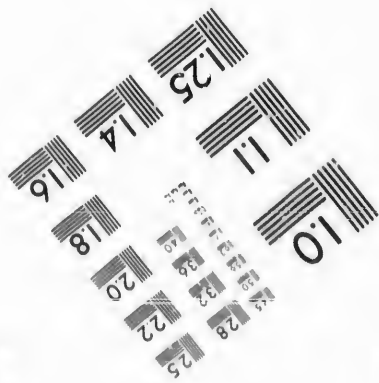
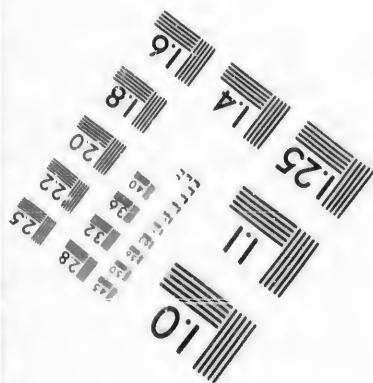
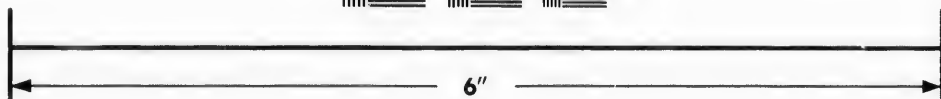
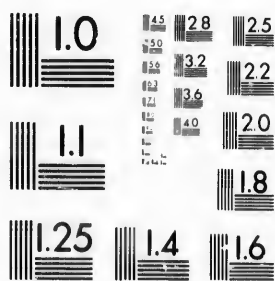


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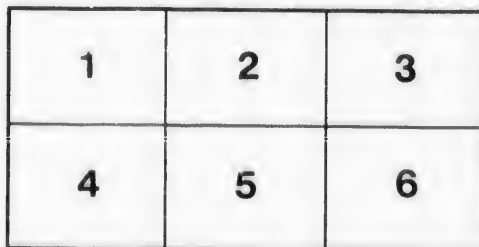
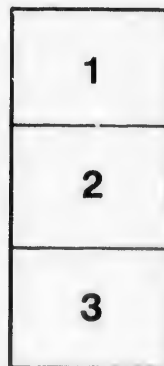
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REVIVALISM

AND

THE CHURCH.

