

interest comes before us as, for instance, that of the Systematic Beneficence Scheme, is it not possible, in such a representation of the churches as we find here, to do more to secure its hearty adoption and constant operation than by any other means we could devise? We believe that such meetings for consultation on Christian work are highly profitable and are requisites to enlarged prosperity.

Again, we think a high purpose would be secured in our Associational gatherings if there were some definite time set apart for the discussion of important topics of doctrinal or practical bearing. By this we mean that persons previously appointed should give most careful study to some allotted subject and bring the results of their mature investigations before the people. This might necessitate some change in our customary operations, but we believe the change would be beneficial. There is nothing gained by being too tenacious of old forms in an age of progress. It is better to be eclectic, and in this matter we might learn a lesson of profit from some of our smaller gatherings.

If then greater consecration to Christian work, better laid schemes for successful operation and fuller knowledge of the truth to be proclaimed be the great ends in view we are under obligation so to conduct our exercises as to secure their fullest realization. This may require that greater prominence be given to some departments of our Associational programme and perhaps in some cases a different appropriation of the time at our disposal. If our endeavour is to secure, as fully as possible, the above-mentioned ends, we believe that, first, as the best means to Christian consecration, a greater emphasis should be given to devotional exercises. Have we not reason to fear, brethren, that our meetings for prayer, placed as they are at the hours when it is most difficult to be present, are often looked upon as secondary in importance and are often suggested as a means of occupying the time while the people are gathering? If our meetings are to be characterized by spiritual power, if we are to gain from them warmer impulses in Christian life, then we must bring to them a special interest in the seasons of prayer. In reference to the second mentioned purpose of our meeting, that of consultation on Christian work, it may be objected that our time is now so fully occupied as to place such a meeting beyond our reach. We ask if the reading of church letters were dispensed with, or merely a synopsis of them given, and a meeting such as is proposed substituted, would there not be more advantage gained? We believe that there would be more benefit resulting to the churches if the combined wisdom of the Association were employed in deliberating concerning church interests, rather than in reading letters which, in the majority of cases, are written simply because letters are expected and not because there is anything special to communicate. Or if it be deemed advisable to continue the custom of letter-writing could not sufficient time for such