

word "never." It is worth its weight in gold. Cling to it as a drowning man clings to a rope. Grasp it firmly as a soldier attacked on all sides grasps his sword.

"Never!" Though your heart faints, and you are sick of self, failures and infirmities,—even then the promise will not fail.

"Never!" Though the devil whispers, "I shall have you at last; your faith will fail, and you will be mine,"—even then God will keep his word.

"Never!" When the cold chill of death creeps on, and friends can do no more, and you are starting on that journey from which there is no return,—even then Christ will not forsake you.

"Never!" When the day of judgment comes, and the books are opened and eternity is beginning,—even then the promise will bear all your weight, Christ will not let go his hold on your soul.—Rev. J. C. Ryle.

THE IMMERSION OF THREE THOUSAND DISCIPLES ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

By W. HILL, MISSIONARY IN INDIA.

Holy Scripture states that three thousand persons were IMMERSSED on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 41). The Greek word BAPTIZO, used by the sacred writer to describe what was done, conveyed to all who heard or read it the meaning that they were IMMERSSED. If, therefore, proof could be given, either that their immersion was IMPOSSIBLE, or that, if possible, it DID NOT TAKE PLACE, the effect would be to prove that, in this instance, SCRIPTURE WAS UNTRUE, and could not be the word of God. But no proof of this kind has ever been given. It has been alleged, indeed, that for the immersion of so many there was a want of water; a want of proper convenience; and a want of time; but no proof whatever of the want of these things has been given.

I. IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THERE WAS NOT SUFFICIENT WATER. One objector says, "In Jerusalem itself, there was neither a river, nor fountain of water." Another asserts "that Jerusalem ordinarily afforded no supply of water equal to the immersion of so large a number in a period so brief, particularly during the summer." A third says, "How and where could so many persons have been immersed in so short a time?" and adds, "Even in an English or an American town, if it be not by the side of a considerable river, would it be easy, without preparation, to immerse three thousand strangers decently in one afternoon?" To say that it could not be done in a modern town, it THEREFORE could not have been done in Jerusalem, is like saying that, because tea and sugar, rice and coffee, will not grow in England, they will not grow anywhere; or that, because water will not become hard on the plains of India, it will not do so in the colder climate of England. Wisely has a writer observed, respecting things which occurred long ago, that, "Arguments, arising from supposed difficulties, are always to be received with caution; for in affairs so remote, there may have been circumstances of which we are ignorant, but which, if known, would make all plain."

If ancient Jerusalem resembled the eastern towns and cities which I have seen and in which I have lived, most certainly the objection that there was a want of water, falls to the ground. In Cuttack, in Burhampore, in Pooree, and in other towns in Orissa that I am acquainted with, I could find an abundance of water to baptize, not only three, but thirty thousand people any day. For, let it be borne in mind, that in tropical climates, where the rain falls periodically, there are not only private, but public reservoirs, in which water in immense quantities is preserved, and to which all persons have free access. Some of these are exceedingly large, and have, around them, broad flights of stone steps to give easy access to the water. In a sacred tank at Pooree, I have seen hundreds, if not thousands, bathing at the same time; and have no hesitation in saying that fifty or one hundred thousand persons might immerse themselves in it in a single day, without any inconvenience. Can it, then, be supposed, that in Jerusalem—situated in a well-watered country—which had its pools and reservoirs—there was not sufficient water in which to immerse three thousand persons? On festive occasions, Jerusalem is said to have contained from one to two millions of people. Like the Hindoos, they were accustomed to daily washings and

bathings; and, like them, they had religious rites, for the performance of which much water was needed; and yet we are told that three thousand persons COULD NOT have been immersed in a single day in Jerusalem, because there was not sufficient water!

II. IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THERE WAS NOT SUFFICIENT CONVENIENCE for the immersion of three thousand. One objector says, that, "at least twenty-four robing rooms, and a dozen dipping-places, must have been obtained." A learned Doctor declares, "These persons did not come prepared for bathing; they had no bathing-dresses with them." He then asks, "Were they plunged overhead in their usual clothing?" Again he inquires, "Were they unclothed for the purpose, and that amid thousands of spectators in a crowded city?" A celebrated paedobaptist supposes that, if they were immersed, they must have separated, and resorted in little parties to a great number of private houses scattered over the city; and says, "I cannot imagine how three thousand persons were immersed in one day in Jerusalem without any previous arrangement; as I do not believe it could now be done with decency and propriety in Manchester!" It ought to have occurred to these writers, that, what might really be inconvenient to-day, in an English town, might not have been so in Jerusalem in the days of the apostles. Eighteen or twenty centuries ago the ancient Druids and Britons wore very different dresses from our own. John the Baptist, we know on good authority, was not cumbered by many clothes. Whether in addition to his "leathern girdle" he had a bathing dress, or "robing-room," we are not informed; but, possibly, the self-same girdle was made to serve the double purpose of both bathing and ordinary dress; or if he had a spare one, in all probability it was used in turn for the self-same purposes. In India, where—as in Jerusalem of old the people bathe every day, they are always provided with bathing-dresses, or rather use for bathing purposes part of their ordinary dresses. To ask a traveller in India whether he had a bathing-dress, would be equivalent to asking an English gentleman whether he had a pocket handkerchief. As a matter of course he has it; and never enters on a journey without it. Let it not be supposed, moreover, that it is heavy, and cumbersome; it consists merely of a few yards of calico, and can be carried, wet or dry, without the slightest inconvenience. If such an objector could see the thousands in Oriental countries, who, whether at home or abroad, bathe every day, they would be careful how he repeated the assertion, that "these persons did not come prepared for bathing; they had no bathing-dresses with them." As to the objection about "robing-rooms," and "unclothing for the purpose of baptism amid thousand of spectators in a crowded city," it may be stated that, by thousands and tens of thousands who bathe daily in India, robing-rooms are never dreamt of. When they come out of the water, it is easy for them, with their simple style of dress, in a few seconds, and without the slightest approach to indecency, to fold one cloth round them and slip off the other. It is also customary, for both men and women, on finishing bathing, to return to their homes and lodgings in their wet clothes. As to spectators, there are none; for the practice of clothing and unclothing is so common in the vicinity of the reservoirs, that it fails to arrest the slightest attention. I do not, of course, affirm that the customs of India in the present day have an exact parallel in Jewish customs in the times of the apostles; but, with a knowledge of Hindoo customs, I can confidently state, that the immersion of three thousand persons in a single day would not be attended with the slightest inconvenience or indecency.

III. IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THERE WAS NOT SUFFICIENT TIME. "Supposing immersion to have been the mode," says an objector "it must have been a most laborious, disagreeable, if not impracticable, undertaking to be accomplished in five or six hours." "No ground of inference is given," observes another, "that they went into the water and stood there until the protracted and painful labour was accomplished." Without replying that it would involve no more protracted, laborious, or painful work to immerse three thousand men, than it would to sprinkle three thousand infants; it may be observed that in India, at bathing festivals, Brahmins often

stand in the water for as long a time as would be required to immerse the three thousand converts on the day of Pentecost. Women, too, for transplanting rice, and other purposes, frequently stand in water for days together, without suffering apparent inconvenience. Moreover, in this climate, it is considered a luxury to go into cool water.

If the three thousand were immersed by the twelve apostles themselves, this would give two hundred and fifty each, and these might, without difficulty, be immersed in a single afternoon. But if they called to their assistance fifty others, (of the one hundred and twenty disciples who met together from day to day,) this would give to each administrator less than fifty candidates, so that the whole number might be immersed in the course of an hour. Possibly the apostles, with the brethren assisting, might be baptizing in different reservoirs; and, at the close of the day, they might discover that they had "baptized about three thousand souls."

Heartily should I rejoice, if, at Pooree, on some festive occasion, three thousand converts should present themselves for baptism to our small band of missionaries in Orissa, making, with our native assistants, about twenty-five in number. Without regarding the work as painful, or disagreeable;—without experiencing any difficulty from the want of water, bathing-dresses, or robing-rooms;—and without the most distant approach to a lack of delicacy in the estimation of the "thousands of spectators," I am quite confident that the whole three thousand would be immersed in a single afternoon.

The scriptural account, simply and fully translated, is this: "And Peter said to them, Repent ye, and be each of you immersed, upon the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . . They therefore, who gladly received his word, were immersed; and on that day there were added about three thousand souls." (Acts ii. 38, 41).

