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THE REDEMPTION OF THE
PRAYER-MEETING.

*O, for a faithful, upward look,
For the gracious Spirit, first to seal,
For lasting good this little book,
And then to open and reveal!*

*Upon its journeys, Lord, attend!
Make it a teacher, guide and friend;
That thus the loved "sweet hour of prayer"
May be yet sweeter everywhere.*

THE REDEMPTION OF THE PRAYER-MEETING

By

J. GEORGE HALLER, Ph. D.



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FOREWORD.

THE purpose of this volume is, not alone to furnish prayer-meeting talks and programs, but to offer the largest possible variety of helpful hints and methods which the author and others have tested and found to have merit.

No substitutes are offered for pastoral initiative and effort. Indeed, there can be no successful substitute. All the wise together could not compile prayer-meeting studies that would not anesthetize the meeting that is doped with them, in lieu of prayerful and painstaking preparation and direction.

Volumes of prayer-meeting sermonettes are not wanted, but talks that are germinal, together with directions as to their use in connection with other exercises, are sought by all wide-awake pastors.

The first and second parts of this treatise

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deal directly with the prayer-meeting itself. In the Prayer-meeting Studies of the third part the author has sought to avoid prosy preaching—with what success the reader may judge. The “Suggestions” accompanying them will, it is modestly believed, add to their value. Themes are presented that lie close to daily life. There are a few of a more doctrinal hue, but always they aim at practical usefulness rather than at didactic or apologetic purposes.

It is to the pastor who is willing to work out his own problems, while welcoming suggestions, that this little volume offers a hand. Every such man with God will win. If, by reading every page, he finds one hint, and only one, by which he can improve the mid-week service, the writing and the reading will have its due reward.

INTRODUCTION.

“THE REDEMPTION OF THE PRAYER-MEETING!”

MY friend has hit upon a telling title. No name could express more accurately the design and scope of the book. And the author has stuck to his text. That is not always true of book-builders and sermon-makers.

Many prayer-meetings need redemption. They are no good. They fill an hour of space each week, but that is about all. They are without aim and animation. They lack pith and point. They are colorless and cold. They seldom yield fruit. Any pen-point, therefore, which will call attention to these deplorable conditions and suggest any method of redemption is entitled to high praise. To diagnose the disease is one thing. To prescribe an adequate remedy is another. Dr. Haller does both.

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If I were required to put my finger on the chief cause of a poor prayer-meeting, I would face a perplexing task. But on the whole, I would probably write down one word—MONOTONY. That trouble is widespread. And it can be cured only by a variety. The meeting does not need something novel and sensational, but something *different*. No two meetings should be quite the same. Prayer-meeting ruts are particularly dangerous. “The prayer-meeting will be held on Thursday evening, as usual,” said the minister last Sunday. That is the great trouble. A meeting “as usual” will not draw. It must be *unusual*, if it shall act like a magnet. An *unusual* meeting will prove attractive to sinners and saints, and is a perpetual guarantee against empty seats.

An unusual meeting does not come by chance. It does not happen. It is the result of preparation. If the average minister would give as much attention to preparation for the leadership of his weekly devotional meeting as he does to preparation for his Sunday morning

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service, he would no longer have occasion to scold his people for their absence. By emphasizing preparation I do not mean to advocate a cut-and-dried program that crushes out all spontaneity, but a preparation which promotes originality and freshness and which gives direction to the deepest stirrings of mind and heart. This preparation must be made by pastor and people. They share responsibility. They must unite to make the meeting go.

I risk nothing in saying that many an anxious pastor and church member will be aided materially in "getting ready for meeting" by a careful study of the suggestions and plans in the pages that follow.

The value of much of this material is that it discards the merely theoretical and gives first place to that which is severely practical. The plans which the author recommends have been tested in the actual life of the Church. They have "worked" and, it is safe to say, will work again. There is very little literature covering this phase of Church life, and we are under

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obligations to the author for the industry and enthusiasm which has enabled him to gather into these pages so much that is practical and usable.

As pastor and district superintendent Dr. Haller has been an honorable and useful servant of the Church, and we shall be surprised if the little volume, in your hands, does not prove to be the most valuable contribution of his devoted life.

Buffalo, N. Y.

J. F. BERRY.

PART I.
ANALYTICAL AND REMEDIAL.

THE PRAYER-MEETING IDEA.

THE prayer-meeting is old. The Christian Church has never been wholly without it. In the early Church Christians met for prayer long before the sermon, as we have it, was evolved. Pentecost was the result of a prayer-meeting. Peter was delivered out of prison through a prayer-meeting (Acts 12:5). The somewhat hackneyed phrase, "where prayer was wont to be made," grew out of a riverside prayer-meeting in Philippi, and one of its fruits was the conversion of Lydia, the purple-seller.

In the time of the persecutions the early Christians gathered for prayer in houses, caverns, and catacombs. Later, when the Church became an established ecclesiasticism, the prayer-meeting, as an institution, was lost sight of, until the Reformation brought it to light again, and now for several centuries it

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has been regarded as an essential weekly service by most evangelical denominations.

Revivals of religion are closely connected with the prayer-meeting. Many evolutionary movements of a spiritual character have originated in it. The foreign missionary movement had its inception in a prayer-meeting held by five young men—Mills, Richards, Robbins, Loomis, and Green—under a haystack, where they sought shelter from a storm, in Williamsburg, 1806. Likewise the great temperance revival of the past, such as the Murphy movement and the Woman's Crusade, were inspired and made effective by meetings appointed for earnest supplication to God. To this day evangelists who stir communities most deeply and have the largest results are those who insist upon weeks of special services for prayer in advance of their appearance. The great revival of 1859 in Ireland, which brought 10,000 communicants into the Presbyterian fold, is acknowledged to have been the result of a prayer-meeting held for several months in a

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schoolhouse in Tannybrake. The revivals in Scotland and Wales, at about the same time, had a similar origin.

To-day, no less than in the past, the prayer service fosters, as nothing else can, that effectiveness and that spiritual fellowship which the Creed designates as “the communion of saints”—so essential to the life and growth of the Church.

THE HUSH OF THE HOUR OF PRAYER.

Earth's infatuations,
Duty's urgent prod,
Daily occupations,
Leave me now with God!

Hour of supplication,
Time of praise and prayer,
Thought and consecration—
God and man are there.

Exit, care and sighing;
Enter, peace and power;
Exit, strife and crying
From this holy hour!

Hush, ye clamorous voices,
Crying unto me;
While my heart rejoices
Here in prayer to be.

CHAPTER I.

SAVING THE PRAYER-MEETING.

DOES THE PRAYER-MEETING NEED SAVING?

IF the prayer-meeting needs saving, what is wrong with it? By no means has it lost all its savor. In many instances it is the best thing in the Church still. Many prayer-meetings are fresh, fervent, vital, scintillating, and attractive. The Church that has such a prayer-meeting has many other good things. It has a tactful pastor, for without such there can be no wide-awake prayer-meeting. It has a warm-hearted, soul-winning membership. It is aggressive in evangelism, and carries the sword of the Spirit unsheathed. It is likely to have devout young people and a good Sunday school. O, the refreshings of the "sweet hour of prayer," when it is sweet, but, alas, for the unblest drudgery of it when it is n't!

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Many prayer-meetings are far from ideal, and many more have died unsaved long ago, though they are still being "held." Such meetings are the deadest thing in the Church, whereas they should be the most alive. The small attendance and lagging spirit impress one as though the service were for aged saints alone, who formed the habit of going long ago and do not care to break it now. Less than one-fourth of the membership are present in the average mid-week service, and among the absentees are many prominent men and women.

The author listened to the kind but caustic words of a man of large affairs who, after a long absence, returned and, in the mid-week service, said that though a faithful attendant years ago, of late he had lost his interest in this service because of its impractical character. His interest in religion had not diminished, he said, but this particular meeting did not appeal to his notion of aggressive Christianity. It seemed too much like a frantic effort of Christians to have a good time. This

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criticism is upon the lips of thousands of hard-headed men, and it expresses the reason for their absence from this service. Doubtless the lack of interest in spiritual things explains the absence of many, but not of all. Frequently these absentees are the very men and women whose counsel and assistance the pastor never seeks in vain, and who welcome every Christian duty except that of attending prayer-meeting. Evidently the meeting does not attract them. In the face of this fact, would it not be in order to investigate and learn if the meeting is all it could and should be? Shall we cover over the real state of things and go on repeating in painful monotony our weekly jeremiads about the many absentees and our vain assurance, "You will be missed, if not there?" Shall we not rather rally our utmost initiative to make this service such that we can say instead, "You will be most welcome if you come, and if you do not, you will miss (not, 'We will miss you') the best thing of the week?"

Thousands of devoted pastors grieve at the

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deadly pace of their prayer-meeting, at the slim attendance, the indifferent participation, the dull music, and the platitudinous ruttiness of the prayers and testimonies. *Yes, the prayer-meeting needs saving. It must be saved, if it is to save others.*

WHY SAVE THE PRAYER-MEETING?

If the majority do not care for this service, why keep it up? Because many do care for it, and all need it; because, more and more, secret and family prayer are falling into disuse; and because no other service is adapted to fill its peculiar mission. The class meeting affords an hour of spiritual delight to an ever-diminishing number. The devotional service of the Young People's Society is primarily for the young, should not supplant the mid-week service of the Church, and, besides, it has peculiar problems of its own.

The clinical metaphor of the prayer-meeting being the thermometer of the Church seems to have been universally adopted. Henry Ward

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Beecher called it the bellows to Sunday—something that makes the eloquence and devotion in the great congregation. Though not so delicate an instrument as the thermometer, the bellows is much more reviving, and hence it more aptly represents the prayer-meeting.

Save the prayer-meeting because for Christians it is the Salvation Army “knee-drill” which is to prepare for the public march; the weekly council of the general manager with his employees for more efficient service; the commissariat for provisioning the King’s army; the forum for the interchange of thought; the family hearth for closest Christian fellowship; and the holy of holies for the nearest possible approach to God through Jesus Christ. For the unsaved it is a call to meditation, penitence, surrender to and faith in Christ, and enrollment in His army, the Christian Church. To let a service drift and die, which means and may accomplish all this, spells deterioration and defeat for the Church that does it.

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The mid-week service is to furnish instruction, inspiration, and direction for specific work, *and is not for spiritual delectation only*. The delectation should never be the end sought, but always the result gratuitously added. The prayer-meeting that is but an effort of pastor and people to have a good time is a fake and a failure. If less effort were made to "get a blessing" and more to get a new vision of Christ, of truth, and a new grip on the life abundant, on some specific duty, more blessing would be the result. Going to prayer-meeting just to "get a blessing" is like reading a book for the romance of it. It is living to eat and eating to tickle the palate. But going to commune with the King of kings and His people for practical purposes, that is eating to live and from it there comes the life abundant.

Blessings that are caught on the wing easily flit away, but the blessing that quietly distills as the dew, and settles, with or without observation, into the conscious and through this into the sub-conscious life—that blessing abides.

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THE PRAYER-MEETING CAN BE SAVED.

While the author would not boast that he has solved the prayer-meeting problem, he dares express the conviction that the prayer-meeting can be saved, and that any pastor of average ability can save it, if he will. There are few places where it can not be made a real delight. Large numbers, mighty sweep of intellect and eloquence are not required. Artistic singers and fine music are helpful, but not indispensable. This is pre-eminently the people's hour—their favored time for prophesying, seeing visions, and dreaming dreams. Of all the services of the Church, this one has least excuse for being dull. The leader is bound by no fixed order of procedure. He can shift as and when he wills; can employ any and many methods; can draw upon God and man, nature and grace, art and religion, literature sacred and secular, current events and individual experience, the aged and the young, members and non-members. And such a service dull! God wills it

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should be dynamic with His Spirit. What, with the rich and varied doctrines of our Christianity, with the fundamental fact in full force that our impressions and knowledge of God are not the result of logic, but always of experience, with God's people eager, wistful to grow in knowledge and grace, with a comfortable room, and sixty minutes shut in with God, and with an enthusiastic and resourceful pastor—this will be the richest, sweetest hour of the week. *The prayer-meeting can be saved.*

“Lord, what a change within us one short hour,
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make !
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parched ground refresh as with a shower !
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower ;
We rise, and all the distant and the near
Stands forth in sunny outline brave and clear.”

CHAPTER II.

THE PRAYER-MEETING AND THE PEOPLE.

THE prayer-meeting is pre-eminently the people's meeting, and the people should back it up. It is every member's plain duty to do so. The author wishes a personal word with the reader on this point.

You are a member of the Church. You love it and also your pastor, but perhaps you ignore both by avoiding the prayer-meeting. The pastor may not complain, and, being tactful, will not scold, but, depend upon it, he deeply feels and keenly regrets your absence. He does not wish to bore you and so says little, perhaps, but he grieves. If you should unexpectedly appear, how it would please him; and if henceforth you came regularly, how it would encourage him for every task! Why don't you do

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it? Where will one hour count for as much? If you accomplished no more than to cheer him, that would be well worth the effort. But you will accomplish that and much more besides. While encouraging others you will get help you need yourself. It is a poor Christian that can not get some good in any prayer service. If the meeting is not to your liking, talk freely with your pastor about it, and help him make it what it should be. He is probably not so self-sufficient as to refuse a suggestion, and, perhaps, he can offer one to you. Anyway, work together to make the mid-week service the most attractive meeting of the Church. You will be a better man or woman for doing it. Do not think these lines to be a censure, but read this volume to the end. It may be you will find a hint or two that will enable you to assist your pastor in making your prayer-meeting more efficient. Anyway, try it.

THE PEOPLE'S PART IN THE PRAYER-MEETING.

Many falter at this point, and, though not always with a good reason, yet would we not

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apply the words of another, who answers the common excuse, "I can not express myself," by saying, "That is true only of idiots and paralytics." Doubtless many can not express themselves, or make a "public speech." In the prayer-meeting, however, they are not expected to do this, but simply to take part by question, comment, testimony, or prayer.

"And just that is what I can not do," says one. Well, how about that? Jesus says, "Ye are My witnesses," and Paul that, "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Is this a purposeless utterance, an unreasonable demand? Does Christ ask that which is impossible? How do you hope to obtain salvation, if not by confession with the mouth? Yes, Christ should be confessed in private life, confessed by deed as well as word. True, but also "in the great congregation," the psalmist says. You can not do it? Let us see. If you believe in Christ as your Savior from sin, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hands of the enemy" (Ps. 107:2). You can, at least, "say so," can

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you not? Well, that is testifying. "But that would be too commonplace," you say? No other words of human tongue express as much by half. "Commonplace" is it to crown your Lord, to declare yourself His disciple? It would not seem commonplace to Him, or the Church—*only to you, and why?* Aim at HIS praise, and not your own. Eliminate this selfish quest of a crown for your brow in the very service that is intended for crowning Him. Mention some fascination about Christ, some aspect of His work that interests you, and then sit down. You are sincere, mean well, and hence must see that your silence at such a time, for such a cause, is unjustifiable, because unjust to Christ, His Church, to others, and yourself.

Or, you are not a Christian, and you would not "pose as one," and so are silent. Be careful there, good friend, and go not floundering by the heavenly goal, so near. This meeting is for you. Nothing would help you so much as to arise and state your heart's desire for

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pardon, purity, and power over sin. Remember the only safe thing to do is the honest thing. That is not "posing."

Philosophy as Well as Religion.

There is philosophy in "taking part," as well as religion. First, it is commanded, and disobedience is destructive. Then, speaking of what we have, or hope to have, increases it. By using, *expressing*, his one pound the servant in the parable soon had ten. Failing to use, and thus express, his pound, the slothful servant lost it. All thought tends to action, but is much surer of becoming action, when repeatedly expressed. Hence, auto-suggestionists require patients and pupils to repeat important declarations.

Again, confession with the mouth is unto salvation for others, as well as self. It is the secret of soul-winning and missionary endeavor. Just why a few vibrating sounds, emanating from a believer in the form of words, should be so dynamic in the evolution of

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Christ's Kingdom, we do not know, but that they are dynamic is thoroughly established.

“I Could Speak, But Not Pray.”

Only if you are not a disciple of Christ and do not wish to be, is such a conclusion proper. Every Christian can give thanks and seek God's grace in public prayer. And can not every seeking one express the longing of his heart? That is the kind of prayer that makes the angel hosts rejoice, and sets the joy-bells ringing in believing hearts. It would bring rich gifts to you, and what an uplift to the meeting it would be! O, yes you can pray in public, if you will. You can praise God for the glorious gospel that turns your weakness into strength, sets your feet upon the rock, turns your face toward the sun, gives you hope, when reason gives you nothing but despair. And you can ask Him to take your life into His keeping; to sanctify the very spring of your volitions, emotions, and affections; to direct you in all the way that you should go, in view of your great responsibility

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and opportunity; and to set your hope forever on the things invisible.

“I Wish I Could Speak and Pray in Public.”

In his “Book of Plans for Young People’s Religious Gatherings,” Amos R. Wells says that he is sometimes tempted to be impolite when hearing people say they wish they could speak or pray in the prayer-meeting. “‘Wish,’ I want to say. Why, you have not even the desire of a wish! By their fruits ye shall know them—wishes as well as everything else. Do men gather dumbness from longing, or sluggishness from desire? One hearty wish would at least bud into timid little words. Let us not cheat ourselves. We never get power of expression until we want it.” Yes, and when we earnestly desire it, we get it. Mr. Wells also advises the study of those who have freedom of expression, not, however, to “imitate their manner, but their method of obtaining their manner.” Had they always this enviable gift? No. Well, as they got it, so may you.

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Preparation to Speak or Pray.

Many vainly depend upon the promise, "In that same hour it shall be given you what ye shall speak," to justify and encourage unpreparedness. Whereas this promise was given to disciples who spent every moment in the very best sort of preparation for the private and public defense of their faith. Really, this Scripture proves the need of previous preparation to have the Spirit's immediate direction. A good way of preparation for public prayer or testimony is to "count your many blessings," to reflect upon your needs, as well as those of others, to ponder current events through which Providence expresses itself, and to recall certain statements of Holy Writ.

Let Life Prompt Speech.

