

MR. MOODY ON PRAYER MEETINGS.

Some men kill a prayer meeting by simply going into it. They come in with an air that as good as says that meeting is going to be formal and stiff. He goes up to the desk and drops down out of sight and you don't hear anything from him till he gets up to give out a hymn. Everything is cold and formal, no pleasantness about the meeting at all. The leader gets up and gives out a hymn, and reads it clear through before it is sung. He reads a chapter and tells you he has not come prepared with anything and you find that out yourself before he's gone very far. Then after having talked the spirit out of the meeting he will say there seems to be a lack of interest, and then deacon So-and-so will make his usual prayer, one he has made for twenty years. Then they will have another hymn and four or five who have led in the prayers for years will say a prayer. A man ought to go to the meeting and leave all his stiffness outside. Make everybody feel at home. Let him go and sit in front of the desk, not behind it. Give out the hymns and have the meeting started before the people know it.

Another thing. If there are about a hundred people at the meeting I would have about a hundred seats. I wouldn't have five hundred seats and have a hundred people scattered all through them. But people say you can't make the room smaller, you can't move the seats, they are fastened to the floor. Get a desk on rollers, and roll it down to where the people are. Get in amongst them, and let them feel they are all together. Have the room well lighted, so that you can read a hymn or portion of Scripture without straining your eyes. I don't know as that applies so much to cities as to small places. I have been in places where the lamp chimneys looked as if they were made of ground glass—hadn't been cleaned for six months.

Ventilation is another important thing. Take a man who has been working all day, perhaps in the open air, particularly in a bracing air like this morning, and let him go into a place as close as some of our meeting-places are. I have been in places where it seemed to me I was breathing the very air that I did there twenty years before—that man will begin to feel drowsy. People think it is the fault of the meeting. But often it ain't. It's only air the man wants.

The room ought to be kept clean and

cheerful.

Have a good deal of singing.

Don't stick to the same old things always, and if the meeting gets into a rut, get it out. Don't think because things have been just so for fifty years that they have got to stay so forever. I knew a case where a new superintendent was elected in the Sabbath School, and he applied to the trustees to have a few benches removed. They wouldn't have it. Those benches had been so almost ever since they could remember, and so they'd got to stay. Change the seats a little, if its going to help you to break up stiffness and get the meeting out of a rut.

Have a praise meeting now and again.

A man once said "I lived on Grumble-street nearly all my life; but I moved over into Thanksgiving street, and I tell you it's a good deal pleasanter locality."

I knew a minister who had taken charge of a congregation in New England. He couldn't get the meeting out of the rut. They had been going on in the same old way for ever so long; got the ruts worn so deep the people had lost sight of one another. He gave out one Sunday morning that there would not be the usual prayer meeting on Friday evening, but that in its place they would have a praise meeting. One deacon asked another if the young pastor had consulted him about not having prayer meetings, and he said he hadn't consulted any of them. They thought he was taking great liberties, and they called upon him in his room. He told them that they had been having prayer-meeting for a long time, and he thought a praise meeting a good thing. They asked him what he meant by a praise meeting—so long since they'd had anything of that kind, you see, they'd forgotten what it was.

The meeting was held. The pastor read one of the Psalms of David, and called upon any who had anything to praise God for to let their feelings be known. One by one they began to rise, all stiffness was gone, and after the meeting was over, instead of each going away as quick as he could, the people stayed, and shook hands with one another, and said what a good meeting they had had, and said they believed the Lord would revive His work. He'd revived it already, for he'd revived them.

Our meeting in Chicago got into the ruts, and I gave it out that we would have a promise meeting, and I told the people to bring me promises out of the Bible, giving to each person a book and