To all whom it may concern.

As some of our Advance Payment Subscribers have omitted—probably forgotten—to forward the amount of their Subscription for the present year, we take the liberty of reminding them that we shall be glad to hear from all such of our friends, as early as possible. Some of these, also, who do not pay in advance have not yet forwarded the amount for the past year. We shall be pleased to hear from them too, without further delay. We greatly need all amounts due to meet pressing demands.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., May 8, 1872.

HOME MISSION CONVENTION.

Harmonious co-operation in Home Mission work has been a characteristic of the Baptist Churches of this Province from their earliest days. It has assumed different phases, according to circumstances, at different periods. In the earliest days the Pioneer ministers went every where, directed, as they believed, by the Spirit, preaching the gospel, and they were helped on their way by the churches, and so they left their impression on the people wherever they went. Subsequently when the churches were all in one Association there was no difficulty in having an annual general gathering of representative brethren. When the Association was divided and became three bands, they for a time did the work as best they could in connexion with each of the said organizations.

But it was soon found that the great field of missionary operation was pretty much in the Eastern part of the province, and it was sought to unite with the others again, that is, so far as the work of Home Missions was concerned, and in 1858 the N. S. Home Missionary Society was formed; which it was supposed would, to some extent, meet this demand. However, it was found that the Western part of the province was still so far distant that it was deemed more convenient that the Western Churches should have a distinct Missionary Board of their own. Some of the brethren in the Western Churches as well as those in the Central and Eastern have still believed

that a Provincial Society would be more desirable, and have from time to time sought to effect such combination. During the last year or two there have been renewals of effort to accomplish this object, and, at the Eastern Association held at North Sydney in July of last year, the following resolution was moved by Rev. A. Chipman, seconded by Rev. D. W. C. Dimock, and unanimously passed:

Resolved, That this Association appoint a delegate to the Western Association, to meet in September for the special purpose of conferring with their Home Mission Board on the desirableness of an early union with the Board the other two Associations.

Resolved, That Rev. D. W. C. Dimock be said delegate and that his expenses be paid by the Association.

At the Western Association held at Nictaux in September, Rev. D. W. C. Dimock attended, according to the request of the Eastern Association, and, as appears from the Minutes, "urged a closer affiliation in Home Missionary efforts between the Churches of the Eastern and Western portions of the Province." At the close of the discussion the following Resolution was unanimously adopted:

Having heard brother Dimock's interesting report of the operations of the Home Mission in the Eastern Association, the brethren present herby affectionately express their warm sympathy with the trials and labours of that Association.

And Resolved, That the following brethren be appointed a Committee to consider in what way a more intimate and effective union of the Baptists of this Province for Home Mission and other purposes can be accomplished:

R. vds. Dr. Day, Dr. Tupper, Isa. Wallace, John Rowe, J. H. Saunders, W. H. Porter, Geo. Armstrong, W. G. Parker, and Jos. Jones, and brethren S. Brown, A. M. Gidney, W. Miller, and Hardy Parker.

The following is the Report subsequently submitted by this Committee:

Your Committee appointed to consider in what way a more intimate and effective union of the Baptists of this Province may be accomplished,—beg to recommend the formation of a N. S. Provincial Baptist Convention for the better prosecution of Home Missions; and that for this purpose each Church in this Province be requested to send a delegate to meet at Berwick, the day before the meeting of the Central Association in A. D., 1872, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

And we further recommend, that the Chairman, and Secretary of our Home Mission Board be requested to correspond with the Board of the N. S. Home Missionary Society on this subject.

Respectfully submitted,
C. TUPPER, Chairman.

At the meeting of the N. S. Home Missionary Board, on Wednesday last, a communication from the Secretary of the Western Board, was read, calling attention to the above-mentioned action of the Western Association.

Having briefly placed before our readers the history of this matter we may be expected to offer some opinion on the action that may arise in relation thereto.

The circumstance of the Western Association having changed its time of meeting from September to the third Saturday in June will render it difficult for that body to take any action this year more than they did last year, seeing that neither of the other Associations have since then held their Annual Session. The proposed Convention at Berwick, it would appear, is entirely dependent on the churches appointing delegates, in accordance with the suggestion of the Western Association.

