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Baptists. Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Association, 1785.

Minutes . . . in Philadelphia, October, 1785.

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# M I N U T E S

## O F T H E

### B A P T I S T A S S O C I A T I O N,

HELD IN PHILADELPHIA, OCTOBER, 1785.

TUESDAY, P. M. OCTOBER 4th, 1785.

1. **T**HE Association was opened, with a suitable Discourse from John xvi. 8. by Brother SAMUEL JONES.

2. Brother OLIVER HART was chosen *Moderator*, and Brother WILLIAM ROGERS, *Clerk*. Letters from thirty churches were read.

N. B. Ministers names in *Italics*. Those marked with an \*, not present. Churches marked with an †, no intelligence from. Dashes denote no text. † Minister.

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.	Baptized.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excommunicated.	Deceased.	Numbers.
Peasopeck,	{ Samuel Jones, John Holmes, Jesse Duryan, Benjamin Duryan, Isaac Hough.	4	0	8	0	0	69
† Middletown,	{ Abel Morgan.	0	0	0	0	0	95
Effatawa,	{ Reunt Rogers, Abraham Monday.	0	0	0	0	2	39
Cohanse,	{ Robert K. Hays, Nathan Sheppard, Joel Sheppard.	2	2	2	2	3	116
Welsh Tract,	{ John Bagg, Andrew Edge, Thomas Anger.	10	2	3	0	2	60
Great Valley,	{ James Davis, Daniel Cartog.	2	0	2	0	1	30
Cape May,	{ Arto Sargant, Jonathan Hildroth.	13	2	2	0	6	72
Hopewell,	{ Oliver Hart, John Jewell, Nathaniel Stout.	7	0	2	4	5	190
Brandwine,	{ Abel Gray.	2	0	2	0	0	16
Montgomery,	{ David Pugh.	0	0	0	0	0	37
Kingwood,	{ Nicholas Co.	6	4	0	0	0	8
Southampton,	{ William Van Housen, Joseph Hart, Arthur Wain.	0	0	0	0	4	5
		37	9	14	6	22	82

Churches.	Ministers and Messengers.	Bap- tized.	Re- ceived by Letter.	Dis- missed by Letter.	Excom- muni- cated.	De- af- fected.	New born.
	Brought forward,	38	9	14	6	22	837
Philadelphia,	{ Thomas Ustick, William Rogers, Joseph Watkins, Samuel Davis, junior, Elisha Gordon	3	0	1	1	1	111
Cranberry,	{ Peter Wilson, Samuel Minor, John Hull.	23	0	0	0	1	71
Scots Plains,	{ Joseph Manning.	0	0	0	1	1	96
Morristown,	_____	3	0	1	0	0	52
Knowlton,	_____	10	1	0	0	0	35
New-Britain,	{ Joshua Jones, Edward Mathew.	1	0	0	0	0	37
Salem,	{ Peter P. Van Horne, John Briggs.	3	0	1	0	3	44
† Newtown,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	74
† Pawling's Precinct,	Samuel Walcott.	0	0	0	0	0	53
Dividing Creek,	_____	4	2	0	1	3	51
New-York,	{ John Gano, Stephen Gano.	55	1	1	2	1	136
Newmills,	{ Samuel Jones.	2	1	0	0	0	70
Upper Freehold,	{ John Blackwell, James Papcott, Christopher Morris.	9	0	2	0	1	86
Mount Bethel,	Abner Sutton.	7	0	0	0	0	30
Lions Farms,	_____	7	0	0	0	0	20
Pittsgrove,	{ William Worth, David Elwell.	1	2	0	0	4	86
† Tuckahoe,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	56
† Stamford,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	77
† Kingstreet,	John Dolge.	0	0	0	0	0	17
Cowmarsh,	_____	0	0	0	0	0	51
London Tract,	Thomas Flason	3	0	0	0	0	30
Hilltown,	{ John Thomas, Nathan Evans.	2	0	1	0	3	96
¶ Lower Smithfield,	David Fayac.	0	0	0	0	0	33
¶ Milpilion (Del. State)	Elphaz Dacey.	0	0	0	0	0	16
	Total,	167	21	21	11	41	2271

N. B. The two last mentioned churches marked with a ¶, were, after giving full satisfaction as to their faith and order, received among us at this annual meeting, and the names of their messengers enrolled accordingly.

