

THE PRAYER-MEETING.

MANY a pastor finds it easier to preach a sermon than to conduct a Prayer-meeting, so that it will be both interesting and profitable. Many pious Church members go to Prayer-meeting for the sake of the cause and the pastor, out of a mere sense of duty. The Prayer-meeting should be the spiritual thermometer of the whole Church, and be the delight of the whole membership. It should be a means of spiritual development and religious education—the engine-room for the generation of “power from on high” in the individual. No single meeting for prayer ought to leave either the Church or its members where it finds them. How is this to be brought about? We will give a few hints suggested by articles in the *Baptist Quarterly Review*. Preacher and people should have a Prayer-meeting ideal—an ideal of what a true Prayer-meeting should be—and unitedly and earnestly endeavor to reach their ideal. As in every other Christian ordinance, our ideals should be taken from New Testament principles. An apostolic Prayer-meeting is about our best model. Among examples, take the one recorded in Acts iv. 23-30.

First. It was a meeting for receiving *reports* of work done. They did not spend the time in trying to persuade God to do something that they ought to have done long before, but glorified God by *witnessing* to the results of their own work.

Second. They *prayed*, not to fill up time or work up a feeling, but because they had something to pray for. They had more concern for the success of Christ's cause than for their own safety or enjoyment, and prayed accordingly. They felt the need of “boldness” of speech in a time of persecution, and prayed for it. “The idea that the Church is a mere training school for heaven, and not an organized army for conquest, paralyses our Prayer-meetings, as it does everything else.” “To minister, not to be ministered unto,” is the genius of Christianity, and ought to be the spirit of the Church. “And I will bless thee; and thou shalt be a blessing,” was the promise to Abram, and represents the Divine principle of dispensing blessings. The Christian is not the receptacle for blessings on self, but the channel of blessings to others.