

determination to read and digest the Report for themselves. Such cases, we submit, ought to be the rule rather than the exception in our missionary meetings; and such meetings may be made attractive, popular, even delightful, anywhere. More than that, they may be made awakening, edifying, and promotive of the deepest spirituality, as well as of the noblest liberality. But all this depends largely on the use which may be made of the statements in the Report. The subscribers ought to learn how their money has been disposed of, and all ought to be informed of the progress of the kingdom of God, and of the claims upon us for its extension. This is one of the essential pre-requisites of a good meeting, and the way in which it is gone about will ordinarily give a tone to the occasion—high or low—which will regulate its character and its results all the way through. Painstaking work here is sure to succeed. Each of the Reports named at the head of this paper is worthy of our earnest thought. Separately, and in combination, they exhibit the distinctive features of the Christianity of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is true that we are yet far from the realization of the ideal Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The most devoted and the most hopeful men in the Church to-day, are those who affirm that we are far behind our responsibilities in reference to the salvation of the world. Yet, nevertheless, it is admitted with all gratitude to the Lord and Giver of Life, that the present time is peculiarly that of revivals and of missions. Our “forward movement” may be best justified as in some measure a backward one. We are reverting to first principles. The ever-memorable charge and commission which our Saviour gave to His apostles, just before His ascension, had reference to this feature of His religion. His final saying was not, Look to yourselves; Be men of prayer; Do not bring a reproach on your profession; See that you rise to the full experience of the sanctifying grace of God; or even, Be upright and blameless in all manner of conversation. No. These were preliminaries to the accomplishment of the great design. They are involved in it, and would be secured in the loyal endeavor to bring it to full effect. The parting word to them, the chief command to the body of believers in Him till