The deliberations of brethren who might attend such meeting, would become effective, only as they might express a pretty unanimous wish on the part of the different sections for an amalgamation. And it would of course be necessary for the three Associations to endorse the action taken at said Convention so as to make it the action of the body generally. This would of course render it necessary for the action of the Central and Eastern Associations to go before the Western Association next year, as it is still uncertain whether the brethren of the Western Association are prepared to vote for one Provincial Home Mission Board. There are some, we believe, who have been, and are still, opposed to such combination, thinking that those who live near the missionary locality are best able to direct the missions to them, and that the Western Counties need all the labor they can supply.

We have, however, no hesitation in expressing our opinion that it would be a most desirable thing for a Union to be formed of the churches throughout the Province for this great work; if it

could be effected without doing violence to the feelings of brethren East or West. An able active energetic agent wholly devoted to the work would be essential to the success of such an arrangement.

Died at his residence in Truro, May 1st, aged 64 years, REV. BENJAMIN SCOTT.

Brother Scott is well known in New Brunswick, P. E. I., and Nova Scotia, as an earnest and faithful preacher of the gospel. His labors in all these places have been blessed in the conversion of sinners;—But his work on earth is done. Unexpectedly he has been called to lay his armor down, and to receive his crown.

On Lord's Day morning he rode six or seven miles to attend his service, preached, and returned to his home the same evening. On Wednesday about nine in morning, his spirit entered the land of rest.

On Friday, 3rd inst., his funeral services were conducted in the Prince Street Baptist Church. The services were as follow:—Singing by the choir 1099th hymn. Reading of Scripture by Rev. Mr. Baxter, Presbyterian. Prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Reed, Wesleyan. Address by the Pastor of the church. Closing prayer by Rev. Mr. Chase, Presbyterian, and Benediction by Rev. Mr. Baxter.

Our brother's remains were then conveyed to their resting place, where prayer was again offered.

This sudden death falls heavily upon the widow—and leaves the church unexpectedly and suddenly destitute of a Pastor. But the Lord is the husband of the widow, and the great Shepherd still lives.

No fear or cloud obscured his faith. All was well—at the Master's bid he cheerfully crossed the river.—Com.

THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION.

THIRD ARTICLE.

But even during the most cheering and most successful periods of the denominational regime down to the present moment, every one familiarly acquainted with its working cannot but know that the professors and tutors have been most miserably paid. . . . [They] are more meagrely remunerated for their labor than any other men in the community possessing like or even much inferior attainments.

But, further, every one of these Colleges is meagrely provided—and because under the existing system, it cannot be otherwise—with a staff of instructors to teach the various branches embraced in its curriculum. Given a certain number of branches to be taught in a College or any other high class institution of learning, the Professional faculty can manage and instruct five hundred students quite as efficiently as it can fifty.—*Journal of Education*, October, 1871.

These extracts are given that our readers may see in their original form the arguments used by writers who would substitute a provincial institution for the existing Colleges. The charge of the inadequacy of the salaries at present paid, we have to admit; and it applies quite as strongly to our own institution as to any. We happen to know that our Professors are obliged to live from hand to mouth. Those in the prime of life are spending their years and laying up nothing against future wants. It certainly is not creditable to us as a body, that public servants should be obliged to consume what little property they may have had from other sources, because of the inequality of the salaries paid for services in such a position, and the demands which the position makes on one who holds it. We could not wonder if such men should sometimes think that their chances might be improved if some legitimate connection could be established between themselves and the public treasury. Nothing but love for their work will keep Professors in their places in such circumstances; and it is unfair to exact services from men in such a case and not allow a reasonable compensation. But we incline to the belief that this condition of things has arisen rather from want of knowledge and consideration than from any unwillingness to be just. It cannot be from inability to meet all equitable claims. The people will find no difficulty in supporting whatever they wish to support.

It must be evident to every one whose range of observation is not the narrowest, that the prosperity of the country demands that there should be much greater variety of interests adapted to minds of different tastes and talents. Penuriousness in public affairs is no more honorable or useful than in private. Men are worth more in a community than money. We believe it to be unwise for a country of the size and character of Nova Scotia