

tion of the soul through the Holy Ghost. The divinely appointed symbol of this truth is water. To use much water in any mode, is to turn the thoughts from the truth signified. If a man stands while bucketful after bucketful of water is poured upon him, he is likely to have his thoughts fixed only on the drenching to which he submits. If he is taken out, as I have seen, on a wintry day, when the thermometer is below zero, and plunged into the cold water of some pond or stream, it is not in flesh and blood to think of anything at such a time, save the icy shock of the water and the dripping discomfort in the freezing air. Here is a description of baptism with "much water," which thousands can verify from their own observation: "When all the shivering group stood upon the frost-bound shore, muffled in their *double envelope*, her slender form, exposed to the keen Arctic winds, was let down through the ice into the cold liquid element below. She afterwards stood upon the shore, clad in her icy garments until several more were immersed, and then, with a body benumbed with cold, was conveyed to her chamber, whence, after a few weeks of rapid decline, she was removed to the lonely domicile of the dead. Her friends regarded her death as the *consequence of her exposure at baptism*." Now, Mr. Editor, with all your fondness for "much water," I appeal to you, what would the mind of a person in such circumstances be most occupied with? Would it not be with the water—i.e., the mere sign? To rise above the material sign at such a time to the spiritual truth, would demand nerves of iron and a superhuman will. And therefore the God who made us, and who knows us, has taught us to use but a little water in baptism; sufficient to suggest to the mind the truth of the Spirit's purification of the soul, and leaving the mind free to dwell on the blessed truth itself.

Once more as to the relative fitness of sprinkling or immersion to symbolize a thorough change of soul, turn up your Bible at Ezekiel, Chap. xxxvi. and read verses 25 to 27: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart, also, will I give unto you, and a new Spirit will I put within you," etc. It is not to the purpose to say Christian baptism is not here mentioned. We do not say that it is; but we do say that there is a great change of soul here described, as great a change as God ever wrought on the heart of anyone. God here promises to His people the purifying, sanctifying grace of His Spirit, cleansing them from all filthiness of sin, and consecrating them wholly to his blessed service. And this all purifying, all-sanctifying all-pervading work of the Spirit, how does God say that it is properly symbolized? Look again at the beginning of the passage above quoted, and you will find that God tells us emphatically it is by the sprinkling of clean water—"then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," etc.

You have already acknowledged, Mr. Editor, that there is no case in the Old Testament where one person, by divine command, immersed another. It is undisputed that there are innumerable cases in which one man, by the divine command, sprinkled water on another. I trust that you will yet be enabled to see that both these statements are as true of the New Testament as of the Old.

[To be continued if the Lord will].

#### WHY ARE PRAYER MEETINGS SO THINLY ATTENDED?

MR. EDITOR,—I would ask the question, Why are prayer meetings so thinly attended in a great many of our congregations? True, God hears the twos and threes that meet together in His name. But in comparing our Sabbath congregations with our weekly prayer meetings a stranger would be apt to think he had come to the wrong house. When he sees the minister, and two elders, and perhaps ten or a dozen women scattered about in great lonesomeness over a space similar in size to Johnathan and his armour-bearer's battle ground. We often hear it said that the prayer meeting is the pulse of the church, which we believe to be a true saying. As the familiar lines express—

"Prayer is . . . Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air,  
His watchword at the gates of death,  
He enters heaven by prayer."

Some one may say that means private prayer, and we can pray at home in secret, and in our families.

But I would remind those who thus argue, that one soldier, apart from a miracle, would not have succeeded in capturing Arabi and his forces. God's people have to band themselves together sometimes when great things are to be asked. The disciples were with one accord in one place before the cloven tongues sat upon them. How often do we find that God's ancient people in their straits, for their sins, cried unto the Lord and he delivered them from their enemies. And what a beautiful illustration we have in the early Christian Church, when nothing less than an angel from heaven had to unloose the shackles of Peter, and open the gates for his deliverance. Have we not as much need to band ourselves together as those early Christians? Are there not many prisoners more tightly bound by Satan than Peter by the four quarterings of soldiers? One of our Saviour's last commands was "Watch and Pray," and one of the highest pinnacles on the watchtower is the pinnacle of prayer. I would not like to say that all who come to the prayer meeting are true Gideon men, but I would venture to suppose that they are more likely to be lappers of the waters of the Spirit than those who stay away. Ask and ye shall receive, is the rule of the Kingdom, and if God's own dear Son is not going to get the heathen without asking, we need not expect them, nor any great blessing to ourselves either. Now, Mr. Editor, as prayer is the freewill offering up of our desires, are we to compel men like Simon of Cyrene to bear the cross? Are we to press them to prayer? If it would cause them to bring their Alexanders and Rufuses to fill the empty seats we would almost be tempted to press them. As the week of prayer is at hand would it not be well for ministers of the Gospel to entreat the professing Christian Church to call on the Lord our God to bless us on the year in which we are about to enter?

#### THE ENDOWMENT OF KNOX COLLEGE.

The appeal that has been made to the Church on behalf of the above-mentioned object has not yet been very largely responded to, apart from the splendid donation of Mr. McLaren. Of the \$25,000 or there about contributed in Toronto, it is interesting to notice that about one eighth of the sum has been subscribed by the Professors and ministers of the city. No doubt the fact of the city Churches having done so much in building in recent years to some extent hampers the movement in the city.

