

For the Christian Messenger.

ADDRESS OF THE MIRA BAY BAPTIST CHURCH, TO THE REV. E. C. SPINNEY, A. B.

Dear Brother,—

On the eve of your departure from us, we embrace this opportunity of expressing to you the esteem in which you are held by us, and of our appreciation of your labors as a gospel minister.

We deeply lament, that we are called to present you a parting address; that you have seen fit to leave us, for a time at least; but we must not murmur for we believe that He who holds the reins of all His true servants, has guided you, and will continue to guide you in the path which you are about to take. We hope and pray that the change may bring honor and glory to His most holy name.

We feel, dear brother, that though you have been able to devote but part of your time to this place, we have received much benefit from your labors, and have greatly enjoyed the efforts put forth for our spiritual welfare. From time to time we have been made to rejoice in that, through your instrumentality, God's grace has been made manifest, and the hearts of his children have been quickened and revived in this little branch of His Zion.

The past three years have been to you a period of active and earnest toil for the glory of your Master, and the upbuilding of His cause. During this time, you have had much to depress and discourage you, this has called forth great faith, patience and perseverance. Errors, at different times, have crept into the church, when much judgment and labor were required for their suppression. We are assured that through all, you have aimed to carry out the teachings of God's word, and we believe the results will be for the honor of His cause.

Since you first came among us, some of our number, who were then in the prime of life and fully enjoying its greatest boon "health," and who were co-workers with us in the cause of our Master, have passed away from earth to heaven, there to receive their reward. The interest and sympathy manifested by you in seasons of affliction, have awakened in our hearts a deep feeling of gratitude and love.

Though we have had during your sojourn with us, reason to "weep over Zion," and have been called to mourn the loss of some taken from us by death, still, we render thanks to God that, under your pastorate, the church has had many accessions to her membership. Ofttimes we have been made to rejoice that, through God's infinite and all abounding mercy, sinners have been led to see the danger of their condition, and have sought refuge in the "Ark of safety." We truly have had much reason to exclaim, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

And now, dear brother, as we are called upon to part, permit us to say that you carry with you our highest respect and brotherly love. Your labors here will be long remembered. We express the hope that when you have completed your Theological Studies at Newton Centre, Mass., we shall again enjoy the benefits of your labour as our pastor, but in whatever part of God's moral vineyard you may be called to labor, we would say "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Should trials await, and persecutions assail you, remember Him who hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

In conclusion, we would ask you ever to remember us at a throne of heavenly grace; and may the God of all grace, mercy and truth continue to abide with you to the end.

Signed in behalf of the Church.

CHARLES MARTELL, SECR., } Committee. L. G. SPENCER, } JOSEPH HOLMES, }

Mira, C. B., Aug. 19th, 1871.

REPLY.

Dear Brethren,—

Language imperfectly expresses the deep emotions, that your very kind, unexpected and unmerited address has awakened in my soul.

Ever since our first connection, you have shown me the utmost respect. During my labors amongst you, I have been taught by your counsels, sustained by your prayers, encouraged by your untiring zeal for the Lord, and supported with your money. You have not only promptly paid your subscriptions to aid my mission, but have frequently relieved my wants and gladdened my heart with generous donations.

Although we have had much to try our faith, yet I never expect to spend a happier three years than the past have been, neither do I anticipate ever meeting with a more hospitable and considerate people. If it be God's will I could willingly be spent for you.

Whatever success has attended my feeble efforts to promote the Redeemer's cause, is largely due to the interest you have always manifested in the prosperity of Zion. By your united efforts obstacles have been removed and difficulties surmounted. But before our common Lord we would reverently bow and ascribe all praise to His name.

And while in the providence of God we are called to part, be assured, however widely separated our paths may be, you will ever hold a remembrance in my supplications at the mercy seat; and trust, I will not be forgotten in your prayers.

I sincerely hope you will not long be left destitute of the preaching of the gospel, but trust a more faithful, consistent and devoted under-shepherd, than ever I have proved, will be directed to this field, to break unto you the bread of life.

And now, dear brethren, permit me to heartily thank you for the interest you take in my future welfare. I shall live if you remain steadfast in the Lord. Let me urge you to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And in the words of our text for this morning, "Be of good cheer."

