

movement in the United States from Church order is fraught with serious dangers. Under the plea of drawing out the piety and exercising the gifts of the laity, the ordinance of preaching is less esteemed than free voluntary exhortation. It is claimed as a favorable feature of the present awakening, that there has been no unusual employment of the pulpit, the brethren exhorting one another. But awakening minds peculiarly need frequent, earnest and lucid preaching of the Word—and a series of abrupt, unconnected exhortations form but a poor substitute for it, and can never ground young converts properly in the principles of our holy religion. We must add that we do not like to see what ought to be the Church's most cherished work placed under the direction of Young Men's Christian Associations, which are, in many places, assuming a position to which they have no title, and sorely disappointing some of their warmest and earliest friends. Their members, it is true, are in general excellent young men, such as we rejoice to see in their due place and rank in the visible Church, and whose alliance and intercourse we regard as in itself a delightful sign of the times. Yet we think it extremely rash and unbecoming to concede to such Associations, the guidance of the greatest religious movements of the age—and this the more, when we perceive how apt they are to fall under the influence of men who are impatient of all Church government, and who, themselves young men no longer, *use* the young men for their own purposes, rising on their shoulders into a certain importance, and exercising, through their activity, a sort of power not merely inter-denominational but super-denominational, in which they delight, and which they glorify under the title of "a Catholic spirit."

In the American cities, a large proportion of the prayer-meetings are "under the auspices" of Young Men's Christian Associations. Large tents and other places of concourse for special services are also under their care; and they choose and invite the officiating ministers. Now granting them all praise for zeal, and perhaps for a good and impartial choice of Preachers, can any one dispute that these are dangerous precedents, and that a power is being yielded to these Societies, which may hereafter be very unwisely and very unfairly used? The tendency is, not to strengthen the Church, but to form new centres of religious interest out of the Church. Thus we read of the fire-men being assembled at their engine-houses on the Lord's Day for prayer and brotherly exhortation, instead of connecting themselves humbly and unostentatiously with some Christian congregation, and going up, as other men, to the House of God. Sometimes, the firemen have marched in procession to Church, to hear a Preacher whom they have specially invited. Well-meant as such measures are, how unwise, and how inconsistent with that awed sobriety and humbleness of mind which ought to characterise a time of religious revival! Firemen and military volunteers are sufficiently tempted through the week by their love of parade and display, without having the same feeling called forth on the Lord's Day, and beautified with an aspect of religion.

In thus writing, we have no wish to cast doubt on the American awakening,