

meetings pretty much as they really are. The key to many a character may be found by observant eyes, and many a valuable hint garnered which we can afterwards utilize for the good of our people. It affords an opportunity to meet with our brethren and enjoy a pleasant hour or two, and to hear some other voice besides our own. It must be confessed that some of the brethren do not seem to appreciate this side of the social, for they come late and go early; and from their ceaseless fidgetings one would suppose that the fate of empires depended on their getting home ten minutes earlier than others. A clerical fidget can make more people miserable than any man I know of; he can upset more programmes, mar more sociality, kill more good-fellowship; but we must charitably suppose that he has mighty projects on hand for the benefit of the world unknown to his brethren (or to anyone else) which makes his soul loathe to mingle in the small affairs of life.

In our own churches we are the perpetual presiding officer, the uncontradicted exponent of the law, and from the imperial character of our rule there is danger of our becoming dogmatic in opinion and whimsical in manner. Let any one of us take our dogmas and whims and air them before an unknown audience our faith in them is apt to become rudely shaken. While a student in Leipzig one of the most renowned lecturers of New England occupied the pulpit of the American Church for one Sabbath. He came unexpectedly, and few, who had not heard him before, knew the speaker. The address was one often given previously, and of world-wide reputation, yet it was with difficulty many refrained from open laughter at the odd gestures which marred a finished and brilliant oration, while those who knew came away mortified that such truth and wisdom should be so unnecessarily prejudiced. Even genius has to be careful of manner, much more those to whom this gift has not been granted have to be guarded so that their manner of presenting does not mar the matter which they present. To hear the addresses of others and to watch their acceptance with the audience and to learn thereby how to present truth that it may obtain favor, and how to avoid those errors which may hinder its acceptability, is an advantage which *can* be gained from these social gatherings.