

these meetings by leading in prayer; but in one of the districts of the congregation with which I am best acquainted, a *new departure* in the method of conducting these prayer-meetings has been in existence for some time, which is both refreshing to all who take part in them and encouraging to all who desire the prosperity of Christ's kingdom.

These meetings owe their origin to a worthy and venerable elder of our church. For a considerable time he had been anxious to have such meetings in his district, and two years ago he spoke to me about the advisability of conferring with his brother office-bearers in the Free Church and U. P. Church to ascertain if they would be willing to co-operate with him in carrying on these meetings. He was encouraged by meeting with gratifying sympathy and promise of co-operation, and after a brief period of delay the meetings were commenced. As the district is a purely agricultural one and the population scanty and far spread, it was intended from the first that these meetings should be held monthly in the homes of the respective office-bearers; that the head of the house where the meeting is held should be responsible for the conducting of the meeting—should preside, and lead the devotional exercises. These meetings are meetings for prayer, and prayer and praise and reading of scripture occupy a foremost place; but the exposition of the Word is not overlooked, and when a neighbouring minister is not present by invitation, the elder who has been the originator of these meetings gives a brief and earnest gospel address. The meetings are held in the homes of four office-bearers of the Free and U. P. Churches, three of these being elders and one a deacon.

I have been present at several of these meetings, and have been struck

with the hearty earnestness that pervades them. The place of meeting is the kitchen of a farmhouse. The ingle nook is scrupulously clean, and the peat fire banked up so as not to emit too much heat to the crowded room. The dresser, with the dairy utensils glittering upon it, has got a special scrub that day, and everything in the room looks bright and tidy. The kitchen chairs are utilized to support planks for forms, and every available space is used up to accommodate the worshippers. The farmer and his family are there; the neighbours come dropping in, and after the kindly welcome and salutations, take their seats; then the farm-workers, male and female, and the young folks from the neighbouring cottages, till the kitchen is filled. The spirit of earnest waiting upon God is evidently upon all. All who are met there recognize how restful it is after the toil of the day to meet for mutual help. The praise is joined in by all with zest, and the earnest prayer, oftentimes couched in quaint and homely phrase, enjoyed by all, for it represents the wishes of all before God in the language that comes so readily to the lips.

Two things have impressed me in connection with these meetings. First, the *earnest devotional nature* of the whole service. To meet together to call upon God, to the simple-minded and the earnest, is a matter of great solemnity. They recognize that they are in the presence of the King immortal and invisible—the peasant in the audience chamber of the Prince of the kings of the earth. And thus the spirit of devout reverence fills every heart. A cottage prayer-meeting conducted by working-men cannot possibly be a *service* of prayer, as we are apt to call it. It is not display, but the approach of many to the Burden-