

# The Christian Visitor.

REV. J. E. BILL, RELIGIOUS AND DENOMINATIONAL EDITOR.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth

peace, good will toward men."

THOMAS McHENRY, SECULAR EDITOR AND MANAGER.

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## REIGNING GRACE.

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 26TH 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON, AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

(Continued.)

But we must pass on. The man has now become a forgiven one—a saint; but grace has not ceased to reign, nor has he ceased to need it. "After sin is forgiven that the battle begins." If we had only grace enough to transform us from sinners into saints, it were not worth having, because, saints would soon return to their sins, unless grace were constantly bestowed. And now let me show you a saint after he has been renewed by grace. There he stands, sir, and did you ever see a man in such a position as that! You have heard of battles, and you have sometimes read the story of some valiant hero around whom the battle made a fearful centre; who had to fight, with horses slain beneath him, standing on heaps of bodies which he had slain. Behold his ardour, his courage, his burning valour, as he finds that he is the target for all arrows, that all the battle-axes and spears are dashed and thrust against his person; that every son of wrath is thirsting for his blood. See now he hurls about him a hail of iron bolts. Right, left, and all around, his sword sweeps in awful circles. Now such is the true Christian—such and yet more solemn is his position. There has never such a fight been seen on earth as that man must wage who hopes to enter into the kingdom of heaven, for no sooner are we converted than at once hell is alive against us, and earth is on fire with anger, and we have both earth and hell to dispute our salvation. Young Christian, dost thou tremble? Let me do with thee as Elias did with his servant of old. Young man, thou seest horses and chariots that are innumerable; come with me, and I will pray for thee, and touch thine eyes. What seest thou now? "O!" saith he, "I see the mountain, full of horses of fire and chariots of fire that are round about Elijah." Blessed be his name; 'tis no vision—"tis the very truth, 'More are they that are for us than all they that are against us,' and if the fray thickens, angels shall rush to the valley with their good swords to drive back the foe, and the standard-bearer shall not fall, though full well he may. The soldier of Christ shall stand, for underneath him are the everlasting arms; he shall tread upon his enemies and shall destroy them, in the words of Deborah of old, "Oh my soul, thou hast trodden down strength." So then, grace reigns in the thick battle of temptation, and makes those who are the subjects of its kingdom more than conquerors through him that hath loved them.

To push further still. The man, being kept in temptation, has a work to do for his Lord, and I have often felt that there is no case where grace reigns more powerfully than in the use which God makes of such poor, infirm, feeble, decrepit creatures as his servants are. Let me show you a picture of grace reigning. Do you see Peter there in the hall afraid of a little maid? He denies his Master, and with oaths and curses he says, "I know not the man." Wait awhile. Some six or seven weeks have passed, and there is a great crowd in the streets; there is a multitude gathered from all countries—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia. Who is to preach to them—who shall be the minister? Grace, to think honor let it be told—thou didst not select John who stood at the foot of the cross, nor he who was surnamed Zealotes, because of his zealousness—no, Peter who denied his Master, must come forth to own him afresh. And here he comes. Methinks I see him. Perhaps as he ascends the place where he is to speak his heart whispers to him, "Simon, son of Jonas, what dost thou here?" The cock crows, Simon, and it reminds thee that thou didst deny thy Lord; what dost thou here? And then conscience seemed to say, "Art thou the man to be a preacher—thou! Give place; canst thou hope to do any good, or to save immortal souls, such a feeble head-strong, presumptuous worm as thou art?" But grace is with him. Grace has touched his lip, and the cloven tongue is like a sword of fire within his mouth; he comes forward—and he begins to speak. So the heavenly fire descends from him upon the multitude, and that day, three thousand baptisms tell what God can do, and how grace can reign in the feeblest instrumentality. I am the living witness that God can make use of the weakest means to accomplish the mightiest results. In that day when you shall review the sinner of David, and the ox-goad of Shamgar, when you shall have to look back upon Jael's nail, and these little things which have done great exploits then shall I beg you to write down my name as that of one by whom many souls have been saved, but who, himself has wondered more than ye all, who God has blessed him, and who ever a soul has been saved by such an unworthy one. Grace, grace, that can prevail, that can do it, that can make use of the meanest instruments to produce the grandest effects, and to increase thy glory among men.