AN ADDRESS

BY

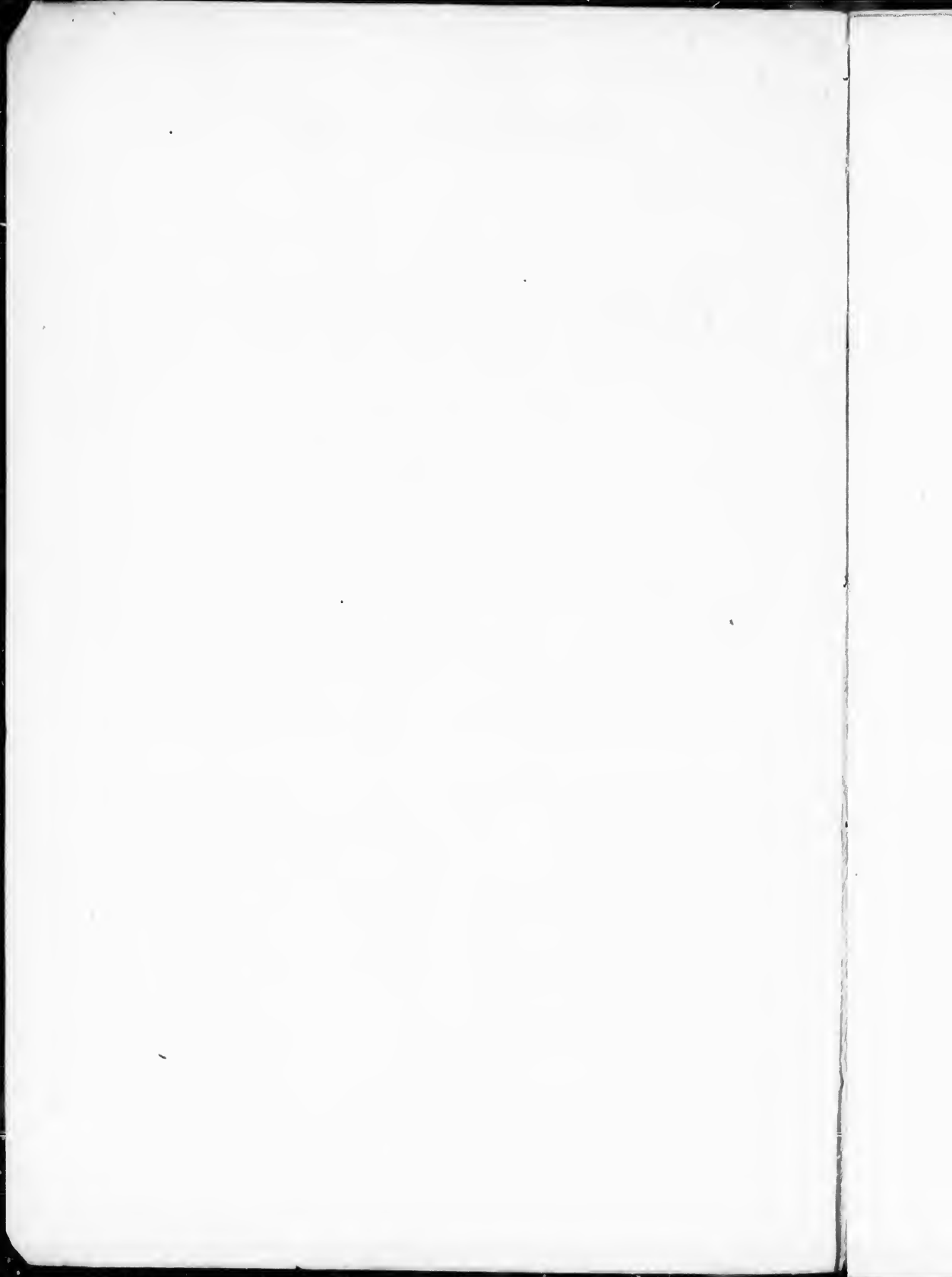
REVD. CHARLES CHAPMAN, M. A.,

CHAIRMAN OF THE

Congregational Union of Ontario
and Quebec.

MONTREAL

JUNE 1876.



CONGREGATIONAL UNION

OF

ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

ANNUAL SESSION.

The first meeting of the Annual Session of this body was held last evening in Zion Church.

The proceedings opened with singing, followed by prayer by the Rev. J. A. R. Dickson, Toronto. Another hymn having been sung, the Chairman of the Union, Rev. Chas. Chapman, delivered his

ANNUAL AND PARTING ADDRESS,

upon the eve of his departure for England, as already announced.

The Rev. gentleman said —

We are once more permitted in the kind Providence of God to meet together as pastors and delegates of our respective churches to seek by blended counsels and mutual encouragement to carry forward more effectively in this Dominion the holy work which we believe has been Divinely entrusted to our hands; and, naturally, our first and most pronounced feeling, as we reflect on the past, is that of hearty thanks to our Merciful Father for having spared our lives and continued to us a place among those who love and serve Him. It is a good thing for a Christian man to die when maturity of character and fulness of labours have qualified him for the higher service of the church above; at the same time, as long as we are conscious of needing more holiness of life and have work on hand which we desire to bring to greater perfection, we cannot but deem it a mercy to be spared a little longer; nor can we think of the snares and pitfalls, that lie concealed in our pathway, and the "lions and adders" that lurk by our side without a grateful sense of the care and love that have kept our feet from falling, our eyes from tears, and our souls from spiritual death. Well will it be for us, if here in solemn assembly, while tendering to one another the fraternal greeting, we inwardly renew our vows to God and make gratitude for the mercies of former days tributary to a wiser and more loving service in years to come. Breth-

ren, may grace, mercy and peace be unto each one of you! May the various exercises and deliberations of our annual gathering be characterized by the spirit that was in Christ Jesus; then, I am sure, we shall each go forth to our toils and cares for the ensuing year with a holier mind and more steadfast resolve to do only the Will of our God.

