

We have now to consider the last and the gravest feature of this question, namely, the meaning of these organizations or developments to the Church at large, and in this we must have especial regard to the tendency to criticise and to condemn them under their guidance of a spirit perhaps more akin to that of the Pharisee than we would like to believe.

How have they come into being? is a question which we are bound to answer as members of the Church from which they sprang. Even if they were but the fungus growths, the ghastly caricatures of life which appear upon the trunks of decaying trees, it would be the duty of thoughtful persons to take notice of them and enquire into the nature of the decay which their presence indicates. Anathemas or ridicule directed against the evidences of a low or impaired vitality are quite valueless. They are indeed the surest evidences of that spiritual atrophy in ourselves which we condemn in others.

I have already stated that the existence of these separate bodies and their divergence from the church is presumptive evidence of an imperfection in the church in the direction indicated by the features of doctrine and practice which these organizations lay special stress upon. They naturally give prominence to those things which they have felt the need of, and which they have found in their departure from the church.

As I have said, they are apt to be *new fangled* with their views, and, as a consequence, to undervalue and even to misrepresent those things which they have left behind them; and their departure may have been more or less due to contention or restlessness and an unwillingness to submit to the restraints of authority, and when the new standard is raised there will be no lack of men and women to take their places under the new flag. Still, making all allowance for these things, it is the wisdom of the church to examine her own position to see what truth there may be in the charge against her implied in the departure of her children from their home.

If this be done it will usually be found that the articles of the newly formed faith, as they are embodied and expressed in an active propagandism, are the enlarged and exaggerated counterparts of the defects in the church herself in her sacred office as the dispenser of the gifts of the Holy Ghost to those who are