a small quantity of water is of the same quality with the waters in the boundless ocean. It is the daily desire of the true Christian to be more conformed to the image of Jesus His glorious Savior; and it is his burden that he is not more like Him whom he loves above all. This glorious union of the saints of God! Neither life, nor death, can break the bond.

Obedience to the commands of Jesus will evidence a union with Him. *"If ye love Me, keep My commandments. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."* This is the voice of Jesus to all His followers. This is the motive to all evangelical obedience, which is ten thousand times stronger than all the terrors of the law, or the dread of punishment. The slave obeys from fear, but the child is influenced by love to his father. The word of God is our only rule of both our faith and our practice; not the inventions of men. To worship God contrary to His word, is to insult the wisdom and power of the King of Zion. The Spirit of God in its operations on the individual, cannot lead any to discard the commands of Christ in His word, which are written by divine inspiration. The spirit with, testifies the word of God in the Bible. The precepts of God are not grievous to the individual that is created anew in Christ Jesus: - His burden is light. These are the only blessed ones, who shall enter in through the gates into the Holy City.

The glory of God is near and dear to the hearts of all who are interested in the Lamb. When the name of their dear Savior is reproached by men, or His cause suffers in the world, they are grieved; but when success attends the Gospel, it affords them real joy and satisfaction. What is the victory of an army to the splendor of kingdoms, to the success of the truth of Christ, or the victory of His grace over the souls of men, which end in the happiness of the conquered, and the eternal glory of God? At this, angels rejoice; - and

will not the saints join them in praise? The glory of God is the end of their creation; and not the praise of men. Their happiness is connected with, and flows from the manifestation of the divine glory, they are bought with the blood of the glorious Immanuel, therefore, they shall glorify God in their bodies and spirits which are His. To glorify God is their desire on earth, and to glorify and enjoy Him in heaven, shall be their eternal employment and delight with the whole elect family, the Church of the First-born, whose names are written in heaven, who shall unite in one eternal song of praise to God and the Lamb.

The BENEFITS resulting from an interest in Christ, are many and valuable.

Christ is yours; your lord and your God; your Prophet, Priest and King, in whom you are caused to rejoice. He assumed your nature to raise you from sin and misery; - He died for you, and rose again for your justification. He went before to prepare a place for you in glory. His righteousness, and promises, with all the riches of His grace are yours. Christ lives in glory as your Intercessor; and He lives by faith in your hearts. Your lives are hid with Christ in God. Glorious union! The eternal wonder of saints and angels!

In interested in Jesus, we are entitled to all the privileges of His church on earth. All the ordinances of Christ are yours. The Israelites who were born of the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, had a right to all the privileges of the Jewish church; but being born of God by the Spirit of God, gives us a title to all the institutions of the Gospel. Faith in Christ entitles sinners of all nations, to a place among the Lord's family in His house below. Here the saints love to dwell. For the laws, services, provisions, and inheritances are delightful, and here God hath promised His presence and His blessing for ever more.

You live in an age, when infidelity abounds [**It never improved! Stan**], our Redeemer hath furnished you with the best evidence of the authority of that religion you profess. Your adversaries say, that, the terrors of the law are a fiction, but you know that the fruit of sin is a reality, for you have felt its power in your awakened conscience. Do they call the Gospel human invention and imposture.- You know that it is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believes, having felt its energy in your own hearts.- Do they charge the Gospel with having an immoral tendency?- Consult your own experience: you know that the blood of Christ purgeth the conscience from dead works to serve the living and the true God. This remedy removes the guilt from the soul; and where grace reigns sin shall not have dominion; it leads to true holiness and influences all its possessors to do good to all men as they have opportunity. – The advocates of infidelity also assert, that religion destroys the happiness of men. But you know from what you have tasted, that nothing can be more false; for in the Gospel there is the sum of true and permanent felicity; and from this source all who believe have joy unspeakable and full of glory.

A sense of your interest in Christ will support you under all the trials of life. Though many sorrows attend you, and the temptations of the adversaries are powerful, yet, in Christ you have strength equal to your day. From Christ you have riches in poverty; comfort in sorrow; and pleasures in the midst of pain. All power in heaven and on earth is in the hand of your Redeemer, and every necessary support is provided by Him, for all His elect people. He will supply all your need according to His riches in glory. Afflictions are sanctified on purpose to work together for good, to all who love God. He hath declared, "*He will never leave nor forsake His people.*" Death, the king of terrors, is disarmed of its sting; and when your evidence of interest in Jesus is clear, death is considered as a messenger sent to convey you to your heavenly Father's home. You never heard of an instance of one

person, who trusted in Christ and repented of it in a dying hour; but you know of many who bitterly lamented in that period the want of that religion which they despised through their life.

Let me only add, you are entitled to a glorious inheritance in heaven, to which God has predestinated you to. It is *reserved* in heaven for you, in Christ. If children then heirs, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. The inheritance is invaluable beyond all conception, and the title is secured in the Covenant, promises and oath of that God who cannot lie. Your prospects are indeed glorious! Ere long, the saints shall enter into the joy of their Lord, free from all evils, and in full possession of all good. Then let our feet walk in the commandments of our Lord, let our tongues speak His praises; and our lives more devoted to His glory! Thus when death shall come, we shall depart in peace according to God's most holy word, and our eyes behold His everlasting salvation.

Brethren farewell,

Signed by order of the association

--Ebenezer Ferris, *Moderator.*

--John Stanford, *Clerk.*