To me there is something more than usually solemn and impressive in occupying the position which I now do, and in delivering to you a Chairman's retiring address, because there is every probability that this is the last time I shall ever have in my life of meeting you as a member of the Congregational Union. A voice clear and firm, on my part quite unlooked for, has called me to depart to my native land to render service in an important sphere; and believing that I am bound to serve Christ anywhere, in case He summons me, I have felt it my duty to go. It is to me an interesting and grave coincidence that just on the eve of my departure I should enjoy the pleasure of coming face to face with brethren whose kindness and consideration will ever be gratefully remembered, and also be allowed the honoured of saying a few words on matters pertaining to the high interests of our great Lord and Master. As a rule, it is very repugnant to my judgment and feelings to project personal matters before assemblies convened for the consideration of topics relating to the Kingdom of God, but in the present instance, I have thought it would scarcely comport with the regard I am conscious of entertaining for you, were I to repress the sentiments awakened by the prospect of my speedy severance from you; while my knowledge of your habitual forbearance and charity towards your Chairman gives me ground for hoping that you will accept these personal allusions as indications of a mutual interest which I trust, is destined to survive the changes of time and place. A five years' experience in this land has not been without pleasure and profit to myself. May I not hope, also, that

my endeavours to discharge honestly in church, college and Christian fellowship the duties falling to my lot have not been altogether disowned by Him whose favour is better than life? Should occasions arise in years hence, as doubtless they will, in which it may lie in my power to foster the interest that churches in the mother country should, for all sorts of reasons, cherish in those of Canada, you may rely upon it that my knowledge of your efforts, and my sympathy with your aspirations, shall be laid under tribute. And now having delivered myself of this pledge of my abiding regard for you, I should very much like to be able to leave behind me for your reflecting such considerations as would be of essential service to you in prosecuting the work which, as representatives of congregational churches, you have in hand.

Your Chairman holds amongst you a position of considerable freedom, and yet, because of that freedom, of no slight responsibility. He does not speak as the authorized exponent of your opinions. He is not a conspicuous section in a highly developed ecclesiastical machine, moving only as the whole moves. He is still an independent man, free to think his own thoughts and to express them in his own way without committing you to either the form or substance of his utterances. We are accustomed to this elasticity and freedom by the necessary working of our church polity, and we delight in it because of its wholesome influence on our mental and moral life. Nor need we be ashamed before the eye of a critical world of the results ensuing therefrom; for it is a noteworthy phenomenon in ecclesiastical life that with all our freedom from the exactions of articulate creeds and centralized domination, there exists amongst us a uniformity of Evangelical faith not surpassed in any denomination, along with a respect for the moral influence of combined counsels, equivalent in its effect to the most rigid conformity to Church "laws," and, as we think, immensely superior in intrinsic worth. But in this very consciousness of freedom enjoyed by your Chairman there arises, as a moral counterpoise to the possible abuse of liberty, a deep sense of responsibility lest, by rashness, inadvertence or vain fondness for our own mental offspring, anything should be said or done that would wantonly compromise others, or in any way be alien to the common purposes for which our annual meetings are held.

It is under the combined influence of this "liberty of prophesying" and sense of responsibility that I ask your attention for a short time to a few observations on one of the features of modern religious life and our duties in relation thereto.

When the ancient prophet was reminded of his office as a watchman on the towers of Zion to keep an eager eye upon all that

might possibly affect the welfare of Israel; when our Saviour directed His hearers to observe the "signs of the times," there was, no doubt, laid down for Christians of all ages the imperative duty of studying the shifting phenomena of the religious world so as to be ready at once to correct what may be wrong, and develop to perfection what may be sound, in principle. Just as a statesman proves himself to be worthy of that honorable designation by a quick and comprehensive apprehension of the tendencies that, at first in subtle forms, find expression in political life, and then with strong will and skilful hand adapts his measures to the occasion; so we, as servants of Christ, spending thought and putting forth effort for the establishment of His kingdom, shall earn a right to our assumed distinction in so far as we scan the varying phenomena of the religious world with an intelligent eye, and are prepared to adjust our conduct to the requirements of the times. We all are convinced, in spite of what some partial students of Nature may have said, that the fundamental principles of our religion lie deep down in the very constitution of things, and abide the same, unaltered and unalterable, amid all the changes apparent on the surface of human life. Yet, at the same time, the forms and phases of its manifestation are very intimately connected with man's intellectual and social condition, and consequently are liable to variations in proportion as inherited or acquired habitudes develop. It is an obvious corollary from this admission that if at any time there should exist in society mental and moral qualities defective in point of development or harmony, any strong movement of the deep and abiding principles of religion finding expression by means of those qualities, must, so far as this manifestation is concerned, be proportionately defective. And although religion fundamentally can never be shaken—though like the light it is ever light, and as a life is ever life—yet incalculable damage may be done to its progress by reason of the purely human aspects it is made by us to assume.

