

the past eleven years Dr. Lyman Abbott has been pastor of the church, and if the great crowds which were wont to be attracted by Mr. Beecher's oratory have been wanting, the real life and influence of the church have been well sustained under Dr. Abbott's ministry. This is the more remarkable in view of the fact that Dr. Abbott succeeded Mr. Beecher both as pastor and as editor of the 'Christian Union,' now the 'Outlook.' Dr. Abbott who is now sixty-three years of age finds that the condition of his health makes it impossible for him longer to carry the double burden, and he has accordingly resigned the pastorate of Plymouth church in order that he may give his undivided strength to his editorial duties. As preacher, as editor and as an author of books, Dr. Abbott has impressed himself very strongly upon his generation. Probably no man in America, during the last ten years, has made his influence more strongly felt upon the religious thought of the times.

The "honors of war" rest with the United States. With whom the balance of advantage rest may not be easy to determine. Spain's surrender of her colonies, however, it may hurt her pride, probably involves no financial loss. Her effort to retain and to govern them was fast bringing her to bankruptcy. On the other hand there are not a few of the most intelligent and thoughtful citizens of the United States who regard the acquisition of Cuba and Porto Rico as of very doubtful advantage to their nation, and there are many more who are firmly convinced that it is entirely opposed to the interests of the republic that the Philippines should come under its flag. It is evident that, as a result of the war, Spain will have been relieved of some heavy responsibilities and very embarrassing problems, with which the United States will now have to wrestle. But there will be this great advantage to all concerned, that the United States is immensely better fitted to deal with these problems and responsibilities, and may hope to succeed in many things in which Spain has failed.

It is well understood to be the policy of Great Britain to establish a continuous line of authority and a safe highway of communication between Egypt and the British possessions in South Africa. This will secure to her a predominating influence in the affairs of that continent and it will serve to define her territorial position so clearly that no other nation will have any difficulty in understanding what it involves. This extension of British influence cannot but be regarded as promotive of the best interests of what has been for ages "the dark continent." Wherever the flag of Britain waves and justice is administered in British fashion, there will be open doors and favorable conditions for the missionary with that Word which gives light to the peoples. Another half century will doubtless see great changes in Africa, great development of the country's natural resources under the hand of civilization. Let us trust that it will also witness a glorious extension of the Kingdom of Christ over tribes and peoples in that dark land who have hitherto been the slaves of cruel superstitions.

Inquiries are being made about our Baptist Year Book. Why is it so long delayed this year? Perhaps those who have the matter in hand are able to show that the delay is unavoidable. But the circumstances must certainly be extraordinary to justify our having to wait for more than three months after the Convention for the publication of the Year Book.

**The Prayer Meeting.**

BY REV. A. C. CRUTE.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

Not for intellectual improvement, though that may come in by the way. Not principally for instruction. It is for the quickening of the spiritual life. Most of us have a contact with the world, a necessary contact, which has a deadening effect, so that a season with God's people between Sundays is needful for fresh stimulus toward pure and holy lives. Sordid propensities require to be checked, and divinely implanted aspirations to be fostered by this means of grace. There is a gain from the united petition-making which cannot be had from private devotions. This social service is composed of those who come from various walks of life, from high station and low, from the ranks of educated and uneducated, meeting upon a common plane with common needs and desires,

and with intent to have the Kingdom of God advance in themselves and in the world by telling of the workings of God's Spirit in their own hearts and pouring out their mingled cries for those supreme gifts which God is pleased to bestow upon all who earnestly seek them.

**DO YOU ATTEND?**

We may be present when absent as we may be absent when present. But there is never presence in heart if there is ability to be present in body while the body is not there. Many a pastor is informed of the inner lack of certain church members while he makes efforts to induce them to attend this regular church appointment. One says that business prevents. And sometimes it does. But what is to be thought of the man who gives this excuse and then shows over and over again that he is able to leave his business for a lodge meeting or concert or to make one of the number who go night after night to hear an entertaining evangelist? There is something wrong within when that which is a mere mole hill between us and numerous other things is suddenly changed into a mountain between us and the prayer meeting and as swiftly made small again to suit our preferences. And stay-at-homes who are not such provisionally, multiply their kind. "Father doesn't go. Why should I?"

But you say you have the time to go but do not go because the same old set occupy the hour month in and month out, year in and year out, and in much the same way. Well, if they do, who are to blame for it but such persons as yourself? Think you that "the same old set," as you are pleased to style them, are possessed with an eagerness to use up all the time? If you could be made aware, friend, of the many, many times that some of these stable souls have longed that silent ones should be heard, and could you know how often they have allowed themselves to fill up the moments only because they could not bear the awful pauses, you would forever cease charging your delinquencies upon this class. If there is monotony it is chiefly chargeable to those who do not use their opportunities. But some one adds, with strong aversion, that blame should be properly located, that certain of these conspicuous individuals have a great deal of religious talk in the meetings and considerable irreligious acting elsewhere. But take note that such as are much given to that sort of unfriendly comment, with a view to presenting a seeming warrant for their own omissions, are in no enviable situation. To see others' faults rather than our own, and to find in them an excuse for our own, is to make it manifest that our own must be of a specially heinous character. True it is that the profession and practice of many leaders are not sufficiently harmonious. But the Great Builder has not yet completed his work, not that we would belittle inconsistency. But we would encourage more charity, and dissuade from expecting to-day what ought not to be looked for until later. You yourself like to be dealt with leniently, and what you wish to have exercised toward yourself you will do well to exercise toward others. Why should you expect what you refuse to bestow? One of the evidences that we have passed from death unto life is found in that we "love the brethren"—weak brethren like ourselves. And those we love will be our associates, if Thomas were like some who are about us, then he was absent from that prayer meeting in Jerusalem because James and John had contended about foremost places and Peter had denied his Lord. And we know how much Thomas lost by being away. It were well to learn from what came to him, and well to defeat Satan when he tries the same method with us. A manly confession might do some of us real good, a confession to the effect that we have been away from the place of prayer for the reason that our hearts are not right in the sight of God, and that we are not devoted to the spread of Christ's Kingdom. Then let the confession be followed by beginning to keep this regular appointment with the Lord, remembering that if God requires us to be in the prayer meeting upon a particular evening we cannot hope to get a blessing in tarrying at home or in going anywhere else.

