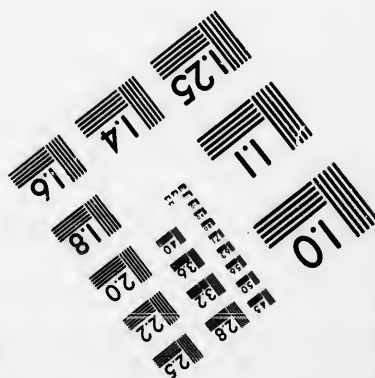
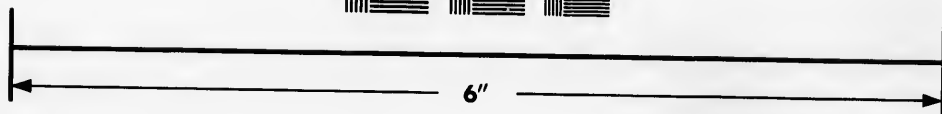
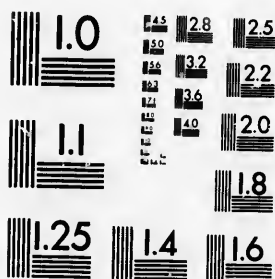


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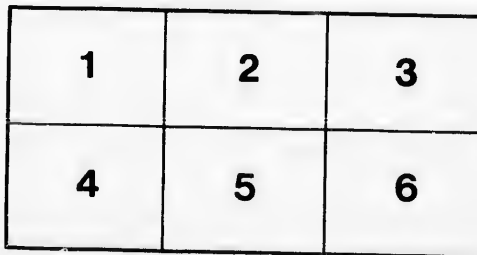
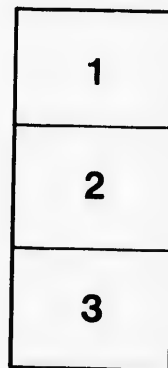
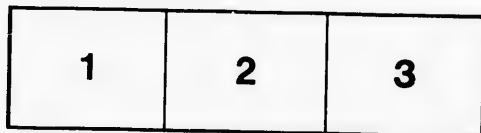
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THE
BEST MODE OF CONDUCTING
Associations of the Clergy,
FOR
CONFERENCE, STUDY, PRAYER AND MUTUAL SYMPATHY.

A PAPER READ AT THE VISITATION OF THE LORD BISHOP OF QUEBEC, HELD AT
BISHOP'S COLLEGE, LENNOXVILLE, ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1872,

BY THE
REVEREND CHARLES H. BADGLEY, M. A.,
Rector of Bishop's College School, Lennoxville.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST

QUEBEC :
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PK XV

The next mode of contributing Associations of the Church
for conference study, private and mutual sympathy.

The subject for our consideration this morning is one
which to most of us here present as being important of
God's Word and Sacraments is of peculiar interest and
importance. It were almost a truism to observe that a
question so markedly personal to ourselves could not be
otherwise. As however we have yet to hear of the
easily to attain that 'best way', the subject need not be
wisely suggested to us as a matter of religion. It is
position as a non-partisan religious question, and it
suggests readiness for a candid and open discussion
a question, and of that nature, I have no objection to
regions. Still it may have the advantage of suggesting
ideas, however crude, which strike at the heart of the
ing in perfect independence, before we have the
one who is free from parochial considerations.

The increased zeal for souls and a more intelligent
service of God which has been a mark of the nineteenth
the Mother Church in England and Wales, and in
the Church in Canada has called for more and more
and increased now and again the same old old
direct that zeal—this new and second wave of religious
spiritual fathers of the last 300 years of the Church
to the spirit or practice of the early Church, and to
the principles of life and conduct of our Lord Jesus Christ
self while upon earth. Such aid to the revival of the
show, we recognize in the revival of the Church.



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THE BEST MODE OF CONDUCTING ASSOCIATIONS OF THE CLERGY
FOR CONFERENCE, STUDY, PRAYER AND MUTUAL SYMPATHY.

