

## 1876 Circular of the Mount Pleasant Association of Regular Baptist

[Recently I came into possession of a goodly number of the early associations' minutes. The Mount Pleasant was in fellowship with the Licking Association of Particular Baptists. I note that this Kentucky association is referred to as "Regular Baptists," and its sister association in Ohio as "Old School Baptist." It is apparent that a settled denominational appellation was not settled upon. However, they each had followed the early example of the Philadelphia Baptist Association in writing "Circulars" and "Letters of Correspondence." I'm sure that this practice, in an age of little communication throughout the colonies and frontiers, was an effective tool for developing and maintaining a cohesiveness among believers of like persuasion.

I'm composing under duress. My eyes are worse this week than I've experienced so far. And I have vastly enlarged the collection of these old documents. I selected this one because it makes reference to the "church in its wilderness" state, and I think the church revives, declines, revives again repeatedly throughout history. If we suppose the truth of free and sovereign grace and the finished work of Christ's redemption to be a measure of the vitality of the church, then we are in a thicker wilderness now, than they were in the nineteenth century. I hope you can enjoy this selection.

The ministers present in this session were: J. F. Johnson, John M. Theobald, Spencer F. Jones, B. Farmer, Thos. Theobald, C. F. Johnson, R. M. Thomas (from Missouri), J. B. Turner, Wilson Housel (from New Jersey), S. F. Jones, A.B. Francis, N.A. Humston, J. M. Demaree, B.F. Ransdell, and W. C. Sams. Elder Sams is the writer of the Circular.

The associations seated in this session were: Salem Association of Predestinarian

Baptists, Licking Association of Particular Baptists of Ky., Western Corresponding Association of Baptists of Mo., First Regular Old School Baptists of Kansas. Copied by: Stan Phillips, Dec. 2008.]

*The Mount Pleasant Association of Regular Baptists of Kentucky to the churches of which she is composed, wishing grace, mercy and peace to abound from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ to whom be glory now and forever.*

*Brethren and Sisters-* Beloved in the Lord, you will see by reference to our minutes, how the business of the association was conducted. And as it is expected that we should address you by way of a circular, we thought proper to call your attention to a few thoughts upon the subject of **The Church** of our Lord Jesus Christ, its foundation and defence.

The Lord Jesus is not only the **Head**, but the **Foundation** of the church. The prophet Isaiah 28 chapter, in speaking of its foundation says, "*Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. He that believeth shall not make haste.*" This foundation was set up **from everlasting**. This is that Rock upon which Jesus said He would build His church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This is that stone which the David said the builders did reject, but the same became the Head of the corner. And Paul writing to the Corinthian Brethren, 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter says, "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.*" He is the only foundation of the true church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Upon this

sure foundation is the church built, which shall never be destroyed. Daniel in the 24 chapter, 44 verse, had a view of this when he said *“in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. And the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, etc.”* Again Paul speaking to the church at Ephesus 2 chapter, says *“Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth up in a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God, through the Spirit.”* God has promised to defend His church amidst all opposition. Kingdoms and dynasties may fall and decay, but His Kingdom shall never be destroyed. Isaiah speaking of this says, *“We have a strong city. Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.”*

David in the 48 Psalm says, *“Walk about Zion and go round about her, tell (count or number) the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces that ye may tell it to the generations following, for this God, is our God, forever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death.”* Again, Isaiah 33d chapter, *“Look upon Zion the city of our solemnities, thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; but there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby. For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, He will save us. For as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people from henceforth even forever.”* Now the materials of which this church is composed are *spiritual*, including the redeemed of God out of every nation, kindred and tongue and people- Chosen *in* Christ before the world began, hence says the apostle, *“Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”* Brethren this Kingdom shall not be destroyed, but continued forever.

We do not think the **church of Jesus Christ is apostate, but during her wilderness stay**, she was the chaste bride of her Husband. The bridegroom speaking of her in the Song of Solomon, says, *“Oh, my dove that art in the clefts of the rocks in the secret places of the stairs. Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.”* This doubtless points to her wilderness obscurity. She was represented as *undefiled*. Again the bridegroom represents her as sustaining the same character; when she came out of the wilderness; he said, *“Rise up my love and come away, for the winter is passed and the rain is over and gone; arise my love my fair one and come away.”* She was seen leaning on her beloved. The question is asked, *“Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners?”* She is the bride, the Lamb’s wife in whom had been given the wings of a great eagle to fly into the wilderness to the place **prepared of God** where she ever leaned on the strong arm of her divine lover.

Brethren, the people of God know the voice of their divine Master. David says, *“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, they shall walk O, Lord, in the light of Thy countenance, in Thy name shall they rejoice all the day and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted.”* We find from the divine record that Jesus is that Rock upon which His church is built; He has protected it in all ages, and will sustain it even unto the end, for the prophet says, *“no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against thee in judgment thou shall condemn; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.”* *She has had her characteristics in all ages, and will till the end of time. She has inscribed on her banner, “Salvation is of the Lord,”* unaided by an arm of flesh, that those who undertake to build the church of Christ are but rejectors of the stone whom the builders sat at naught. David declared that *“except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city the watchmen waketh but in vain.”* Finally Brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of one mind, live in peace and the God of peace be with you. *Amen. Written for the association by Elder W. C. Sams.*