No one can speak so impressively of saving human lives as a member of a life-saving crew, or any one who has saved lives. If you would speak effectively of charity, exercise it; of benevolence, bestow it; of the degradation of sin,

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visit the slums; of the uses of affliction, comfort some lonely heart bereft; of the need of more personal work, lead some one to Christ yourself; of Christians "living beneath their privileges," live up to yours; of the importance of Church membership, get some one to join the Church. After such preparation your words in the prayer service, however imperfectly arranged, will be eloquent indeed. The driest of dry things is pious talk that does not emanate from action. The words that stir most deeply in this service fall from the lips of men and women who come fresh from the battlefield of life where they have tried, midst numberless embarrassments, to do their duty. How their words strike fire! War theories are tedious, but war bulletins never. The science of explorations is not always inspiring, but the report of new discoveries always is—especially in matters pertaining to the Kingdom. "I have declared righteousness in the great congregation. I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, Thou knowest. I have declared Thy faithfulness and

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Thy salvation. I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation” (Ps. 40:10, 11).

WHY MEN SHOULD BOOST THE PRAYER-MEETING.

In a word, because it is a man's job. The model prayer-meeting requires the presence of men. The meeting which, as one says, is chiefly a service of “songs and sighs,” may be good enough for women—though we doubt it—but it does not appeal to men. The ideal mid-week service concerns itself with all the big things of the Kingdom, and it is up to the men to take them in hand. Says William T. Ellis, “The modern Atlas is a Christian man who bears on his heart the world bequeathed to him by his Master.” There is something truly heroic about the mission of the Church and the men who essay it. To no other organization, nor to all others combined, is there committed a task so vast and magnificent as to the Church. What is commerce as compared to the task of “teaching all nations,” of directing all government,

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supervising the enactment and enforcement of righteous laws, safeguarding all human interests, and bringing all nations to pay homage to the Son of man?

Professor William James says, "What we now need to discover in the social realm is the moral equivalent of war." The worst malady that threatens us is the dread of hardship and the quest of ease. Our safety lies in erecting once more what one has called, "The heroic standards of life, such as caused the early Church to set the world agaze." It takes consecrated manhood to do this, and the prayer-meeting offers this consecration. Men's recent awakening, through the missionary movement, shows that they have their eyes on the full program of Christianity, and that they are challenged and charmed by its problems. When this new devotion finds vent in the mid-week service, a new era will have dawned for the Church and the world.

A terse writer says, "The biggest work in the world should be done by the biggest men

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in the world," and the world's biggest men are its Christian men. The interests of the Kingdom are wrapped up with the problems of statecraft, commerce, and education, and only consecrated manhood can grapple with them. These problems appear everywhere, hence every locality needs the manhood which the prayer-meeting develops. Joseph Cook said, "The nineteenth century made the world one neighborhood, the twentieth should make it one brotherhood." The prayer-meeting will help men to bring this about by engaging their highest powers, and offering a field for their most imperial ideals.

If the men in any Church will agree to support this service, this alone will revolutionize that Church. Our Brotherhoods could do no better thing than this. If they will do it, they will become the greatest boon the Church has had for centuries. *Men, you can do it. In God's name, begin now!* Go at it as you go at other things worth doing. Try to

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pledge every man to this meeting. In making the canvass be sure to count with you those who would come if not unavoidably prevented. Do not give them the uncomplimentary brand of non-attendance. If the character of the meeting is unattractive to you, and you can not attend it with delight, do so because it is the mightiest expedient before the Church to-day, and it will become a delight later.

PRAYER-MEETING DO N'TS FOR THE PEOPLE.

- Do n't murmur at the dullness of the Church,
when you ignore the mid-week service.
- Do n't clamor for a change of pastor when you
have not stood by the one you have on
prayer-meeting night.
- Do n't wonder why the music is not better when
your harp is hanging on the willows.
- Do n't ignore the fact that the pastor and others
are wishing you would speak and pray,
and are wondering why you do n't.
- Do n't scold or whine in your testimony. Re-

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member that jeremiads and philippics both fall like a killing frost upon the blossoms of devotion.

Do n't complain that the attendance at the prayer-meeting is so light, unless you are doing all you can to increase it.

Do n't complain of the excessive emotion of others when you have n't any at all.

Do n't blame the Church for your having few acquaintances and friends when you avoid the service, where the closest fellowships are formed.

Do n't think that because you are not now interested in the prayer-meeting you never can be. Interest in and ability to take part in such a service are a gift of the Spirit and a grace which grows by exercise.

Do n't speak or pray in prayer-meeting at all unless you can be brief.

Do n't forget that good prayer-meeting followers are as necessary as good prayer-meeting leaders.

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Do n't parley about this, that what the prayer-meeting does for you is a fair measure of what you do for it.

Do n't sit and wait in prayer-meeting to see if something good may happen, *but make it happen* by having heart and voice in what is going on.

Do n't think lightly of the meaning, gravity, and consequence of disinterestedness in, and even dislike of, the things the mid-week service aims to do.

Do n't lose sight of the fact that if you would not run dry, but keep up steam and power, you must stop regularly for living water at the mid-week station of the Church.

Do n't take the pastor's place in reproofing wrong and exposing defects within the Church, and do not give him yours in testimony and in prayer.

Do n't say, "I do n't believe in praying and saying more than life proves true, as some are doing," but speak in spirit and

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in truth of what Christ is to you, and what you are and wish to be for Him.

Do n't be caught idle in prayer-meeting. Am-
brose said: "If we must give an account
for every idle word, beware, lest you
have to answer also for an idle silence."

Do n't miss this, that no service of the Church
deals so directly and effectually with
character and destiny as does the mid-
week service of Bible-study, song, and
prayer.

Do n't throw stones in public prayer at the
pastor, absentees, or the "worldly mem-
bers" of the Church. They will fall back
with stunning force upon your own head
and the meeting.

Do n't go to prayer-meeting in a slipshod, ac-
cidental way, or because the weather is
fine and you would like to walk. Go be-
cause 't is right and duty. Go on prin-
ciple. If you do n't enjoy it now, go
until you do.

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“We may not climb the heavenly steeps,
To bring the Lord Christ down.
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For Him no depths can crown.

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He ;
And faith has yet its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.”

—JOHN G. WHITTIER.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRAYER-MEETING KILLER.

THE terse name of "prayer-meeting killer" is given to those who always pray or speak in every meeting, and always so long and lazily that whatever of interest had been awakened before they began is promptly and often irretrievably suppressed. Sometimes they are officials in the Church and think that, therefore, they are entitled to more time than any one else. Frequently they are men of much influence, so that it is unsafe for any one, their pastor not excepted, to interfere with their assumed prerogative. It is said there is at least one such in every Church, while some have several. However, this is incorrect, for not all Churches are thus afflicted. Often, to be sure, they are the most devout of Christians who

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do not realize the harm they do, and would not do it if they did.

Admonitions to be brief are meaningless to them. When troubled with such invincibles, the author has called on them to pray as early in the hour as possible, then took the remaining time and held the meeting. Despite his warnings, their prayer-windlass would unwind to the last coil of the rope, when the bucket, if there really was one at the other end, was so far down that it never came back with refreshing drafts. He explained that prayer should begin with the bucket at the bottom and consist in bringing it to the surface, and the explanation seemed to interest all except those for whom it was intended. Then, growing desperate, he admitted that a few, including himself, prayed much too long, in fact, much longer than they thought; that they did not mean to take the time which belonged to others, and that none need think that they—naming the offenders with himself—could not pray briefly if they tried. “And now,” he proceeded, “we

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will show you that we can be brief. I will pray first, and Brothers Blank will follow, and you may note the brevity of our prayers." Then followed the shortest prayers the people had ever heard, perhaps, from any of the three.

Candidly, it were better for the same person to pray two or three times exactly to the point, immediately upon all hearts, than to pray once much too long, without an obvious point or burden, and vainly trying to create one. The rule that each person should speak or pray just once is without authority or reason. It is another of those ancient customs with which the prayer-meeting is weighted down—customs venerable only for their age, although they sometimes awe us, as if they were commanded of the Lord.

For the prayer-meeting-killer, if hints and warnings will not avail, a final sure specific is for the pastor, thoroughly backed up by his people, firmly but kindly to have it out with him or her in private conversation. If it must be, it is better to offend one than give offense

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to many fifty times a year and, what is worse, defeat the purposes of the holy hour of prayer.

On one occasion the great Spurgeon's patience gave way under the long prayer of a member of his congregation. Quietly approaching him, Mr. Spurgeon said, "Brother, you have prayed long enough, and if you are offended at my telling you, you are a goose."

It is said that when Africans "palaver," they talk as long as they can stand on one leg, and then they stop. This custom has given rise in some circles to what is termed one-legged testimonies and prayers. Doubtless the plan would materially cut down many of them.

CHAPTER IV.

EXERCISES IN THE PRAYER-MEETING.

THE BIBLE IN THE PRAYER-MEETING.

THERE should be an ample supply of Bibles in the prayer-meeting room. Where the Word of God is ignored, or superseded by anything else, there is lack of spiritual vigor. He who can use it deftly and in the largest variety of ways—happy is that pastor and fortunate are his people. The leader may read or quote it; or, he may designate another to do so, preferably beforehand. Or, the lesson may be read or recited in concert, or references assigned and read individually. Or, a number of persons may be asked in advance to quote or read certain passages selected by or for them and bearing directly upon the theme to be considered. Or, the leader may prepare, say, a dozen ques-

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tions on the topic and ask as many persons to come prepared to read or recite answers to the questions found in the Bible. In most cases it is best to let the people find the answers. Another interesting use of the Bible in the prayer-meeting is to work out the lesson study, based upon certain Scriptures, which the leader distributes with the request to read them at the right moment. A good illustration may be similarly used. A good way to open a meeting is to recite a psalm in concert, as it is sure to give spiritual tone to the service from the start. Sometimes it is well to do this at the close. These various methods of using the Book will enlist the people in the free use of it, and at the same time will secure their participation in the exercises of this hour. Do not fear that the free use of the Bible will injure your meeting. Most prayer-meetings use it too little.

A Prayer-meeting Chapter.

Announce in advance a chapter of the Bible, and ask all to read it carefully and come

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prepared to name one verse and some lesson suggested by it. Teach the people the great secret of making discoveries of deep spiritual truths by reading the Scriptures slowly and prayerfully. Urge them to try it and then to report the results for the benefit of others in the prayer-meeting.

An Initial Meeting.

Ask all to read, or preferably recite, at the next meeting some texts beginning with the initials of their own names, and to point out some lesson contained in them.

A Promise Meeting.

Each one is asked in advance to quote a fresh promise (see "Promise Meeting," p. 143).

A Prophecy Meeting.

Ask each one, or, if there are too many, certain ones, to read a prophecy which has been fulfilled, pointing out the fulfillment.

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THE PRAYER-MEETING PRAYER.

In the main, the prayer of this service is not unlike the model prayer in any other place. It is humble, simple, brief, earnest but not clamorous, submissive but not indifferent, and always sweetly trustful. When these virtues appear in prayer, the praying one becomes an Æolian harp, through which the Spirit breathes, producing heavenly melodies. One thing only is better than hearing such a prayer, and that is uttering it yourself. It is like fetching a spray of roses fresh from the garden of the King.

Silent Prayer.

Care is necessary to get good results from silent prayer in the prayer-meeting. Indiscriminately and mechanically to introduce it is meaningless. It should always be for a specific purpose which is well understood. It is helpful to grip a climax, deepen an impression, produce conviction, and should be asked for only when the leader has reason to believe the people

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will improve the opportunity gladly. Too little time is sometimes given silent prayer, the leader interrupting it with vocal prayer or the announcement of a hymn, when it has scarcely begun.

Attitude in Prayer.

No matter what may be the custom of any Church as to the posture during prayer, it will be found most helpful occasionally to kneel. Some will pray when kneeling who would not do so in any other position. The Scriptures give examples, but offer no command. God's worthies in the ancient Church, the apostles and our Savior in the new, were often found upon their knees, and sometimes on their faces, while in prayer. Beyond this, dogmatizing is unsafe.

Chain Prayers.

In some quarters chain prayers are recommended to young people's societies. We do not see why they might not be used with profit in some localities by adults. The chain consists of sentence prayers, which form the links,

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on some specific theme. The leader starts and others follow, so far as possible taking up the thought of the last preceding link, but none conclude with "for Jesus' sake, Amen," which is left for the leader, when all have prayed.

A Prayer Record.

Why not have a record kept of things especially prayed for, and of the answers as they come? Think of the many petitions made and of the few reports we hear of the many more that have been graciously granted. Here is a great weakness in the average Church and prayer-meeting. True, all Christians should tell of the rewards of faithful supplication. Yes, but often it is quite forgotten or suppressed, lest some may think it proud or vain. Thus, perhaps, in every meeting God is robbed of glory. The asking at His hands was heard for months and years, it may be, but the receiving was kept a happy secret. This is unwise, unfair, and wrong.

The proper person could not render better

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service than by keeping careful record of these earnest prayers and, with due discretion, sometimes telling in the prayer-service of the cry that God has stilled, the hunger which has been appeased, the flood of light that now fills homes erstwhile enwrapped in clouds of woe, and of the night of sin and strife that has given way to the full-orbed day of pardon, peace, and love. How this would kindle faith, revive the drooping spirit of disheartened ones, exalt prayer, popularize this service, and crown the Savior of men!

Such record keeping would not forestall the telling of God's goodness by any one at any time, and would prevent the irreparable loss always entailed by ingratitude and forgetfulness.

In some Churches such a record is open to all. On one page requests for prayer are entered, and on the other one the answers as they come, and telling when and how they came. This plan alone, faithfully worked, will bring spiritual quickening to any Church.

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The Prayer Itself.

No rigid rules can be given to which the prayer-meeting prayer should always conform. Even the admonition, ordinarily wholesome, not to be too long, formal, and stereotyped, will, if slavishly observed, create the very formality which it aims to prevent. However, it is always safe to let prayer aim at the things most needed at the time. The immediate needs of the Church, or any special department in it, or definite work being undertaken at the time; or some special need of the community, the home, the nation, or in the praying one's own life—if these are borne in mind, the prayer is sure to be effective. The spirit of humility should breathe through it. To foster this quality let acknowledgment be made of God's greatness, holiness, and goodness in the face of man's unworthiness. Always the prayer should be trustful, boldly claiming proffered mercies. Out of this will flow that joyful praise which is the crowning beauty of prayer.

Prayer should never seek to instruct either

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God, the pastor, or anybody else. Prayer is not for instruction in theology, nor for expressing dissent from the pastor, or rebuke of neighbors and delinquent Church members. "O Lord, Thou knowest I have studied this matter for many years, and therefore can not accept the theory advanced by our pastor," said one in prayer. Another launched forth into a reprimand in prayer of those who did not admire him. A well-meaning saint, whose pastor frequently quoted from the Revised Version, thanked God in prayer-meeting that the Authorized Version was good enough for him, and prayed that the "dear pastor" might be saved from the snares of the former. A lady, whose pastor was in the habit of coming to worship a little late according to her clock, but sharp on time according to his, gave him a scoring in public prayer and prayed that grace might be given him to be on time.

The story is told of a heathen who asked that he might never die. The prayer was granted by the Fates. But he had forgotten to ask

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that health and youth should last forever also, and so he lived on till life became a burden. He wished to die, but could not. Then he saw that he had asked for something he was totally unfit to enjoy. But the discovery came too late.

All such prayers are improper and unwise, and frequently they become irreverent, selfish, vindictive, pusillanimous, repellent to sensible people, and dishonoring to God.

THE MUSIC IN THE PRAYER-MEETING.

Here, at last, we have one service that is not dependent for its success upon a choir, and that is a relief. Nevertheless, the singing is an important exercise in this service. It is well that hymns be selected with due reference to the topic. Often persons in the congregation will make wise selections, especially if told beforehand that later they will be asked to announce a number. A good way is for the leader, when announcing a hymn, to name the person who will suggest the next one. In some cases a number of singers sitting near the organ have

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rendered valuable aid. A special number, such as a solo, duet, quartet, or chorus, may be used at times with gratifying results in giving emphasis to an important truth. If Hymnals are available, in most instances they are preferable to the undevout and senseless jingles that are often used.

The organist, too, is an important factor in this service. Her sympathies should be with the whole program of the hour. She should enjoy them all. Tactful and sympathetic playing is a help to singing of the same kind. Preludes to familiar hymns and interludes between the verses should be avoided. Let the people who have a good prayer-meeting organist thank the Lord, *but also her*. How frequently she is undervalued! Perhaps no worker in the Church deserves more and receives less praise than does the faithful organist.

Above all else, let all the hymns be used as prayers. Songful prayers and prayerful songs will go far in making the service what it should be.

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THE BLACKBOARD IN THE PRAYER-MEETING.

There are many ways of using the blackboard in the prayer-meeting. Have notes written upon it before the service begins, but hidden from view till wanted. Or, have some one write what the leader requests. Or, write yourself as your remarks proceed, stopping for prayer at any point when the Spirit impels. Another way is to read the Bible lesson in concert and let the people state, after each verse perhaps, what to write upon the board. The topic might well appear upon the board in every meeting. (For further hints, see "Prayer-meeting Studies with Suggestions," Part III.)

THE LETTER COMMITTEE.

In every prayer-meeting there should be a committee to correspond with members who have moved away. Think what this would mean to the absent friends and also to the meeting, and yet how seldom it is done. A former member is far away. None but strangers all about

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him. Often he thinks of the old home, the Church, and prayer-meeting and all the sacred fellowships of other days. He wonders if he is still remembered, when lo! a letter comes, or a collection of short ones, from members of the prayer-meeting circle at home. No, they have not forgotten him. Perhaps he is young in years or in Christian experience. Who can tell the good accomplished as he renews his fealty to Christ and his Church? Nor is this all. A letter from him is received by the committee and read in the next meeting, bringing cheer to many hearts. Thousands of young men and women who go to the large city would not so easily drift from their religious moorings if this one little effort were faithfully made and oft repeated. In God's name, why is it not done? Why are young and old appreciated while yet present in the weekly gathering for prayer, but speedily forgotten and never again referred to, so far as this meeting is concerned, as soon as they have moved away? The pastor's part in this is but to ask if there are any

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communications; the committee will do the rest, and the results will be magical.

THE PRAYER-MEETING COMMITTEE.

This committee is of the greatest importance, and no pastor who has discovered its value will ever want to be without it again. They are his Advisory Board, who, with him, look after every possible need of this service. The number constituting it is optional. *If wisely chosen and often convened for consultation*, they will relieve the pastor of much anxiety and care in maintaining interest and attendance.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
It is his native air;
His watchword at the gate of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways;
While angels, looking on, rejoice,
And cry: "Behold, he prays!"—(*Acts 9: 11.*)

CHAPTER V.

THE LEADER.

MORE than any and everybody else the leader determines the success or failure of the prayer service. The efficient leader is not equally successful always and in all places, since all Christians are not equally responsive to good leadership, but he is sure to have a profitable meeting. A few essentials of efficient leadership are here subjoined.