I must still trespass upon you while I take you to another spot, to show you how grace can reign, where you little think it could ever live at all. The sea is agitated with a great storm, and a man has just been thrown into the sea, it is Joseph. A fish has swallowed him; that fish dives into unfathomable depths, till the ocean has covered up both fish and prophet. The earth with her herbs is about him for ever; the weeds are trampled about his head. As the creature sucks in mouthful after mouthful of its food, there lies this man, and yet he lives. Grace is there preserving his life; grace was there, even when the fish was led to swallow him. But can that man ever find deliverance? Is he not in trouble too great, and cast out from the very presence of God? Hear! he groans out of the darkness of that living prison, he begins to cry, towards the temple of God. Grace, grace, come forth—she divides the sea—she speaks to Lovethorn—she comes up upon the dry land, he vomits forth the prophet, and he lives. Have you ever seen the like of that in your own case? Have you ever been in a strait and a trouble so difficult that you imagined there was no deliverance? If you ever have, I turn you to your own history as an illustration of how grace can reign in redeeming you out of the most terrible trials. I tell you brethren, if all the troubles that ever came from heaven, all the persecutions that ever came from earth, and all the afflictions that ever arose from hell, could meet on your poor devoted head, the reigning grace of God would make you master of them all. You have never need to fear. Storms are the triumph of his art, and grace can

steer the ship the better for tempestuous waves. Trust in the Lord, and do good; rest thou on his grace, and hope thou in his mercy. When the water is very deep he will put his hand beneath thy chin, so that thou shalt not lose thy breath, or if thou shalt sink, he will sink with thee; and if thou shouldst go to the very bottom, he will be at the very bottom with thee. Where'er thou goest, he will be thy companion, saying to thee, "Fear not, I will help thee; I will be with thee; when thou goest through the waters thou shalt not be drowned, and when thou goest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

