

rama, or prevent the most delicate man in the community from going to his office or workshop. And how often, too, where public entertainments of the description we have named, come into competition with the devotional meetings of the church, do the latter have to give way to the former ! Similarly potent is the attraction of the Masons' or the Odd-fellows' Lodge-room, whose claims seldom fail to take precedence over those of the Lecture-room, if the night of meeting be the same. And then, there is a large class of the membership in every church who stay away, not from any counter-attraction, but from sheer indifference. The prayer-meeting is *not for them* ; at least, so they feel about it.

Now it must be confessed that the fault is not always, or wholly with those who neglect it. It often lies to a large extent with those who conduct it, or take part in it. "Our prayer-meeting is as cold as an iceberg," said one. It was the condition of his own heart that suggested the simile ! But he wanted to complain of *somebody*, so he cast the blame of it on his minister. Perhaps the reproach was merited ; perhaps it was not. But we can easily conceive of the truthfulness of the description, if the meeting was conducted like some we have seen. Only let the few who attend sit as far from the desk, and as widely scattered as possible ; let them drawl out such hymns as

"Hark ! from tombs a doleful sound," or

"My heart, how dreadful hard it is !"

to old "*Walsall*," or plaintive *Martyrs*," (expressive name) ! let the prayers be muttered and mumbled so that nobody, not to say the aged and the deaf, can hear them ; and let the exhortations be full of complainings of things in general, and of the prayer-meeting in particular, and any church may extemporize an "iceberg" in July ! Nothing less than Pentecostal tongues of fire can melt it ; and indeed, we doubt if Pentecost would ever have come, had the meeting in the upper room in Jerusalem been conducted in that way !

It is far easier, however, to point out defects than to remedy them, and we would strongly advise any one who thinks his minister is to blame in the matter, to try his hand in conducting one. We vouch for it he shall have the opportunity, if he can do it any better.

But this we may do to improve our devotional meetings. We may make it a rule to be always in attendance, *if possible*, and to carry a devotional spirit with us when we go. We may be more sociable, and sit closer together. We may be shorter, more earnest in manner as well as