

# The Christian

"FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD."—Paul.

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## The Christian.

### WHO KILLED THE PRAYER MEETING?

1. The pastor killed it. Although he gave notice from the pulpit on Sunday that there would be "a prayer-meeting" in the vestry on Wednesday evening, he changed it into a lecture when the evening came. As a lecture it was a great success, as a prayer-meeting it was a lamentable failure. After the learned man had taken twenty minutes himself, everyone else felt that whatever he might say would seem very tame. Young John Evans wanted to say a word or two, telling how the Lord Jesus had satisfied his hungry soul, and then utter a short prayer of request for other hungry souls, but his poor little word was nowhere. Indeed, he didn't say it. Oh, the pauses of that meeting! Surely the clock in the corner never ticked so loudly. And the pastor killed it.

2. The deacon killed it. It was the next week. This time the pastor went in with a warm heart. He opened the meeting with a short, tender prayer, and then in a brief word, told, as a child might tell it, the preciousness of the Lord's presence. And it seemed as if nothing could prevent it from being a hopeful, quickening season. Something did prevent it. The grand old deacon was a little tired and sleepy, but he thought he must do something to take up the time. He began away back in the sin of Eden, and did not stop till he reached the year 1885. And then he said, "Let us pray." Was that really "praying," that ten minutes description of the plan of salvation which followed? Was this what that disc'raged man over there in the corner wanted from the meeting? Alas, the deacon killed it all!

3. The thoughtless member killed it. She is at the meeting, although not always there. Next to her sits a friend who is out of Christ. The thoughtless member whispers during the pastor's prayer, giggles at every mistake and turns over the leaves of the hymn-book when anyone talks. The people within a radius of ten feet each way are disturbed. The Spirit is grieved and that, too, by one who is professing to seek the glory of God. And that killed the prayer meeting.

4. The officious member killed it. One of the weaker brothers offered a prayer and made a mistake in it. Another brother misquoted a text. The pastor never corrected an error during a meeting. He thought the correction more fatal to the spirit of the meeting than the mistake. Not so the officious brother. He rose and corrected each mistake, and that killed several meetings.

5. The six members who took ten minutes each killed it. It was a fine symposium on the theme, "Christ the Bread of Life," but it was not a prayer-meeting. It ran over the hour and the only prayer was the opening prayer.

6. The fault-finding member killed one precious meeting. His prayer was a real lecture to God, reminding him of the failings and wickedness of the church. When Christ said to his disciples, "Give ye them to eat," did he mean gall and wormwood, or the Bread of Life? Would not one earnest prayer at home before the meeting have brought as its answer a sweeter spirit?

How many ways there are of killing the prayer-meeting? How many a church has, this year, lost its Week of Prayer through thoughtless, indifferent, careless members? Do we have enough of praying? Do good people ever err by too brief prayers.

Dear reader, don't kill any more prayer-meetings.—*Rev. S. W. Adriance in the Congregationalist.*

### MISSION WORK IN CHINA.

A brief account of the efforts that have been made to Christianize the inhabitants of China may be of interest to others besides the writer of the following card:

Please give a sketch of the mission work in China, its origin and growth. A READER.  
VEEDERSBURG, Ind.

The Roman Catholics established a mission in Peking early in the seventeenth century, and from this point they spread rapidly in all directions, not only making many converts to their faith, but also getting into their possession immense property. But a persecution arose against them. Their property was confiscated and all foreigners were driven from the country, and the empire was closed for about two hundred years. When, in 1842, it was re-opened, the priests of the Church of Rome entered without delay, and not only claimed the property that had been taken from them two hundred years before, but succeeded in recovering it under the influence of French guns. They had in China, according to their own official statement in 1882, 41 bishops, 664 European priests, 34 colleges, 34 convents, and 1,092,818 converts.

When China was closed against foreigners, Dr. Morrison, of the Church of England, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, sailed for China in the year 1807. Under the shelter of the East India Company, he was permitted to live and labor in Canton and Macao, on the southeast coast. He continued in this work till his death in 1834. Before his death he had succeeded in preparing a Chinese dictionary, and also a new translation of the Chinese scriptures.

As China itself was closed, he and those with him established missions in Malacca, Batavia, Penang and Singapore. In 1842 five ports were opened to foreigners for residence. The London Society immediately established missions in Hong Kong, Canton, Amoy and Shanghai. There are now representatives of over thirty different missionary organizations engaged in mission work in China. Protestants have less than five hun-

dred missionaries in China—given at 480—counting the wives of missionaries, while the Roman Catholics have nearly seven hundred priests. Protestants have at the present time in China about 25,000 native converts.

It will be readily seen from these figures that but few of China's 300,000,000 people have had the opportunity of hearing the gospel of Christ, and much of what the few have heard is a caricature of the Christian religion.—*Christian Standard.*

### A HAPPY DISCRIMINATION.

The Disciples of Christ in California, Pa., where the writer is now engaged in a meeting, were some years ago holding a prayer-meeting in the town of Greenfield which is a little distance farther down the river. They had invited some members of the Methodist Church, who lived in Merchanttown, just across the river, to assist them. They came—and as the meeting was progressing, several persons having offered prayer, the leader called for Scripture recitations. Quite a number were given by Disciples who were then present; whereupon a Methodist man arose and said that he would give a recitation, but not from Scripture. He continued to speak and among other things said that he thought the time could be more profitably spent in praying than in reciting and reading Scripture.

When his speech was ended a Scotch brother arose and said that an important subject had just been mentioned, viz., how they could most profitably spend the time they might remain together—whether in praying or singing exclusively or in reading and reciting and setting forth the Scriptures in connection therewith. To this he added that as it respects the ideas that it should be praying and singing rather than in reading and reciting the word of God he had this to say,—“In prayer we talk to God; but in the Scriptures, God talks to us. In view of this it seems strange that we should in a meeting like this spend all the time in talking to God and not allow him by his word to talk to us.”

It is useless to inform the reader that no more speeches were made on the subject. That one HAPPY DISCRIMINATION had the happy effect of setting that question happily at rest.—*Selected.*

### IRRITABILITY.

This is one of the most unfortunate characteristics belonging to fallen humanity. It is very annoying and repulsive to the persons with whom the possessor comes in contact. The irritable are unjust; they are dissatisfied; they are exacting. The habit of irritability has an unfortunate growth, and it soon reaches such a state that its possessor is incapable of conferring happiness upon others. It so perverts the imagination and distorts the other mental faculties that the true is