

what are called "revivals." In our own ministerial life we have had many proofs of the sovereignty of grace, that revivals cannot be gotten up but must come down, and that the true method is to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit; and when a state of things in a congregation seems to demand some special effort, to be ready promptly to fall in with the leadings of Divine Providence and grace. It is to be feared that oftentimes we invert this order by seeking to produce a higher state of religious feeling simply by the multiplication of religious services. We remember seeing an entire Sunday-school bowed before Almighty God in tears under the simplest ordinary presentation of the truth in Christ; but that awakening had been preceded by much prayer to Almighty God, and resulted in the conversion of nearly every Sunday-school scholar in the school. We are confident that, if the ordinary means of grace were more diligently and prayerfully pursued, if pastors themselves expected and taught their people to expect a perpetual blessing on the means of grace, there would very few religious services be held, or sermons be preached, or Sunday-school lessons be taught that would not, properly followed up, be found to be fruitful in the conversion of souls.

We add one last consideration, which is, perhaps, the most emphatic of all. We must teach our people that a part, a necessary part, of our organic life is the exhibition of an evangelistic activity by every true disciple of Jesus Christ; that the minister is but the leader of a church *force* for which the whole world is the *field*; that preaching the Gospel in its scriptural sense is the announcement of the good tidings of redemption backed by a personal witness to their power in the individual soul of the believer. We must seek to abolish all rigid lines of distinction between the clergy and the laity in the promulgation of these good tidings. We must educate our people that they are not to be simply receivers but distributors of the grace of God; not sponges put asoak in Gospel doctrine, but means to illumine the darkness that has overspread the world. When church-members learn this fundamental truth that every believer is a herald and a witness for Christ, church-members will cease to regard themselves as the objects of labor, and become themselves laborers for others. We believe that the tendency in some quarters is toward too much preaching and teaching in our churches, in the presence of habitual church-goers, and especially church-members, and toward a lack of personal work; and this is a sort of overfeeding which breeds a kind of spiritual sloth and dyspepsia. God's will is that, so soon as we learn sufficient of the truth to become teachers of those more ignorant than ourselves, we shall cease simply to be as those who hear, and become those who speak that others may hear. Such a return to apostolic methods of universal Christian activity would settle not only all the practical questions raised in this paper, but many more besides, having a vital relation to progressive and aggressive church life.