An adequate conception of the real purposes of the service is the first requisite. These are spiritual communion, the perfection of believers through new visions of Christ, the Truth, and a new grip on life, the saving of the unregenerate, the offering of a forum for the free interchange of opinions and the discussion of the affairs of the Church, and the fostering of the social life in a spiritual atmosphere.

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Careful Preparation is Another Essential.

The haphazard prayer-meeting does not require this. It depends upon the blessing of the Lord and the peoples' "taking part," hence what need for preparation? But that is not leading a meeting; it is only starting it and letting it drift, drag, and die. For the leader to open the service and then sit down, saying, "The meeting is now yours," is to throw the reins upon the neck of the steed and let it go where it likes. It is easy to tell where it will go—to seed or to grass, and though the figure be unseemly, it aptly foretells the fate of the prayer-meeting whose leader does not "lead."

Preparation means zealous effort. A lazy pastor, or one who thinks it easy to rightly lead such a meeting, will fail. There is no easy way of doing anything worth while. Only the willing worker wins.

There is a "wonder-plow" which, by an extra wheel, renders the holding of the plow-handles needless. But there is no such contrivance for running a prayer-meeting. Some

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would have the Holy Spirit to be this extra wheel, and so let go, but so does He. To have the Spirit's guidance, the leader must hold on with both his hands until the close. This he can not do well if prayer and study has been stinted.

The leader should have at ready command a dozen different methods of procedure, and never permanently confine himself to one. Not only should he study well the lesson, but he should provide himself with what may be termed *relief-measures* to save the service should it seriously drag. Regardless of the topic, he may propose a question, or, referring to a current event, ask how many have read about it and what are its lessons.

Or he may ask the teachers in the Bible school to tell of the work in their classes, specially mentioning signs of awakening in any of the scholars. What could be more stimulating to a prayer-meeting.

Or, the leader may take from his pocket a letter or a clipping with a bit of vital news that

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he laid by for a crisis just like this. A tactful pastor saved his meeting from collapse by asking all to tell him whether God is interested in religion more than in anything else. Some answered Yes, some No. Presently the query was whether they disagreed as to the character of God or the nature of religion. The former apathy was immediately dissipated. Some leaders will adroitly shift in such a plight by intuition, but any one can do it by preparation.

The Meeting May Also Be Over-led.

This is done when the leader occupies most of the time himself. There are those who may, with profit, speak at length in giving what is called a mid-week lecture. Some Churches may prefer this to the ordinary course, but in most cases they do not. The meeting is over-led when the leader, after exhausting the theme, asks the people to make further comment. Dr. Frank Otis Ballard likens this to taking up an orange and, after squeezing out the juice and very pulp, knead it twenty minutes more, then throw it

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to the people, saying, "Now see what you can get out of it." Knowing they can get nothing out of it, they will not try. If they reach for a new orange, fresh from the tree of life, the leader calls them back to the old rine. Result—the meeting falls, and the pastor goes home sick at heart, wondering why the people did not take part, and sorry that he must have a prayer-meeting at all.

Spiritual preparation is pre-eminently needful to rightly lead a meeting with such obviously spiritual ends.

Note again the sixfold mission of this service (see above) and be assured that only when in immediate touch with God can any man lift other hearts to reach this goal. Unless in sweet communion with the Lord, his voice will be a sounding brass, his lesson merest talk that will not stir the soul, and he himself will be a bar to every holy purpose of the hour.

Much that is called "leading others in prayer" is really driving them from it. So, likewise, he who has charge is said to "lead

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the meeting," when, in fact, not having come directly from the mount of prayer with Christ, he only coaxes, drags, or drives the meeting he should lead. Had not the shining face of Moses told of being with Jehovah on the Mount, his magic words would have proclaimed it. So, no matter what the leader's face, if in his words there rings the echo of the Mount. It is the fragrance of the hills of God, whence he has come, that, breathing through his message, woos me thither.

But pastors are busy men, and some are indisposed to welcome suggestions that only mean more work, while others gladly pay the price and get the goods. *Will pastors pray, think, read, and write to make each meeting all that it should be?* This is the crux of the whole matter, and at this point the road divides. One leads through willing effort which itself becomes a pleasure, to growing power and success; the other, via Comfortville, to mediocre results at first, and then to retrogression and decay.

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This volume feign would answer earnest pastors' queries, and put a few new levers on the fulcrum underneath this problem; but Heaven forbid that it should seek to obviate the need of honest application to the task of most efficient leadership. The man who shrinks from prayerful meditation and will not write from ten to thirty cards or letters, or do as much in other ways, to have a meeting that is quickening and sweet, no matter what his talent, has failure written on his ministry.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR LEADERS.

1. *Do not unite a teachers' meeting with a prayer-meeting.*

Except in rare instances, this can not be done without injury to both. The interests are not sufficiently identical to merge well. Some who would attend the one will have no interest in the other, and so will stay away from both. Usually the prayer-meeting suffers most from the merging. However, where the people on both sides are well agreed, the venture may be

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made. It is doubtful whether in any case the merging will be long successful. The two interests that are at stake can not well be paramount. The one or the other is likely to have pre-eminence. The climax toward which the hour should strive, if reached, may mean defeat for the teachers' meeting and vice versa.

2. *Always exalt the Word and the Spirit.*

Nothing is so conducive to spiritual results as the deft use of the Scriptures and the honoring of the Holy Spirit, upon whose presence and influence more depends than upon any other thing. Remember that the service may be interesting and yet a failure. The intellectual scintillations may be strong and the instructions rich, but if the thought does not awaken feeling, stir the heart, and if the Spirit does not through it quicken conscience, the real objective of the service is not reached. No word of man is half so sweet, so quickening, and up-to-date as God's, and for His Spirit there is no equivalent. Moreover, it is not difficult

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to have the Spirit's influence in this service. Devout thought, earnest prayer and expectation easily secures, and alert co-operation with Him through the hour maintains it. It is well for those who are of one mind in this matter to agree with each other in every meeting from the very start, to be en rapport with the Spirit, praying for His gracious influence. From time to time they should renew their covenant to do this. "If two of you shall *agree* as touching one thing, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19). The prayer-meeting where this is done will be rich with grapes, figs, and pomegranates—sample fruits of Canaan.

3. *Teach the people to discriminate between testimony and comment.*

Witnessing for Christ is different from studying the Word and interpreting it, or commenting on spiritual truth and religious activity. The latter is wholesome, and the author frequently employs it to get diffident ones into

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the habit of participating. But we should have it clearly understood that comment or exhortation can never be a substitute for testimony to saving grace and cleansing power, or for the confession of a desire to know Christ. It is well frequently to call for real testimony, explaining again and again that you mean witnessing to divine grace received or desired. Unless we beware at this point we will raise a generation of Christians who can talk *ad libitum* about salvation, but are unable to bear witness to it. This discrimination wisely made and privately explained to some, whose hearts the Lord hath opened, will lead them into a better Christian experience and life.

4. *Never force testifying or praying, nor upbraid the people for seeming slow to take part.*

The best Christian does not always feel like speaking or praying, and it is no indication of backsliding if he does not. To excessively admonish or rebuke in such cases is confession of

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defeat, if not an evidence of weakness, and some will go away with diminished interest in a service which is confessedly a failure, and in a minister who shows temper. True, reluctant participation is embarrassing and sometimes fatal to the service. Unless prepared for such emergencies, nothing can be more perplexing to the leader than to see his meeting suddenly run up against a stone wall of silence. Why not have an understanding with, say, half a dozen or more of trusted Christians, promptly to come to the rescue in such an emergency. None need know how many have been pledged to do this.

5. *Make prominent the family character of the meeting.*

There are many ways of doing this that never fail to make the service attractive to the people. At some juncture of the meeting, time may be given to discuss the affairs of the Church, perhaps some new enterprise proposed by the officials, which one of these will be glad to explain. New members may be introduced

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accompanied by an all-around shaking of hands, singing a hymn the while. Members who are sick may be mentioned and names taken that they may be visited. Letters from absent or former members may be read. The getting of such letters should be privately encouraged, or the Letter Committee may have it in charge. Soon the people will look forward to this meeting as a sort of clearing office, where the latest and best news can be obtained and things learned that can not well be given to the promiscuous audience of Sunday, and they will flock to it like children to the family fireside.

6. *The pastor's question-drawer.*

Let questions be solicited in advance, and, say, fifteen minutes given to answering them. The kind of questions desired should be made plain when they are called for. Some will write questions which they would shrink from asking verbally in the public service. This exercise should not occur too frequently—once in two months may be sufficient.

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7. *A Call for Volunteers.*

Another inspirational departure is to occasionally call for volunteers for special work during the week to come, with the understanding that opportunity will be given in the next meeting to report results, should any desire to do so. To make sure of volunteers have slips at hand on which is written different kinds of work. Pass these around and have the people choose the work they will volunteer to do by marking it upon the slip, which then is handed back. This will never fail to land the volunteers. Notice some of the results: the prayer-meeting is stimulating Christian activity, thus strengthening the workers and the Church while pouring helpfulness and blessing into other lives. Moreover, the pastor is coming into closer mutuality with his workers, who know his mind is on them all the week, and hence their own is upon him. If you meet them that week, they will talk of the pastor and the work he is doing—they are thinking of him. And should you chance to meet the

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pastor in that week and fall to talking of his Church, promptly he will tell you of the work these volunteers are doing—he is thinking of them. This is practical, wholesome mutuality between members and the pastor. One might be much in the company of many Church members and never suspect them of having a pastor, *because they are not engaged with him in any particular work.* This little digression during the prayer-meeting hour, while achieving these results, also vastly enhances the people's interest in that service.

8. *Hold many special prayer-meetings.*

Such as New Year's and Christmas and Easter prayer-meetings; special meetings on the anniversary of prominent men and women from whose life and work new inspiration is sought; special meetings for missions, the Sunday school, Christian education; Young People's, Old People's, and patriotic prayer-meetings. This will give variety and elasticity to the service, and keep all alert as to what is

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coming next. It will be easy to have one special prayer-meeting a month.

It would be well to distribute printed cards containing the fifty-two topics for the year and indicating in bolder type the special prayer-meetings. (A year's cycle of topics is given elsewhere.) What a relief this would be in many places, what cumulative interest it would develop in this service, and how much work and worry it would save the pastor!

Sometimes we are in ruts and do not know it, and sometimes, knowing it, are unwilling to get out, but rather seek to prove the orthodoxy and traditional sacredness of our ruts. "For so the fathers did before us," we are prone to say. When, as district superintendent, the author warned a Church to beware of ruttiness and grooves, an official interrupted him with, "We enjoy our ruts first-rate; you need not worry about us." "Just that is the serious thing about your situation; not only are you in the ruts up to the hubs, but you are satisfied

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and even glad you 're in," replied the superintendent. Of the mid-week service it may be said:

If in a rut, the more it moves,
The deeper down it settles in the grooves;
Unless it moves to higher ground,
Which always near the rut is found.

But if not in the rut, it soon will be,
Unless it changes tracks quite frequently,
By *special meetings*, well arranged,
The ruts for solid ground are changed.

9. *The Prayer-meeting and Evangelism.*

Though a high evangelistic tension can not always be maintained, yet the evangelistic note should ring through every prayer-meeting. If any real evangelistic work is to be done, the mid-week service will have a prominent part in it. Frequently encouragement and invitation should be given to any who desire help in becoming Christians. Thus the results of conversation, entreaty, and prayer with the unsaved, during the intervening six days, may easily be gleaned in the prayer-meeting. If this plan is

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systematically and persistently worked, the Church will be in a continuous revival. Not to do it gives rise to the necessity of an occasional evangelistic campaign, and while the latter is good, the former is better.

Where a series of such special meetings is contemplated, it is well to prepare a four weeks' program for the prayer-meeting, letting it work up to a climax with the beginning of the series (see "Prayer-meeting Topics," p. 215). For such a program the following key-thoughts are suggested: 1. The normal necessity of evangelism. 2. The blessed results of normal evangelism. 3. Helps to normal evangelism. 4. Readiness for normal evangelism. Who is ready? Assignment of work, etc.

PRAYER-MEETING DO N'TS.

For Leaders.

Do n't beg the people to come to the meeting; rather announce some attractive feature for the next one, and encourage the people to say good things about the last one.

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Do n't be sure that your meeting is all that it could be, for it is n't.

Do n't blame anybody else if your meeting is unattractive to many so long as you will not accept advice.

Do n't presume to take the place of the Holy Spirit as leader, and do n't ask Him to take yours. He 'll refuse, and then you are done for.

Do n't be afraid to ask the people for special help. They are wondering why you do it all yourself.

Do n't forget the timid ones in your prayer-meeting—help them to take some part.

Do n't always speak before the rest—let them speak first, and you "sum up."

Do n't think your main task is to get something to say. That is only half; the other half is to get others to say something.

Do n't lose sight of this: that if you lead too much and speak too often; soon the people will let go, depend on you for all, and then your plight is pitiful indeed.

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Do n't wonder will the meeting be a good one, or fear that it will not. Having prayed and studied, rest assured that it will be—expect it.

Do n't claim the promise, "In that same hour it shall be given you what ye shall speak," to excuse your indolence. It was not given for lazy folks.

Do n't forget that you should be in a devout mood when entering the room, eager to begin operations and not dreading them. If the engine is not oiled and steam well up when it starts, there will be friction and squeaky noises plus, but progress and power minus.

Do n't talk too much, exhausting the topic. That is smashing the nut with a trip-hammer and throwing it to the people. Say just enough to let the meat appear, then give it to those present and they will clean it out with avidity.

Do n't expect the Spirit always to adopt your plans. Plan well, but in your planning

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leave room for change, compression, addition, or abandonment of your plan for His.

Do n't get discouraged about your prayer-meeting until you have repeatedly tried the suggestions in this volume by proving, approving, and improving them.

PART II.

WHAT OTHERS SAY.

CHAPTER I.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY PROMINENT CLERGYMEN.

THE reader can not fail to be interested in the communications and answers which the author secured from prominent pastors who have achieved success in the prayer-meeting. These men represent the Methodist Episcopal, the Baptist, the Presbyterian, and the Congregational denominations, and they speak with authority upon this subject. They are Frederick D. Leete, D. D., Maurice Penfield Fikes, D. D., James M. Barkley, D. D., Frank S. Rowland, D. D., of Detroit; Charles S. Mills, D. D., and William Wirt King, D. D., of St. Louis; Cortland Meyers, D. D., of Boston; W. F. Sheridan, D. D., of Kansas City; John Snape, D. D., of Utica, N. Y.; Clarence E. Allen, D. D., of Buffalo; Joseph C. Nate, D. D., of Jacksonville,

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Ill.; and Eli Philipps Benett, of Port Huron, Michigan.

The questions and their answers are tabulated for easy comparison, as follows:

1. What, in your opinion, is the greatest problem of the prayer-meeting?

Leete: "The leader is the prayer-meeting problem."

Barkley: "The problem of the prayer-meeting is the prayer-meeting."

Fikes: "Getting the people to attend it."

Allen: "To make it diverse and yet maintain spiritual fervor."

Sheridan: "The disappearance of the experimental note from the Churches, and the strenuous social life of our people."

Rowland: "To convince the practical or professional man and woman that it is a real help to the highest moral and spiritual life."

Mills: "1. For the pastor to find time for adequate preparation. 2. Getting the in-

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terest of the people beyond those most devout.”

Benett: “There is no greatest problem of the prayer-meeting; the greatest in one place may not be known in another. The real problem is not a prayer-meeting problem at all, but a problem of worldliness that manifests itself in the prayer-meeting. The problem that looms largest on my horizon is that of competent leadership.”

2. What are some errors in preparing for the meeting?

Mills: “Haste. Remoteness of theme. Glittering generalities in pastor’s utterance. No system for securing helpful participation.”

Allen: “Haste. Too little prayer. Restricted vision—preparing simply for ‘the meeting.’ No specific aim.”

Fikes: “Insufficient preparation—making it (the preparation) too sermonic, too formal. Not thinking of the average

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man, and planning to avoid sameness in successive meetings.”

Sheridan: “The common feeling that anything will do for a prayer-meeting talk; prayerlessness.”

Leete: “Talking too much, covering the subject exhaustively; too long and involved Scripture lesson; too much holy tone and not enough informality.”

Benett: “Formality, lack of variety, absence of intellectual food, monopoly of the time by the leader or by a few, failure to work up the meeting in pastoral—and pulpit work, talking discouragingly about it.”

Barkley: “Subjects lacking vital human interest; or going to other extreme in trying for such topics by having cheap ones. Then, droning monotony—lack of preparation by laity as well as leader.”

3. Name some errors in conducting the meeting.

Leete: “Insufficient variation in order of exercises, methods, postures.”

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Rowland: "Sameness—too much leader."

Sheridan: "Lack of variety in methods; unattractive music; formality."

Fikes: "Leader talking too long; promptness in opening and closing on the minute."

Allen: "Formality; conspicuousness of the leader; following the same fixed order; tardiness in opening and closing; making announcements that neutralize spiritual impressions."

Mills: "1. In pastor: too formal and stiff; too long in speech; too superficial in address. 2. In people: not enough prayer; too few participants; utterances too pietistic, formal, and long."

4. What order of exercises would you recommend?

Mills: "Great variety." (See letter next chapter.)

Barkley: "We purposely avoid the same order for variety, and yet we are not entirely free of monotony."

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Rowland: "I try to have a new program for each meeting."

Fikes: "None in particular. I aim to have informality, variety, and especially to have order different from Sunday services."

Sheridan: "Much song in starting; two or three prayers; Scripture and talk by leader; testimony and more prayers. However, variety should characterize the method."

Allen: "Depends upon local conditions. Different items should be placed in different order from time to time. Remarks may come anywhere—sometimes at the very close, followed by the benediction."

5. What proportion of your attendance are men?

One answers, "One-third." Another, "One-third to one-half. The official member who does not attend is the exception." Another says, "As good a proportion as women." One reports, "Forty per cent," and one says, "On an average, about one-half."

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Fortunate pastors are these with so large a proportion of men in the mid-week service!

6. What proportion of your whole membership attend?

One, the pastor of a large Church, says, "A good one-tenth," meaning, of course, the attendance at an average service, and not that only one-tenth of the total membership attend this service at all. Another answers, "One-fourth," and still another, "One-fourth more or less regularly." One has an attendance of one-fourth of his people more or less regularly, but rarely more than one-tenth at a single service. One, whose membership is very large, is happy to have two-fifths of his people with him in the mid-week service, and a close neighbor, also with a large membership, reports an average attendance of one-third of his members, and an occasional attendance of three-fourths! Both the latter are down-town Churches, which indicates marked spiritual effectiveness as a result of splendid leadership. In the great Pilgrim Congregational Church, of St. Louis, Mis-

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souri, one-third of the resident membership regularly or occasionally attend. Immense throngs attend the prayer services of Dr. Cortland Meyers, of Boston. The average attendance in country Churches or in villages, where some of the members reside in the country, is smaller than in the city because attendance there is associated with greater difficulties.