3. Brother James Manning, President of Rhode Island College, being present, his company and assistance were desired.

Adjourned till to-morrow morning, half past eight o'clock,

WEDNESDAY, October 5.

Met pursuant to adjournment.

1. The minutes of our last year's Association were read.

2. A letter and minutes from *Charleston Association*, held at the High Hills of Santee, October 27th, 1783, were received from their annual committee and read.

3. A letter from the *Warren Association*, held at Wrentham, State of Massachusetts, September 14th, 1785, was delivered by their messenger, Brother *Hezekiah Smith*, and read, whereby it appears that in the neighbourhood of *Boston*, several persons of unblemished reputation were imprisoned the winter past, by reason of their refusing to support a way of worship, repugnant to the dictates of their own minds. Though the constitution under which they live equally secures their privileges, with those who, repugnant to all sound policy, continue to persecute them.

4. A letter from *Ketocton Association*, Virginia, held August 19th, 1785, was read--Their Messenger Brother *Elijah Craig* took his seat among us.

5. Brother *Peter P. Van Horne* was requested to prepare a letter for *Charleston Association*; Brother *Thomas Ustick* for the *Warren*, and Brother *Thomas Fleson* for *Ketocton*--Messenger to *Charleston Association*, Brother *John Gano*; to the *Warren*, Brother *William Rogers*; to that of *Ketocton*, Brother *Eliphaz Dazey*.

6. The church of Philadelphia, having represented that a number of books lately taken from the City and committed to the care of the Association Librarian, belonged to said church; agreed that in order to bring the matter to an issue, our Brethren *S. Jones*, *W. Van Horne* and *Josiah Jones*, be a committee on behalf of the Association to meet a committee of Philadelphia church, that the right of said property may be adjusted.

Adjourned till three o'clock, P. M.

Met pursuant to Adjournment.

1. Our Brethren *Samuel Jones* and *Hezekiah Smith*, having in the morning been appointed to consider upon that part of the letter from *Great Valley church*, which requests information relative to a minute of last year, concerning "Jesus Christ as an object of prayer", reported "that the person, of whom the churches were then cautioned to beware and the cause whereon their procedure was founded, be all referred for further investigation and settlement to the church at *Upper Freehold*, whereof he is a member, though not their present minister," agreed that said report be adopted.

2. The Query from *Philadelphia church*, relative to the "administration of the Lord's Supper, among any of our Brethren and Sisters, however numerous they may be in any one place, during the period of their remaining unorganized or unconstituted as a distinct, regular church by themselves," requiring mature deliberation, it is thought best to postpone our final conclusion thereon till next association.

3. Brother *Samuel Jones* is appointed to copy into the Association book, all such Minutes, as by him may be judged of real utility and future advantage.

Adjourned

Adjourned 'till to-morrow morning, half past eight o'clock.  
Sermon in the evening by Brother *Smith*, from 1 John v. 3.

THURSDAY, October 6.

Met pursuant to Adjournment.

1. The circular letter composed, according to appointment, by Brother *William Rogers*, having been the day past presented and read, was again taken under consideration and approved. Brother *Thomas Ustick*, is appointed to write one for the ensuing year.

2. The letters to the different Associations, corresponding with this, were brought in, read and adopted.

3. Resolved, that the thanks of this Association be given to Brother *Isaac Backus*, of Middleborough, Massachusetts, for his unwearied pains and great labour, in collecting and compiling the History of the Baptists in New-England, consisting of two volumes large octavo---A work highly esteemed by this Association.

4. Agreed to recommend to the several churches, to make enquiry among themselves in the course of the year, what number they will respectively take, of an intended publication of materials towards an History of the Baptists in *New-Jersey*, and transmit an account thereof to our next general meeting.

5. Supplies for the destitute church at Scots Plains.

Brother *Hezekiah Smith*, 2d Lord's day in October.

Brother *Wm. Van Horne*, 3d and 4th in ditto.

Brother *Abel Griffiths*, 5th in ditto, and second Lord's day in May.

Brother *Reene Runyan*, 2d Lord's day in Nov. 1st in May; and 1st in July.

Brother *David Loosborow*, 3d ditto in November.

Brother *Nicholas Coxe*, 1st and 2d Lord's days in December.

Brother *Peter Wilson*, 2d ditto in February and 2d in August.

Brother *William Rogers*, 2d Lord's day in April.

Brother *Joshua Jones*, 3d ditto in May.

Brother *John Blackwell*, 2d ditto in June.