Finally, if we should never meet on earth again, may we greet each other in that better land, and be allotted some humble place amid the ineffable glories of that blessed abode. And there, may I with you young convert, and with you old soldier, raise some feeble note in that eternal anthem that shall ceaselessly echo among the hills of eternity to the riches of redeeming grace.

That "peace may be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces," is and shall be the unfeigned desire of your unworthy brother

E. C. SPINNEY.

Homeville, C. B., Aug., 1871.

IN THE CHURCH FROM PRINCIPLE.

By Rev. H. A. SAWTELLE.

Who has not seen it on this wise? One has become a member of the church, giving reasonable evidence of newness of life and singleness of devotion. He runs along well for a season, co-operating with his brethren in every good word and work, apparently happy in his adopted relations. But suddenly he is missed from the meeting, missed from the Lord's table. Is he absent from town? Is he sick? Neither of these. His pastor saw him in the street, yonder, but he appeared to be shy. What is the matter? The delinquent is sought out. It is found that he has a grievance with some fellow-member, who has offended him by a slight or some other disagreeable thing; and he declares he will have nothing to do with the church so long as that offensive member is there. And no amount of kind remonstrance or persuasion is able to change his sulking decision. Now it is evident that that man did not really unite with the church for better or for worse, but only with individuals in the church; and that he was bound to the church by no principle, but only by his selfish convenience. In his estimation, his own feelings are above the interests of the church as a whole. Therefore sad to say, he is willing to sacrifice the church, Christ's beloved body, for his own private pique; willing to abandon the church, and leave it to struggle on alone, because of one or two disagreeable or possibly unworthy members in it. He sees not the church, with its precious name and interests, with its Divine headship and sacred truth, but only some fleshly members in it. What a miserably low and inadequate view he has of the matter! how slight a thread holds him to the Divine organization of Christ's church! how little bound by principle! Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. A Peter might deny Him, a Judas betray Him, but He adhered to the church. How different these selfish members! O, if He had done as some of our selfish delinquents do, where had been the cause of redemption to-day? Blessed are they who join the church and adhere to it, whatever a few individuals may do to them; who declare that no mere offending individual shall ever separate them from the privileges or the service of the church. The church is more to me than any individual in it. I am in it for Christ's sake. I will not offend the whole body because somebody has annoyed me. That

would be indeed a strange, a ridiculous proceeding.

We are compelled to see some professed Christians choosing their church affiliations merely from their ideas of convenience or popularity, or from a paltry consideration of the interests of their secular business. Alas! that this should ever be the case with men who profess to be the servants of

Christ, but facts will not allow us to modify the representation. Not only the claims of some feeble assembly, but even denominational preferences are sometimes entirely waived from the account, simply because another church is more convenient for one's self and his family, or possibly does not require as much expenditure of money and care. What is this but keeping back a part of the price and lying to the Holy Ghost, as Ananias and Sapphira did?—

Then, again, you will see some who bear the Christian name looking about for the most popular minister or congregation in the place; and when they think they have found one or the other, or both, they locate themselves in their ecclesiastical relations accordingly. They say for themselves that their literary and elocutionary tastes, or their social affinities, are of some consequence to them. Do they not prove that these things are of more importance to them than the self-denying service of Christ's cause for its own sake? Their faith may be better satisfied, and their influence more needed elsewhere, but what of that? Here is one who in fact would make a gain of godliness. If he can increase the number of his week-day patrons and customers by his Sunday associations, of course he is quite willing to do so. Such an one has been known to leave a congregation that has not patronized his business, and try another which it is hoped will do better in this respect. He leaves partly to punish those who would not give him business, and partly to fare better, as he imagines.

Shall we notice another character who is willing to barter his chosen church relations for his own selfishness? It is he who feels that his brethren do not give him the office and place in the church which he would indeed so well fill if he only had the opportunity. Not enough notice is taken of him. The pastor does not put him forward enough. He does not receive proper deference. His ruling passion is ambition. He is another Diotrophes, "who loveth to have the pre-eminence." He loves publicity. He is willing to purchase it with enlarged donations. But he has waited and watched. He discovers that he is not absolutely essential to the existence of the church. His ambition is wounded. Well, he concludes, if I cannot be what I want to, I will not be anything. If they will not let me hold my proper place they may get along without me. He is soured; he is ready to ally himself with a dissatisfied party, or unsettle the pastor, or break things generally. His forlorn hope is that by change or revolution he will come out at the top. He belongs to the "rule or ruin" class. The peace and even perpetuity of a church are nothing to him if his ambition is not gratified. But perhaps he leaves the church of his choice altogether, thinking so to reward it for its unappreciativeness and partiality.

