

What is the source of this deplorable state of affairs? We at once discard the notion that it is the best our students can do. They are, in most cases, men of intelligence and spiritual discernment. The trouble has its origin in the old notion that preaching is the principal thing, and to be a strong preacher is to be a strong minister. This leads to indifference towards the reading of Scripture and prayer, and ignorance as to what public prayer ought to be. Preparation for a sermon to be addressed to the people requires all week; but preparation for carrying the hearts and affections of his flock to the Heavenly Shepherd—this is done on the spur of the moment, and the result is that too often it is not done at all. As Professor Proudfoot well points out, an understanding of the affections and emotions of men, and how to arouse them, is acquired by travelling no royal road. Hard work alone brings the blessing. This is the source of the evil. Students go downstairs to the dining hall, and at the conclusion of the meal, without warning or preparation, select a chapter and lead in prayer. That the exercises in many such cases are unedifying, and sometimes even offensive to good Christian taste, goes without saying.

Is there no balm or cure for all this? On one occasion when the subject was under discussion the use of a prayer book was proposed, but was lost by a small majority. The change was too radical for that date: but seeing that Dr. Gregg, our Professor of Church History, has published a volume on this subject, valuable hints might be secured from him. There should be no objection to the reading of a prepared prayer, but in every case there ought to be preparation before any one takes the sacred task in charge. A short portion of some of the devotional parts of the Bible—for instance, the Psalms—is always in good taste: and with such changes respecting the reading and prayer worship in the dining hall will become a pleasure, and a powerful influence in the upbuilding of reverent Christian feeling. We should here like to refer students to the excellent address of the Rev. D. J. McDonnell, B.D., published in the July number of *THE MONTHLY*. In conclusion, it may be suggested that some order or arrangement be made, so that the leader may know when his turn will come to officiate.

GIVE unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice:
The confidence of reason give:
And, in the light of truth, Thy bondman
let me live!