

special preparation of my own heart. I seek to be prepared for the prayer-meeting. It doesn't do simply to be present. Nothing so blights a prayer-meeting as unpreparedness on the part of the minister at the head of it. Somehow it is worse in his case than in that of any other person; probably just because more is expected of him. Nearly all the people present have been actively engaged all day in the business of life, and they are to a great extent dependent upon their spiritual leader. It is so very specially with those—working-men in every case—who may take part in the meeting. The key-note which the minister strikes is, generally speaking, that which they will pass on. Oh the humiliation of feeling that, by allowing ourselves to be robbed of the time which ought to have been spent in preparation, the meeting through our unspirituality, has been a failure, and souls have been sent away without that quickening comfort, and strength which they had expected!

Besides endeavouring after it myself, I continually urge upon the people in general, and upon those likely to take public part in particular, the desirability of possessing a spirit of prayer in this service. This they more or less attain to, and to this in its own place, as much as anything, is to be attributed the success of the prayer-meeting.

As to the actual method of conducting our prayer-meeting, we observe considerable variety. Always for fifteen or twenty minutes we consider a portion of Scripture—a text, an incident, or a portion of some book taken up for consecutive study. This last, while it does always with the difficulty of searching for a subject, demands the more study, especially if the book is long. But the labour is well spent. For several months we have been going through

the Gospel of John. For a longer period this community has been also going through that agitation which has more or less passed over all the Highlands. As week after week we went on with our study of this Gospel, without any direct reference on our part, our people were simply amazed at its bearing upon present-day questions, and deeply grateful for the light and instruction it imparted concerning events which were happening around. As far as possible, I generally endeavour to have subjects of prayer arranged beforehand. Sometimes these are mentioned as requests for prayer at the beginning of the service; sometimes, as the meeting proceeds, each person as he is called upon to lead in prayer, is requested to make one or two subjects the special burden of his prayer. Again, instead of thus publicly mentioning subjects of prayer I adopt the method of urging upon each of those who are in the habit of leading, to come up with subjects which specially he will plead at a throne of grace. The psalms and paraphrases we carefully select. This we find to be of great importance; and quite as important, too, that we have a precentor who can lead with expression and feeling. Our meeting lasts just one hour. During that time, besides the opening psalm and prayer, we have three or four short singings and as many short prayers. Generally a singing precedes a prayer, but frequently we have two or three prayers in close succession.

In bringing to a close these remarks which you have kindly permitted me to make, may I express my conviction that we are not utilizing the prayer-meeting service to the highest advantage. If our people are absent from the Sabbath service, we speedily make inquiries as to the cause. Might not some of this opportunity be manifested in behalf of