Is that man a member of the church of Christ from principle? Is it grace or selfishness that has the predominance in him? The church of Christ has been afflicted with such (some of whom, however, have the faculty of concealing their pride more than others) from the time of the apostles to the present. And it is no doubt one proof of its Divineness that it still lives as mightily as it does, in spite of such traitors to its dearest claims. Let us rejoice that a Lucifer cannot shake heaven, nor a Judas the church.

If any one needs to be held to his church by principle it is the Baptist. For no one will have more to try him than he. It is generally supposed that a Baptist church member is such because he cannot conscientiously be otherwise. Not long since we heard a most excellent minister say he would belong to some other denomination if he could. But his Bible convictions held him to the Baptists, and with them he must stay and work though it was often a cross. Knowing the strength of conviction which a genuine Baptist must have, we are the more surprised and pained when we hear one who bears the name saying, "I am done with the Baptists. They have used me badly. Some of them are so mean, and so narrow, and so unreasonable. Let them go. I am off for a people where I can get along more comfortably and decently."

What a commentary is this upon the depth of that man's principles! He can renounce them with a snap of his finger, because Baptists have not used him right,

and so can go and enroll himself in a pedobaptist church, ceasing to support the dear doctrine of believer's immersion, and practically endorsing the undivine ceremony of infant baptism. How lightly that man's principles must sit on him! Has he not got fearfully under the sway of selfishness? Something evidently is dearer to that man than a Gospel principle.

For ourselves we can say that whatever others should be led to say or do against us, in their unwisdom or unkindness, our home is in a Baptist church. Nothing can separate us from the Baptist cause. Baptist principles are more to us than ease or private resentments. A Baptist church is to us above all individuals, or trials, or offences. Baptist principle is a part of us, and we could no more surrender it than we could the heart itself. Were we in a place where there was no Baptist church, but a pedobaptist one, we would work with the latter in things agreed. But wherever there is a Baptist church we must co-operate with it. It may be the meanest in the place; it may be filled with the poorest people; it may be made up of Africans, Chinamen, or Caucasians; there may be narrow, persecuting or exclusive people in it, but so long as it is a Baptist church in truth, we have an interest in it, and must adhere to it unless absolutely driven away, and even then our name is Baptist still, for principle's sake and for Christ's sake.

BAPTISTS AND BAPTIST PRINCIPLES.

A scriptural view of believer's baptism lies at the basis of an enlightened negative response of the heart to all human authority in matters of religion and an affirmative response to the authority of Jesus. Still, Baptists, the majority of them, are grievously at odds with themselves, not upon the subject of baptism but upon their duties.

There are our prudent Baptists, who most cautiously deliberate respecting the most suitable means of spreading their principles, and the most practical modes in which their principles will display themselves; they prudently wait till the opportunity of spreading their principles in a given locality is past. "A wise man," says Lord Bacon, "will not make more opportunities than he finds." The section of our very prudent Baptists includes pastors whose eloquence attracts rich Pædobaptists to their chapels, fashion-men who prefer the good opinion of their literary friends to their distinctive principles, and well-to-live deacons, who, though in judgment they admire their principles, wince under them when they impose an obligation to take a few sovereigns out of their purse. Inverting the scriptural order, they are first peaceable, then pure. They believe that Baptist principles are destined to triumph, but they decline a share in the honour of spreading them. Peace is observed with more scrupulosity towards Pædobaptists than towards zealous Baptists. The prudent Baptist allows truth to be disparaged, and shuns the ruthless sneer that insult adds to grief.