**DO YOU TAKE PART?**

We may certainly help while silent, just as we may hinder by talking. But the full heart is likely to overflow in part at the lips. Heart counts in the prayer meeting for a vast deal more than head. Fine speaking may kill a meeting. Warmth of affections and aptness of phrase make an admirable combination. It is delightful for the jewel to have a suitable setting. But the chief thing is to have the jewel. Some of the most enriching things we have heard in prayer-meetings have come from the illiterate. Led on of God in higher learning, they have furnished choice kernels though the coverings have been unsightly. We think too much, quite too much, of externals. That is why we have so much of the fear of man which bringeth a snare. To speak out our love for our Lord, even though in trembling word, is to have that love enlarged. Indeed with the trembling there may be the more of profit, both to the one who speaks and to listeners. And the one who ventures forward in this way, desirous of pleasing the Master, helps others to take the same course. One little bird begins to chirp in the early morning and soon the whole grove is made vocal with

sweetest song. Blessed the man who starts a chorus us praise to God.

A scamp may be in the prayer meeting and a saint out of it, nevertheless the flower of Christian churches must be looked for in this service. A contemptibly mean fellow may be often speaking and praying, while some choice spirit may say nothing. Nevertheless, as a rule, the loving heart is served by a willing, if not an eloquent tongue. The counterfeit but declares the existence of the genuine. Would that the membership of our churches were more generally in "the place where prayer is wont to be made." When we get there "with one accord," it will not be long before there will be something like a Pentecostal blessing.

**A Message from The Great West.**

BY D. G. MACDONALD.

DEAR EDITOR.—Kindly give me a little space for a chat with your readers down by the sea. One year ago next Monday we said good bye to our dear friends in North Sydney, assuredly believing that the Master wanted us where the Baptist ranks are thinner than in the Maritime Provinces. For the first seven months I supplied for Pastor Hall of Portage in Prairie while he prosecuted his studies in the Emerson School of Oratory in Boston. On his return I accepted a four months' appointment from the H. M. Board to do the work of an evangelist. Through the generosity of the Portage church I was permitted to do a good deal of such work between the Sabbaths during my stay there.

At the October meeting of the Board it was found that their financial condition was such as to lead them to discontinue the appointment. I received calls from two churches and letters of enquiry from four others, but with the conviction that my life would bring more glory to God and be of more value to the denomination in this new, great, and growing country in this way than in the pastorate, I concluded to continue the work, trusting in God, through His people, for the needed support.

I confess to some hesitancy to do this when I thought of the feebleness of the churches, here being but three self-sustaining ones outside of the city of Winnipeg, but my hesitancy was put to shame and my want of faith rebuked on reading, under peculiar circumstances, the message of the Master in Matt. 6: 25-24 (Please read the passage.) My want of faith received another rebuke when a letter from a dear brother in Cape Breton brought me \$50 and promised \$50 more conditioned on business prosperity—this letter was written on the day of my decision to trust in the Lord and go forward. Subsequent messages from others—East and West—assured me that I, even I, am included in the number of His servants for whom the Lord cares. I praise Him for His condescending care. I thank His people for their generosity in yielding to His promptings concerning my support.

Should some friend in authority come to me today and say, "Now that you have given yourself to mission work in the North West, I am here to pledge your support. You can have your choice of a cheque of \$100 per month from one person or \$10 per month from each of 100 persons." I should unhesitatingly accept the latter as it would lead me to expect 100 prayers in my behalf instead of one; and should the offer be 10 cents per month from each of 1,000 persons I would prefer it yet the more. May I not rely upon your prayers, brethren and sisters, whether you have any contributions for this mission or not?

In my peregrinations over these broad prairies I meet many "down-easters." Regina, the town from which I now write, has a P. E. Islander as its Mayor and another P. E. Islander as the editor of one of its leading papers. One of the young men blessed in our meetings last week is a St. John boy who had not been in church for five years before coming in to our meeting the other night and who owned no Bible since leaving home till I gave him one yesterday. And as for Nova Scotians there are many. It was my privilege to take tea in the beautiful home of brother and sister J. A. Neilly formerly of Annapolis, N. S. Mr. Neilly is a prosperous tradesman in this town, and just such a Baptist as readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR ought to be. He tells me that if your file of old MESSENGERS or newer MESSENGERS AND VISITORS is defective you can be likely to find the missing number on his mother's file in the old Annapolis home. Maritime mothers who love their Bible and their MESSENGER AND VISITOR are likely to send out into the broad world sons and daughters of whom they need not be ashamed. God bless our living mothers and the memory of our departed ones.

Next week I shall send you a brief account of a successful four weeks' mission just closed in the town of Moose Jaw—one of the most prosperous towns in the Territories, and in which N. S., N. B. and P. E. I. are well represented.

We are all in excellent health except Mrs. Macdonald's headache. This is not yet gone but there is progress in that direction. Our permanent address is Austin, Manitoba. Writing the MESSENGER AND VISITOR and all its constituency prosperity.

D. G. MACDONALD.

Regina N. W. T., Nov. 23.