6. Voted, That our next Association be held in *Philadelphia*, on the first Tuesday in October, 1786. Introductory sermon to be preached at three o'clock, P. M. by brother *John Gano*; in case of failure by Brother *Wm. Van Horne*.

7. Brother *William Rogers*, is requested to superintend the printing of the Minutes and Circular Letter of this Association, and to forward the same to the churches.

Business closed. Sermon in the evening by Brother *Manning*, from John i. 29.

(CIRCULAR LETTERS)

The MINISTERS and MESSENGERS of the several Baptist Churches, convened in Affiliation, at Philadelphia, October 4, 1785.

To the respective Churches, with whom we are connected, Send Christian Salutation.

Dearly beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ!

THE SUBJECT, which in course we are to address you upon, is contained in the 11th chapter of our Confession of Faith, which treats of JUSTIFICATION. A subject truly important! One of the fundamental articles of our holy religion! As such, demands our very particular attention. Therefore, wherein we are obliged, owing to the confined limits of our annual epistle, to study brevity. Our hope and expectation is, that you will individually make up such deficiency by serious meditation.—

Persecuity being our aim, we shall,

- I. Explain the term.
- II. Consider the author.
- III. The objects interested.
- IV. The blessings resulting.

We are, I. To explain the term. Justification spiritually or evangelically considered, is a complete acquittal from imputed and contracted guilt; a deliverance from the condemning power of sin; an act of free grace flowing from Jehovah's sovereign good will and pleasure. By many eminent divines this leading doctrine of our creed is viewed as twofold—ETERNAL and DECLARATIVE. By the former, we understand that which existed in the divine mind from everlasting, respecting the chosen seed, united with Christ their head, "who hath saved us, according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. By the latter, viz. declarative justification, is designed that which, in time, takes place in or on the conscience of a believer, commonly styled justification by or through faith. It is upon this, dear brethren, we now address you, this is the light wherein our confession treats upon it, agreeing herewith, our catechism tells us that "justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." To be thus fully absolved from all sin and guilt, by virtue of Christ's plenary satisfaction, and pronounced "heirs of eternal life," oh how enlivening the thought! how animating the reflection! "Bless the Lord, O our souls, and all that is within us, bless his holy name!"

We come, II. To consider the author of our justification. In other words from whom it proceeds. Blended with which we must just hint at some of the causes thereof.

Educated in the School of Jesus, and instructed by the unerring spirit of the most high, you are ready, dearly beloved, to anticipate us under this head by exclaiming with an

inspired apostle "It is God who justifieth." Rom. viii. 33. A Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A truth this, when viewed in all its parts, calculated to excite not only within us, but amid the angelic choir the highest wonder, "which things the angels desire to look into," 1 Pet. i. 12. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus," Rom. x. 4, 26. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by His name that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts xiii. 38, 39. "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. Many other pertinent texts might be quoted, did we not believe you to be already well established in this peculiar excellency of gospel revelation! Nevertheless for our mutual edification, permit us, previous to our dismissal of the head, to mention, with all due consideration, a few of the causes of our being thus justified or pronounced Righteous. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them, who have pleasure therein," is of equal force now as when penned by Israel's King. Thus supported, we will not be backward in asserting—

1st. That from this main pillar, this sublime characteristic of gospel truth, *man's debt, merit, or works*, are utterly excluded. Paul peremptorily says, "To whom of the law no flesh shall be justified by his works." Rom. x. 20. This single declaration, confirmed by repeated apostolic testimony, condemns at once every idea of justification by virtue of our own doings. Those who harbour a sentiment so opposed to Jehovah's revealed will, vainly imagine, consistent with themselves, to bring the supreme governor of universal nature under obligation to do them good. But, beloved, we have not so learned Christ, we do not wish to rob the blessed Redeemer of the brightest diadem in his mediatorial crown, we do not intend thus solely to detract from that glory which peculiarly belongs to the Father. *Thou-Ours!* "For there is not a just man upon earth who doeth good and sinneth not," Eccl. vii. 20. "For we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," Isa. lvi. 2.

2dly. What is by so many denominations, styled *the law of God*, we do not admit as having any claim upon us. Those who cherish this opinion are grossly mistaken. The

gospel of our salvation is unconditional, it knows no *onus* on our part as leading to a justifying righteousness. *Faith* and *repentance* are graces bestowed by the Spirit of God, they are blessings flowing from that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. In fine, regeneration of soul, sanctification of heart, sincerity of disposition, holiness of life, persevering fidelity, undeviating acquiescence in Jehovah's government, steady zeal for Imanuel's interest, all our own pious frames of mind, comfortable feelings and approving testimonies of conscience, are, with respect to this all-essential doctrine, to be kept *totally* out of view. To what then is our justification to be ascribed?

