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One of the most difficult tasks which the office-bearers of the Church have is that of Congregational Management. The machinery of church organization is very easily put out of order. It is not so easy to put it right again. Sometimes the minister is to be blamed. A thousand good actions of his are taken as a matter of course and soon forgotten; whereas if he makes a mistake, or acts unwisely or wrongly, his deed is embalmed and kept perpetually fresh in the memory of some of his parishioners, or as the ancient Roman complained "learned and conned by rote to cast into his teeth;" while he cannot always lay the flattering unction to his soul that they thus chasten him on account of their great love for him.

Again the fault may lie at the door of one of the trustees or managers. If so, such an one may extract what comfort he can from the thought that while he lives his fault or error will be grievously atoned for—he will be reminded of it often enough to preserve him from too much self-satisfaction during the remainder of his natural life.

Again the trouble may arise from some of the people themselves. It cannot be otherwise. Offences must come. The object of gathering a congregation is to educate them for the better discharge of their duties here, and prepare them for blessedness hereafter. A congregation is usually composed of the great body of people who dwell in the neighborhood of the church. It cannot be supposed therefore that they are all wise or generous or unselfish or patient. If they were there would be little need to instruct them. When we consider the material of which an ordinary congregation is composed—the different views,

opinions, habits, modes of thought which prevail among men, the wonder is not that quarrels should arise, but that a congregation should ever be free from them. There are in human nature so many sources of discord, enmity and strife that no office-bearer should expect to have an easy life or hold office without paying the full penalty of the burden attached to it.

The absence of a deep feeling of responsibility in church-going people is at the bottom of much of the unnecessary squabbling of the day.

Irresponsible frivolity (to use the now famous phrase) rides its hobby in at the church door and refuses to become conscious of its folly. The most hallowed associations of pious people and the good sense of the judicious, all count as nothing in the estimation of unconscious incapacity. Kindly regard for our neighbours, reverence for the aged as well as the consideration of the peace and prosperity of a congregation are less than nothing in the eyes of such persons. It is only however when they succeed in forming parties that such classes become dangerous. For then the strife for victory begins and peace departs to return only when death has ended the ignominious struggle and the combatants have gone "where the wicked cease from troubling."

It would be an unprofitable as well as a mournful task to enumerate the chief occasions by which offences of this nature arise, causing bitterness, grieving the hearts of good men and doing incalculable injury to our fellowmen.

It may help us to avoid such errors if we bear in mind some of the ends for which congregations are called together. It is not merely to enjoy delightful services nor to be pleased with handsome church garniture and upholstery; but a large proportion of worshippers go to church surely for a very different purpose. They go impelled thereto by the heavy moral burden of which they are