7. Why are not more men in our prayer-meetings?

Leete: "Too busy; not enough religion."

Benett: "Business, lodges, worldliness, difficulty and failure in making the service truly helpful to active men, and, at the same time, comforting to old people."

Sheridan: "The proportion equals the proportion in the Church membership, and they are often the most active in the service."

Rowland: "Because the average prayer-meeting does not appeal to them—they think it a waste of time and energy to be present."

Allen: "Because pastors excuse their absence."

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Because they think them meetings for women. Because a sufficiently masculine spirit is not put into the way they are conducted. Because business affairs are given preference.”

Fikes: “The world, the flesh, and the devil. Not enough definite work done to enlist them personally.”

Mills: “No adequate effort to make meetings such as appeals to men, and grips everyday life as a man sees it. Also absorption on his part in ‘the world.’ ”

Barkley: “The draft of the world on the energies of men; the desire for rest at home, or away from home; Church loaded down with many organizations which the same set must operate; men are away from other services also; Church work too much feminized.”

8. Have you much Bible study in the prayer-meeting?

Leete: “No Bible *study*, save incidentally. Experience meeting.”

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Benett: "Exposition of the Scriptures, but not properly Bible study. I aim to make it distinctly a *prayer-meeting*."

Fikes: "Only occasionally. Have taken a whole New Testament book, subject by subject, but not usually. It is a devotional meeting."

Sheridan: "I give about one-third of the hour to the study and exposition of the Bible."

Mills: "Increasingly. Believe in magnifying it, but not in making the prayer-meeting a 'class' for Bible study."

Barkley: "Always a Bible lesson. Sometimes a Book study. Often read it in unison, or response. Not infrequently the address is broken with questions, which the people answer by the lesson words. They follow with their Bibles."

9. Do you usually give a lecture or talk?

"Usually, though not always a talk," says Doctor Sheridan; "the largest meetings I have had have been with a series of fourteen nights in Isaiah."

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“Always, but brief, pointed, and suggestive; a starting-point for others only,” says Doctor Leete. Doctor Rowland gives a short talk, but not to exceed fifteen minutes. Doctor Allen’s reply is, “Never a lecture; frequently an informal, heart-to-heart talk,” and Rev. Benett usually reads a lesson, gives a brief exposition, and applies it to the needs of those present. Doctor Mills never gives a lecture or extended talk. He regards the service primarily as a laymen’s meeting, and he makes “the people feel that they must look after it.” Doctor Fikes never gives a lecture, sometimes a brief exposition. “The people should make the service,” he says.

10. In reply to inquiry as to *special helps or methods employed*, one answers:

“An occasional series of addresses; sometimes a solo or duet; have one of the organizations of the Church take charge, as the Brotherhood, a Woman’s Missionary Society, etc.”

Doctor Rowland has found a series of short

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talks on "The Teachings of Jesus" very attractive and profitable.

Doctor Allen says he makes good use of several retired preachers, and adds: "I can preach on Sunday. I frequently refer to local matters observed in pastoral work, and make much use of my laymen."

Doctor Mills: "Nothing sensational or spectacular is introduced. Topics always timely. Program made out for from two to three months in advance, making allowance for exceptional events of unusual spiritual significance. One whole month was given to 'The Religion of Adolescence,' with sub-topics: 'How would you teach a child about God?' 'How would you teach control of temper?' 'How would you teach moral responsibility?' 'At what age should a child begin to attend Church?'"

A potent factor in Doctor Mills' prayer-meeting is the cultivation of the family spirit. At almost every meeting the sick of the parish are mentioned by name and prayer is offered

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for them. All who are in any misfortune or sorrow are remembered. Important letters received by the pastor are read. In fact, any incident of vital importance to the Church is mentioned in a devout spirit. Thus this service becomes the social attraction of the Church. The pastor never takes chances on what the meeting will be, and who will take part. He plans for it in advance, believing that the Holy Spirit can work through a well-prepared program as well as, or even better, than without it.

Doctor Fikes has "no special helps and methods." He believes "the ordinary methods, if rightly used, are sufficient."

11. How much time do you give to prayer, testimony, and Bible study respectively?

Rowland: "I have no fixed schedule for the various parts."

Sheridan: "It varies. Sometimes all prayer and song; at other times a brief prayer service and much testimony. More often the whole service divides into one-third

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for prayer and song, one-third for Bible study and address, and one-third for testimony.”

In Doctor Mills' service the first half-hour is given to song, prayer, Scripture reading, responsive reading, and the reception and dismissal of members. After this the subject is announced and the people take it up. The pastor usually does not speak until the last, thus giving the people an opportunity before the subject is exhausted.

Doctor Barkley is planning to introduce reviews of books that have a vital religious interest, as for example: "Twice-born Men," by Harold Begbie; "The Unrealized Logic of Religion," by Fitchett. He has also had a "Pastor's Social Evening" once a month, when, after the service, ladies who had not been otherwise drawn into Church activity served tea (or coffee) and wafers, nothing more. This afforded a pleasant social half-hour.

CHAPTER II.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM PROMINENT CLERGYMEN.

A CLARION NOTE FROM TREMONT TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH, BOSTON.

THE prayer-meeting is at the very heart of the Church life and service. The spiritual, soul-winning Church is always a prayer-meeting Church. This is the test of its value. "By their fruits ye shall know them." If it is true that the prayer-meeting is less in attendance and success than formerly, it is not true that it is less needed. But the fact is that there are just as large and as good prayer-meetings as the Church ever knew. Last week there were five hundred persons at our prayer-meetings, and great spiritual power was manifest. Where-

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ever prayer and the old gospel truths are a reality there can be a meeting crowded with numbers and filled with the Spirit.

CORTLAND MEYERS.

WORDS THAT RING TRUE.

Here are pungent words from the pen of Doctor Clarence E. Allen, Methodist Episcopal, Buffalo, New York, concerning the absence of many men from the mid-week meeting:

“Industrial conditions frequently prevent men from attending any service during the week. Men like variety. When the prayer-meeting gets into a rut—the same old prayers and testimonies by the same persons—men find no pleasure in it. I am not excusing absence on this ground; only explaining it. Strange to say, some remain away because they have the notion that they will be ‘called on,’ class-meeting fashion.

“I believe that the idea that we are to do more than pray and hold services for prayer, emphasized unduly in our day, is bearing fruit

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in the tendency of some men to think that there is no call for prayer-meetings whatever. Prayer can only be a foundation, but this continual harping upon the string of 'practical service,' is as silly as it is false. The trouble with the Church is that we do not pray enough.

“Men are sometimes kept from the prayer-meeting because of professionalism in the ministry. The minister thinks he must defend the faith in the presence of Christians. If the day for apologetics is not passed, our religion can never find a substantial foundation. If men appreciated that they could go to this service and themselves work out their own practical problems, *as they understand them*, the preacher understanding them, too, or keeping still about them, they would go more frequently.

“But I suppose the real reason why men do not attend prayer-meeting as they should is *indifference*. However, on the whole, I think men are taking much greater interest in the Church than ever before. Their interest is objective rather than subjective. This is a de-

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cided advance over stanza 4, Hymn 64, The Methodist Hymnal:

“‘My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this,
And sit and sing itself away
To everlasting bliss.’”

REFRESHINGLY ORIGINAL, STRIKINGLY NAÏVE,
UNFAILINGLY HELPFUL.

Such indeed are the following words of Rev. John Snape, D. D., Tabernacle Baptist, of Utica, New York. All who are partial to the prayer service, and even those who are not, will admire the force and unconventional freshness of his conclusions, which, the author is assured, are “not theory, but the record of personal practice.” Doctor Snape writes:

“A good prayer-meeting mood is essential to a good prayer-meeting, and this is created by the spirit and emphasis put in it and upon it by the pastor. If the single hour of the week, specifically recognized as the people’s hour for spiritual improvement, is appropriated by one man in the exploitation of exegesis, or in the

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discussion of political reforms, or in deliberations about the hygienic conditions in the houses of the masses, then that hour is misappropriated and diverted from its highest purposes. The mid-week meeting is not intended so much for the masses as for the benefit of the individual. It is not an hour for fine interpretation, but a time for devotional uplift. *A sermonette in this service may be only a poor diversion, but a sermon is a punishable misdemeanor.*

“The prayer-meeting should be characterized by a praiseful opening, unexegetical progression, unanimous participation, and a prompt closing. The leader, who should always be the pastor, should not strive at projecting quotable sentences. *Whatever he says should be worth forgetting.* On Sundays he may say things the people can't forget; in the prayer-meeting he should say things they can't remember. He should be out of sight, as far as possible. It is not the pastor's, but the people's hour.

“Much is said about ‘sameness’ in this

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service. It is the firm conviction of one man *that the momentum of many prayer-meetings is lost by too much variety.* Whatever else the meeting is, it should never be other than devotional. It would be difficult to build up a great Church prayer-meeting with the bricks of Biblical criticism, or the masonry of systematic theology, or the hard wood of Romans, or the fine finish of popular lectures—it can be done only by a persistent insistence on devotion.

“The prayer-meeting not only quickens the Church life; it discovers it. It not only cultivates the Church’s prayer-habit; it expresses the Church’s prayer-life. Not many earnest, private *pray-ers* habitually neglect social prayer. It is the business of the minister to foster and focus this force, and how to do it is likely to be his greatest problem.

“The pastor must be a prayer-meeting enthusiast. In season, out of season, at all seasons he must emphasize the importance of that hour. He need not fear the prominence of the personal element in it. Let him often

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pray for people by name, let him often call for personal prayer requests, let him not look with aversion on emotion—emotion is a sign of life.

“The pastor should invite and expect the co-operation of his men in this service. They will respond, if the burden of it is laid on them. Recently in the Church of which the writer is pastor there was appointed a prayer-meeting committee. This committee made out lists of men and handed the lists to other men with instructions to get them out to the mid-week service. *By personal solicitation, by letter, by phone men went for men and—got them.*

“A simple plan which could be worked in any community, but probably more successfully in cities, has been the giving of prayer-meeting suppers before the hour of the prayer-meeting. A committee of fifteen women is appointed, whose task it is to furnish, serve, and pay for the supper one night. This costs each woman about seventy-five cents, and carries with it, for the husband, the right to attend the other suppers without further expense. The plan

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SPARKS FROM DOCTOR JOSEPH C. NATE'S PRAYER-MEETING ANVIL.

The following communication from Joseph C. Nate, D. D., Methodist Episcopal, Jacksonville, Illinois, is crammed with helpful hints:

“It is a pleasure to make any suggestions to you which I am able to offer to help our prayer-meeting work; I feel that the special attention, such as you are giving to it now, is exactly what the Church needs.

“Among the few suggestions that I will venture to offer is neat printing and the distribution of prayer-meeting topics for a quarter in advance. I like to print them in quantities and redistribute them from time to time. I usually enclose one in every letter mailed to my people. In this connection, an occasional pastoral letter, laying the prayer service upon the hearts of the people, will stimulate attendance.

“The most marked increase in attendance with which I have been favored has been at

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two different times in my ministry following successful revivals. Other revival seasons have improved the attendance, but at these two times it increased largely and the increase was well sustained.

“Another simple method which I have found effective was to put one meeting of each month under the care and direction of some society of the Church, as the Ladies’ Aid, Brotherhood, Sunday School, Woman’s Missionary Society. The head of the society selected was usually the leader of the service, assisted by the pastor. The conditions, needs, and work of the particular society were made subjects of special discussion and prayer. Suitable newspaper notices on the day of the meeting, worked in, if possible, as a bright news item, as well as dignified and earnest reference to the meeting on Sunday, have seemed to me to help the meeting. Our people are inclined to pay careful attention to those features of our Church life to which we pay careful attention. Sometimes I use the back of my calling card for a little

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printed invitation, suggestive and urgent, to certain services of the Church.

“I recognize the fact that after we have done our best to get the people into the meeting, a larger problem is before us in making the latter so bright and interesting, as well as deeply helpful spiritually, that we can keep them there. To this end, in general, I think of the meeting especially as a service of prayer. With some exceptions, which my people always note as such, I make the hour largely one of prayer, praise, and spiritual meaning. It does not seem to me to be the time best adapted for Bible study, although, as our pastorates lengthen, a pleasant change is effected by permitting the themes of a quarter, even of an entire year, to take on something of the Scripture study idea. In fact, it is perhaps always helpful for the leader to suggest some little matter along this line as appealing to some, or giving them a starting-point, who might not get hold of the meeting otherwise. What I mean to emphasize is, that the Scripture study idea is,

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at least, secondary. It is rather, to me, a time when the men will come in from the shops and offices, and women from the work of the day, seeking again a renewal of their heart's purpose to live with and for Christ. Such men and women come to us craving a fresh anchorage, a brightening of faith and consecration,—to realize again that God is good and that He is God!

“I will not dwell on the smaller, incidental details of the management of the meeting itself. I write questions upon the blackboard. I mail questions for discussion to selected individuals beforehand. Sometimes I close with an altar service, and sometimes have nothing but songs and prayer. At times it is a happy change to devote almost the whole hour to the Hymnal, and close with hearty prayers of gratitude for the spirit of song. By the way, the only song-book I know how to use successfully in our meetings is the Church Hymnal.

“You will pardon the personal vein of the remarks, for you have made me feel that you

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want my own experience. Since I am giving this, I must say in conclusion that when I have done my best and have exhausted all my resources, I have felt that it all ought to have been much better and more effective, and that our whole prayer-meeting life, as a Church, perhaps, must be made more paramount and triumphant among us than most of us have been able to have it. For this reason I shall be among the many pastors who will deeply appreciate the help you are trying to bring us, and shall feel permanently indebted to you for it.

JOSEPH C. NATE."

THE LANGUAGE OF EXPERIENCE.

A further word from Doctor Charles S. Mills, of Pilgrim Congregational Church, St. Louis, will be the more welcome because of his success in the prayer-meeting. We are assured that his people look forward to this service with expectation and delight, and that out of it flow continually streams of living water.

"It is difficult to answer specifically some

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of the questions as you put them. I do not know that my answers will be very illuminating, but it is all I can do under the stress of my work.

“Let me say in general, I believe with all my heart in the prayer-meeting; I believe in the old-fashioned prayer-meeting; that is, making it largely a laymen’s meeting, rather than a lecture by the pastor. The latter plan, I believe, however able the lecture, is far more likely to fail than to succeed; in fact, I have never known of such a meeting which I considered a success.

“The prayer-meeting is the great opportunity of developing laymen and promoting that social spirit which blends so well with the spiritual development of the Church. Oftentimes the pastor must do ten times as much work to get his people to participate, as if he did it himself, but the results are mightily worth the outlay. If I should briefly name some ideals of the prayer-meeting I should say: 1. The development of the spiritual life. 2. Develop-

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ment of the family spirit—bringing into the meeting all items of news in the family life, especially afflictions or special burdens, which may appropriately be mentioned. 3. The participation of a large number of individuals, so that the meeting never becomes a series of homilies by a few people. 4. The promotion of vital interest on the part of the Church, choosing themes calculated to arouse such interest, and illuminating them by all sidelights possible. 5. The constant study of variety of method. For example, two or three times in the last year we have covered several weeks with a single theme. One of the most productive of these was 'The Religion of Adolescence' (see preceding chapter), on which we had illuminating contributions from teachers of the public schools, from a judge of the Juvenile Court, from kindergartners, mothers, and others. Another was 'The Relation of Pilgrim Church, with its immense membership and large resources, to the down-town section.' More recently we have undertaken a trenchant study of

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the shorter Epistles. We began with Galatians, then took Ephesians, giving several weeks to each and, without using a hard-and-fast plan, though with program outlined in advance, we took as much time as seemed desirable to cover the field. Each Epistle was studied in the environment of its writing, the circumstances of its author, the qualities or defects of those to whom it was written, and above all, the application of its teachings to present-day conditions. We purpose taking Philippians and Colossians in the same way. In taking such Bible study, however, I believe we should avoid making it technical and so confining it as to arrest the spontaneity of the service. This should always be kept an hour of conference and prayer.

CHARLES S. MILLS."

A LAYMAN'S ADVICE.

William Wirt King, D. D., Methodist Episcopal, of St. Louis, Missouri, in the *Methodist Review*, relates the following:

"In a certain Church with a large member-

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ship and widely known for its achievements in many directions, the prayer-meeting had always been a poor, neglected, uninteresting, and unprofitable service. With a membership of some twelve hundred, the average attendance was from forty to fifty. The same people, called the prayer-meeting crowd, attended from week to week, and all appeals from the pulpit and in private failed to bring about any change. All other services in the Church were stirring and enthusiastic; this one was dead, and haunted the pastor like a nightmare.

“One day a strong, intelligent, and devoted layman, in conversation with the pastor about the failure of this service, frankly but kindly expressed his view as to the reason for it, which was that the pastor took no special interest in it himself, as a result of which the people thought they would get nothing when they came and missed nothing worth while when they stayed away. He insisted that if the same conscientious and intelligent work were done in and for the prayer-meeting, it could be made

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as great a service as any in the Church. As a result of this conversation, a plan was resolved upon looking for as definite and practical work in the prayer-meeting as anywhere else. A certain connected study was taken up running through the whole year. Then the people were asked to aid in this special work whenever called upon, in the way of papers on special topics, and discussion of special themes connected with the general study. The subject for the year was 'Studies in the Early Church,' which was in reality a study of the Acts of the Apostles and most of the Epistles. Sixty persons, most of whom never attended the prayer-meeting before, were pledged to help in this work for one year, whenever called upon, with the assurance that they would never be embarrassed by being asked to speak, without previous notice. With surprising promptness and cheerfulness nearly every one who was approached responded favorably. Then a letter was sent to nearly all the members explaining the plan. The attendance of the first service

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under the new order, instead of being forty or fifty, was two hundred and fifty! From that time on the prayer-meeting room was always full of expectant people. The thing that nobody believed could be done, had been done.”

DECADENT PRAYER-MEETINGS THAT HAVE BEEN REDEEMED.

We have learned of a pastor who solved the prayer-meeting problem by organizing a Religious Study Club with this threefold purpose: 1. Uplift in worship; 2. Growth in depth and beauty of character; 3. Application of Christian principles to modern problems, and Christian standards to modern life. Each member proposes—there is no promise—1. To attend as regularly as circumstances will permit; 2. To study the lesson assigned each week as he has opportunity; 3. To add as much as possible to the helpfulness of the meeting; 4. To do what he can to stimulate others to attend.