Among the features of religious life conspicuous in our age, if not peculiar to it, there is one deserving of our most careful consideration, both because of the intrinsic value of the feeling embodied and the debatable character of some of the forms and methods by which that feeling is often expressed—I refer to *earnestness and its manifestation in what are known as revivalistic services.*

That for some years we have been in the midst of a remarkable religious earnestness is, I think, obvious to any one who compares the phenomena of life to-day with, say, the condition of things last century, or even forty years ago. There may possibly be in

it something of the *Zeitgeist* which prevades all human energy and finds expression in commercial enterprise, political ambition, philosophical research and, in some quarters, relentless assaults on the very first principles of natural religion. Yet granting this, I cannot but believe, with the Bible as my guide, that Divine Providence is utilizing the natural activity of the age for the drawing out of man's strong and indestructible religious instincts towards Him who alone can give rest to the soul. To a reflective Christian who dwells much upon the ideal of goodness and zeal towards which he daily aspires, it may seem as though he and his brethren were still very destitute of the earnestness appropriate to the Christian profession, yet looked at relatively to periods in our own history it is unquestionably true that there is a powerful religious life amongst us. Whether we regard institutions of late years created, or better, sustained, the devotional and theological literature now widely promulgated, the missionary agencies extended almost as far as can be, the care for the sick, the destitute and the fallen cherished by all classes, the vigor displayed in assertion of Christian battle against pseudo philosophies, the development even of ritual in certain branches of the Church and the demand on every side for popular services, it is manifest that there is a spirit abroad for which, without committal to all its forms of manifestation we may well be thankful. For if there be for all men a future beyond this life; if the blissful or woeful condition of men in that future is determined by what they become on this side the grave; if Christ alone is the source from whence fitness for the blissful destiny can be procured, and if it is laid on those who know and believe these solemn truths, to see to it that their fellow-men find their way to the Saviour, then certainly there may be found in these considerations a justification for intense religious zeal, convincing alike to the learned and unlearned; and it ill befits a follower of Him who poured out His life for others to look with scorn and indifference on any sincere albeit, crude, enthusiasm displayed in so momentous an enterprise.

The special evidence popularly adduced in proof of the existence of an intense religious earnestness at the present time—often, I am sorry to say, to the almost complete ignoring of other more quiet and less obtrusive signs—is that embodied in what is commonly termed the revival movement, embracing the appearance of good men endowed with certain popular gifts, and impelled, apart from Church appointment, to exercise the function of the Evangelist; the manifest success of exertions, *extra-Ecclesiam*, as witnessed in crowded houses and numerous converts; the presence in divers churches and under pastoral direction of a spontaneous awakening; the intense

dissatisfaction of many members in all churches with the slowness of progress amongst themselves, and the consequent tendency of the more active workers to go off from Church ground and coalesce with others of kindred spirit in maintaining Evangelistic services, independent of Church control; and the rising up and maintenance of a periodical and general literature devoted to the special work of providing teaching supposed to be more simple, earnest and conducive to conversion than what issues from ordinary pulpits.

But I need scarcely remind you that alongside with the section of Christian workers in ardent love with this revival movement, and almost jubilant on account of its reported triumphs, there exists a large class of quiet yet nevertheless holy and intelligent men, who look with anything but approval on what seems to bear on the surface such positive marks of Divinely bestowed success. Whether it arises from a modest reserve which hates a glaring outer appearance in all things, and more so in religion, or from a far-seeing spiritual vision which traces out principles to their more final issues, or from a prudent distrust of the mental and moral calibre of some who here and there project themselves into the fore front of these popular efforts is not for me now to determine, but the fact is patent that persons whose piety and judgment are of unquestioned weight do regard modern Revivalism with a strong aversion, and are prepared to assign intelligible reasons for the attitude they assume. They demur to the assignment of these spasmodic efforts to a deep religious earnestness, and they question the permanent influence of them, both upon the Church and the world. They rather claim to be more correct interpreters of the phenomena when they affirm their origin to be in a *pseudo-religious* restlessness which, under the name and in the garb of religion, is simply a form of the common bane of modern society—namely, an intense love of sensation and visible display. They accordingly resent with strong will the too frequent implication that abstinence from these services is a sign of indifference to the salvation of men, and maintain it to be rather an evidence of a deeper and truer regard for the interests of the kingdom of God. And, finally, while acknowledging the probability, and even certainty of some good as the outcome of revivalism, inasmuch as truth, under even most diverse circumstances, does bear fruit, yet they aver that a far greater good has been assuredly missed by this portentous diversion of energy from the legitimate channels of usefulness.