We reply, 1<sup>st</sup>. To the mere grace or favour of God as the *moving* cause. "being justified freely by his grace," Rom. iii. 24. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Titus iii. 4, 5. *That*, which never could have been found out by men or angels, the wisdom of Jehovah contrived and his love hath made known—*This* is the original source. Here is the fountain from whence all doth spring.

2<sup>dly</sup>, To the life and passion of Jesus as the *procuring* cause. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him," Rom. v. 8, 9. He fulfilled every precept, he bore the whole penalty of the law in the room and stead of his people, thus was the law magnified and rendered honorable, an end made of sin and everlasting righteousness brought in, "and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," Jeremiah xxiii. 6. Oh glorious name! predicted long before his incarnation—Unto whom should we go but unto our once bleeding but now risen Saviour for acceptance? For us he drank the bitter cup—It will not do to substitute any thing in the place of this noble sacrifice—It is *not* a righteous thing with God, freely to justify and abundantly to pardon, "in the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," Isaiah xlv. 25. The robe of Christ's righteousness is a garment down to the foot, wherewith every member of the mystical body is amply covered, "for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God, in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," Heb. vii. 26. Should any put the question—How doth Christ's righteousness, that consisting of the holiness of his nature, his active and passive obedience, become our's in such wise that we are necessarily deemed righteous too?

We readily answer—By *IMPUTATION*; by making it over unto us; reckoning it our's or placing it to our account, being wrought out by our elder brothers on behalf of the whole ransomed flock, "David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works," Rom. iv. 6.—Pursuant therefore to the unalterable purpose of heaven; agreeable to the economy of man's redemption; this righteousness of the precious Jesus, wherewith so many glorious things are spoken, is as much our's as

though wrought out by ourselves in our own proper persons; Rom. v. 13, 19. 11. 3. m. 8, 9. Thus clothed upon with raiment of needle-work—Thus united with the HEAD, how can the members be viewed by God the judge of all but as perfectly and completely justified: "and ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power," Col. ii. 10.

3<sup>dly</sup>, Our justification is by some ascribed to *faith* as an *instrumental* cause. Strictly speaking, we apprehend *faith* as no cause at all in this momentous procedure, but rather as an effect. It is true, the scriptures frequently mention a *justification by faith*—By such expressions it is evident the *object* and not the *act* of faith is designed; the object of faith is Christ and his righteousness; this the believing soul layeth hold on—*Faith* is the eye which discovers, the hand which receives; espying a Saviour's worth, charmed with his merit, the believer is so enraptured as to cast away all his heavy burden, falls at Messiah's feet, confides in the promise and pleads atoning blood, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," Rom. x. 10. It is beautifully noticed by one of our very first and most orthodox writers. "The reason why any are justified is not because they have faith—But the reason why they have faith is because they are justified." If justified by faith as a work performed by us or as a grace wrought within us; where would have been the necessity of the death and resurrection of Jesus? Faith is that precious grace, by which we do in a certain manner put on the righteousness of the Lord's anointed, and receive the greatest of all blessings from the God of our salvation. "It is a grace (faith one) which quarrels much with human pride and makes its only boast of Sharon's rose; and never was meant to be our justifying righteousness in the sight of God, else it would learn to brag—Faith says, 'In the Lord have I righteousness,' and tells a sinner, 'I cannot save thee,' 'Thou art saved by grace through faith.' The grace of Jesus and that alone brings salvation; and the sinner, through faith as an instrument, puts in his hand, enabled to reach the rich donation; just as a beggar, by his empty cap stretched forth, receives an alms." The poet says,

III. To mention the objects interested. In the examination of this particular, what abundant reason have we to adopt the prophetic language "to the law and to the testimony many; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isaiah viii. 20. The persons justified through rich and sovereign grace are in the living oracles declared to be "ungodly," Romans iv. 5. also "sinners," Galatians ii. 17. Was it not for declarations like these, where would be our comfort? We are all *sinners*; we are all *ungodly*; does it from hence follow, that *all* who are sinners, *all* who are ungodly are without exception justified? by no means! the whole canon of scripture concur with the dictates of sound experience to render every such idea inadmissible! It is true, we read "that by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," Romans v. 18. by a careful revision of what goes before, and follows after, we shall find the apostle did not mean *all* men absolutely, but *all* the *obedient*, *all* the *believers*; his epistle was directed to "all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." Moreover the *justified* are represented as a *peculiar* people and have such characters ascribed to them.