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A RESURRECTION, NOT A FUNERAL.

One writes that his prayer-meeting had joined the great majority and had become to the many a matter of indifference, and to the faithful few a painful problem. He asked his congregation whether it might not be best to declare it dead and proceed to the burial, but as none offered to serve as pallbearers, restoratives were applied instead. Having heard of a Western Church that had similar troubles, the pastor wrote for the remedy that brought relief there. Then the following pledge was circulated for signatures:

“I hereby promise to attend the Thursday evening service of —— Church, in ——, at least twelve times during the year, unless prevented by circumstances that render it impossible. This promise is not binding unless 100 (the number can be made larger or smaller) such pledges are secured within 30 days.

“*Signed.*

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One hundred and twenty persons signed the agreement, which gave assurance of a good average attendance, provided, as the officials expressed it, "the service could be made worth coming to."

Exactly that is the crux of the whole matter: "*to make the service worth coming to.*" There are many ways of temporarily increasing the attendance, but only when the character of the meeting is of the right sort will it be permanent.

HOW ONE PASTOR DID IT.

In ——— Church, of ———, the prayer-meeting for years was like a well gone dry, where people still keep coming for water, unwinding the windlass and letting the bucket go banging against the stones with which the well is walled, down to the bottom and up again,— always empty and always accompanied by the squeaking of the old-time apparatus. Well, it was a prayer-meeting of this sort that smote the heart of the new pastor, who had just ar-

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rived. Forthwith he betook himself to study and prayer for the redemption of this service, with the gratifying result that within four months it was nearly as popular as the Sunday service. The attendance had doubled and, best of all, the interest and spiritual delight of the meeting made it the longed-for event of the week. How did he do it? By talking little about it in the pulpit and much in private; by asking individuals to attend, if not every service, once, twice, or three times a month; by emphasizing the home aspect of the service, so that attendants would always wish to come again.

ENLISTED HIS MEN.

“I greatly missed my men at the prayer-meeting, which did not attract them at all,” writes an aggressive and tactful pastor. They were of a vivacious, business turn of mind, and would not invest in a thing that offered no returns, except the appearance of being pious. When they saw the pastor did not summarily

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condemn their absence from the prayer-meeting, but sympathized with them and wanted their assistance in the service, their interest was aroused at once. When he showed them how they all could help to make the meeting what they thought it should be, they pledged him their support and kept their word, like men. He was careful to give them some important part, which made the service mean more to them and also made it more attractive to others.

ADMITS FAILURE.

One admits his failure thus: "Somehow, I fell into the snare of thinking that intensely spiritual exercises repel those of an intellectual turn and also those not in the habit of taking public part in witnessing and prayer. Accordingly, I sought to introduce that which appealed to the intellect and pertained more especially to the building of Zion's outer walls. Imagine my pain to see my prayer-meeting degenerating into what was little more than a religious club,

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with no appeal to conscience, no striving for high spiritual ideals, no conscious sense of the divine presence. The religious form of the service had to be and was maintained. Into this historic mold I found it hard to pour my cold material. As a result, the meeting was a double failure, being neither a religious nor an intellectual success. I found it difficult to make a change, but did at last, and now my people feel with me that spiritual things do not repel, but rather fascinate, thrill, and make men feel like taking up the fight, with strength renewed and weapons newly burnished and made keen in the smithy of the hour of prayer. Now we aim to have both mind and heart active and at its very best, and our mid-week service is rich and sweet once more.”

PART III.

PRAYER-MEETING STUDIES WITH SUG-
GESTIONS.

A WORD OF WARNING.

BEWARE of making the address or study the chief or only attraction of the hour; otherwise it will not be a "prayer-meeting." However interesting and good, the address alone can not meet the full requirements of the service. First, last, and every minute it is to be an hour of prayer, and it must be the people's prayers that make it such. Thus only can it be a potent, spiritual event. This one thing forgotten, though all the helps and hints contained within these lids were well improved, yet will the service wane until it is at best a mere religious forum. Frankly, however, better have it a religious forum, well attended, bristling with interest, looked forward to with gladness, and left with reluctance at the close, than to have it a sacred mummy, bequeathed by faithful fathers to their surviving heirs, who, not

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having bowed the knee to Baal by letting in the modern light, believe themselves the rightful guardians of a service which, they are satisfied to know, is just as it used to be save that the people do not attend it any more. Ten times better to have the former than the latter, but, better still, have the former baptized in spiritual fervor and crowned with the victory of grace in individual hearts.

Occasionally it is well to omit the lecture, study, or address, and give the hour to spiritual conversation, reports of work accomplished, pointing out work that should be done, and asking divine blessing upon it.

But always, when an address or talk is given, it should represent the leader's best effort and show careful preparation. The notion that "anything will do" to give the few that come is sure to make the attendance, already small, still smaller. *Ill prepared leadership has killed more prayer-meetings than any other one thing.*

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NEW YEAR'S PRAYER-MEETING.

It is not difficult to have two interesting prayer-meetings at this season of the year—one on the last prayer-meeting night of the old and one on the first of the new year.

Suggestions of the Old Year to the New, Lessons for the Aged and the Young, Warnings, Memories of the Old Year—Sad and Pleasant, Profits of the Old Year for Self, Church, Community, or Country—these would be appropriate topics for the former. For the first meeting of the new year, Mottoes and Good Resolutions for the Future, is a suggestive theme. Write the topic upon the board, and call attention to it in the preliminary exercises. It may be helpful to write under it questions like these:

Is it wise to make resolutions? Is it better not to make vows than to make and break them? Are not the things that require firm resolution in advance likely to be most important?

A resolution to “fight it out on this line, if

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it takes all summer," made and immortalized one of our greatest American generals. By declaring with inextinguishable fervor, "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death," Patrick Henry lit a torch of new patriotism that still illumines the heavens of the New World.

It is easy to quote numerous examples of the usefulness of good resolutions from secular and sacred records. Let the people give original or selected mottoes for the new year, and be sure to encourage the former.

THE ETERNAL WORD.

(Key-text—2 Peter 1:19.)

Suggestions: Two or three services can profitably be given to this study. Ordinarily, the time given it should not exceed twenty minutes. Appropriate hymns can easily be found. When the topic is not so concrete as to require careful selection of hymns, the author frequently names the person who will announce the next hymn, and so has a hymn a-coming

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throughout the service. But such a procedure would be inimical to the continuity of thought required by a topic like the above. However, it is a good way of training those who are timid about taking part to be helpful in the service.

First Study.

THE ETERNAL WORD SPEAKING FOR ITSELF.

Suggestion: The announcement of this topic should send the people to their Bibles, that they may come prepared. The pastor will know whether he can trust them to do this. To prevent a failure, and to make sure that certain desired Scriptures will be quoted, let him assign such passages to different persons, perhaps to those who might not otherwise be sure to come, thus accomplishing laudable purposes. A number of things the Bible says for itself are here subjoined:

That it is God's own Word. 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb.

1:1, 2, 2:2; Eph. 6:17.

That it is a Word of prophecy. 2 Pet. 1:19.

That it is "sharp." Heb. 4:12.

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That it is powerful to regenerate. 1 Pet. 1:23;

Eph. 5:26.

That it is complete and unchangeable. Deut.

4:2; Rev. 22:18, 19.

That it is perfect and tried. Deut. 6:6-9.

That it is pure. Ps. 12:6.

That it is sure and enlightening. Ps. 19:7, 8.

That it is swift. Ps. 147:15.

That it is magnified above His name. Ps. 138:2.

That it is unfailingly effectual. Isa. 55:10, 11.

That it is imperishable, everlasting. Isa. 40:8;

Mark 13:31.

That it is to be published, read. Deut. 31:11-13.

That it must be obeyed. Prov. 13:13; Isa. 5:24.

Second Study

THE ETERNAL WORD ATTESTED BY OTHERS.

The adverse criticisms of the Bible have been numerous and varied. It has been denounced as a text-book of mysticism, as the embodiment of myths, as unsafe for children, as unhistorical, unscientific, and dangerous.

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The printing of it has been denounced by a great religious body as one of the black arts of the devil, and, not so long ago, this same body condemned Bible societies as the pest of Christendom. But the Bible is here still, has more friends, and is more eagerly studied than ever before. It is commonly known that the room in which Thomas Paine wrote his "Age of Reason" against the Bible was subsequently occupied by a clergyman who preached in the neighborhood. Also that the room in which Voltaire wrote his venomous vaporings later became a depository of the very Book which he said would scarcely be remembered in fifty years.

ATTESTATIONS.

John Calvin: "Read Demosthenes and Cicero, Plato and Aristotle, and you will be interested, delighted, moved. Pass from these to the Bible and you will find yourself instructed, captivated, judged, then comforted and inspired for holiest aims. Presently you

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will perceive that it is permeated by a divine influence which far excels the most illustrious human gifts.”

Gustav Wasa, king of Sweden, to his son John: “I commend thee, my son, for reading the works of the ancients, for you have need to know how men were governed in their days. But I adjure thee, esteem not the word of man above the Word of God, for here thou canst learn the most rational system of conduct and also the art of the best government.”

The celebrated Goethe, though far from being a disciple of Christ, wrote: “The widespread homage which generations and nations pay to this Book is because of its matchless character and content. It is not a national Book, but a Book of nations. As the centuries rise higher and higher, more and more this Book will be honored by all the truly wise as the foundation and means of true culture.”

John Milton: “There are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion.”

Boyle, the naturalist: “The Bible is indeed

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among books what the diamond is among stones, the most precious and sparkling; the most apt to scatter light, and yet the solidest and most proper to make impressions.”

Sir W. Jones, jurist and Orientalist, and one of the most accomplished scholars of his day in England: “The Scriptures contain more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains, both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass from all books in any age or idiom.”

Napoleon the Great: “Book unique, where the mind finds a moral beauty before unknown, and an idea of the Supreme superior even to that which creation suggests! Who but God could produce that type, that ideal of perfection, equally exclusive and original?”

Edmund Burke: “A religious training is the cheapest defense of the nation. I have read the Bible morning, noon, and night, and have ever since been the happier and better man for such reading.”

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John Locke, the great metaphysician: "On morality there are books enough written both by ancient and modern philosophers, but the morality of the gospel does so excel them all that to give a man full knowledge of true morality, I shall send him to no other book than the New Testament."

Lord Bacon: "There never was found, in any age of the world, either religion or law that doth so highly exalt public good as doth the Bible."

General Andrew Jackson, pointing to the family Bible, during his last illness: "That Book, sir, is the rock on which our Republic rests."

William H. Seward: "I do not believe human society ever has attained or can ever attain a high state of intelligence, virtue, security, liberty, or happiness without the Holy Scriptures. The hope of human progress is suspended on the ever-growing influence of the Bible."

Hon. W. E. Gladstone to Dr. T. DeWitt Tal-

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mage: "The older I grow, the more confirmed I am in my faith in religion." "Sir," said he, with flashing eye, "talk about the questions of the day, there is but one question, and that is the gospel—that can and will correct everything."

Abraham Lincoln: "The Bible is the best gift which God has given to man."

Gen. U. S. Grant: "Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet-anchor of your liberties. Write its precepts in your hearts, and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this Book are we indebted for the progress made in true civilization, and to this must we look as our guide in the future."

Shakespeare teems with quotations and Scriptural allusions. Four hundred thirty-six quotations have been found in Tennyson, and nine hundred twenty-six in Ruskin. Lord Hailes affirms that he has discovered the whole New Testament, excepting eleven verses, in the secular writings of the first three centuries, and he believes he could find these also.

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SIMON ZELOTES.

(Acts 1:13, 21:20; 1 Cor. 14:12; Titus 2:14;
Galatians 4:17.)

Suggestion: The purpose of this service is not merely to talk about zeal, but to pray for it, and without fail, to get it. Let the leader keep his eye upon this goal and turn everything in this direction. If he desires, ten or fifteen of the key-thoughts here subjoined may be copied and distributed, to be read in rapid succession when called for. Or, he may embody them in his remarks.

In Luke and Acts this man is spoken of as Simon Zelotes, which means the zealot. Matthew and Mark designate him as the Canaanite, really Canaanæan, which is the Aramaic for zealot, so that his zeal is expressed in every name given him. Simon belonged to a band of political enthusiasts, who strenuously objected to the rule of Rome. Perhaps he did many extravagant things in this connection.

Jesus must have been looking for an enthusiast, for He chose Simon as His disciple.

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He saw in him qualities which, if turned in the right direction, would be invaluable, and his predominating quality was his zeal.

It is a good indication when a boy lights up with enthusiasm as he tells of his games or books or any harmless hobby. And the same is no less true of us older ones. We, too, should have sometimes ecstatic visions of domestic, political, religious, or other noble ideals, should be caught up, like Paul, to the third heaven. Unfortunately for the highest usefulness, we are training ourselves to be, as one expresses it, "icily regular, faultily faultless, splendidly null." Just so. We stand guard over dignity, respectability, and orderliness until it becomes a splendid nullity, and then we continue to watch the corpse.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward, in "Robert Elsmere," aptly sets forth this spirit as "the uselessness of utterance, the futility of enthusiasm, the practical absurdity of trying to realize any of the mind's inward dreams. These considerations," she says, "descend slowly and crush

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down the newly springing growths of action or of passion." Such apathy is the deadliest blight that can fall upon a human life.

Rev. George Jackson quotes another as saying that the young man of to-day has neither religion nor enthusiasm, and then adds, "I do not believe it, but if any such there be among us, let them kneel and pray God to deliver us from this death of the soul."

No, "It is good always to be zealously affected in a good thing." Never pour water on the fire of another's noble enthusiasm. Peter, though hot-headed and impulsive, accomplished more than a whole battalion of "icily regulars" who never violated a rule of propriety. Boast not that you have never gone wrong when, perhaps, you are not going at all.

The Church has been slow to learn how to wisely use her enthusiasts. Discarded by the Church because unwilling to be laced in an ecclesiastical straight-jacket, they have often gone to extremes. But is it not better to have the pot boil over than not to have it boil at all?

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Why are men so impatient with religious enthusiasm, when they enjoy it in everything else? When the apostles preached on the day of Pentecost, many accused them of being drunk. When Paul waxed eloquent before Festus, that gentleman thought him to be mad. Because of Christ's great earnestness in preaching, some said, "He hath a devil," and, strange enough, His own friends tried to lay hands on Him, thinking "He was beside Himself."

When a political campaign is without enthusiasm, we say there are no vital issues at stake. But this can not explain the absence of enthusiasm in religion, for the issues at stake are tremendous, embracing every interest of God and man. If a student fails to "get in the game" and will not even yell with the boys, they say he has no "college spirit." The Christian without zeal has not the true Christ-spirit.

We plead not for unintelligent boisterousness, but for the quality that made our Savior zealous and that led Him to choose Simon the Zealot. How sad that not more of the dar-

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ing of commercial life finds its way into the Church! We grapple our business with zest, and then take hold of the King's business with fingers that are all thumbs. Note that all who have made a mark in the uplift of the race were such as could not be forced into a groove, but had initiative and enthusiasm, and in that sense were zealots.

We have knowledge enough. Now let us pray to have it set ablaze with holy fervor. *Look at this Church, this community, these homes, this Bible, the harvest field, Calvary, and the eternal throne—and henceforth be a loving, intelligent “Simon Zelotes.”*

FAVORITE HYMNS.

Suggestion: Announce the topic in advance and have the people suggest favorite hymns, quoting a verse, describing or relating some incident connected with them. Have the Hymnal and, perhaps, other books on hand and sing a verse or two of most of the hymns mentioned.

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It is well to improvise a choir to assist, as many hymns may not be familiar, though most of them are sure to be. Intersperse the singing with an occasional prayer. A short Bible reading like the following, at the beginning, will add to the spiritual richness of the service:

“There is singing in heaven,” Rev. 15:3.

“Spiritual songs are needed on earth,” Eph. 5:19.

“A new song was sung in heaven—a redemption song,” Rev. 5:9, 10; 14:2, 3.

“A new song is requested of man,” Psa. 33:3.

A PROMISE MEETING.

Suggestion: In connection with the opening exercises, quote 2 Peter 1:4, and point out two things:

1. The promises described “great and precious.”

2. The purpose for which given—“that by these ye might become partakers of the divine nature.”

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Let the quotation be repeated in concert in answer to the leader's questions: What kind of promises? and, What are they given for?

Just to announce a promise meeting and ask all to come prepared to quote a promise, or, worse still, not to announce it till the meeting has begun, is likely to result in disappointment. Many will quote the same familiar texts; some, seeing that their passage has already been given, will quote none at all, and thus the scope of the selections will be impaired. Beware at this point. It is better to announce the promise meeting one week in advance. Promises should be assigned by asking one to bring a promise for the sick; another, one for the aged, the penitents, the mourning, the oppressed. There will be no trouble to get the people to do this. Having done it, you may look for a profitable meeting. Sometimes it is best to give the references, but ordinarily it is wise to let the people search the Scriptures for them. Suggestive promises are here subjoined:

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A Promise of

Material blessings. Old Testament Beatitudes, Deut. 28:1-6.

Peace. John 14:27.

Rest. Ex. 33:14.

Reward. Gen. 15:1; Prov. 11:18.

Pardon. Isa. 55:7.

Guidance. Psa. 32:8, 48:14; John 16:13.

The Holy Spirit. Luke 11:13.

Power. Deut. 8:18; Isa. 40:29.

Wisdom. Eph. 1:16, 17.

The Kingdom. Luke 12:32.

A Promise for

The troubled. Psa. 27:5.

The sick. Psa. 41:3.

The burdened. Psa. 55:22.

The fallen. Psa. 145:14.

The mourning. Matt. 5:4.

The aged. Isa. 46:4.

The widow and orphan. Jer. 49:11; Mal. 3:5.

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THE JERUSALEM CHURCH.

(Acts 2: 41-47.)

Suggestion: In this study the blackboard may be profitably used, as follows:

With Bible in hand, let the people name from the reference above the prominent traits of the Apostolic Church, which the leader or some other writes upon the board.

A Church made up of Bible Christians—v. 41, “They that gladly received the Word.”

A sociable Church—v. 42, “fellowship and breaking of bread.”

A united Church—v. 46, “with one accord.”

A praying Church—v. 42, “and in prayers.”

A generous Church—v. 45, “sold their possessions and parted them to all men.”

A grateful Church—v. 47, “praising God.”

An influential Church—v. 47, “having favor with all the people.”

An Apostolic Church—v. 42, “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.”