I have thus shown you grace reigning in the midst of spiritual death, spiritual bondage, spiritual despair; grace reigning in the court of judgment, grace in the battle of temptation, grace in the quagmires of infirmity, and grace triumphant also in the midst of our direst afflictions. I shall need to give you but one other picture, grace reigning in the hour of death, and triumphing in the moment of our entrance into heaven. Last Friday evening, as I lay upon my bed, having been much tossed about, and tempted, and tried, it pleased God to visit his servant and give him somewhat to cheer him. And among many sweet thoughts which gladdened my mind, I fell into a doze, half sleeping and half waking, and I thought I saw an angel who came from the upper skies, and who had in his hand a crown. He said to me "Thou hast fought the good fight, behold thy reward." And I waved my hand and said, "No, no, I cannot receive it, I am not worthy of it; I cannot take it." He said "Heaven lies before thee—enter." And I said "No, I cannot; I deserve it not. I have no claim to any reward, no right to any rest, though it will be given to the children of God." And he looked at me, and he said "It is of grace, and not of merit." Then I thought I would take the crown, but I saw the dream was over. Ay, and I thought, I thought, I thought, it would never be my reward, I was even in it I should say, "I am here by mistake; I am sure this is not my place; 'tis not my heaven; I have no claim to it." I should walk among the redeemed with their golden harps, and say, "No, no, you have what you have fought for, and have won, but I am an intruder here." I should be afraid of being cast out at last from a portion which I had no right to have obtained. But if it be of grace and not of works—why then we may walk into heaven with boldness. We may receive the crown with gladness, and sit down with the redeemed with joy and confidence. I protest I never could enter heaven, even if I might if it were not of grace. I dare not in common honesty enter. Neither you nor I could claim a reward, or could ever dare to take it as a merited recompense. It must be given simply of God's free love and covenant faithfulness, or else indeed when given we should seem like robbers who had taken to ourselves what was not ours, and should always feel the possession was not safe, because the title was not sound. It is of grace, then, and so, beloved, when you come to the grace shall bear you up in the midst of Jordan, and you shall say, "I feel the bottom, and it is good." When the cold waters shall chill your blood, grace shall warm your heart. When the eye gathers the death-glaze, and the light of earth is being shut out from you for ever, grace shall lift the curtains of heaven, and give you visions of eternity; and when at last the spirit leaps from time into eternal space, then grace shall be with you to conduct you to your Father's house. And when the judgement throne is set, grace shall put you on the right hand; grace shall robe you about with Jesus' righteousness; grace shall make you bold to stand where sinners tremble, and grace shall say to you, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"It lays in heaven the topmost stone, And well deserves the praise." And now I have conducted you into the many scenes, or rather into a few of them, where grace reigns. I want you now if you can before we close, to take by faith a view of GRACE SITTING ON ITS THRONE. Be gone vain thoughts; far removed be every worldly imagination now. We are about to come into an awful presence, and well may we cry, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Methinks I see the throne of grace. 'Tis but through a glass darkly, but these eyes behold it. The throne is placed on the eternal hills of God's immutable purpose and decree. Deep settled in unfailing wisdom and unwavering love these mountains never move. There they stand; while nature changes they move not, and though the sun may rise and set, they abide forever and for evermore the same. The throne itself, standing upon those lofty hills, has for its pedestal divine fidelity, divine faithfulness, and the eternal will of God. Didst ever see such a throne as that? The thrones of monarchs rock and reel, but this is settled and abideth for ever in God's faithfulness and truth. 'Tis true that the throne of many a dynasty has been cemented by blood, and so is this indeed, but not with the blood of murdered men, or of soldiers slain in battle. To make this throne secure it is cemented with the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Nay, as if this did not suffice, this throne is settled by the eternal oath. God swears by himself because he can swear by no greater, that by these immutable things wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled, for refuge to Christ Jesus our Lord. Oh! grace—I see thy throne; I mark its solid base. A faithful and unchanging God lays the foundation of this throne in oaths and promises, and blood. And now look upward. Do you see the shining steps? The throne is of pure white alabaster, and every step is of solid light. The steps are the divine openings of providence as he gradually develops his mighty scheme. And see on either side—as on the throne of Solomon there were lions that did lie upon the steps—so on either side of the steps of the throne of grace I see two lions ready to guard and protect it. And who are these? Their names are Justice and Holiness. Let any attempt to assail that throne, and Justice will devour them, and Holiness with fiery eyes will utterly consume them. Oh glorious thought, Christian! That very justice which once seemed to stand in the way of grace is one of the lions which guard the throne; and that very holiness which seemed once to put a barrier between thy soul and bliss, now stands there as a mighty one to guard the seat and throne of sovereign grace.

New look upward if your eyes can bear the light. You cannot see the full form and visage of the Lord of Grace—the King; but if ye can dimly discern it—I see upon that throne one who "Looks like a lamb that has been slain, And wears his priesthood still."

Ay, though ye cannot see him, yet he sees us, and that Divine image is scattering mercies on us now. The eyes of grace are the suns of the spiritual universe; the hands of grace scatter lavish bounties throughout all the church of the firstborn, and those lips of grace are uttering continually those once unspoken decrees which speak when they are fulfilled and carried out in gracious providences. But come hither and look upward. Bow thyself in that presence before which the angels cry, "Holy, holy, holy," and veil their faces with their wings. See above the throne, and above the image and likeness of him that sits thereon—above that throne of grace, behold, the crown. Was ever such a crown? Nay, 'tis not one, 'tis many; there are many crowns and many jewels in each of the many crowns. And whence came these crowns of grace? Oh! they are crowns that have been won in fields of fight; they are crowns, too, that have been given by grateful hearts. And there, as I gaze, methinks I seem a soul that was once black with sin, made bright and sparkling, and there 'tis in the crown of grace, glittering like a diamond. And, my soul, shalt thou be there? Shalt thou be one of those ever-glittering, undimmed jewels? Shalt thou be in that crown? Oh! glorious day, when shalt thou come, when I shall be a real jewel in the crown of Jesus? But are ye not there now, men and brethren? Have you not crowned Jesus Christ already, in some of your lives, felt that you must crown him? And as often, as we have sung that hymn, could you not sing it again?—"All hail the power of Jesus' name, Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown him Lord of all."