The subject for our consideration this morning is one which to most of us here present as being ministers of God's Word and Sacraments, is of peculiar interest and importance. It were almost a truism to observe that a question so markedly personal to ourselves could not be otherwise. As however we have yet, I fear, failed practically to attain that '*best mode*,' the subject has I think been wisely suggested to us as matter for reflection. My own position as a non-parochial clergyman might naturally suggest unfitness for assuming the position of writer on such a question, and of that unfitness I have been only too conscious.—Still it may have the advantage of suggesting the ideas, however crude, which strike an outsider, and of bringing in perfect independence, before you, the thoughts of one who is free from parochial cares and ties.

The increased zeal for souls and whatever relates to the service of God which has been of late years manifested in the Mother Church in England and in our own branch of the Church in Canada has called into being, has multiplied and increased new and special furthering aids to foster and direct that zeal—aids new and special at any rate to our spiritual fathers of the last 300 years or so, but strange neither to the spirit or practice of the early church nor indeed to the principles of life and conduct of our Blessed Lord Himself while upon earth. Such aids, to mention but a few of them, we recognize in the revived convocations, the confer-

ences, the congresses, the mission-weeks, and clerical meetings of the Church at home, in the legally established Synods, the more strictly observed Lenten services and the rural deanery meetings of the Church in Canada. Nor are such aids confined to churchmen only—the same increased zeal is witnessed on the part of Dissenting Christians and has doubtless in some particulars reacted from them upon the church and revived and awakened her dormant powers. I say *dormant* powers, for after all we must remember, as I pointed out before, that in these instances of rekindled zeal all, both Churchmen and Dissenters, have but returned, (under God's blessed guidance and providence) in a measure, to the practice of our Blessed Lord Himself and of the Early Church.

To one only, however, of these particulars which I have enumerated must I call your attention now; that of Clerical Conferences or Associations. That they are *needed* requires but little to be said. In work of all sort spiritual or secular, union, association and fellow sympathy have long been and must ever be, considered all important to develop individual strength and efficiency to their fullest. This, as regards secular work, need hardly be enlarged upon in days when Confederation of States and Provinces, Union Leagues of labourers—and Internationalism, with its wondrous social and political ramifications, have been developed in our midst, so suddenly and with such fearful powers for good or ill. And in spiritual work the same combinations, larger or smaller, seem as equally necessary to, and as much required by, *human* agents. I speak to some perhaps who have had personal experience of what I can refer to only as matter of history in the Church in Canada—of clergymen separated from brethren in the ministry by distances

which, as well from the difficulties of travelling as from their actual extent, were practically insurmountable;—of the day when the whole of this vast Dominion, so far as it was known and explored, was under the spiritual guidance of a single Bishop with his handful of clergy sprinkled here and there over its wide extent, with no opportunities for fellow-counselling, with but little for fellow-sympathy save in the necessarily infrequent visitations of their Bishop. All honour then to those noble missionaries who thus in almost exile, in certain solitariness, first planted the precious seeds of the church's teaching and system in our country. And I mention their lot only to bring into stronger contrast our own more favoured position. With sub-divided and smaller dioceses, with the wonderfully increased opportunities, which these last fifty years have brought, of personal and epistolary communication, we have further what our fathers must have often longed for in vain, those occasions for meeting together, for taking counsel, for gaining and imparting sympathy, which so strengthen the wearied worker and supply such renewed interest and effort in his holy labour.