A growing Church—v. 47, “and the Lord added daily such as should be saved.”

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Question: Which of these traits are found in our Church? Let us review them and see. Now let us pray that what is wanting as yet may be graciously supplied. (Ten minutes of prayer.)

THE SOUL'S RENAISSANCE.

1. Putting off—the “old man,” Eph. 4: 22.
2. Putting away—“lying,” Eph. 4: 25; Col. 3: 8.
3. Putting on—“the new man,” Eph. 4: 24; Col. 3: 10.
4. Putting into—“I will put My law into their hearts,” Heb. 10: 16.

HEART IRRIGATION.

“And their souls shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.” Jer. 31: 12.

Irrigation is one of the oldest arts. To it Egypt, Assyria, and other countries of the East owed their prosperity. Our Scripture em-

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ploy this beautiful metaphor to set forth the influence of divine grace upon the human heart.

We are reminded of the *beauty* and *fruitfulness* of the watered garden. When the Spanish invaded Mexico, they were astonished to find the charming gardens of the Aztecs, who had brought irrigation and horticulture to a perfection unknown to the Spaniards. So also divine grace awakens slumbering faculties and unfolds a fruition in many lives which is wholly unexpected and surprising.

Dante's words, "That which in heaven is flame on earth is smoke," illustrate the difference between a soul under divine and one under evil influence. The watered garden in the midst of barren surroundings represents the same difference.

The food products of a watered garden belong to its immediate owner, but this is the least the garden yields. As Emerson said, "Oaks bear other fruit than acorns." So the by-products of the watered garden—its beauty, fragrance, and the cheer, the faith, the praise

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which it inspires—*these are more than pulse and greens, and they belong to all.* Even so the by-products of the soul that is as a watered garden offer more than mere sustenance for itself, or store for future use. *Its richest benefactions are to all.* Every passerby may stop and see, may eat and drink, and then pass on refreshed by the fruit of the Christian's faith, and many do.

Note the ascending scale, John 15:1-5: "no fruit," "fruit," "more fruit," "*much fruit.*"

SUNDAY-SCHOOL PRAYER-MEETING.

Suggestion: Announce the meeting on preceding Sabbath, and urge all teachers and officers to be present. Assign sub-topics to persons known to be capable and interested. If possible, have a few special musical numbers, hymns, or solos that ring with interest in the Bible, or the young. Have teachers speak for their classes, explaining what is being done to lead the scholars to decide for Christ. If any teachers will ask for prayers in behalf of their

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classes, it will unfailingly touch hearts and awaken interest. To report conversions that have occurred, or the case of scholars about to join the Church, will have the same result. A good topic to announce is: The Church about her chief business. Here are seed-thoughts for the study:

1. The commission—"Feed My lambs," John 21: 15-17.

Feeding the lambs and sheep is the final test of love ("Lovest thou Me?"). Note, they are to be *fed*, not merely instructed to know about the Shepherd.

2. The peculiar relation of childhood to the Kingdom.

After reading, show how this appears from Gal. 3: 29; Acts 2: 39; 1 Cor. 7: 14; Matt. 19: 14.

3. The sacred obligation growing out of this relation.

Not enough that they are under universal redemption. They must be taught to know

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Christ, and led to accept and publicly to confess Him. Why is it that sixty per cent of our scholars go out from our schools unconverted? Of our boys we lose more than seventy per cent. One prolific cause of this is that so many of them have teachers that tell them about Christ, but do not lead them to accept and confess Him. Some do not even try. Would they be likely to drift away from the Church if converted? First of all, we must ourselves be saved if we would save these boys and girls. Then we must studiously *aim* at their conversion.

4. Behold the beautiful harvest.

In his volume entitled, "The Child as God's Child," Professor Rishell says that eighty per cent of those who unite with the Church are trained in the Sunday school. Think of it—if every officer and teacher in Methodism alone would win one scholar to Christ and the Church within twelve months, it would mean an army of 400,000 new members annually, and rela-

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tively the same would be true in other denominations! The art of teaching the lesson has been wonderfully improved. How about the art of enrolling our boys and girls in the King's army?

THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER.

Suggestion: The blackboard may be used, letting the people name the characteristics of this prayer and the things implied by it, while the leader or some one designated by him writes them on the board.

The prayer was

Humble, earnest, wise, trustful, and to the point.

The prayer implies

1. That there was faith in God.
2. That God takes note of man's conduct and, in his serious moments, man realizes this.
3. That man is responsible to God, and knows it.

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4. That sin has entered, disturbing the relation between God and man.
5. That God can and does pardon sinners.
6. That there is no happiness or peace if unforgiven.
7. That none need despair because of sin.
8. That man may come to God direct, without the mediation of a priest.

INDECISION.

(1 Kings 18:21.)

1. Elijah's call for decision implies
That sinful man has a moral sense. Rom. 2:14.
That he has the power of choice. Deut. 30:19; Luke 10:42.
That he is aided by the Divine Spirit and may decide for God and the good. Gen. 6:3.
2. Indecision stifles enterprise, impairs growth, spurns opportunity. Luke 9:59-62; Matt. 12:30.

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It invites self-deception. Acts 24:25; 26:28.

Felix and Agrippa.

Misleads others. Deut. 32:15-19 (Jeshurun misled children); 1 Sam. 15:28.

3. Wherein are we in danger of indecision?

(1) In becoming Christians.

(2) In uniting with the Church.

(3) In laying aside besetting sin. Heb. 12:1.

(4) In welcoming the Spirit's latest, brightest light and walking in it, no matter what defects it may expose in our traditional beliefs or how it shows our vaunted righteousness of self to be "as filthy rags."

RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Suggestion: An exhaustive study of this subject is out of the question here. All that is intended is the setting forth of the need of receiving the Holy Spirit, in order that the Christian may be led to pray intelligently and earnestly for this gift at once.

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Acts 19: 1-7.

Whether because Paul observed a serious lack in the twelve Ephesian Christians, or because he was determined to declare the full counsel of God to all classes, we do not know, but he pointedly asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. Their reply, "We did not so much as hear that the Holy Spirit was given," proved the correctness of whatever misgiving Paul may have felt concerning them. They had received the baptism of John unto repentance, but not Christian baptism with water, nor yet the baptism of Him who, John said, would come after him and would baptize with fire and with the Spirit. Both these baptisms they promptly received under the ministry of Paul.

Many Christians to-day have little in advance of these Ephesians, unless it be Christian baptism with water. May not the reason be that they, too, have never "heard," have not been clearly instructed? Paul evidently considered the receiving of the Holy Spirit a requi-

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site to satisfactory experience and efficient service.

The following clear essentials of such an experience and service are wanting until believing is rewarded by the gift of the Spirit:

1. *Love of the Divine Word.*

Not mere belief in or defense of it—a love for it, like that of the youthful author of the 119th Psalm. Nine times he speaks of his “delights” in the Word, nine times of his “love” for it, and many times of its excellencies—“great spoil,” “sweeter than honey,” “better than thousands of gold,” “wiser than mine enemies,” “hiding-place and shield,” and “everlasting.” Do you love it as he did? Do you read it with pleasure or from duty, or not at all? Would you study it though you had no address to prepare, no class in the Bible school to teach?

2. *A happy life of prayer.*

Mark, not, do you pray—of course you do—but do you live a life of prayer? An Indian

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convert said, "I used to pray three times a day, but now I only pray once—that is, all the day." He was not upon his knees all day, but the consciousness of self-commitment unto God was abiding. His soul-attitude toward God had become fixed.

3. *A pure, unselfish life.*

There is little efficiency, and no satisfaction, in any other life. Just enough efficiency to hold your job and draw your pay, and even that comes hard. S. D. Gordon speaks of life as the web of character. The thoughts, imaginations, purposes, affections, and will are the under threads, while the looks, voice, words, acts, habits are the upper threads. Time is the shuttle which swiftly and unceasingly shoots to and fro, weaving these threads into the web of life. How does the product look to you, to others, to God? Are the goods all wool and of standard width?

4. *Peace and joy.*

How about these? Is your peace "like a

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river?" Does it "pass understanding?" Is it His peace? Is your joy "full," "unspeakable," and is it steady in "tribulation?"

5. *Power.*

This is another essential of a satisfactory and efficient Christian life. Power to "resist the evil one," to conquer self, to do or say the unpopular thing, if needful; to "persuade men," by inviting them, pleading with them, lifting up Christ before them, and then lifting them up to Him. Power to run or to stand still, to sing praises or be silent. How about this?

Note that all the five things mentioned came to the apostles with the baptism of the Spirit. They can be obtained in no other way to-day. It is the specific office of the Spirit to mature these graces, and there can be no substitute for Him. Note also that He is here—here in the world, in the Church, in the Word, and would dwell within and enrich you. How to receive Him? Precisely as the disciples did—by obey-

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ing Christ's twofold command to "go" and to "tarry."

There is a school that trains men to "balance up business," not to take invoice—any one can do that—but to examine any business with unsparing scrutiny and report results. It is expensive service, but it pays. There is such a thing as growing stale in religion and running contentedly in deadly grooves. Let us have a balancing of our spiritual affairs, that we may receive the fullness of the Spirit.

THE MISSIONARY PRAYER-MEETING.

To have a wide-awake missionary prayer-meeting about once a month is to add one more mighty dynamo to the machinery of the Church. Nor is it difficult to have such. The prayer-meeting committee, or a special committee appointed for this service, may prepare the missionary features of the service, and let the pastor conduct it. In most instances the latter will need to direct the preparation. Happy the pastor who has a member or two who will take

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the matter upon their hearts and relieve him of some of the work. To impart the most information in the most attractive manner is the great objective which should be kept well in mind. Not to get missionary money, but to make missionary Christians is the prime purpose of this service. The logical order of exercises should be as follows: *information, interest, sympathy, prayer, enthusiasm, desire to help*. Is not, then, the result well worth the effort of such a service?

The very latest news from the front can easily be obtained, and this, with the liberal use of maps, charts, miscellaneous literature, and personal communications from the field, can not fail to awaken interest. The maps and charts are not expensive, but if they can not be procured, the "Chart Series" will be sent free, and from it the figures and facts can be copied upon the blackboard or on heavy paper or cloth.

Doubtless many missionary prayer-meetings are growing stale because too little thought and effort is given them. If Christians are not

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enthusiastic about world evangelization, it is either because they are following Christ afar off or because they are not made to see the needs and golden harvests of the field, and the moral loss of leaving the grain ungarnered. We can not lay the dullness of this service to the unspiritual state of the Church so long as we have not used the approved means of stimulating spirituality by spreading missionary intelligence.

Because of the rapid advance of missionary activities, it is difficult to offer appropriate material for the missionary prayer service, but for such as may desire it, the following exercises are suggested for one such service:

Hymn, "The Son of God goes forth to war."

Three or four earnest invocations.

Reading of 72d Psalm, or the 54th chapter of Isaiah, or an arranged responsive reading.

Study of the field which is the topic, if possible, by use of maps and charts; or, if without these, by oral instructions as to:

1. Geography of the field.

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2. Brief history of missionary work there by other Churches, then by your own, frankly naming encouragements and discouragements. Nothing is gained by withholding salient features and impressing people that pagan nations are coming our way on the run, begging us to receive them. Let the people know of the tremendous obstacles in the way, as well as of the great victories.
3. Setting forth the political, social, or other conditions that have a vital bearing upon the work.
4. What are the immediate needs, and what is your Church doing to meet them?
5. Communications from the field, or from persons who have been there, or any who are competent to speak of it.

The exercises should be freely interspersed with prayer and hymns.

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PATRIOTIC PRAYER-MEETING.

Suggestion: Three or four times a year, what may be called Patriotic Prayer-meetings will be found useful. Have appropriate singing and, if possible, a short address that bristles with "points" on some aspect of national morals or events. Great inspiration will result from having much prayer and praise for prevailing evidences of progress in public morals and true reform. Such evidences should be diligently sought out and strongly emphasized. Nor should wrongs be covered over. In setting forth wrongs, however, beware of letting the service degenerate into a sheer indignation meeting. Sin may be committed in improperly denouncing sin. Ardent, indiscriminate denunciation of wrong is inimical to devout worship. First, let the moral sensibilities be stimulated and the conscience quickened by earnest prayer and deep devotion, then turn the full light on existing wrongs. Upon the other hand, cause for thanksgiving may be found in the latest

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wholesome legislation or court decision, and in strong moral utterances of the press or prominent men and women. An appropriate topic for such a service would be

THE BASIS OF NATIONAL WELL-BEING.

Scripture: 1 Tim. 2:1-5; Jer. 9:23, 24.

Things that are not the basis of national well-being:

Wealth and material resources.

Numbers.

Military strength.

Education (alone).

Statesmanship.

The leader may show at length how well we are provided with all these. But that it would be folly to put our trust in these accessories, possessed by many great nations now defunct, should also be made plain.

Things that are the basis of our national well-being:

The fear of God.

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The moral integrity of the people.
Righteous laws impartially administered.
Citizens who, with Churchill,

“Consider well, weigh strictly right and wrong,
Resolve not quick, but once resolved, be strong;
Rather stand up, assured with conscious pride,
Alone, than err with millions on your side.”

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND.

(Mark 6: 36-44.)

The Food.

1. Common food—bread and fishes.
Ordinary mercies enough, if blessed of Christ. Many pray for a “blessing,” meaning spiritual dainties. The Hebrew captives were satisfied with “pulse.”
2. Ordinary food, obtained through ordinary channels—a boy and the disciples—but consecrated with an extraordinary blessing. Do not expect miracles till ordinary methods are exhausted—Jesus might have made bread of the stones, but preferred to make the meager pro-

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vision ample by His blessing. How often
He does that still.

The Provider.

1. Christ. He took the initiative—pitied the people as He foresaw the coming hunger.
2. Through the disciples and the lad. “Give ye them to eat.”

The Sequel.

1. Christ looked up and prayed, then gave to the disciples and they to the people. Disciples an important factor, after all—helped in procuring and did the distributing.
2. All were filled—that is, satisfied, felt no more hunger. In many respects divine blessing makes the little we have go a long way, accomplish wonders. Illustrate. Food was prepared for the people, and the people for the food. Christ’s mind influenced their minds, while His

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blessing gave efficacy and increase to the scanty provision.

It is not the quantity of the meat, but the contentment and cheerfulness of the mind, that makes the richest feast.

Prayer: Give me an eye to see God *in* all things, a hand to serve Him *with* all things, and a heart to praise Him *for* all things.

Note: Either in advance of the service, or at its beginning, the leader may ask that personal observations of "A little child shall lead them" be given at the proper moment, say, under "The Provider," "2" above. Here is an example: A father, returning home after a prolonged absence, and not knowing that his little daughter had become a Christian, proceeded to eat without saying grace. "Do n't you pray before you eat?" asked the little girl. "Daughter will pray if you wish," interposed the mother. She prayed so beautifully that the father presently dropped knife and fork and buried his tearful face in his hands.

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A MANLY RELIGION.

(Isa. 46:8; 1 Cor. 16:13; Acts 4:13.)

Suggestion: This can be made a men's meeting, and if it is desired, all the exercises may be by men. Let the women "keep silence" in the public congregation, while the men, for once, do all the singing, praying, and speaking. But the ladies should be invited, and later a meeting for ladies can be announced, with the men invited to keep silence. If desirable, selections from the following may be distributed for use. The author acknowledges indebtedness to Rev. George Jackson for help in this study.

The estrangement of men from the Church in this country, and still more in Europe, is a deplorable fact. Two-thirds of the members of the Church are said to be women. In Scotland from twenty to thirty per cent fewer men join the Church than women before the age of twenty. It is the business of the Church to find the cause of this condition and to remedy it.

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There is no deep-seated hostility to the Church, perhaps, but there is widespread indifference and apathy with reference to her claims. We can not concede that the cause lies in the nature of Christianity. Rather it lies in the misconception of its true nature. Many men do not understand that the Christian life and the manly life are one and the same thing. They fear religion will make them appear womanish, and there is nothing a young man hates more than that. He may act very foolish in many things, but he will never knowingly lay himself open to the charge of being effeminate.

He also fears sanctimoniousness, which to him is an unavoidable concomitant of religion. He is sure that he has seen men, some of them clergymen, whom religion has shorn of their manliness. Sidney Smith must have stumbled at this when he wrote of the three sexes, men, women, and clergymen. But this is a misconception of Christianity and Christ. If for anything, Jesus Christ stands for manliness, courage of the highest type, and sturdiness of char-

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acter. With these qualities, however, it associates kindness and gentleness. It produces gentle men, that is, men who are no less gentle because being men and no less manly because being gentle. Physical prowess, uncouthness, and ruffianism is not manliness.

The Scriptures cited above aptly verify this conception of manliness. "Quit you like men," says Paul. He is training men to be saints, yes, but stalwart, soldierly saints; saints who have courage to strike a blow, but also stamina to take punishment without finching. "Quit you like men," be game.

Notice in Acts 4:13 that it was not the meekness and love in Peter and John, important as these are, that reminded their enemies that they were influenced by associating with Jesus. No, it was "when they saw their boldness" that "they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Manifestly Annas, Caiaphas, and Alexander (Acts 4:6) had no doubt about the manliness of Jesus. After a night in jail, Peter and John were given a hearing

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before the Sanhedrin. Instead of flinching and begging off and promising not to preach any more, they proceeded to preach to their judges, flinging it into their very teeth that "Him ye crucified." Anything unmanly or womanish about that? Observe Christ lashing the desecrators of the temple out into the street. See Him regal, calm, majestic, though a prisoner before Pilate, a horrible death awaiting Him, while His judge flits nervously about, scarcely knowing what to do or say next. What young man that can not afford to take such a Christ as his Captain, Savior, and Lord?

Christian manliness expresses itself not only in courage, but in unselfish devotion to others. When at the brook Kedron they could not well take Jesus, because uncertain of His identity, He placed Himself in their hands by saying, "I am Jesus of Nazareth," but magnanimously added, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way," meaning His affrighted friends. He bade the weeping women that followed to weep not for Him, but for themselves and their children. In

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the shadow of the cross He cared for His mother, and when upon it He prayed for the men that murdered Him. Anything weak and effeminate in these things?

Gentleness, when wedded with manhood, makes a man, says one. Physical courage is possible without the Spirit of Christ, but not the courage to fight the wrong, and while so fighting to be as tender as a child.

There are tasks in Christianity that only woman can perform, but the great problems of the Kingdom are essentially a man's job.

STEPS IN SALVATION AND SERVICE.

SAVED BY AN EVER-READY SAVIOR.