Now, besides those who are thus very pronounced in their aversion, there is, also, amongst us a considerable section who, while disposed to encourage revivalism within definite limits, nevertheless look with grave

anxiety or tendencies and dangers incident to the movement. They believe that in many places there is a stupor among professing Christians, and a gross neglect of religious ordinances on the part of the masses that may be broken in upon by a series of services framed as to time, locality, form and circumstance to that specific end; and they would rather put up with a few extravagances if need be, than remain in their former dull and non-aggressive mood. The demand for zeal is so imperative in the kingdom of God that they must welcome it anywhere and everywhere. But at the same time they are not insensible to the importance of toning down extravagance by an infusion of church sobriety, and of gathering up the reputed results of Evangelistic effort for permanent service in the church. As observant cautious men, they cannot fail to notice, in the almost invariable incidents of Revivalism, a tendency to abnormal emotional developments; a growing craving for smart sensational utterances; an obvious unwillingness on the part of the prominent to recognize Church authority and order; a disposition in many converts to evade quiet continuous instruction; and, where church fellowship is sought a sudden infusion into the full rights of membership of persons whose sincerity may be unquestioned, but whose aptitude for taking part in the government of the Church is not highly developed. In view of the evils thus recognised, it is thought that a counterpoise to their presence may be found in the countenance and co-operation of the more intelligent members of the various Churches, and the adoption by pastors of a well devised scheme by which converts may become thoroughly instructed in religious doctrines and Christian duties.

We thus find ourselves in the midst of three parties, each claiming to be influenced by a supreme regard for the Kingdom of God among men: 1. Those who advocate and practice Revivalism. 2. Those who object *in toto* to the Revivalism now in vogue. 3. Those who, while not concurring in all that is done, desire to utilise the movement as best they may.

Now, I am not disposed to ally myself on the present occasion as a partizan to either of these parties. My sole object is to suggest considerations that may modify the opinions of all.

That there should arise sometimes in the history of the Church a revival of religion seems to me to be an inevitable result on the one hand of man's natural tendency to lose interest in even the most sacred things, and on the other of the mercy that will not allow our degeneracy to proceed to utter decay, and, therefore, aversion to revival in every form is unphilosophical. If perpetual steady progression in holiness, zeal and love be not the record of the Church's life from the first

then, if Divine promises are to be realized there must come a season of renewal. In fact revivalism is found in all the highest departments of human effort and enjoyment. Literature revived after centuries of decadence, in the days of Erasmus. There was a period when Art came forth once more to enrich the world with forms of beauty; and in the age of Lord Bacon the human intellect was aroused from its deep slumbers to pursue afresh, with firmer step and under truer guidance the lofty path of science. Nor can we doubt, whatever opinions may be entertained as to the ultimate form it assumed, that it was a true and Heaven-born spirit that last century worked through Wesley and Whitfield and saved religion from being almost strangled by the hand of a hard, unreflecting formalism. We surely are not so content with what we have already attained to and done as not to feel the need of a life more consistent in its tone and its aims with the solemn verities we profess to hold and the personal allegiance we have sworn to our Lord. Neither as individuals in our private walk with God, nor as parents among our children, nor as men of business revealing our spirit to our fellow-men, nor as members of the church of Christ professedly devoted body and soul to the interests of Zion, are we as we ought to be; and if we would but estimate things according to their intrinsic worth, we should count it a signal mark of Divine mercy if there were to fall upon our hearts a baptism of the Holy Ghost, so real and complete in its effects, as to enable us to realize more perfectly the ideal of Christian life that ever shines before the sincere mind. And though there may be something of the world's feverish restlessness, and, also, no little proportion of its outward display, blended unconsciously in the feelings and acts of many advocates of modern revivals, I cannot but credit many of them with a measure of spiritual renewal after which we may all most earnestly strive. When we only reflect on that holy, self-denying blessed life spirit among men eighteen hundred years ago; when we think of the sin and woe still bearing men far away, and remember the fleeting character of our stay here below, we may well be ashamed of ourselves before God, and cease from the depths of our soul a mighty quickening to a truer and nobler life. And if we give due heed to the lessons of that ancient story concerning "one who followed not with us," as well as bear in mind the diversities created in human life by the mental and social habits engendered by early education or lack of education, I am sure we shall take care lest, in the expression of our inability to accept the style of spiritual excitement others so readily appreciate we should by a harsh word or scornful look, wantonly wound the hearts of one of Christ's disciples.