But something more is yearned for which these very gatherings, I refer to our Synod and Church Society meetings, fail to supply, although they aid in suggesting its possibility. These latter, mainly confined to the discussion of the temporal and pecuniary needs of the church, naturally fail to meet the higher spiritual longings and strivings which should ever manifest themselves to the earnest and zealous minister, and which are in a way the truest index of the reality and success of his ministrations. To afford opportunity for the satisfying of these, something less secular, if I may use the word, something more spiritual than the Synod or Church Society meeting, is desired. They call for some-

thing more quiet and retired, more intimate and free, where heart may, without hindrance and without impropriety, pour forth to kindred hearts its hopes and anxieties, its comforts and its apprehensions, and all ask and seek for that special presence and help of Christ's comforting spirit which our Blessed Lord promised. His ministering Apostles should abide with and accompany them in their labours for ever. And that these longings and strivings are not a mere fiction, you my Brethren of the parochial clergy could, I am sure, bear ample witness. The unceasing pressure upon a zealous clergy of distracting and anxious duties, the constant drain on their minds and hearts in giving themselves to minister to others, the necessity of viewing religious truth as affecting others rather than themselves, the risk of mechanical use of divine offices, are trials peculiarly incident to their vocation; while the thought ever presses on the heart of the earnest minister of God, that in proportion as he falls short in his own life of a high standard of spiritual mindedness, not only is he himself in greater peril than others, but also his ministry loses all true life and efficacy.—“They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own have I not kept.”

It is of much moment too to remember (as I suggested before) that our Blessed Lord himself gave frequent examples in his dealings with his Apostles how these natural longings and strivings are to be satisfied. His ministerial life may indeed in one of its aspects be cited as one prolonged association with his Apostles for conference, study, prayer and sympathy.—As individual instances, witness for study and conference his sermon on the mount, with all its deep fund of as yet unfathomed in-

struction and exegesis; his personal explanation and application to the Apostles of many of his parables; his expounding after his resurrection of the teaching of Moses and the Prophets bearing upon that mystery, and his teaching generally during the great forty days. Of prayer we have instances repeated again and yet again, culminating in that love-abounding prayer, with and for his eleven; which just preceded his agony. Of sympathy call but to mind his gracious and loving reply to the ambitious but ignorant request of the sons of Zebedee; the look directed to St. Peter as the cock crew; followed after his resurrection by the thrice-told forgiveness conveyed in the thrice uttered injunction, Feed my sheep; Feed my lambs, and above all and more than all his pouring forth his whole soul in love at the institution of the Last Supper. The same too is evidenced in the Apostolic times and practice; Witness the quiet return to Jerusalem and resting there of the Apostles after our Lord's Ascension, in obedience to his command; a period spent in breaking of bread and in prayer and followed in due time by the promised out-pouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Witness again the gathering together at Antioch, spent in a similar manner and followed by a like manifestation of the Blessed Spirit prior to the separation of Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas for their missionary work. All testify to the same spiritual craving for sympathy and fellowship; all give us some clue as to the manner in which that craving may be satisfied.

To turn now to the practical side of the question before us. The four points involved in it seem to divide themselves naturally under the two heads of, firstly, the *practical* and, secondly, the *devotional or spiritual* requirements to be sought after in associations of the clergy. What then, we are

asked, is the mode in which Associations of the Clergy may be held making these objects their particular aim.

Firstly, as to the members composing such associations; they should be limited in number, embracing only the clergy of a particular district, near enough to be acquainted with their brethren's work and so able to sympathize with their labours and anxieties. For instance in our immediate neighbourhood here, the Rural Deanery of St. Francis, seems to provide an area quite extensive enough and clergy numerous enough to form one such association. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the other Rural Deaneries to hazard the suggestion whether they might not in like manner form the boundaries of other such Associations. Quebec City, however, with its outlying dependencies at the Cove and Point-Levis, seems to present itself naturally as a similar centre. Excessive numbers in such gatherings should I think be deprecated as tending in a way to mar the individual benefit we should strive to gain from such meetings, and being likely to make them rather religious debating societies than occasions for seeking higher spiritual blessing.

Secondly, they should be held quarterly, and as to their length experience would, I think, suggest that they should last if possible for two days, at any rate for one whole day. Members should be urged in all cases to arrive the night before, so as all to join in what should be the central point of the gathering, the early celebration of the Holy Communion.