Jesus, we crown thee, we crown thee. All hail! all hail! thou King of Kings—thou God of love. Behold thy church bows herself before thee. "With vials full of odour sweet, And harps of sweeter sound, The elders chant before thy presence, and we, even we adore thee. Through silver of angelic praise, and gold of perfect melody we cannot boast,—yet such as we have we give thee. Unto him that sitteth upon the throne—unto him that liveth and was dead—unto grace in the person of the Lord Jesus be glory, and honour, and majesty and power, and dominion, and might, for ever and ever. Amen."

The elders chant before thy presence, and we, even we adore thee. Through silver of angelic praise, and gold of perfect melody we cannot boast,—yet such as we have we give thee. Unto him that sitteth upon the throne—unto him that liveth and was dead—unto grace in the person of the Lord Jesus be glory, and honour, and majesty and power, and dominion, and might, for ever and ever. Amen.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF CONV-N-TION.

STATE OF THE DENOMINATION. The Committee have to report that the state of the denomination, numerically considered, is presented in the following abstract of the Statistics furnished by the Association:—

NOVA SCOTIA.			
Churches, Bap.	Mem.		
West. Association, 50	317	6845	
Central " 37	381	4477	
Eastern " 52	297	3067	
	139	995	14389
NEW BRUNSWICK:			
West. Association, 66	160	3840	
Western " 50	460	3632	
Total, 116	620	7472	

The following brethren have been ordained:— July 15, 1859, William Dobson, Little River Cumberland County, N. S. Sept. 14, " M. A. Bigelow, Guysborough, N. S. Oct. 5, " John E. Goucher, Upper Gagetown, N. B. Oct. 4, " John McKenne, Greenfield, N. S. Dec. 4, " Edw. C. Cady, Portland, Saint John, N. B.

Jan. 24, 1860, David Shaw, Falmouth, N. S. Five new Churches have been constituted:— At Crow Harbour, and Coddie's Harbour, N. S.; and at Hampton Ferry, Restigouche, and Dundas, Kent County, N. B.

Six new Meeting Houses have been opened, viz: In Nova Scotia, at Beaver River, Wolfville, and Jordan River; in New Brunswick, at Springfield, Studholm, K. C., and Blainville Miramichi. The number of baptisms falls considerably short of last year's report. The churches seldom enjoy two successive years of prosperity. Why is this? Has there been an exhaustion of spiritual energy? Is it impossible to maintain for any lengthened period the efforts by which a revival season is distinguished? Is declension an unavoidable part of our experience? These inquiries, your Committee suggest, demand grave consideration.

The paucity of Ministers is again to be referred to as affording cause for deep regret and anxiety. Many churches are destitute of Pastors, without any present prospect of obtaining them. The number of ordinations during the past year only equals the number of deaths of Ministers. Besides this, many more laborers are required for our Home Missionary enterprise; and unless they are furnished, other denominations will occupy fields now open to Baptist effort. What is to be done? Your Committee entreat the brethren to give this subject their earnest and prayerful attention.

As the Committees appointed last year to take charge of funds contributed for ministerial education will present their Reports at this meeting, it may be hoped that definite arrangements will now be made in order to carry into effect the important purposes contemplated, and that the establishment of a permanent fund and of regulations for its distribution will be undertaken by the Convention. This is a matter which ought not to be deferred, for the necessities of the churches are urgent.

In conclusion, your Committee beg to recommend the adoption of measures, by the Pastors of the Churches, for the more complete instruction of young members and inquirers in the doctrine of the Gospel, as understood and held by our denomination, and for the more extensive employment of all the gifts which the Lord has bestowed upon his servants. The reasonableness of this recommendation is so obvious that further enlargement is unnecessary. An intelligent apprehension of truth is essential to full

\*As the meeting of this Association has not yet been held, the returns of last year are given.

enjoyment of its blessings and effects; and, as Robert Robinson said, "Every one who understands Christianity should teach it." Respectfully submitted, J. M. CRAMP, Chairman.