Immediate decision being urged by the message of the gospel, a man resolved that he would go home and there give himself to Christ. He started, thinking and praying on the way. Presently he reflected that there was nothing at home that would help him, and so, with one decisive act of surrender, prayed, while walk-

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ing, "God be merciful to me, a sinner, now!" That moment his longings were silenced and his soul was at rest.

SEALED BY THE KISS OF PARDON AND ADOPTION.

After one of his greatest victories, Cyrus, wishing to bestow marks of esteem upon his generals, gave to one a sword, to another a signet ring, but to his friend Crysantas he would offer no material thing. So he kissed him on one cheek, then on the other, that he might know that he was the object of special favor. "Who also sealed us and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:22). "In whom having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13).

TRANSFORMED BY THE LIGHT OF DIVINE GRACE.

A traveler was told that if he went up Pike's Peak as far as Cripple Creek at three o'clock in the morning, he would see a wonderful sight. He went, but, arriving just before sunrise, he

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saw nothing strange. He moved a little farther up and soon heard exclamations by other tourists, just as the sun was rising. He turned, and there before him stood a mountain like a white-robed priest, another like a choir of angels, and a third like unto a golden ladder reaching to the skies. "The darkness is passing away and the true light already shineth" (1 John 2:8). "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

SAVED TO SAVE OTHERS.

Thomas Guthrie tells of a ship's crew who heard signals of distress in the distance and later found a wreck, and fastened to it an almost lifeless human form, so weak he could scarcely speak. As they bent to lift him up, they heard him whisper, "There is another man." They saved this one also. The servant should be as his Master. He, while dying, saved

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another unto life eternal. This spirit was in the shipwrecked man above and should be in you and me.

MAKES PROGRESS BECAUSE THERE IS A SECRET POWER WITHIN.

It was in the time of sails and side-wheelers and before the screw-propeller was known. A pretty pleasure fleet lay calm-bound in the bay, and every sail was limp. One sloop caused great surprise by coming on apace with splash of side-wheel and sails a-flutter. Its secret power was a screw-propeller, hidden from the unknowing gaze of man. (Eph. 4:20; 1:19; 2 Cor. 4:7.)

AT EVEN-TIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT.

A great artist's masterpiece was a death-scene with gloom all about. Dying at ninety in the triumph of the faith, "Fetch my masterpiece and brush," he said, "for I must change it before I go. This valley is not dark, but

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beautiful with a glory I never saw before.”
God’s true child never dies in despair. Always,
“at even-time it shall be light.”

IMPORTANT BIBLE “COMES.”

In Revelation 22:17 the Spirit, the Bride, and all who hear are represented as saying, “Come,” hence there is a variety of Bible “Comes.”

1. Nehemiah 6:2 holds up, as warning, an evil “come,” an invitation to the plain of Ono for wrongful purposes.

This reminds us that over against the good are many invitations to the bad.

2. The intellectual “Come,” John 1:46, “Come and see.”

The Bible and Christianity are not opposed to critical inquiry; they invite and get it. Recent discoveries disprove the destructive arguments against the Mosaic authorship of the

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Pentateuch. Indeed, the Code of Hammurabi and the Tel el Amarna tablets have made necessary the rewriting of Old Testament criticism. Until recently many critics declared against the Mosaic authorship of the books that bear his name on the twofold ground that writing was not known in Moses' day, and that codes as exalted as those bearing Moses' name could not have been written thirteen or fourteen centuries before Christ. The documents named disprove both these objections. Learned and unlearned are invited to "come and see." More than ever these classes do come and do see, and by the truth themselves are conquered. But we are attracted also by

3. The spiritual "Come." (Gen. 7:1; Matt. 11:28.)

In ceaseless iteration the refrain of the whole gospel rings out in this winsome "Come." It means

Come and see;
Come and trust;

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Come and worship;
Come and work; and then, at last,
Come home and rest.

Suggestion: An evangelistic or at least a very practical turn can be given the meeting by singing hymns that ring with the invitation, "Come," and by proposing the questions, Who should come, and why, and how, and when?

The blackboard can be used by writing, for example, "Come and"—then letting the people suggest the word "see" by referring them to Philip (John 1:46), after which it is written in. Or, "Come and"—the word "worship" is to be written in after the people have suggested it when reminded of what the wise men did at the Bethlehem manger.

LOOKING BACK.

(Gen. 19:17-26; Luke 9:57-62.)

Let the remarks revolve about the question, Why and when is looking back especially dangerous?

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1. *When doubt assails.*

Lot's wife had not implicit faith in the angel's warning. Assurance is not gained by looking back. New evidences, all-sufficient for your doubts, lie just ahead. Go forward and you will find them.

2. *When under conviction for sin.*

“Up, flee for thy life and delay not.” Now, to look back is to silence the Voice that offers peace, pardon, and life. “Thou art not far from the Kingdom of heaven.” (Zoar.)

3. *When tempted.*

To hesitate, to parley, or even to consider the enemy's proffer means almost sure surrender. If resisted at his first approach, he is sure to “flee” (James 4:7). If evil thoughts are banished, evil deeds can never follow.

4. *When duty beckons.*

Angel lips had warned Lot's wife; angel hands had led her out; and angel voices bade her not look back, or stay in all that plain. It

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was her salvation and her duty to obey. It always is. Trifling with what is understood to be a duty is dangerous and often fatal. Besides, resolutely entering upon a duty renders it a pleasure.

Suggestion: Let there be much prayer that God will make duty a real delight, but also for grace to perform it, whether a delight or not. Examples of the fatality of looking back are easily found: The Israelites looking back to Egypt and dying in the wilderness; Judas, the betrayer; Demas; "many of the disciples" (John 6:66), and more modern instances.

PROFIT AND LOSS IN RELIGION.

(With blackboard.)

Suggestion: There is a loss even in religion. The devil does not fish with a baitless hook. In the temptation of Adam and Eve, and of Jesus, much was offered. It is futile to try to make people believe that a life of selfishness and sin is all wretchedness. Some have more

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to lose in becoming Christians than others, while some have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

Let the people join in making honest mention of the things that often are forfeited in becoming a Christian and, if desired, place them in a column on the board. In the column will appear friends, pleasures, comforts, and life itself. Under these, in the same column, place the undesirable things that are lost in becoming a disciple of the Christ. Some of these are evil associations; a harmful influence over others, dear ones it may be; a troubled conscience and remorse, a false hope, and spiritual decay.

Over against the losses, in another column, place the gains, again letting the people assist. Be prepared to offer pointed comment upon things named. For example, for the disciples to follow Christ meant a loss of business. Elisha was the son of a prosperous land-owner when Elijah called him away from home. A young lady was compelled to choose between her lover and Christ. She chose the Bride-

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groom of her soul and lost the lover. The choice of the ministry to many bright young men involves lifelong financial limitations and embarrassment.

A MESSENGER FOR CHRIST.

Messages are sent by telegraph, telephone, and by courier, bearing a written or an oral message. Our subject means messengers of the latter class. God wants individual living messengers; messengers who "let the Word of Christ dwell in them richly" (Col. 3:16), so that, though the message is His, it is also theirs. It comes from the message-bearer's heart as well as from Christ's.

These messengers speak with authority, they are ministers of State, ambassadors of the King. They frequent His throne; indeed, they dwell under its shadow. What honors, privileges are connected with such message bearing! To this work we all are called.

Suggestion: Here let the blackboard be

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brought into use by writing upon it in large letters, "The Kind of Messenger for Christ That I Would Be." Under this write qualities of an ideal messenger, as they are mentioned by those present. The list will be somewhat as follows :

Swift, Fearless, Faithful, Loving, Prayerful, Untiring, Tactful, Hopeful, Sympathetic, Consistent, Intelligent.

Anticipating the qualities that will be named the leader may prepare himself to add some pointed illustrative comment. To illustrate: when "Fearless" is mentioned, reference can be made to Joan of Arc, who boldly ventured into the presence of King Charles and delivered her message, saying, "The King of heaven announces to you by me that you shall be crowned king in the city of Rheims, and that you shall be His vicegerent in France."

When "Swift" is suggested, tell of Thomas Wolsey, whose promotion from priest at Magdalen College to cardinal, and afterward to chaplain of King Henry VIII, arose out of his

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promptness to seize an opportunity and carry out orders. He was the king's confidential messenger to Maximilian. Sent, on one occasion, with a message to the emperor, he took the ferry at Gravesend, went with horses to Dover, had quick passage to Calais, discharged his commission, immediately returned, and was in Richmond again on the fourth evening. Presenting himself to the king the following morning, he was angrily asked why he had not set forth on his errand, when, in fact, he had already accomplished it.

To illustrate the quality of "Faithfulness" tell of the treacherous Athenians who, being sent to negotiate peace with Philip, accepted his bribes instead, thus enabling him the more successfully to prosecute the war against the Greeks. The messengers were untrue, and Philip swept down like a torrent, carrying all before him and meeting little resistance by the people, who believed that peace was being restored. Explain that in our day the messenger should not begin by affirming his authority,

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saying, "The Lord has sent me, or told me thus and so." It should be left for those addressed to judge of that after hearing the message and observing the messenger. Such pretenses awaken suspicion rather than confidence. The Divine Spirit may be trusted to quicken the word lovingly given and, if there is need, to attest the messenger.

At this point ask the people to bear witness to the results of faithful message bearing. Prayers for grace to mature the qualities mentioned will lead the service to a spiritual climax and the hour will have been well spent.

COMING TO THE THRONE.

(Heb. 4:16, 10:20-22.)

There are many thrones, mythical and real, of Deity and of men. In this great universe there must be one throne, central and supreme, upon which the perpetuity and glory of all other thrones depend. This throne Paul designates by a word which plainly shows that, to him, the

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most vital thing about it is not its power or splendor, but *that it is a "Throne of grace."*

This Throne was typified in olden time by the Mercy Seat which covered the ark. (Let some one describe it.) It was two and one-half cubits square and was thickly lined, inside and out, with pure gold. It was holy and no man was to touch it. Within it were the two plates of the Commandments, a golden vessel full of manna, and Aaron's rod, which budded. Directly over the cover were two cherubs, facing each other and looking down into the ark, their wings being spread over the cover. It is to this that Psa. 91:1 refers when speaking of the Lord "sitting between the cherubim." It was from this spot that the voice of God went forth to Moses (Num. 7:39), and to Samuel (1 Sam. 3:3). Hence it was

1. A place of communion with Jehovah.
2. A place of judgment.
3. A place of appeal in prayer.
4. A place of divine pardon.

All this is true of the "Throne of grace"

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and more, for, first, unlike the ancient Mercy-seat, *it has a permanent place of abode*. The former was kept for a short time at Bethel. Then, until the Promised Land was reached, it remained at Gilgal. After entering Canaan, Shiloh was its resting-place, until the sons of Eli bore it into battle against the Philistines, who captured and placed it in their temple beside the god Dagon. In the presence of it Dagon fell and was shattered. Later it was kept at Kiriath Jearim. Then David brought it to Jerusalem and established it on Mt. Zion. Pursued by Absalom, his son, he bore it with him to the brook of Kidron. Subsequently it was restored to Jerusalem, and finally Solomon gave it abode on Mt. Moriah. When Nebuchadnezzar plundered the temple, he stripped it of its gold, and thereafter it was no longer known by the people. But the "Throne of Grace" stands forever and is not subject to such vicissitudes.

Further, whereas the Mercy-seat was accessible only to the chief representative of the

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people, *the "Throne of Grace" is open to all,* and "whosoever will may come."

For nine hundred years the nearest any man could come to God was that typical throne, and even to it he came, so to speak, by proxy. But now, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

Suggestion: Hymns like "Sweet hour of prayer," "Just as I am," "Jesus, where'er Thy children meet," will be helpful. As an illustration of coming boldly, use the following: On pain of death, no person was to approach the Roman emperor's tent in the night. A soldier was to be immediately executed for violating this rule, for he approached the tent, late at night, with petition in hand. In his pavilion the emperor heard the commotion and cried out, saying, "If the petition be for himself, let him die; if not, spare him." It was found that the brave man had come to pray for the life of two comrades who had been taken asleep on the watch. Thanks to his courageous approach of the emperor in behalf of others, he nobly forgave them all.

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MOSES' CHOICE.

(Deut. 18: 15; Heb. 11: 24-26.)

Suggestion: A useful prayer-meeting study may be developed from this subject. Have some one prepared to name the different offices in which Moses appeared. Or, appoint different persons to name one of these offices each, and, in one minute, define it by quoting the sacred record. As, for example:

Poet, prophet, lawgiver, political economist, theologian, historian. The leader may show how, after all, the real greatness of the man appears in his choosing "afflictions with his people" in preference to all the emoluments of the court of Pharaoh. That choice was

1. *Unusual and strange.* Few then or now would make it. Yet some do. Give instances.
2. *Vital.* Behold the change it wrought in Moses' environment, associations, employment, etc.
3. *Wise and wholesome.* "He looked to the reward," foresaw good results.

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4. *Courageous nevertheless.*

Christianity is not an emaciated system of pious sentiment and song, never appealing to the sterner aspects of life, but rather a system of sacred obligations that mean service and conflict and self-denial, which appeal to the heroic elements of the soul, thus developing courage and leadership.

Illustration: In "The Redemption of David Corson," by Doctor Charles Frederic Goss, David's former friends point out to him the losses, crosses, and humiliation it will mean to him to become a Christian. He admits it all and says he expects it, and then resolutely adds: "I have suffered the losses and crosses of doing wrong, and now I invite the losses and crosses of doing right."

NOAH'S FAITH.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world and became an

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heir of righteousness which is by faith.” (Heb. 11:7.)

Suggestion: Open with the singing of “My faith looks up to Thee,” and close with “Faith of our fathers! living still.”

1. *Necessity of faith.* “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Heb. 11:6.)
2. *Scope of faith.* “That He is and that He is a Rewarder.”
3. *Foundation of faith.* “Being warned of God”—not reason, tradition, philosophy, dreams, and visions, but the Word.
4. *Work of faith.* “Prepared an ark.” Mere belief is often idle, faith never. Have people name things true faith will make men do. Nothing so essential, so real and great as the work of spiritual faith. Noah found it so. The work of his faith (ark) outlasted everything else.
5. *Reward of faith.* “To the saving of his house.” Own kindred first beneficiaries of his faith. “Come into the ark, thou and thy house.”

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Suggestion: Testimony: Let the people name some of the fruits they have plucked from the tree of Christian faith. Prayer: Ask God not to give you faith, but for grace to exercise the faith you have, and thus it will grow strong.

THE PRAYER-MEETING WEIGHED IN A BALANCE.

A service which makes such demands upon the time and thought of Christians as does the prayer-meeting should be able to point to a record of good accomplished in the past and give evidence of what it can and would do in the present. In this study we place its high demands upon one side of the scales and the considerations last mentioned on the other.

First, *What the prayer-meeting has wrought of lasting good.*

Here let the people speak of good they have themselves received, or seen or read about in others' lives. See also "The Prayer-meeting Idea," p. 16.

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An interesting volume in a Sunday school library tells the story of little children holding a prayer-meeting under a tree to comfort one of their number who had lost her little brother. Reluctantly the father, not himself a Christian, gave his consent to let the little mourner attend the meeting. Inquisitively he followed and, hiding in the bushes near, listened to the children's prayers until his heart was melted and he became a willing soldier of the cross.

Second, *What can this service do to-day if given a fair chance?*

Questions like the following may here be introduced with profit:

How may the prayer-meeting help the pastor?

How may the prayer-meeting help the Sunday school?

How may the prayer-meeting help the cause of missions?

How may the prayer-meeting help all the interests of the Church—the spiritual, social, and financial? (Or, how has it helped them?)

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Conversely, let the representatives of these organizations within the Church tell how these departments can help the prayer-meeting. There are ways in which the Sunday school, the missionary organizations, the young people's society, and the Official Board can mightily reinforce this service. Announce the nature of this particular meeting and possibly the speakers, and the attendance will be good.

Should this outline offer more material than is needed for one meeting, it can easily be divided into two or more.

CHARACTER STUDIES.

Suggestion: A few general directions under the head of character studies may be of greater value than to present one such study fully worked out. Sermons and prayer-meeting talks of this sort are quite common. Care must be exercised to bring out such traits and events as will produce immediate spiritual results. The use of the plural in the following studies

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does not mean that many characters, or even more than one, should be taken for one meeting. The leader will exercise his judgment as to this, and also in the selection of the characters to be considered. It will be well to make the assignment of these when there are several, or of the different traits when there is but one. Here is material for five attractive prayer-meetings:

1. Persons outside of Biblical history whose lives were rich in moral import.
2. Persons in Biblical history whose lives were rich in moral import.

To avoid the trite and commonplace, the things desired may be brought out when assignments are made. One may be asked to name the noble qualities and another the weaker ones. One may describe the subject's early life; another, the religious training; another, the life-work.

3. Persons that have been an inspiration to me, and how.

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4. Pastors who have been a help to me, and how.
5. Great men and women of prayer.

RELIGIOUS TRUTH IN ALLEGORY.

Suggestion: One or more of the following illustrations can be used in one meeting. Scripture and other material can be supplied at will. A unique manner of using the incidents is to relate them and letting those present name the lessons taught, which then is written on the board where all may see and read.

1. *The Seductiveness of Sin.*

Lured by the inverted trees, sky, and landscape, a bird flew into a lake and was drowned. The lofty, pure, and good are often seductively reflected by sin. All the glories of the upper world may appear inverted in evil, causing error to appear as nobler truth, disobedience as liberty, anger as indignation, tyranny as justice, skepticism as scholarship, doubt as intelligence, bigotry as loyalty to truth, cowardice

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as humility, lack of decision as broadmindedness and generous toleration.

2. *Perfect Obedience.*

This means to do what is recognized as right, whether the reason and wisdom of it can be seen or not. Obedience that demands perfect understanding is not perfect obedience.

A man was hired to turn a grindstone. He turned it for an hour and then left it in disgust because no one came to grind anything. Another was hired, who turned and turned for hours, with no one near. When asked by his employer why he did this, he answered: "That is your business; you hired me and ordered that I do it." "Stop turning," said the employer; "I have been looking for a man who will literally carry out my orders that I may make him manager of my affairs, and you are my man." God does not ask us to perform senseless tasks, but He does sometimes test our obedience severely in order to promote us to higher assignments, if found worthy.

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3. *The Cross Conspicuous.*

Rubens's "Brazen Serpent," in the National Art Gallery of London, greatly magnifies the misery of the dying, while the brazen serpent, God's instrument of rescue, is represented as a minute thing in the distance. Not so Revelation. It sets forth sin and suffering only that the cross may be the more conspicuous. "The law entered that sin might abound." The gospel entered that "where sin abounded grace might much more abound."

