

1877 Kaw Valley Association of Regular Baptists

Written by Elder W. T. Pence

[I spent about two hours trying to decide which old document to type this evening. I settled on this one, mainly because the Kaw Association of Illinois was seated in the Licking Association of Particular Baptists through many years when Elder Thomas Dudley moderated it, and was often at the Lebanon where Elder J. F. Johnson's membership was. Since this is the only Minute of this association I have found, I want to make sure it isn't lost along with so many other Minutes of very sound Predestinarian Old School Baptists associated with Elder Beebe, Purington, Bavis, Leachman, Johnson and Dudley. Present at this session are : Elders C. B. Lee, W.S. Matthews, W.C. Garett of the New Garden Association, Elder T. Trapp, Elder A. Odell, J. Wilson, Elder J. A. Brundage. I hope you can benefit from these principles of Gospel Truth. SCP]

The Kaw Valley Association of Regular Baptists to the Churches composing her body – Dear Brethren: As a subject important to the friends of our Redeemer, we have selected that of Church Communion upon which to offer some thoughts for your serious consideration, the importance of which is evident from the consideration that our Lord and Master Himself hath instituted it, and placed it in His Church to be observed by all His faithful followers until He come, to be observed by them in commemoration of His death, representing by the emblems employed His broken body and shed blood, through which we have the forgiveness of sins, and are justified from all things from which we could not be by the Law of Moses. It is our present object, however, to present some of our reasons for the practice of what is sometimes called *restricted communion*, which is opposed by those who claim to be more *liberal*, and who contend that the practice of *open communion* (that is, to extend the privilege to others not of our Gospel order) would be more Christian-like, and nearest in harmony with the Gospel – to the investigation of which we now invite you. If our practice should be wrong, we should abandon it; and if we should be right, we should be able to give our reasons for the same.

We observe first that it is a *Church ordinance*, instituted and exemplified by our Lord in the Church (see Luke 22:20). For proof of the existence of His Church at so early a period (which some deny) we refer you to the fact that He (Christ) was spoken of in the Psalms as *singing* praise in Zion, which the Apostle reemploys in proof of our Savior's dignity, and makes the quotation in Hebrews 2:12, saying: "*In the midst of the Church.*" Hence as He sang at no other time while here in person, of which we have any record, the inference is irresistible that the Church was now set up, and that the Master was in the midst of it, to order and establish it in its ordinances – at the close of which we are told by the Evangelist, that they sang a hymn and went out. Here then we make this point: that the Supper was instituted in the Church, was given to the Church, and is therefore a *Church ordinance*, and cannot by the authority of Scripture be extended to any others than members of the Church. Therefore it is necessarily restricted for the want of authority to extend it beyond the limitations of the Church, for further proof of

which we refer you to the 11th chapter of 1st Corinthians, where an abuse of this ordinance is reprov'd. We notice first when administered the membership must have come together in the *Church*; and to observe it acceptably there must be *no divisions*, neither must there be *heretics* among them (see 5:18 and 19,) else it would not be to eat the Lord's Supper, in which the Apostle deemed the Corinthians guilty, and administered an appropriate reproof, asserting that the Church was to blame for allowing disorders to intermingle in the sacredly impressive service, and that in observing the privilege they despised the Church, implying that the Church was responsible for allowing such disorder, from which we cannot fail to discover it in the light of a *Church ordinance*, to be observed by them when together and qualified to act in *church capacity*, the Church judging of the fitness and qualification of its communicants, being required to first purge out the elements of disorder and be a new lump, to be rid first of the leaven of such wickedness as was among them, on account of which many were weak, sickly Christians.

Now this is the sum of the Apostle's teaching on the subject: 1. That the communion was in the Church under the control of the Church; 2. That the communicants were subject to the discipline of the Church; 3. That the Church was *to judge* of the fitness of its communicants; and lastly, the Church was required to restrict its administration to those only whom it deemed worthy to be participants. She was required to put away certain persons from among her membership- with some she was positively forbidden to eat: "*Not, not to eat.*"

Now we are at a loss to know how any candid Christian can have the courage or rather the *audacity* to confront this array of Scriptural testimony, and contend for the disorderly and Church-degrading practice of *open communion*. It supposes that the individual is to judge of his or her own fitness. The Word of God makes the Church judge in the case, and holds her responsible for the decision. It supposes that the privilege *of the Church* may be enjoyed without *subjection to the authority or discipline of the Church*. God's Word, however, makes them inseparable. Obedience to her laws is absolutely essential to citizenship, and the privilege thereof. The individual member is admonished to *self-examination*, but the *Church is to judge them "that are within"* its jurisdiction; them that are "*without God judges.*" In reference to the matter in hand, the Church has nothing to do with them that are without. (see 1 Cor. 5:12,13). Also, the language of our Savior with reference to the incorrigible brother if he will not hear (or obey) the Church, "*Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican*" (see Matthew 18:17).

Elder C. B. Lee, *Moderator.*

Elder W. S. Matthews, *Clerk.*