It may be further observed that while there may be a true spirit of religious earnestness which, because of the diverse and often imperfect development of mental and aesthetic faculties, is apt to express itself and seek nurture by means of crude unsatisfactory forms of thought and emotion, there may co-exist with it a singular unfitness, in a large class of Christians, to deal with the spirit which underlies all these doubtful forms, so that the criticisms indulged in should find scope in more directions than one.

Incapacity is a relative term. The lower type of thought may not rise to the higher, and the higher may have lost capacity for entering into what is true to the lower. There are minds so constituted as to frequently live over again the immature experience of their earlier years, while others become so utterly absorbed in generalized habits of thought as practically to forget their former selves, and so to become devoid of all sympathy with what is elementary in both thought and feeling.

There are penalties and losses of culture and advanced experience as well as honors and gains. That very severity of thought and broad philosophic range which enables a man habitually to live in regions of truth raised far above the sphere of the mere concrete thinker, tend to incapacitate him from appreciating for practical purposes the representations that may be the very bread of life to souls of retarded development. The habitual exercise of a highly disciplined mind in providing religious instruction for thoughtful Christians necessarily impairs whatever capacity there may have been for arousing the attention of minds uninterested in whatever arises above their daily forms of thought. Of course there will always be a large number of professing Christian people who, by reason of enforced or deliberate abstention from reading and thinking, will ever be disposed to listen with unvarying satisfaction to the elementary teaching most suited to beginners in the religious life, and these will furnish a large proportion of attendants on popular services; but there will always be a considerable residuum to whom such teaching will prove most unsatisfactory.

It is, I know, a sound canon of educational and religious practice that we should ever strive to raise what is low, to perfect what is imperfect, and not make tastes and habits of thought and expression which we believe to be crude and unsatisfactory the standard to which we accommodate ourselves. This is doubtless correct. Yet in its application we must not overlook the fact that elementary religious feeling, in itself, is not a crude thing. Conviction of sin, craving for pardon, trust in Christ may be genuine in the most untutored soul, even amidst a wild and almost irrational external excitement. And

what we are to avoid, in our extreme care for correctness and truth of expression and manner, is the danger of creating for ourselves a growing incapacity, aye, and unwillingness, to lay hold of the true elementary earnestness of religious feeling, thus handing its nurture and training over to those whose methods are not, according to our judgment, healthful and sound.

Further, if there be reality in the earnestness which finds scope in movements practically outside the churches, and often in apparent competition with Church organization, there should arise in thoughtful minds the enquiry as to whether the Church as now organized is what it should be, seeing that so much of what is confessedly good is forcing its way into notice and taking shape apart from her direct control. I am not afraid to claim for the Church the inalienable right to lay hold of and develop everything that pertains to the conversion and edification of souls. Our Divine Lord did not form His Church for a partial purpose in relation to His kingdom among men. It never, so far as I can understand the New Testament, was designed for the evangelization of the world, to be carried on by agencies outside and independent of the Churches, as Churches. It is a fearful thing to say or to imply that the Church of Christ, as the Church, cannot do all that is wanted to be done for the spread of His truth and the salvation of men; and to me it seems a most dangerous and disloyal act to turn aside from the Church, as a Church, and set up organizations or carry on agencies of the same without the direct action, and with a view to admit the control of the church. I do not prophesy, but I see here the sowing of new seeds—the alienation from the church of energy and feeling which belong to the church, and must some day shape themselves into a national form. I regard with alarm the sentiment that makes a distinction of church relationships, and diverts from the volume of the church's life the energy and devotion that by reason of solemn covenants entered into belong to the church for ever. I know it may be said, and in fact is, that there is not scope in the church for all the energy and zeal many Christian people are conscious of, and that, therefore, by the sheer impulse of their Christian life they go forth and continue, as Christians, *extra ecclesiam*, to make a new and special effort to save mankind. I do not now discuss the whole of this question. My present purpose is to point out to you that in this state of things it becomes our duty as pastors and ministers of churches to pay a very rigorous attention to the condition of the church in respect to its spirit, its agencies, its internal development and its ministry; and see how it is that there should exist such a *prima facie* reason for earnest, good members to come to the conclu-