them, as cannot without the greatest inconsistency and abuse of language, be ascribed to all the progeny of fallen Adam. They are spoken of as those who are predestinated, redeemed, pardoned, effectually called, sanctified, regenerated, &c. That these things are not *true*, with respect to all the laps'd family, every unprejudic'd mind must acknowledge! upon the whole, those who are *unworthy and guilty* in themselves, but in the everlasting covenant *elect'd and lov'd*, have that righteousness wherewith their justification is founded, not only exhibited to them by the gospel, but brought nigh by the Holy Ghost, these are the "purchas'd possession," this is the "bride" the lamb's wife; between whom and the Lord Jesus, an union not only now exists but hath existed, ancient as eternity itself, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee," Jer. xxxi. 3. a multitude which no man can number. The

IV. and last thing proposed for investigation, we now hasten to unfold; viz. The blessings resulting herefrom.

Where, dear brethren, shall we begin, and how shall we end; blessings great indeed crowd in upon us! blessings beyond compare are consequential on our being thus freely justified! a doctrine pregnant with comfort unexpressible! a foundation is hereby laid not simply for sustaining hope, but for the full assurance of present and of future bliss. By virtue hereof, we experience—1. A freedom or deliverance from sin and condemnation. From all sin as to it's guilt, from it's reigning power and dominion and by and by from it's in-being "the blood of Jesus Christ his son, cleanseth us from all iniquity," 1 John. i. 7. Heb. x. 12—14. our sins are covered and hid from the all penetrating eye of divine justice and when sought for hereafter shall not be found, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1. Gal. iii. 13. When seriously reflecting on our happy release from the hands of Satan, our accusing law, also from death and the grave as penal evils; but more especially from the pains of hell and the wrath to come, and all as the effect of love divine! what heart among us can remain cold and lifeless? what tongue among us can cease to praise?—2. As justified we enjoy peace with God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 1. connected herewith is real peace of mind! Oh happy souls, brought fully to behold a crucified Redeemer making peace by the blood of his cross, "the chastisement of our peace was upon him," Isaiah liii. v.—Knowing this to be the case, well may we, "on the Dove like wings of faith, fly far away from the storms and tempests of an opposing conscience, and find in the rock of ages a quiet sanctuary and safe retreat."

3. The acceptance of our persons and services is another blessing resulting herefrom. The Father is well pleased with us for the alone sake of Christ his Son, "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6. Christ's garments smell of myrrh, aloe and cassia, wherewith his people being clad, the Lord smells a sweet smell in them also. A view of this emboldens us to draw near to the King of kings, Heb. x. 19—22. The person, the blood, the sacrifice, and

the mediation of Jesus are the only *intercession* of all our pleas at the celestial throne.

4. As justified we are blessed through life, shall be to us death, yea throughout eternity. While on earth we are expressly assured that "all things work together for our good;" when summoned to die, we need not fear the grim messenger. The property of temporal death with respect to God's people is greatly changed; it puts an end to all their sorrows, hath its sting taken away, and will prove to be our very great gain. In honor and triumph are such conveyed to the mansions above, and oh! with what joy are the everlasting doors expanded wide for their reception. Our bodies, though mouldered to dust, will neverth'less enjoy a glorious resurrection—our persons at the last day in honorable distinction and gracious approbation from the judge Supreme—Never ceasing felicity, consummate happiness, and perpetual glory will be our portion, "we have not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them who love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9. We shall then O joyful period! live and reign with Christ for ever and ever, and our song will uninterruptedly be, "unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever," Rev. v. 5, 6. Justification and glorification are closely connected, they go as it were hand in hand; Rom. v. 8, 10. also viii. 30.

Having thus endeavoured to explain this leading article of the Christian faith—We shall now close our address with such instances as appear easily deducible therefrom. Here we are taught—

1. The *futility* of every opinion which doth, however remotely, lead to self-dependence. Justification—either by our own external performances or any inherent holiness whatsoever, are sentiments fully exploded by all who are acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus; we are justified in such a way as excludes in every sense all boasting in ourselves. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." Rom. iii. 27.

