

F. B. ROBB, of Amherst, then conducted an open conference on "Prayer-meeting Methods," first reading a paper on the subject.

MR. ROBB'S PAPER.

Well at the outset I would say don't conduct it at all, but make up your mind that as you are to deal with, reach out after and thank God for, the things of Heaven, for these as well as yourself, that you should be led rather than attempt to lead. Now, as the first clause is rather paradoxical and the whole premises may seem a little obscure, I will explain that I consider the first essential for the conducting of a successful prayer-meeting to be the placing of ourselves in the charge of the blessed Spirit, desiring that he may guide us, chairman as well as all others, into all the truth, for He shall not speak for himself, but whatsoever things he shall hear, these shall he speak, and shall declare unto you the things that are to come, (John 16 : 13.) Desiring then to glorify God in our bodies and our spirits which are His. (1 Cor. 6 : 20.) We listen to His voice as He makes clear and brilliant to us in our preparation, the lesson for consideration, and suggests to us what hymns are best suited to the meeting. We throw off formality and stiffness, making all present feel as perfectly free and without constraint, as is consistent with christian responsibilities.

After making a general remark or two either before taking the chair or after so as to ensure the attention, and especially the sympathy and full co-operation of all present, the time arrives to begin the meeting.

Now in these days of independence through the Holy Spirit, which means no dependence in ourselves, we must take for granted that the brother or sister chosen to be a leader has bowed the knee in earnest prayer that there may be during the meeting the operations and manifestations of the Holy Spirit's work and power. The leader having thus come in the attitude of Psalm 123 : 2, "As the eyes of servants, etc." We hear God saying in the words of that wonderful Psalm 32, "I will instruct thee, etc., I will guide thee with Mine eye upon thee."

The meeting is now opened either by the leader offering a few words of audible prayer or singing a suggestive hymn, such as "Sweet hour of Prayer," or "Once more we come God's Word to hear," then the meeting goes forward, each one present feeling free at any time during the meeting to suggest or even start a hymn or lead in prayer. As an appropriate order for some meetings, let us suppose there is prayer by the leader in opening, then comes a lively and suitable hymn, after which the leader asks all to bow for a minute or so of silent prayer, adding that brother or sister so-and-so will follow with audible prayer, then another hymn, and perhaps ask that some one or two brothers or sisters lead in prayer, sometimes calling them by name. The lesson referring to the topic for the evening is read alternately, the leader reading the first verse, and all the members in unison reading the next verse and so on. Then after the lesson is read over, the leader, or in case he may need to fill a gap at the close of the meeting, he may ask some one else personally to pray that the enlightenment and power of the Holy Spirit may be manifested by the Word used, and all the exercises, not forgetting to ask that the singing also may be blest, after which the leader may say a word or two upon the lesson that may be suggestive in the line of the topic, or he may throw the meeting open at once, and only take part as he finds the time unoccupied, for if, upon throwing the meeting open, he finds no one quite ready to take part, as is sometimes the case, he may be glad that his thoughts and prayer are yet in reserve so that the meeting cannot by any means drag. If all have come prepared to take some part, there will be no danger of a drag after the meeting has got well started, for so long as there are members to take up the time, especially if the fervency of the Holy Spirit is constraining the members, and a leader with the members,