## DEPARTED BROTHERS.

SAMUEL H. BENTLEY died November 26, 1859. He was ordained at Liverpool, November 23, 1851. After labouring there several years with much acceptance he removed to Halifax, and became Pastor of the North Church. He resigned that office in order to take charge of the interests of the Nova Scotia Baptist Home Missionary Society, as its Secretary and General Agent. In view of the spiritual necessities of the Province he determined to devote his energies to an endeavour to rouse the churches to adequate and united action. He had entered on the work with much zeal, and prosecuted it with encouraging success, when it pleased God to remove him to the better world, and thus to disappoint the hopes of his brethren. Snatched from us at the early age of thirty-seven, he has left a vacancy which cannot be easily filled.

MAYNARD PARKER was ordained at Lunenburg, August 29, 1831. He preached in different parts of Nova Scotia, and presided over several churches. He resided last at Londonderry, where he died, on the 15th of January, at the age of sixty-four. He was a plain, solid preacher of the Gospel.

ISAIAH POTTER, son of one of the old fathers of the same name, and his colleague for some time in the pastorate of the Church at Clements, died there on the 26th of June. He was three score and ten years old. His ordination took place Sept. 7, 1837. For some years before his death he had been compelled by infirmity to desist from public labours. He "dwelt among his own people," and lived in their affections.

RICHARD McLEARN was pre-eminently "a brother beloved." Our father held him in high esteem, and his praise was in all the churches. His views of truth were clear and comprehensive.—He was "fervent in spirit," and wise in counsel. Gifted above many for the work of the Lord, he consecrated himself wholly to it, and would have spent his life in the discharge of ministerial duties had he been permitted.

Brother McLearn was ordained at Rawdon, March 10, 1831. He became Pastor of the Church in this place, and subsequently of the Church at Windsor. His labours were highly appreciated by both churches. As Agent for the Educational Institutions at Horton he travelled extensively in these Provinces and in the United States, and was very successful in his applications to the people for aid. About the year 1842 the failure of his voice rendered it necessary for him to resign his pastorate and withdraw to a great extent from public exercises. He watched over the interests of the Church at Dartmouth, where he resided, preaching as often as he was able, and he rendered important services in a variety of respects to the cause of religion. Latterly he identified himself more particularly with the Home Missionary Society, and it was hoped that he would assume the general direction of that enterprise. But the Master has called him home.

He died on the 17th inst., aged fifty-six. "Devout men" of all evangelical denominations followed his remains to the grave, testifying to the respect and esteem. It was truly a Catholic funeral.

The labourers are too few for the harvest. May the Lord have mercy upon us, and prepare men for his work!

JOSEPH C. SKINNER was born in Parsonborough, N. S., in the year 1800, and was early instructed by his Godly mother, the late Mrs. Sarah Skinner, in the principles and obligations of the christian faith. When about 20 years of age he professed religion, and was baptized by the late Edward Manning. He was then regarded as a young man of more than ordinary promise. He removed to New Brunswick in 1825, and feeling a deep interest in the progress of education, he devoted several years of his life to the instruction of the young. In 1836 he was ordained to the pastorate of what was then designated the 1st Wickham Church. He faithfully fulfilled the duties of his office for many years, and although his pastoral connection nominally ceased some time prior to his death, yet virtually he continued to preside over these people and to watch for their souls as one that must give an account until removed to join the Church triumphant in the heavens. He departed this life in the 61st year of his age, March 23rd, 1860, in full assurance of the faith he had so long proclaimed as the only ground of the sinner's hope. He was interred in the Church-yard surrounding the House in which he was ordained, in the presence of a large concourse of people.—Rev. David Crandall preached his Funeral Sermon from 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8. "I have fought the good fight," &c.

