

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

HOW TO IMPROVE THE PRAYER MEETING.

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This problem has puzzled the brain of many a pastor, elder and church member. Perhaps we can throw some rays of light upon it that may lead to a solution of the difficulty.

1. Let it be clearly understood by the congregation that the prayer meeting is an absolute necessity to the existence of a healthy and vigorous church. It seems to me that when our people look upon the prayer meeting from this stand point, we can easily obtain the rest.

2. Let it be understood by the people that Christ looks to every believer to bear his or her share of the work of rendering the church services a grand and constant success. "To every man his work." "What is that to thee?" Follow thou Me."

3. Let the presence of Jesus Christ be ever recognized by members. Jesus is present in every meeting of the saints, deeply interested in the whole of the service. Hear what He says in this connection.

"Let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely." (Song of Solomon, ii. 14.)

I am quite well aware that this word applies to private devotional exercises, nevertheless, it is equally applicable to the church assembly on Sabbath or week day. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."

When the Queen intimates that she will hold a levee with what pleasure the nobility and gentry hear the announcement, and with what alacrity do they prepare for the august occasion!

In like manner when the Lord Jesus intimates that He will hold a levee in the place where He has recorded His name, surely we ought with far more pleasure and alacrity prepare for and go to meet Him, "who alone hath the word of eternal life"—to meet and commune with Him, who comes to bestow upon us enduring blessings. It affords the blessed Saviour joy to see His people in the week night service and to hear their voices in praise, prayer and testimony. Let it be ours to give this joy to Jesus in the prayer meeting every week. If we do, it will have a most marked effect upon ourselves in every-day life routine duties. "Take My yoke upon you."

Let the pastors live more and more under a realizing sense of the presence of the Master and the people will soon come to it and the Church will soon manifest the effects of it.

4. How to make the meetings interesting? This plan might be tried to enlist members in the exercises:

The pastor could speak to say six members one week and as many another week, and give each something to do in the meeting. One might read a few verses of Scripture, another pray (shortly) another read a hymn, another (who knows when to stop) might give a brief address.

I have found this plan exceedingly helpful in my own work. I feel satisfied that, with a little discreet persistency, ministers can enlist their earnest fellowship in this way, and thus make the prayer meeting what it really is, the people's service.

Give this method a fair trial and I have no fear for the result. In a word, let each come prepared with some verse or thought or hymn for the good of the whole organization.

5. Be punctual in commencing and closing the meeting; let the exercises be varied and never drag. If a brother prays too long don't be afraid to tell him, as Moody did once in a similar case: "Brother, that was a good prayer—the first five minutes."

Endeavour yourself to be short, sharp, crisp and sparkling, and the meeting will follow suit in the different exercises.

6. Intimate from the pulpit the topic for the prayer meeting; the members can then study it up, and they will.

Above all, remember the promise of Jesus: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Seek to render the presence of Jesus a reality to yourself and the people, and God will make the service a blessing for edification and salvation.

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AN AUTUMN REMINDER

BY FIDELIS.

The yellowing leaves and shortening days tell us that the summer of 1885 has passed away, and that winter is coming fastly—wintc., *par excellence*, the season of *work* and social life—as summer is, for many, the season of rest and enjoyment of Nature's beauty. Many of the readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN have pleasant summer memories of open air life by the breezy sea beach, among the hills, in the woods

and on the river. They will cheer the "onward eye" during many a bleak or dreary winter day. But besides the pleasant memories of natural beauty is there not the invigorating influence of the rest—the refreshment of soul, also, that comes from communion with God through His own unspoiled works? Many will gratefully acknowledge this, as they look back to happy summer days by "flood or fell, when they seemed to enter the immediate presence of Him who reveals Himself in the Book of Nature as well as in the Book of Revelation.

But all privilege or enrichment comes to us—not for ourselves alone, but as a gift to be shared, as far as possible, with others. "Freely ye have received, freely give" is the law of all God's giving. Whatever therefore we have gained, it is for us to use wisely in the service of Him who gave it, and of those He means us to bless. We know what was the judgment on him who "hurt nobody but only hid his talent in a napkin." The new strength we have received from the invigorating country air—is it not to be used in some branch of Christ's service. The expanded thought, the lessons of beauty and wisdom, the glimpses of God's love—are they not to make our service more gracious, more fruitful, more willing and spontaneous? Can we not do something to instil the same lessons, the same refreshing, into other lives?

Many are the ways and channels of Christian work and usefulness to day. For some they are only too numerous, and will soon absorb all and more of the new vigour received. But with many there is little study of how best to expend it in their Saviour's work. Yet each has his or her own special fitness, special mission, special work. Is it not the duty of each in the commonest gratitude for great privileges and precious blessings, to try to find out just a *hut work* the Lord would have us to do, and then to set to work and do it with all our might in the love and power that He and He alone can give? So doing we may carry summer in our hearts all the year round.

There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime
Who carry praise in their heart
Through dusty lane and wrangling mart,
Flinging their daily task with busier feet,
Because their inmost hearts a holy strain repeat

ONLY

Only a word for the Master,
Lovingly, quietly said;
Only a word,
Yet the Master heard,
And some fainting hearts were fed.

Only a look of remonstrance,
Sorrowful, gentle and deep;
Only a look,
Yet the strong man shook,
And he went alone to weep.