There are New Testament Baptists. These have renounced the world, and call no body of men master. They believe themselves to be captives redeemed by the blood of Christ. To know and to do the will of their Heavenly Master is their loftiest aim. They acknowledge that they have no right to enquire how they shall spend their time, their property, their labour, their influence; for they are not their own. On the subject of baptism, as on the subject of the supper, without showing any disrespect to the Old Testament, or at all overlooking the importance of its connection with the New, they demur to its evidence on this point, on the ground that it is superseded by fresh instructions. That infants were a part of the Jewish nation is so clear as to be a truism; but they lay it down as a maxim from which they refuse to depart, that as Moses is the proper authority in matters connected with the Moaic system, so Christ and his apostles are the proper authority in matters connected with Christian ordinances. New Testament Baptists are the enlightened agents of a Superior Will. They regard themselves as servants; and the consequences of their actions are comprehended not by them but by their Master. Still doing the Master's will in everything—even in regard to the subjects and mode of baptism, they have clear views of the special position and bearings of their actions. "If any man will do His will, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God." The connection established between

purity of will and a sound organ of spiritual knowledge is an unalterable connection. A heart prostrate before the Will that rules the universe is made ready for the teaching of the New Testament in regard to baptism; and the knowledge of the nature and design of this ordinance, that passes through the heart, discovers its relative importance. Adopting Baptist views,

therefore, is no trivial act. It is a lofty, generous, magnanimous, pious act. It is the mind reverently bowing, in the presence of opposing authority, before the throne of the Supreme, and paying its homage there. It is saying "Jesus, my Lord, I esteem all thy precepts, concerning all things to be right." New Testament Baptists have pondered the mighty significance of this profession. Having calmly, prayerfully, and humbly examined the subject, they are grave, but bold and resolute men. Civil power, ecclesiastical authority, worldly wisdom, respect, custom, honour, must yield to the claims of truth. Their profession of attachment to truth is not a Sunday attire to be laid aside on Monday, but a part of themselves. They are betrothed to Truth. They are hers by their own act. They said by stepping into the baptismal font before God, angels, the church, and the world, to Truth alone our allegiance is due. We believe that Jesus attaches importance to His own ordinance and puts honor on it. We cannot despise a symbol which is valued in heaven. When Jesus was immersed in Jordan His Father proclaimed Him blessed. Our loyalty to our Master distinctly recognises His right to our allegiance.

Let zealous Baptists unfold to the hesitating to "Baptists in principle," the glory of a zealous Baptist's position and the exalted character of his duties. Let zealous Baptists tell temporizers that real "heaven" is sure to excite fermentation; bear witness even when men "forbear," be active though activity should expose to reproach; never ground their arms and stand at ease; never wink at popular delusion. Let zealous Baptists proclaim their principles at all hazards, wield truth with a vigorous arm; be calumny proof; set their faces towards their one grand object as a flint, and steadily pursue it.

An Intelligent Baptist does homage to truth for the sake of its Author and its end. He avoids every appearance of practical equivocation. The reason why he can look the world so boldly in the face is—he walks erect, following not the curved line of beauty, but the straight line of duty. His is genuine self-respect, and it shows itself in deeds. It works for the Master, and calmly plans important enterprise in the face of difficulties. If our Baptist principles are from heaven, and not of men, doubt of their ultimate success, is unreason. The exhibition of them is, whatever inconvenience it may bring to us, our bounden duty. The energy of an immortal principle is great. Neglect cannot starve it into helplessness. Its final triumph is as secure as the throne of Omnipotence. It can, must, establish for itself an undisputed dominion.

Half-consistent Baptists are alive to their own case, but dead to the final triumph of their principles. Their hearts are neither truthful nor trustful. The sound of opposition pales their faces with fear, and exanimates them with despair. They look with complacency at their apathy through the stained glass of the apothegm—"The golden mean." They are Baptists, but they can hear a good sermon from a Pædobaptist minister and leave their own pastor. They do not nurture a sense of duty into that delicacy which rates every deviation from duty. They are not uneasy, though the sprinkling of a baby is not accommodated to their preceptions of right. They abhor extremes. "Being not righteous over much," they have come to believe that the readiest way to do good is to sit still.

Baptists must make sacrifices for truth. Do they admire the Moravian Baptist and the Baptists of Holland who obeyed what they believed to be the commands of Christ? Then their maxim should be, "We ought to obey God rather than man." Let us have modern as well as ancient, specimens of fidelity to principle. Worldly prospects, reputation, life itself, are not so valuable as our principles. Faith and duty are united as root and fruit.

Right thinking inspires warm affections and these affection evolve themselves in action. Where there is a living image of Jesus in the conscience, there is no conformity to the commandments of men. A conscientious Baptist will do