

upon in a little while as a public bore, and a great nuisance; and then I stopped finding fault, and began to preach Christ, and people liked to hear me. There are a good many men who have great talents, and might do a good deal of good, who are continually finding fault. Their hands, Ishmael-like, are against everybody. Look at Stephen and Barnabas, and the early Christians. We don't find them finding fault! They were holding up and preaching Christ, and that is what this world wants.

Q. How are we to get more life into our prayer-meetings? A. Get more into yourselves first. (Laughter.) If there is no life in a man it is hard work for him to put any into others. Get out of the old ruts and have a change. In some prayer-meetings it is the custom of having Deacon Jones or White pray, and then the minister reads some great long chapter, and before he gets through he talks all the spirit out of the meeting, and then they go home. It's no wonder young people don't come to prayer-meetings. Have variety—new hymns, once in a while. Get people close together. I have seen many a meeting lost by the people being scattered. People scatter away from the minister, as if they thought they would catch some disease near him. (Laughter.) There is no power at all in such meetings. Have a live meeting, and get the people right up near you. If they don't come, have a pulpit on wheels, and roll it right down among them. Don't have one of these great box affairs where they can't see you. If you can't do any better take a chair and stand upon that. And then just let them all gather around and have perfect freedom and sympathy. Then have the place of meeting well ventilated. Sometimes the janitors forget to open the windows. I have been in some of them when it seemed as though there was the same air there that there was twenty years ago. (Laughter.) People who have been working out in the open air all day come in there and they feel just like going to sleep, and then they lay it on the minister. Have the room ventilated, and warm and light and cheerful. Have short prayers. If any one prays five minutes just go up to him after the meeting is over, and say,

“brother Jones,” or whatever his name is, “I wish you wouldn't pray so long to-morrow night.” I say five minutes, some pray fifteen minutes; I don't know any meeting that can stand that. If you can't pray short, don't pray at all. These men who make long prayers are generally the ones that pray least at home. They are generally prayerless prayers, and they take the spirit right out of the meeting. You ought to make the prayer-meeting the most attractive meeting in the church during the week.

Q. May not a minister be too personal in his sermons? A. Well, I don't know. It seems to me that is what we want. Some men cover up points so that people won't see them. I think it is better to bring them out. Personal preaching is effective. It is not a bad thing for a man who is sound asleep; it wakes him up. When Dr. Taylor was preaching so powerfully, I was annoyed at seeing a man sound asleep near the platform. I asked Dr. Gordon to wake him up, and he looked at me in amazement. I think it is a religious duty to wake them up. (Laughter.) It is terribly annoying to a man to be preaching and have a man sound asleep right in front of him. A little punch of the elbow may save that man. I remember I used to go up into the gallery when I was a boy, and get into a comfortable place and go to sleep. And when I went to Mt. Vernon Church I used to go to sleep there. And one day when I was up there in the gallery sound asleep, a young man from Harvard College, I think—and I shall always feel very grateful to him—I wish I knew his name—gave me a punch with his elbow, and I looked up, and I said to myself, Who has been telling Dr. Kirk about me? I woke up just at the right time. It was just the place in the sermon that hit my case. The perspiration stood out all over me. I never felt so cheap in my life, and I thought if I only got out of that church I would never go there again. It did me a great deal of good to wake me up. So when you see a man asleep near you, wake him up. In my opinion the bulk of the preaching goes over the heads of the people. What we want is, preaching for effect. Some people say, “Oh, that sermon is all preached for ef-