sion that the church as such is not now adequate to the initiation and carrying through of all that is required for the spiritual interests of the world. There is something wrong in the church when even crude minds are not provided for in its agencies. The deficiency cannot all be on one side if good, earnest men do wrong by abstracting from the church the benefit of their energy and zeal. If there be a tendency to get loose from the fellowship and joint action of the church, may there not be a weakness in church coherence for which the church is itself responsible? Because we happen to have been fortunate enough to have worked out well our doctrinal position, it by no means follows that our practical church life has had the amount of study devoted to it that its importance demands. On the face of our present problem, it may, with much propriety, be asked whether our rigid adherence in almost every instance, to the sole pastorate, is quite scriptural and prudent. Some wise men think we are guilty of a tremendous folly in expecting all the functions of pastor, evangelist, teacher and bishop, to be discharged by one individual. The subordination of the detailed development of the church to this modern monopoly of work is believed by many to be a fruitful cause of the wandering off of young and old, who cannot find in the fold the kind of nourishment and care their temperament or education renders needful; while it is to be feared that many, of whom better things might be expected, have very little sympathy with an aggressive policy that shall provide for the wants of the masses.

But while I think it important for those who question the value of Revivalism to look closely into the condition of the church as being one of the concurrent occasions of what they profess to lament, there are aspects of the movement which demand the severest scrutiny of those who are enamoured with it, inasmuch as they tend to impair whatever good there may otherwise be found in these exertions. It is not pleasant to indulge in criticism of an adverse character where the motive of the criticism is a sincere desire to do the Will of God; but, in addition to what has been already hinted at, there are signs of danger and weakness which ought to be fairly faced. Is there not, for instance, in the statistical reports of the number of converts of a given series of meetings, too frequently a confusion with conversions to God of purely psychological phenomena, the product of over-strained nerves at the close of a weary day? A cool observer is apt to draw the conclusion, that for stronger faith, is often placed in the effect of a crowd, of music, and of the outward *eclat* of a huge assembly than in the silent power of God's Truth. There are people who decline to believe that a vast throng of mixed characters gives effi-

cacy to prayer. Some, not careless Christians, are apt to ask is it wise and prudent to expect regular church-goers who have diligently attended two public services, and perhaps the Sunday School, to attend at the close of the Sabbath another general meeting to hear appeals suited to those who have not been preached to already, and from persons who act on their own individual responsibility apart from church direction? It must not be wondered at if observant men regard such a procedure as an implication that the worship and instruction of the church are not good and earnest enough, and that, therefore, the needed supplement must be sought elsewhere. There is, of course, a disposition in some Christians to lead a vagrant life—ever passing from one supposed scene of excitement to another—it is highly probable that they will not gain in steadiness by diversions from their church-home, while both parents and employers now and then speak of the loosening of domestic ties and interruption of family worship by incessant spending of evening in public meetings even to a late hour. Does not the manner in which services are sometimes conducted hold out a strong temptation to impulsive superficial men to push forth their own crude notions as being the truth of God, and to reiterate favorite phases of very questionable tendency? It is naturally very difficult for persons who have been worked up to a remarkable degree of interest in the peculiar style of revivalism to cultivate a proper taste for the solid instruction and sober worship of the Church. Nor is the impression a wholesome one on men of the world when they witness, for a month or more, what seems to them a tremendous commotion about eternal affairs, and then observe how all dies away to the former quietude. We cannot wonder if they should think of our religious convictions as being not very constant in their operation, or else as being of a character that cannot be maintained supreme and absorbing above all others. And granting that there are defects in our church life as it now is, that our teaching is too much framed for the requirements of matured Christians and that the Church is not fully alive to the spiritual destitution of the masses who never enter the house of God—still the question comes is it the duty of those who are practically sworn to fidelity to their Church to seek to remedy this state of things by encouraging on every occasion what cannot but throw the Church into the shade as an evangelizing power, and thus commit a part of its divinely appointed work to a new and loose organization?