Thirdly, as to the Programme. Beginning with an early celebration before breakfast, let the latter be followed at 9 o'clock by Morning Prayer, and business be entered upon immediately thereafter.—I think this is an important con-

sideration, as my experience of decanal chapters has taught me that with service later, accompanied *then* with Holy Communion, it is late in the morning before work is begun.

As to the division of work, under the head of *Conference*, let such matters of practical interest as Parish labours, questions of church administration, missionary efforts, the treatment in a remedial and curative manner of practical and definite evils, in a word all those subjects of parochial interest which now form the bulk of matter at a decanal chapter be practically considered and discussed.

Passing thence to *Study* we come to a point which has always appeared to me to mar the efficiency of the presently arranged decanal meetings—the absence *i. e.* of anything to keep alive our intellectual interest in what concerns our sacred office. Our clergy claim to be, and should strive to their utmost to continue to be, an educated clergy, and the question arises whether practical discussions on parish or Diocesan matters, however ably conducted, counterbalance the loss of intellectually spiritual good, which might be gained from the consideration (say of the Pauline Epistles,) in the original, or of some standard Anglican Divinity. Of course it may be said that we were already supposed to be acquainted with books such as I propose; it may be so, but the question still remains whether the mind of the hard working parish priest depressed, voluntarily or involuntarily, by his unchanging round of work, would not respond with some degree of pleasure to the call for his too-often long-dropped Greek, and derive food and nourishment, spiritual as well as intellectual, from one or two hours' reading of such a kind with his brother clergy. A particular portion of an Epistle might be determined upon for the coming meeting, thus

giving all an opportunity of helping one another, with some ideas suggested by their reading meanwhile. In all cases an Epistle once begun should be gone through with at successive meetings to the end. Nothing is at once more unsatisfactory or less likely to benefit than discursive, disjointed readings of the Greek Testament. For practical benefit to be derived from the reading of English Divinity, no better work could perhaps be suggested than Hooker's Book V on Ecclesiastical Polity. One point to be remembered in favour of such a matter as this will perhaps occur to most of you as of importance. The reading beforehand of the portion announced for consideration at the coming meeting, may in some cases revive, in others fortify, that practice of *daily* study which the present Bishop of Winchester in his ordination lectures so strongly insisted upon as a special duty attaching to all clergymen. Many a hint for a sermon, many a point to be impressed upon our people in the way of application or practice lie hid, and will lie hid unless sought for, in the too frequently neglected pages of a clergyman's Greek Testament.

Such, concluding with Evening Prayer and perhaps a very short sermon on some point more immediately connected with the ministerial office, would be my suggested Programme for the First Day.—With reference to a second day I will offer a few remarks in a moment. I would meanwhile suggest, if one day only is possible, that it should be closed as before with Evening prayer and a sermon, or perhaps better, a meditation from one of the older members of the association. For the subjects of such meditation I would venture to propose the following, not as my own, but the suggestion of one much wiser and more experienced: The example of our Lord's life may be

pourtrayed in detail as a true pattern of a holy and especially a priestly life: these several virtues of his life enlarged upon and illustrated and the blessedness of a faithful imitation of our Lord urged on the soul, so that its whole aim and effort be elevated. Or again the progress of a holy life may be unfolded and traced out through its different successive stages, the cleansing from sin, the illumination by grace and the formation of the christian virtues up to the highest degrees of union with God. Or once more; Sin may be viewed in its origin, its nature, its working, its aggravation, its end in this life and in the life to come, and so may be brought home more individually to the conscience, repentance be deepened and more earnest endeavours after a purer life be stirred. I bring forward these suggestions, as in such proposed clerical associations I take it that one main object is, or at any rate should be, *that* of awakening, deepening, or directing through God's grace the higher and nobler convictions and aspirations of the soul. If they are to be mere business or debating meetings, such suggestions would of course be superfluous.