Our departed brother Skinner stood pre-eminently among his brethren as wise in counsel, evangelical in doctrine, and spotless in life. It was his happiness to witness several interesting revivals of religion during his pastorate, and to conduct many valuable members into the fellowship of the church; and though his labors on earth have terminated, yet the instructions which he gave, his meek and pure example, and the composure and confidence with which he passed through the valley of death, will continue to give forth utterances distinct and solemn, calling upon the people of Cambridge to "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

MESSENGER KIRBY was born in 1806, on the Long Reach. He professed religion when 18 years of age, and was baptized by Elder Charles Lewis, at that time Pastor of the Church at New Canada. He was ordained to the ministry in 1845, and was Pastor for short periods of the churches at New Canada, Butternut Ridge, Canning, and Jemseg. He preached the Gospel extensively and successfully in the Counties of Queen's, King's and Albert. He died at the house of Mr. William Titus, Jephon, after a very short but severe illness, on the 22d of February, 1860, in the 54th year of his age. His ministry was purely evangelical, and was signally blessed in the conversion of souls. In his life he exhibited the purifying power of the Gospel, which he preached to others, and in his death he experienced its all-sufficiency to sustain in the prospect of the stern realities of the spirit world.

JACOB McDONALD was born in Cambridge in 1838. He professed an experimental acquaintance with the truth when 11 years of age.

Some 18 months ago he was licensed by the Church in Cambridge, of which he was a worthy member, to preach the Gospel. Subsequently his services were engaged by the Church at Chipman, and were highly valued by those to whom he broke the bread of life. In attempting to cross the Salmon River in a canoe, on Saturday the 18th of August, at 11 o'clock, A. M., as the canoe struck the bank he was thrown out, and before assistance could be rendered life had departed. This young man was only 22 years of age when he was thus suddenly and unexpectedly summoned to his reward. He possessed elements of mental and religious vigor of no ordinary kind, and his numerous friends had marked out for him a career of brilliant usefulness, but a stern Providence had otherwise ordained. "Like Enoch he walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."

Thus we see that no less than seven of our beloved Ministers, "good men and true," have exchanged, during our Conventional year, the toils of the militant state for the more exalted service of the upper sanctuary. How wide the breach! Who will fill their places? Lord thou knowest. Let us all work while the day lasts. I. E. BILL, Chairman.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF WESTERN N. B. BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

CIRCULAR LETTER. TO THE CHURCHES COMPOSING THE WESTERN N. B. BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

DEAR BROTHERN:—The grounds of our separation from all other denominations are not of trivial importance. We exist as a people because we cherish certain principles which we regard as scriptural, and essential to the highest efficiency and ultimate triumph of the church of Christ.

We believe that the Scriptures are the only authority in matters of faith and practice; that the Churches of Christ should be composed of none but believers, and that the Church should be subordinate to Christ alone. Hence our peculiar views of baptism and Church government.

When we consider the position which, as a denomination, we now occupy, we have reason to thank God and take courage. For centuries during the dreariest ages of modern times, priestly denunciation of a fanatical sect who believed that the Church of Christ was a community of saints, were almost the only evidences of our existence. After the Reformation, sects who differed in all other respects united to defame and persecute Baptists. Now, however, not only are we a mighty people, but the influence of our principles is felt far beyond the limits of our denomination. It is no longer heresy to assert the freedom of conscience, the iniquity of connection between Church and State, the essential equality of the clergy with the brotherhood, nor even the necessity of faith as a condition of church membership. Infant baptism is practiced less than formerly, and Protestant Churches seem to be returning to the primitive mode of Baptism.

We believe that we have a mission to perform in this Province. We wish to exert our due influence over this present generation, and also to do our part towards training a country destined to be populous, wealthy and powerful in the way in which it should go. We sometimes seem to think that our mission shall be accomplished by the naked force of the truths which we profess, and certainly for our past progress we are indebted not to our wealth, education, zeal, or organization, but to the power of our principles. Those who represent our ministers or brethren as skillful and successful proselytes, unconsciously pay them a compliment which they scarcely deserve, and render acknowledgement to the force and truthfulness of our principles.

We shall, however, be mistaken if we imagine as a denomination we can dispense with zealous, prudent and systematic effort. Certainly we possess many facilities for advancement. We confidently believe that we hold the truth. We appeal for evidence not to the decisions of ancient councils, nor to the volumes of ancient Fathers, 4: 7, 8. "I have fought the good fight," &c.

Our departed brother Skinner stood pre-eminently among his brethren as wise in counsel, evangelical in doctrine, and spotless in life. It was his happiness to witness several interesting revivals of religion during his pastorate, and to conduct many valuable members into the fellowship of the church; and though his labors on earth have terminated, yet the instructions which he gave, his meek and pure example, and the composure and confidence with which he passed through the valley of death, will continue to give forth utterances distinct and solemn, calling upon the people of Cambridge to "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

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the spirit of our own principles, and to carry them out to their natural results.