Only some act of devotion,
Willingly, joyfully done;
"Surely 'twas nought,"
(So the proud world thought,)
But yet souls for Christ were won.

Only an hour with the children,
Pleasantly, cheerfully given;
Yet seed was sown
In that hour alone,
Which would bring forth fruit for heaven,

"Only," but Jesus is looking
Constantly, tenderly down
To earth, and sees
Those who strive to please,
And their love He loves to crown.

—Word and Work.

WOMAN'S WORK AND PLACE IN THE CHURCH.

This is the age for the ministry of woman. She has demonstrated her unspeakable power and usefulness in the zenanas of India and Turkey; in the hospitals of Europe and America; in missions of Christ-like benevolence to the lost and wretched, not only in crowded cities but in the world at large. Her avenues of usefulness are almost boundless, from the beautiful "flower missions" on to that of the "prison gates," where she throws herself against the great tide of human guilt, and seeks to save, by the sympathy of the Gospel, those who have been untouched by the justice of the law.

The Scriptural office of deaconess demonstrates that the primitive Church, moved by the Holy Ghost, gave to woman a position of dignity and usefulness, and now, after eighteen hundred years of experience during which the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ has been quickening and renovating untold thousands in the Gentile world, to ignore her place when sanctified by grace is folly in the extreme; and the clergyman who in his ministerial work passes her over, neglects, whether he knows it or not, one-half the working power of his church.

How often when you have languidly announced

some important meeting, feeling as you did so, that but few would attend, have you realized to the bitter end all the disappointment you at first anticipated? If, on the contrary, you had only gathered together all the devout women in your flock—interested them in the good cause, and led them to undertake it with all the fervour of their glowing nature—instead of failure, you would have experienced, with the blessing of God, a marked success, and, in addition, would have discovered how much more earnestness there was among your people than you had before imagined. Ask her assistance in ministering to the sick; in the care of the poor, and in many offices in which with peculiar propriety her versatile gifts may be employed. Each year, as you do this, will you esteem more and more highly the position of sanctified women in the Church of Christ. *Bishop Baldwin*

TAKE PART IN THE CONTEST.

Too many of our congregations, whether in the city or country, look upon their respective clergymen much as the ancient Romans did on the gladiators in the circus. They sit on the benches and sometimes clap and cheer, and sometimes shriek out their disapproval while he fights the lions.

If he do well, thumbs go up, but if the contrary, down they go, and the unfortunate minister, like the gladiator, must there and then die. Now, what I propose is that the congregation should leave the benches and come down and themselves help to fight the lions. In this age, as in every other that has preceded us, we need something more from our people than cheers and hisses: we need the co-operation of loyal hearts and true: the spontaneous action of those who in the day of danger will stand shoulder to shoulder with their appointed leaders, and by every effort in their power help to push the battle to the gate. Our clergy were certainly intended to be spiritual captains to lead on their people in the tremendous contest against sin and Satan: but by no means can they occupy all the subordinate positions in the army as well; they cannot be lieutenants and sergeants and corporals and rank and file at one and the same time; they cannot be the whole army in themselves. Now, in too many parishes, we have the officers, but from one fault and another, no army to give battle to the foe. While, however, saying this, I am confident that throughout the length and breadth of our land, we have hundreds and thousands of earnest men and women who only need proper organization and development to make them a tremendous power for good. *Bishop Baldwin.*

THE ONE JOURNEY.

"When I was a young man," says James Simpson, "there lived a man in our neighbourhood who was universally reported to be uncommonly liberal in his dealings. When he had any of the produce of his farm to dispose of he made it an invariable rule to give good measure, over good, rather more than could be required of him. One of his friends observing him frequently doing so, questioned him why he did it, and told him he gave too much, and said it would not be to his own advantage. Now, my friends, mark the answer of that man: 'God Almighty has given me but one journey through the world, and when gone I cannot return to rectify mistakes.' ... Think of this, friends *but one journey through the world.*

DR. MACLAY, who has spent eight years as missionary to Japan, says he never heard a Japanese oath. He never heard a missionary say that he had heard one swear. He has heard them trying to repeat some oaths in English learned from sailors. They thought they were learning English. This is another illustration of how other nations copy our vices.

SIERRA LONE (West Africa), according to the Government census of 1881, has a population of over 60,000. The Episcopalians and Presbyterians number 18,000; the Methodists, 17,000; the Baptists, 388; Roman Catholics, 369. Including the members and scholars of the Methodist churches, the Methodists have an attendance on public worship of about 21,000.

"MISSIONS are a failure—they cost too much." So some people say. The statement is not true. The Governor of Natal in a brief address, said: "One missionary is worth more than a battalion of soldiers." The Earl of Shaftesbury says "if London did not have its four hundred missionaries it would require 40,000 more police." Civilized nations cannot afford to cease to carry on missions.

A YOUNG Japanese, says the *Christian Union*, had been imprisoned for being too outspoken. In his prison at Tokio he set to work to preach Christ to his fellow-sufferers, and the news of these efforts attracted others, till he had three hundred hearers. When released he laid the neglected state of the prisoners before those in office, and he has been appointed governor of a new prison, with the consent of the authorities to pursue his religious work—an evidence of the value of words spoken in season.