In the event of the meeting being prolonged to a Second Day I would propose that it should be occupied entirely with the spiritual or devotional side, which formed my second division of the subject matter of the present question. Without presuming for one moment to assert that there is amongst us a spiritual apathy, for on such a point each soul must give its own answer, I would still express the fear that there is and must ever be the possibility of such apathy over-reaching us. The cares and anxieties of our social as distinguished from our clerical life; the non-interest, reacting upon ourselves, witnessed as the more manifest result of our ministration, the great individual risk we run, and great indeed it is, my

brethren, of coming to use the Church's offices *mechanically*, all tend if not to apathy at any rate to a lack of spiritual mindedness and devotion, which perhaps more than myself can bear witness to. For the repelling of this, call it apathy or deadness or what not, I would counsel a second day to our Clerical Association Meetings. With the first devoted to practical Parish or Diocesan matters and study, let the second be one which by its devotional character *solely*, may give comfort to all, aid and support to those who need it, and revive and rekindle the courage and strength of those who, even though clergymen, feel that they have yet to fight the battle against the old foes, the *world*, the *flesh* and the *devil*. Such a day I would apportion thus: Beginning as the first day and followed as it by the Holy Communion, after an hour's retirement I would propose a meditation upon some such subject as I have suggested above; to be followed in the afternoon or evening by Evensong, with a practical exhortation, whose end shall be not mere temporary excitement, or abstract contemplation, or any mere intellectual study, but a true, *real*, *blessed* result, a solid improvement in virtue and a more entire surrender of the soul to the obedience of Christ and His service on Earth.

And herein my Brethren I feel that I have anticipated the second division of the subject matter entrusted to me. *Prayer* must indeed *prevent*, *follow* and *close* all our labours. If its incense hallow not all our efforts, God's blessing may indeed be looked for in vain. In these Associations as in our School here, let one Collect, at any rate, be "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings, &c."—And yet my Brethren with all reason may we on such occasions pray not only the church's prayers for Christ's Catholic

Church, but add also a special prayer in behalf of our Bishop and Diocese, and our own Association and its individual members—remembering these too particularly in the Holy Communion, and entreating a special out-pouring upon all of God's Holy Spirit.

And lastly let all our doings be guided by *charity*, that holy gospel love, which shone forth in all its first brightness and glory in our Blessed Lord's Life. Let our words be spoken in the same spirit of brotherly love and affection, then shall that feeling of fellow *sympathy* reign supreme amongst us, without which in all its truest sincerity our meetings would be more worthless than a sham, our deliberations and discussions more vain than the sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. On this head I need not to enlarge, my Brethren, more especially among you my fellow clergy of this Diocese, whose general unanimity and freedom from party spirit, that meanest and lowest phase of small and petty minds, are a praise among the Churches.

To sum up in a few words the general drift of my ideas. Associations such as I have attempted to sketch will tend to unite our Clergy even further in mutual regard and sympathy; will aid in counteracting that great divergence in doctrine and practice which has unhappily been only too characteristic of our Church in these latter days. Much of this difference arises from mutual ignorance. Intercourse such as we aim at and calm discussion will help to prove that points of agreement are in most cases more numerous than points of difference, and tend to solve those many practical difficulties, some new, some old, which beset the Parish Priest. After such meetings with their brethren and joining with them in prayer, in worship and in discussion,

our clergy will return to their work cheered, invigorated and blessed. They will have realized that they are brethren, with a common work and a common hope, and that they are really joint labourers, united by a real and living bond, the high and holy service of a common Lord. That miserable *individuality*, which is so trying and at the same time so injurious to a clergyman, will be at least diminished, and he will learn to respect and honour those who may differ from him, and to admit that he himself may not be perfectly in the right on every subject. Conducted in such a spirit and followed by such results, may we not hopefully count upon God's blessing attending our Clerical Meetings.