It would be pleasant to review the history of our denomination and dwell upon its marvellous progress, or indulge in complacent views of our condition and prospects; but just now we may as well consider some particulars in which improvement is desirable.

We need more individual independence. Venerable ministers sometimes bewail the extent to which the democratic element pervades our churches, and a check to the imaginary evil is sometimes sought for, in attributing to the ministry a mysterious and undefined authority, or in the elevation of denominational societies as far as possible above the control of the Churches. But the difficulty is that we are not sufficiently democratic. We meet with little monarchies in which the minister reigns supreme, or we meet with little oligarchies under the control of some leading members, but we seldom meet with a democracy—a church in which the members think and act for themselves. A Baptist should feel that whatever his believe or do, his business is to know the truth and obey it. He is to be subservient to no one but the Master. Such an one, independent of men, yet meekly and tremblingly submissive to Christ, yielding all things when truth and duty are not in question, yet enduring all things rather than sacrifice either, would exhibit the natural result of the reception of Baptist principles. Were our churches composed of members thus independent, those dissensions which we often deplore, would not arise, a holy activity would appear in every Church, and amidst diversity of opinion and action there would exist true christian unity.

A man thus imbued with the spirit of Baptist principles would not be very popular in a worldly community. He would be considered wilful and unmanageable by those who love to have the pre-eminence, whether ministers or leading members. He would probably be branded as a disaffected member by those who are at ease in Zion, yet his power for good will be felt. Without such men in our churches discipline would become a form, and our simple system of Church government would soon disappear.

We also need in our Churches a higher degree of purity. Without piety a Baptist Church could not long exist. Indeed, its existence would not be desirable. The exhibition of an earnest and self-denying spirit gives an influence to any cause, and has given permanent power to many an error, while truth, if held in carelessness or godliness is divested of its native power, and receives from the multitude the contempt due only to its inconsistent adherents. Truth is mighty and will prevail, yet apostolic Churches rapidly declined in numbers and power when their members lost their first love, and ceased to do their first works.

But our object is not so much to indicate the advantage of piety in the individual as it is to direct attention to the necessity of the judicious exercise by the church of those powers, conferred upon it by the Lord to ensure its purity. We profess to all other denominations, and to the world at large, that we receive into our communities none but such as give credible evidence that they have been converted. We furthermore insist that the churches should exercise discipline, by admonishing or excommunicating those who give evidence that they are backsliding, or belong to the kingdom of Satan. Denominations who regard the church as a field in which the wheat and the tares must grow together undisturbed until the time of harvest, have no redress when the unconverted world enters the pale of the visible Church, but we have in our hands the preventative or the remedy.

We are under solemn obligations to exercise great caution in receiving members, especially during seasons of revival, should the church insist on credible evidences of conversion. If the times renders difficult or unpleasant that cool exercise of judgment requisite for the satisfactory examination of candidates then consistency and prudence alike demand delay.

It is very delightful to receive without suspicion, or question the throngs who sometimes seek access to our church ordinances and privileges, but alas the converts received so gladly and unsuspectingly, may in time form the material for a party, or even a majority in the church, and so become its rulers, or their presence may for years counteract the efforts of the pious, or deaden their energies, or the time and attention of the church may for long periods be engrossed by a excluding tediously and painfully those who were so gladly received. Perhaps even good men in reviewing such consequences may lose faith in revivals. We must never forget that as a denomination we hold to believers' baptism, and a converted church membership, hence we must insist on credible evidences of conversion from candidates.

We are also to preserve purity in our churches by the exercise of these great powers committed to us. The neglect of discipline would render ridiculous in the eyes of the world our peculiar principles, destroy the unity of the church and deaden its energies. At the same time we must put forth with caution and prudence a sentence which destroys the earthly peace of the offender, and casts a cloud over his prospects for eternity. The exhibition of impure feeling by minister or church destroys the moral effect of church discipline. Especially should the church avoid imitating the conduct of the church of

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