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Letter from Reverend Daniel Baker to George Sibley, February 5, 1845

Daniel Baker

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Holly Springs 5th February 1845

My very dear Sir,

By last night's mail I received your kind letter of the 31st ultimo. I cannot describe the feelings which it awakened in my bosom, to ___ of the disappointment which awaits yourself and other respected and beloved friends, in St. Charles, when they find, contrary to my own expectations, that the door is closed against my leaving Holly Springs, at this time. You, my dear sir, are acquainted with the powers of the church government; and need not be reminded, that, it appertains to the Presbytery to disclose me Pastoral ___ between a pastor and the people of his charge. Our Presbytery does not much ___ some time in April next. But as the good people of St. Charles seemed anxious that I should come on. Without delay, and as I was willing to go, it – it appears to be the Divine will; I thought the formal action of the Presbytery might be anticipated, by a joint request from the people of my charge, and myself, to have the Pastoral ___ dispatched at their next meeting; accordingly, last Sabbath week, the new matter was brought before the church, and their acquiescence in the arrangement was ___; but up on trial, it proved that they were utterly unwilling to let me go. This owing not merely to main personal and kind attachments to me in Pastor (and I confess the attachment is reciprocated) but to the fact ascertained that three Presbyterian ministers had very recently left our bounds, and if I should also go, there would not be a single, solitary preacher, of our order, to preach in any part of our county, and which is one of the most populous counties in the whole state! This being the case, they thought it would never answer to let me go, and, accordingly, would not give their consent. A day or two I wrote ___ brother Watson stating the facts of the case. Moreover the subject of the Holly Springs church, by the same mail, addressed a communication a communication to the session of the church in St. Charles, respectfully apologizing for not permitting me to go. They base their refusal chiefly upon certain recent developments of Durian Providence, and the present very great ___ of religious privileges in all the region of country. If I knew my own heart, I am willing to go or stay- but I must confess it grieves me much to think of disappointing my kind and much esteemed friends in St. Charles. Perhaps I did wrong in giving them encouragement, before I had certain ___ that I could be released from my personal charge,- and my only apology is this, which I hope will be deemed satisfactory, that I apprehended no difficulty whatever- as such an arrangement had been made by me in other places before. I hope, my dear friend, you will plead my case and shield me from what prevents my going to St. Charles, but the unexpected refusal of the people of my church to give me up. I trust that the hand of god is in the whole matter, and that he will overrule all for good. Our thing unknown “___ enjoy her monarch's love.” And, very pleasant is the language of the psalmist: the lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.

My daughter desires me to return her very sincere thanks to your lady for her very beautiful, very rich, and very acceptable present. She sets, I assure you, great value upon it, and wishes to inform Mrs. Sibley, that she did hope to have the pleasure of returning her thanks in person. But that being denied, she must content herself with the mode now adopted. Please tell your lady that I obeyd he instructions, and, although my curiosity was much entwined and I was strongly tempted to take a peep at the mysterious thing wrapped up so carefully. Yet I was faithful! Respect for you lady's request achieved a victory over my curiosity, and I knew not what the present was, until it was placed in the hands of my daughter, whose fingers were pretty nimble to remove the wrapper, and whose eyes ___, I assure you, when she saw a silk dress. A pattern so beautiful, and of a quality so good.

With regard to the many dissatisfied with myself A.B. Shaw etc. or the ___ boat, at Memphis, I have, this morning, written to there to remit it to you, by some early and safe conveyance: which request, I suppose will be promptly attended to.

Please present my very best respects to all the members of your dear family, and with Christian salutations to all my friends in St. Charles. I submit myself. Yrs. Very sincerely. Dan. Baker