4. *Quiet Power.*

In Cambridge there lived a little old-fashioned clergyman whom no one cared to hear. He was old and a back number. One day a large number of students took a vote as to whom each one would call, before any other, to give counsel and prayer in the hour of death. Every student named the old clergyman. They did not care to hear him preach, but they knew the genuineness of his life and the power of his faith.

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5. *Divine Comfort.*

“As one whom his mother comforteth.”
(Isa. 66:13.)

“O heart of mine, we shouldn't worry so!
What we have missed of calm we couldn't have, you know.
What we've met of stormy pain,
And of sorrow's driving rain,
We can better meet again,
If it blow.

We have erred in that dark hour we have known,
When the tears fell with the shower, all alone!
Were not shine and shower blent,
As the gracious Master meant?
Let us temper our content
With His own.

For we know not every morrow can be sad;
So, forgetting all the sorrows we have had,
Let us fold away our fears,
And put by our foolish tears,
And through all the coming years,
Just be glad.”

6. *The Heart in Prayer and Service.*

Joachim, the violinist, when, as a boy, asked by his mother what toy he wanted, requested a violin. Later he became famous for his tenderness, as well as his musical accomplishment. A young lady once sang for him much out of

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tune and time. When corrected by her master, she said she would get a metronome to beat time for her. "No," replied Joachim, "you need go to no such trouble or expense. Rhythm and time must come from the heart and not from a machine." The pupil needed a musical soul, and the teacher could not give this to her.

Every heart may be spiritually attuned for service and song, and unless it is, worship and service are as mechanical as the beat of the metronome. "The Lord *looketh on the heart*" (1 Sam. 16:7). David *had it in his heart* to build an house for the Lord (2 Chron. 6:7). "Making melody *in your heart* to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

7. *Christians the Salt of the Earth.*

Salt is preserving, seasoning, vitalizing, stimulating. When Mrs. McKinley, wife of the deceased President, lay in San Francisco at death's door, she was revived through the injection into a vein of a salt solution. It is said that this stimulated the heart, warmed and

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made fluid the almost congealed blood, and energized the corpuscles.

Christianity should be so vital as to stir up the world's moral torpor, stimulate earnest thought upon the holy and wholesome, cause wide agitation of matters that pertain to the public weal, vitalize faith and moral conviction, inspire courage, thus preserving men from moral degeneracy, decay, and death.

Suggestion: Make it plain that nothing else can do all this. Refer to defunct nations who had not the salt of Christianity.

8. *Coming to Himself.*

In a sense an unchristian man is beside himself. Like the prodigal, he needs to "come to himself."

The story is told of a man in Geneva, New York, who worried about his business until he lost his mind, when the poor man wandered away from his home and was missed for two months. In Marion, Indiana, he came to himself, learned where he was, and started for

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home. Penniless, haggard, and tattered, he arrived at last. Words can not describe the welcome that awaited him.

Suggestion: Read Luke 15:12-24, and let all take part in naming points of resemblance, beginning with, say, absorption in material things, resultant confusion, wandering away from home and friends, impoverishment, etc.

Sing: "I am coming home," "Welcome for me," "Haven of rest."

THE KIND OF MEN AND CHRISTIANS THE WORLD IS LOOKING FOR TO- DAY.

Suggestion: The following or similar traits of the kind of men needed to-day may be distributed privately, or at the door, or, better still, by mail. A personal communication from the pastor through the post is always appreciated, however small the message or request. First, the traits of needed men may be given in rapid succession; then those of needed Christians. Ten minutes should suffice for this, when

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the meeting may be given to prayer, testimony,
and song,

THE WORLD IS LOOKING FOR MEN

- who can do things.
- who never give up.
- who can not be bought.
- who see opportunities and seize them.
- who never get into ruts.
- who think much and say little.
- who know their weak spot and guard it.
- who are as good as their word.
- who make every day count for something
worth while.
- who stand for a square deal for everybody.
- who have initiative—can act without orders.
- who know how to get happiness out of their
work.
- who place a value on themselves and never
mark it down.
- who know their place and keep it and enjoy it.
- who get so much good out of life that they
would not swap with a king.

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- who profit by the mistakes of others.
- who do not quake at sight of conflict or of competition.
- who do to-day what possibly might wait until to-morrow.
- who merit praise, but do not seek it or murmur if it does not come.
- who can succeed in business without failing in religion, and vice versa.
- who are real Christians, spiritually-minded men.*

THE WORLD IS LOOKING FOR CHRISTIANS

- who know what they believe.
- who are not stingy.
- who are saved and so alive.
- who love children.
- who venerate the aged.
- who reverence the house of God.
- who preach and practice perfect love.
- who make it a point to welcome strangers in the church.

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- who strive to lead men unto Christ, as well as into the Church.
- who have as much interest in the Church as the pastor.
- who do not attribute all their aches and colds to going to Church.
- who are neither afraid nor ashamed to confess their Lord.
- who love the mid-week service and will do anything to help it.
- who never cause the pastor any worry, but make him glad he has them.
- who are not of those who say, “The Church is right and good, but I will not join it.”
- who are known to be on the right side of all great moral questions.
- who do not blame the pastor for not calling when he did not know that they were sick.
- who do their duty to please the Christ, and not alone their pastor.
- who will not lose the blessing of the sermon if it is followed by a collection.
- who see more good to be thankful for than

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evil to lament over, but who ignore neither.

—who know their Bibles well enough not to attribute, as one did, Sam Jones's slogan, "Quit your meanness," to St. Paul.

—*who are real men, flesh and bone Christians.*

THE KIND OF WOMEN THE WORLD IS LOOKING FOR TO-DAY.

Suggestion: This study may be conducted in the same manner as the one preceding. See suggestions there. Impress the fact that there are many such women, and that the Church is producing more of them constantly. Mark, it is the Church that trains them. Characters like the following are not produced in any other institution. Useful women are found in schools, hospitals, charitable institutions, missions—thousands of them—and many thousands in the homes; but, wherever found, women with the qualities here named are the product of the Church of God.

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THE WORLD IS LOOKING FOR WOMEN

- who love children in the home.
- who, with Mary, choose the better part and are happy Christians.
- who do not regard their husbands as their sovereign lords.
- who interest themselves in civic and governmental affairs, as did Deborah.
- who, like Lydia, consecrate their needles to their Master's work in Ladies' Aids.
- who sit at Jesus' feet, like Mary, but who also rise and serve, like Martha.
- who use the gift of speech in prophecy, as did Hannah, Huldah, and Deborah.
- who daily pray with Socrates of old, "O God, make me beautiful within!"
- who, with Sarah, have the patent of aristocracy from God Himself within the soul.
- who, like Ruth, are industrious gleaners and, like her, too, are loyal unto God and His people.

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- who aim to make the home the training-school for noble men and women.
- who, with all their drudgery and toil, find time for self-improvement.
- who will cheer moral chivalry in men more loudly than mere physical heroism.
- who eschew masculinity and foster normal, cultured, consecrated femininity as their richest charm.
- who have not crushed their gentler qualities through mannish independence.
- who do not stay outside the Church because their husbands will not join, but bind them to the Church by their own affiliation with it.
- who have music in their souls and who sing, not only to amuse and entertain, but, like Miriam, to praise the Lord and inspire mighty enterprises.
- who aim, not to compete with men in business, but to care for self, unless willing to be the helpmates of men who are able and worthy to care for them.

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- who pray, as did Rebekah, whose prayer is the first recorded instance of woman's direct appeal to God, but who, unlike Rebekah, will not connive at deception in the home.
- who depend not alone upon the Church or school for the moral training of the young, but, like Jochebed, do it themselves.
- who seek to gain whatever rights may be withheld as yet by spreading Christianity, as did the wives of Ethelbert and Clovis—prime movers in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks.
- who, if they have time to spend outside the home, give it preferably to organizations that offer to self and others social, intellectual, and moral good combined, and not but one of these alone.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPICS.

During July, August, and September, Rev. Joseph C. Nate, Jacksonville, Illinois, used a

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neatly printed program of topics entitled, "Summer Pilgrimages with Jesus," or "The Gospel Out-of-doors."

FOR JULY.

God's Out of Doors. Ps. 19:1-6, 147:3, 4;
Matt. 8:26-33.

The Parables by the Sea. Mark 4:1-9; Matt.
13.

The Gospel of the Trees. 1 Chron. 16:33, 34;
Psa. 92:12.

Highways and Harvests. Matt. 7:13, 14; John
4:35; Isa. 35:7-10.

Clouds, Storm, and Rainbow. Job 35:5; Psa.
4:6; Gen. 9:8-17.

FOR AUGUST.

A Mountain-top Vision. Matt. 17:1-13; Mark
9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36.

A Valley of Blessing. Psa. 23; John 10:11;
Psa. 84:5, 6.

Plants in God's Garden. Isa. 35:1-7.

A Country Walk. Luke 24:13-35.

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FOR SEPTEMBER.

A Fishing Excursion. John 21:1-24.

Life-giving Waters. John 4:14; Ezek. 47:1-12; Rev. 7:16, 17.

The Peaks of the Range. Matt. 4:8-11, 5:1-13; Mark 9:2; Luke 22:39-42.

The Bright and Morning Star. Rev. 22:1-7; Num. 24:17; Dan. 2:44.

Another program is entitled "Great Themes of Our Christian Faith."

Reconsecration Service. Psa. 19. Memorize 12-14. Theme: How have we kept our first, best vows to God?

The Bible God's Word. Theme: Our habits of Bible study. How and how much has the Word helped us in our needs of life? 2 Tim. 3:16; Deut. 30:11-14; Rom. 2:16.

The Ten Commandments. Theme: Their application to our lives. Memorize in briefer form. Ex. 20:1-17.

The Proverbs. The Proverbs which most appeal to us.

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- The First Psalm. Study and memorize. A certain prescription for happiness.
- The One Hundredth Psalm. Theme: The gladness and worship of service. Study and memorize.
- The Life of Our Lord. John 1:1-18. Circumstances in the life of Jesus which give us help for walking in His steps.
- The Beatitudes. Matt. 5:1-12. Theme: The Master's "Blesseds"—are they ours? Study and memorize.
- The Lord's Prayer. Study and memorize as in Matt. 6:9-13.
- The Parables of Jesus. John 16:25. Question: Which of the parables has helped me most?
- The Miracles of Jesus. John 20:30, 31. Question: Which of the miracles have impressed me most, and why?
- The Apostles. Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8, 22; 1 Cor. 9:1; Eph. 4:11-16. Question: Memorize names of apostles. In what

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things are we called to be their successors?

OTHER TOPICS USED BY DR. NATE.

Studies in the Way of Life.

The Christian and his Savior.

The new Birth and the New Year—a New Year's study. John 3:1-17; Phil. 3:1-16.

What Christ is to me. 1 Cor. 1:18-31; Gal. 2:20.

Giving Him pre-eminence. Col. 1:1-20; Matt. 6:33.

The Vine and the branches. John 15:1-16; Matt. 28:16-20.

The Growth of the Christian.

Thy Word. Psa. 119; Luke 4:16-20.

The school of prayer. Luke 11:1-13; Rom. 8:26-28.

When alone with God. Mark 6:30-46; Job 33:15, 16; Psa. 17:3, 42:8.

The supreme test. Eph. 4:1-15; Matt. 5:48; 1 John 3:1-3.

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The Life of Sacrifice and Service.

The constraint of the Cross. Luke 14:25-35;
2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

The gospel of Christian usefulness. Jas. 2;
Matt. 7:24-29.

The message of the Cross. Luke 15:1-7; 1 Cor.
1:18; Acts 26:15-18.

A Man of Sorrows. Isa. 53; Mark 10:45; Phil.
3:10.

Sorrows turned into joy. John 16:17-24; Psa.
42.

A YEAR'S CYCLE OF TOPICS.

This cycle of one year's topics was arranged by Rev. W. H. Geistweit, D. D., and is recommended by the Northern Baptist Convention. The rearrangement by the author in groups will be found convenient.

NEW YEAR.

What Shall the Harvest Be? Matt. 9:36, 37,
13:1-8, 18:23; Prov. 10:5.

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SPIRITUAL AWAKENING.

“Revive Thy Work.” Psa. 85:4-6; Isa. 57:15; Hab. 3:2. M.

Preparations. 2 Chron. 14:2-4, 20:3-19; Mal. 3:10; Acts 1:4, 12, 14.

The Baptism of the Spirit. Zech. 4:6; Acts 2:1-4.

Witnessing. Acts 1:8, 4:20-29, 8:4; Mark 5:19.

How Can I Help a Work of Grace? Matt. 25:14-20; Luke 12:48.

FIVE STEPS LEADING UP TO EASTER.

The Pathway to the Cross: The Last Supper.
Luke 22:7-34; John 13:1-20.

The Pathway to the Cross—Gethsemane. Luke 22:39-53.

The Pathway to the Cross: The Judgment Hall.
John 18:12-40, 19:1-16.

The Pathway to the Cross: Crucified—Dying.
John 19:16-30.

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The Pathway to Victory: The Resurrection.
John 20:1-18; 1 Cor. 15:13-20, 53-58.

NOW TO THE WORK.

When Duty Calls. Esther 4:13-17; Acts 20:
17-27.

The Test of the Spiritual Life. Matt. 7:16-20;
Rom. 8:9, 10.

What is the Business of the Church? Matt.
28:19, 20. M.

RELATIONSHIPS.

Money and the Kingdom. Deut. 8:11-18; Hag.
2:8; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2.

The Temperance Issue. Prov. 20:1, 23:29, 30;
Hab. 3:15; Eph. 5:18; 1 Cor. 6:10;
Heb. 12:12, 13.

The World. Matt. 12:50; Luke 2:30-32, 10:
25-37. M. Acts 17:24-28; Rom. 1:14.

PATRIOTIC.

A Lesson for the Nations. Psa. 127:1.

Jehoshaphat: A Foolish Alliance. 2 Chron.

PRAYER-MEETING STUDIES.

18:19, 1:2; 1 John 2:15-17. See also
"Patriotic Prayer-meeting," p. 163.

CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY.

- In the World, Not of It. John 17; Jas. 1:27.
The Christian Home. 1 Sam. 1:24-28; Luke
2:39, 40; 2 Tim. 1:5; Eph. 6:1-4.
The Needs of Children (Sunday School). Isa.
54:11; Matt. 19:13, 14.*
The Christian in Society. Matt. 5:13-16, 13:
33; Phil. 2:15, 16.
The Christian and the Church. Matt. 22:21;
1 Tim. 2:1, 2.

PRAYER.

- Jesus' Example in Prayer. Mark 1:35; Luke
6:12, 9:28; John 6:15.
The Reach of a Wonderful Prayer. Eph. 3:
14-21.

THE BIBLE.

- The Complete Revelation. John 14:8, 9; Col.
2:9; Heb. 1:1-4.

* See also Sunday-School Prayer-meeting, page 149.

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Why I Believe the Bible. 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Heb. 4:12.

The Foundation of Faith. Matt. 16:13-19; Acts 4:12; Rom. 15:4; Eph. 2:20-22.

Wonderful Words of Life—A Promise Meeting. Psa. 103:8-13; Isa. 26:3, 41:10; John 14:1, 2, 27.

MISCELLANEOUS.

How Shall We Settle Troublesome Moral Questions? Rom. 15:1-3, 14:16-21; 1 Cor. 8:13, 10:31-33.

The Supreme Gift. 1 Cor. 13:1-13.

Caring for the Needy. Lev. 19:9, 10; Psa. 41:1; Isa. 58:6-8. M.

Vision and Preparation. Isa. 6:1-8.

The Christian Horizon. Mark 16:15; Luke 1:32, 33; Acts 1:8. M.

For Whom Did Christ Die? John 3:16, 17; 1 John 2:2; Rom. 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18. M.

Abraham—The Worth of the Long Look. Heb. 11:8-10, 13:14; 2 Cor. 5:1.

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Moses—A Lesson from Mount Pisgah. Deut.
3: 23-27.

Unnamed Earthen Vesels. 2 Cor. 4: 7; Matt.
10: 42; Luke 22: 9-13.

The Reach of the Christ. Isa. 9: 7; John 10:
16; Isa. 42: 4. M.

The Method of Discipleship. Matt. 16: 24, 10:
37-39.

A Consistent Life. Jas. 2: 14-26. M.

Right Thinking. Psa. 119: 113; Prov. 23: 7, 8;
Phil. 4: 8.

Abundant Grace. 2 Cor. 9: 8, 12: 9; Eph. 4: 7;
John 1: 16.

Songs in the Night. Isa. 30: 29; Acts 16: 25, 26.

How Christ Came to Me. (Personal Experi-
ence.) John 1: 35-51, 4: 7.

Where Is Our Macedonia. Acts 16: 9, 10; Eccl.
9: 10. M.

Lest We Forget (Thanksgiving). Psa. 103.

THREE STEPS TO CHRISTMAS.

Toward Bethlehem: The Prophet's Look. Isa.
9: 6, 7, 32: 1, 60: 1-3.

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Toward Bethlehem: The Eastern Watchers—
Herod's Look. Matt. 2: 1-8.

"O Holy Night!" Luke 2: 7-20; Matt. 2: 9-13.

THE LAST PRAYER-MEETING OF THE YEAR.

Eternity—Where? Psa. 90. See also "New
Year's Prayer-meeting," p. 129.

Remarks: Other equally pertinent Scriptures
may be substituted or added. Themes in
the above cycle that lend themselves to
missionary treatment are indicated by
the letter "M." With a little applica-
tion, a whole year's program can be ar-
ranged from the above groups and the
miscellaneous topics which accompany
them.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS.

Pastors who have helped me, and how?

Why I attend the prayer-meeting.

Why I am a ————— (denomination).

Books or periodicals that have helped me spir-
itually.

PRAYER-MEETING STUDIES.

What does it mean to be a Christian? (Give definition.)

Children and the Kingdom.

Recent events with a moral.

The Old Testament idea of the Kingdom of God.

The New Testament idea of the Kingdom of God.

The things our Church most needs just now.

Great men and women of prayer.

The saddest or gladdest thing in your life since the last meeting.

Prophecies in the Old fulfilled in the New Dispensation.

The Church of Heaven and Earth represented in miniature. Matt. 17.

Toiling in vain. Luke 5.

A good grip. Rev. 3:11, 2:25.

The teachings of Jesus—as to God, Himself, the Kingdom, mankind, sin, salvation, discipleship, prayer.

The model prayer.

Righteousness in the business world.

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Christianity in business.

A Christian's amusements.

Christian sociability and social Christianity.

What are we doing to make the world better?

A tolerant Christian, a lukewarm Christian, a weak Christian. Give Bible examples.

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