Still, taking everything into account, there does not appear to be the same appreciation among wealthy men in the western part of the Church of such an educational institution as there is in some other places. We can only hope that this state of things may not long continue, and that the Lord may open the hearts of all His people to deal liberally towards the sustaining of His cause. Since now the movement has been entered on, without a voice being raised against it, surely it is the duty of this section of the Church to endeavour to make it a success. To let it fall to the ground or withhold support because of some opinion about the mere details of the work is not a satisfactory method of reaching any good end. If it is recognized as necessary, is it not the duty of minister and people to throw themselves heartily into it, as well as of the Professors. Could not the Knox College Alumni association make its presence visible in such a movement. Some of the members acted generously towards the endowment of Queen's, both contributing themselves and getting contributions from their people. Should not this work commend itself as much to them? A unanimous and hearty effort on the part of the Alumni would largely tend to secure the success of the movement. Merely to stand aloof and criticize does not surely satisfy the claims of the college on the hearty support of the Church.

There are many in the Church who find much to criticize in our theological institutions. And justly enough, perhaps; for what institution or individual is not open to some criticism. But granting all that can be said against any of them, yet more can be said against any of that church, its membership, and men of wealth, who, dwelling amid their superfluous luxuries, can look with indifference on the Church's men of learning subjected to the drudgery of tax-collectors, in the effort to maintain in efficiency for these members a college for the education of the ministers of the Gospel. As an outsider, as far as the college is concerned, yet, as a minister of the Church, I feel that this work lies upon ministers and people as well as on

the professors. The college does not belong to the professors. They alone are not responsible for its honour and usefulness. Nothing better, both for the Church and colleges, could take place than the opening of the college doors more widely to the people, the more public discussion of their operations, and so making more familiar both their work and their claims. To endow and equip Knox College as Montreal has been would not be adverse to the interests of any other college, but would tend to benefit the whole Church. If, however, the professors are to be compelled to canvass Toronto, other places will claim an equal right to their services. And if the professors kindly do as much as they can of this work, instead of the lay members of the Board doing it, surely they should receive the support of ministers and elders throughout the Church, but especially should they receive generous support in the city where the college has its seat. The action of Toronto will undoubtedly affect the manner in which the movement is received in other places, and many think the contributions received there do not come up to what might justly be expected.

D. D. McLEOD.

#### A PRESBYTERIAN INDEED.

Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, has a witty and wide-awake Presbyterian elder of pronounced Scotch antecedents, who, although a persistent advocate of the "Westminster Confession," will occasionally for convenience' sake, and from an innate love of social religious intercourse, attend the meetings of his Methodist brethren.

At a recent prayer-meeting of the latter body of Christians that was held preparatory to a centennial service in commemoration of the progress of Methodism in Nova Scotia, the presiding minister dwelt eloquently upon the wonderful growth and prosperity of the Methodist Church, and of its great founder, John Wesley. He also expressed thankfulness that to-day there were one hundred and nine Methodist ministers in Nova Scotia.

The meeting thus very naturally assumed a denominational character, and the minister asked our good Presbyterian brother to lead in prayer at the close. The elder complied, and after thanking the Lord for the many good things he had just heard "about this branch of Zion," he added, with much depth of feeling, "O Lord, we thank Thee for John Wesley, but we especially thank Thee for John Knox; we thank Thee for the hundred and nine Methodist ministers in our country, but we especially thank Thee for the hundred and thirteen Presbyterian ministers who are preaching the Word of Life throughout our land. Amen."

Presbyterians will not lose any lustre by an earnest elder, even in a Methodist prayer meeting.—*Editor's Drawer in Harper's Magazine for January.*

#### A "FRIENDS" ADVICE.

A Quaker was once advising a drunkard to leave off his habit of drinking intoxicating liquors. "Can you tell me how to do it?" said the slave of the appetite. "Yes," answered the Quaker; "it is just as easy as to open thy hand, friend." "Convince me of that, and I will promise upon my honour to do as you tell me," replied the drunkard. "Well my friend, when thou findest any vessel of intoxicating liquor in thy hand, open the hand that contains it before it reaches thy mouth, and thou wilt never be drunk again." The toper was so pleased with the plain advice that he followed it.

#### TIME-SERVERS.

The trimming, hesitating policy of many reminds us of Luther's words to Erasmus: "You desire to walk upon eggs without crushing them, and among glasses without breaking them." This is a difficult game to play at, and one which is more suitable for a clown at a theatre than a servant of Christ. When you are attempting a compromise, you have to look around you, and move cautiously as a tight-rope dancer, for fear of offending on one side or the other. A little too much this way or that, and over you go. A cat on hot cinders is not in an enviable position. No true-hearted man will ever bear such wretched constraint for any length of time, nor, indeed, at all. Think of being able to go no further than the timorous, time-serving Erasmus, who said, "I will not be unfaithful to the cause of Christ; at least, so far as the age will permit me." Out upon such cowardice; life is too dear when bought at such a price.—*Spurgeon.*