

REV. THOMAS JONES ON COLONIAL MISSIONS.*

Mr. Chairman, my friends,—Our fathers thought, and said, and wrote that the body of the first man Adam was perfectly formed before it received life and spirit: all its members were perfect in themselves and harmonised with each other, but it was lifeless. There was no intelligence in the eye, no smiles played on the lip, no spirit of life shone in the face. Like a beautiful statue, it had symmetry, proportion, harmony; but, like a beautiful statue, it was cold and dead. Like a house at midnight without a ray of light in any of its windows, it stood, or rather was laid there; but the Lord breathed into its nostrils the breath of life, and it became a living soul. Then the lifeless statue was inspired, the dark house was illumined, for “the spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord.” That is the old way of thinking; there is a modern way of thinking that cuts all that up—not from me. There are no creations now, all things are developments. (Laughter.) But, to speak in all seriousness, having thought much on the question of the developments of man’s physical nature from the lower animals, I declare that the inference drawn is far too large for the few facts brought before us. The theory is an inverted pyramid; if you do not enlarge the base, it must come down with a crash. And our societies are admirably-formed bodies. I know of no necessity for constitutional changes. I think this society is admirable. I think you have a tolerably good chairman—(laughter)—a secretary, Mr. Hannay, who was born to the vocation—(cheers)—a treasurer accustomed to his work, and I hope your constituency are worthy of you. I don’t know how we could make any alterations in the organisms of our societies, and I am very glad to go on and say that they have some life—you will hear why I speak with caution and care about it. (Laughter.) We go to extremes, I think some take too gloomy a view. We have heard there are some little things in the world and some large things. We have heard we have got a deficiency—thank God we have got used to that. (Laughter.) Though we have cold we have warmth too. These societies have life and strength, and capability of motion—I don’t think they can run; some of them, I am afraid, can’t walk, but they can all creep. (Laughter.) The spirit of the time acts with great force upon the church, and her institutions, and her societies, and her religion. It acts like a refrigerator, under the influence of which the followers of Christ lose their warmth—the expanding emotions of the church are schooled to deadness. The Gospel, lover of the free, is made to resemble a frozen river, which can exert no influence; and, although these societies progress, their progress is like that of the chariots of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, they “drive heavily.” (Cheers.) We want a renewed enthusiasm. Let me say, I don’t mean fanaticism. If I look in a dictionary I see a fanatic is a man filled with mad notions. We don’t want mad notions; let the church possess her soul in all patience; let no bewilderment fall upon her; let her mind be sound and rational, for assuredly the Church of Christ in our time needs all the sound sense at her command. The enthusiasm I speak of does not mean mere revivalism. We want a revival; but spasmodic, organised, tabulated revivals will not bring about what we want. They may galvanise a society, a church, a village, a town, a neighbourhood into the similitude of spiritual life, but when the agency is withdrawn, the excitement has subsided, alas for revivalism—many of the effects disappear. It is not fanaticism I mean. We all believe in the enthusiasm I speak of; it is inspiration by a superhuman power. Well, inspiration by a superhuman power, we all, I suppose, believe in that. It was in the prophets, in the apostles, in our Saviour, in the fathers of our religion, in England, in my fathers among the mountains of Wales. It whispered its Welsh hymns over my cradle, it thrilled through my own country, and filled it with poetry. It is the breath of heaven upon the human spirit, it is the breathing of God into the mind of man. Inspira-

* The above address was delivered at the last anniversary of the Colonial Missionary Society. The speaker was recently Chairman of the Congregational Union, and is one of the most eloquent men in our ministry in Britain,—even for a Welshman.