2. The necessity of highly praising that righteousness which is revealed in the gospel, as the only foundation of genuine hope and solid joy. This righteousness as hath been proven is the alone matter of our justification in Jesus our right; a righteousness which was devised and provided for us by the FATHER; wrought out for us by the SON and now made over unto us by the HOLY GHOST; a righteousness perfect and divine, wherewith justice is satisfied, the law magnified, the LAWYER glorified, and grace, temporal outpouring grace displayed! To exhibit this righteousness, to elucidate it's worth, to inform us of the peculiar happiness of those to whom it is imputed, is the main design both of the Old and New Testament. May we therefore, "search the scriptures, for they are they which testify of him unto us," 1 John. v. 39. We all—

3. From hence learn that the *standing* of all who are justified is secure indeed. To fall therefrom is utterly impossible. How can such some uncondemnation or be made partakers of the second death? They cannot, the righteousness of the Messiah is a surety, and the blood of the Son of God is a



sole ground of our confidence, it evidently follows that our *abiding* is safe; the believer can never lose his interest therein; the act which justifies is in itself unalterable; it is coeval with the eternal covenant; the benefit thereof is ensured and will forever be enjoyed by us, "No weapon that is formed against thee, shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD," Isaiah liv. 17. The love wherewith we are loved; the grace wherewith we are visited, will endure unto the end.

"For Christ in every age has prov'd,  
His purchase firm and true.  
If this foundation be remov'd;  
What shall the righteous do?"

Is it then, dearly beloved! as hath been represented? Supported by the unerring volume, we think this question may be fully answered in the affirmative. What improvement then ought we to make of so essential a part of truth divine? EXAMINE yourselves; have you any solid reason wherewith to ground your belief that you are the objects interested? Admire then the grace of God, in imputing to you righteousness to complete, rejoice therein and have no confidence in the flesh; ascribe the whole of your *present* salvation to Jehovah's boundless love; sing in humble notes the church's song, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake," Psal. cxv. 1. Live near to God, to whose unmerited favor alone you are indebted for a translation from surrounding darkness, into marvellous and stupendous light. The doctrine of justification, when rightly viewed, unavoidably leads to strict holiness both in life and conversation; evidence then by your constant fruit, that you are the called of God in Christ Jesus; persevere in the discharge of every duty. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law," Roman. vii. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10. Be not discouraged! though you have foes without and foes within, Greater is He who is for us, than All those who are against us; owing to inbreeding corruption and pride of heart, we too often offend the best of beings, for our contumacious conduct, "If we forsake his law, and walk not in his judgments: If we break his statutes, and keep

"not his commandments: then will he visit our transgressions with a rod, and our iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless his loving kindness will be not utterly take from us, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail," Psalm lxxxix. 30—33. See also, Isaiah liv. 7, 8.—Chastised we may be with the rod of a father, but not with the wounds of an enemy. "What though your afflictions are great? there is no wrath in the portion of your cup; though men should condemn you, God will not; though devils accuse you, they shall not prevail.

How honored are the subjects of Jehovah's grace! By far more dignified than the angels who never sinned! Frequently call to mind that celestial anthem which through eternity will be chaunted on the highest key by all the redeemed throng, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing," Rev. v. 12.—You can never think enough of Christ and his righteousness; let this then be your constant theme.

"Some this, some that good virtue teach,  
To rectify the soul;  
But we first after Jesus reach,  
And richly grasp the whole."

To conclude. The doctrine of justification, the subject treated upon in this letter, being a doctrine so infinitely momentous, we do, with all christian affection, as members of the same body with you, recommend to the serious and candid perusal of all. A doctrine, we trust, wherein our associated churches are firmly established, for, wherever the gospel is purely preached, this doctrine must necessarily not only make a part, but a distinguished part thereof. That the light of divine truth may emit it's rays in such wise, as to dispel every gloom and all the mists of error; that soundness in every article of our orthodox faith may be restored among and contended for, by all God's children, wherever dispersed; that the good word of the kingdom may run to and fro and be abundantly glorified, even from the rising to the setting sun; that whenever it is dispensed, it may be accompanied with the demonstration of the spirit and of power; finally, that the peace of God which passeth all understanding may visit all our borders; us, dear brethren, the undersigned with cordial prayer of yours in the best of bonds.

By Order of the Association,

OLIVER HART, Moderator.

WILLIAM ROGERS, Clerk.

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