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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letter from John Mason to the Associate Reformed Presbytery of New York

**Date:** May 8, 1810

**Location:** I-SpahrB-undated-27

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To the Moderator and members of the Associate  
Reformed Presbytery of New York, to meet at Newburgh,  
on Wednesday the 16<sup>th</sup> day of May instant.

Rev. Brethren,

Serious reflection, often repeated, and,  
for a considerable time past, habitual; accompanied also,  
if I do not intirely mistake, with scrupulous caution and  
 fervent prayer, against an improper bias, has convinced me,  
that my longer continuance in my present congregational  
charge, will be favourable neither to my own peace, nor  
to my people's benefit, nor to the general interests of our  
church.

"Not that I have ought to accuse my peo-  
ple of." Their fidelity to their engagements; their kindness  
to myself; their respectful attention to my ministry; their  
public spirit; their orderly deportment, ever since my settle-  
ment among them, have endeared them to my heart; and  
shall forever sweeten the memory of my relation to them.

But I find, by experience, that parochial  
cares, to which my own Judgment not less than my ordination-

vows, attaches high importance, are incompatible with the work which the head of the church has been pleased to assign to me; and, accordingly, I do not so much as pretend to perform the duties resulting from them.

I see the congregation suffering for want of an efficient pastoral inspection; and I anticipate, with alarm, the consequences of this evil, unless preventive measures be adopted speedily.

I have used, without success, the only means in my power to avoid the step which I am now forced to take.

My congregation are fully apprised of my intention, and of my reasons; as will appear from the document herewith presented. The decisive expressions therein used are to be interpreted simply as <sup>my</sup> resolution to pursue my present application; and not as interfering, in any degree, with the submission which I owe to the authority of the Lord's house.

I am forbidden by every Christian principle, and by every honourable sentiment, to retain a station of which I cannot fulfil the duties. I am equally forbidden to sacrifice the greater trust to the less; and, as faithfulness & both cannot coexist, I have only the afflictive alternative of praying the Rev. Presbytery to release me from my pastoral connection.

J. M. Mason

New York }  
8<sup>th</sup> May 1810 }

Graduate of *Collegium Theologicum*  
 One of four members  
 Secretary, & one of several professors  
 Pres. of Dickinson College & author of  
 several pastoral instructions, and  
 the consequence of this will, unless prevented, is that

Assoc. to Ref. Presbytery of N. York  
 May 1810  
 A. 1.  
 Pardon of Rev. Dr. Mason to be  
 retained from his charge.

Dr. Mason's rec acct for  
 release from his  
 charge 1810 -  
 found among say  
 Dr. Mason's papers.

180  
 420  
 450

175  
 184  
 386  
 920

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8th. May 1810