It may be asked, what then are we to do? Are we to abstain from attending united efforts. Are we to refuse to meet as brethren for special prayer? Must the care of the non-

church-going be left to persons who are members of no church whatever? Is our attitude to be one of indifference to the cravings of multitudes for a more stirring Evangelism? Brethren, to us the answer is plain enough. Substantially, it is this: Let the church do its own work, as a church, by all the legitimate processes placed within its province. The church is the creation of Christ for the purpose of doing on earth the work He would do were He now living visibly here. It is His body, and through the harmonious action of its members the dead are to be made to hear and the dead to rise. By the very act of having given to the church pastors, and teachers and Evangelists, as well as by the sanction put upon local combination and discipline in Apostolic days, He has declared for all time that the high spiritual functions pertaining to the one universal church are shared proportionately by each local community dedicated to His holy cause and designated a church. And to no other combination of men has Christ committed the great enterprise of seeking the lost. The feeling of the reason—if that can be called reason which runs counter to Christ's will—which leads some men to break loose from all church connection, or to disorganize what He has organized, or to assume an individuality of action in defiance of all order, is not of God and can, in the end, only issue in moral disaster. History may tell of the abuse of church order and authority, but history has never shown the wisdom of any departure by individuals from a Divine order.

The first duty incumbent on the Church at the present time is to direct attention to this spirit of revivalism, so as to discover its true elements and incorporate them with its own action. The indifference that once drove Wesley and his friends from their Church and compelled them to form a new sect, much to the detriment of the Church of England, should not be imitated by those who cannot join in the popular services of our day. It becomes those who regard with mingled feelings of distrust and favor the modern movement to ask themselves afresh how may the Church conserve and perfect what is good and eliminate what is evil. It depends largely upon the action of the Church in bracing itself to the work of Evangelization, whether or not those now intent on that object be retained as an integral part of Church agency or be driven off to form a new denomination. Let us develop in the Church, and win over to Church guidance, the feelings and energies which now find expression out of it and apart from its direction. If there is to be united action for common purposes of Evangelization, let it be that of Churches, not of individuals, who, by such independent action, not only deprive their own Church or the benefit of this energy, but are gradually drifting

towards a new ecclesiastical organization or sect. If the spirit thrown into outer united efforts were thrown into the local action of the churches to which the persons respectively belong, the outward form would not perhaps be at first so showy, but the spiritual result would be more wide and enduring. Why should the leaven of zeal and devotion be abstracted from our church life for concentration in a large meeting for a month or two? It would I think be more effective in the end were there a conscientious diffusion of it in the separate churches, thus raising their tone and developing their latent forces; and the churches will be alive to their responsibility only so far as they encourage this interpretation of their life by a more earnest Evangelistic spirit.

Then, it is important where churches have been blessed with a considerable revival to pay special attention to the instruction of the converts. Let them be watched and trained with all tender care. I commend this remark especially to those brethren of your denomination whose labors as pastors and Evangelists have been so richly blessed.

In any new efforts the Churches may devise, let it be understood that special services are only a very small part of their work in Evangelization. The danger must be avoided of making occasional spasmodic efforts a substitute for the continuous steady care of souls year by year and day by day. If we would but watch over and train our baptized ones as becomes a true foster-mother; if our domestic influence were more consistently Evangelic; if our personal conduct in the world were more truly Christian, and if our Church-members would but go personally to the abodes of destitution and sorrow as Christ their Lord would go, then the work of Evangelism would be done without observation, and much smaller scope would be found for orators' eloquence on rare occasions and the charms of music in public halls. A great deal of the modern Revivalism is necessitated by the prolonged neglect on the part of the Church of the quiet, private labor that may be carried on in home and Church and school every day.

Then, also, it is desirable that any services the church enters on should be such as can be sustained. What we want is a permanently elevated tone, a more habitual zeal, a life-long yearning for the coming of Christ's kingdom. The motives for earnestness in religion abide the same every month, year every day; and we should not strive to work ourselves up to an abnormal pitch for a season, but rather gradually attain to the steady elevation that becomes us always.

And in order to do this it will be necessary for each church so to modify its methods and adapt its agencies as to find scope for all its members. It is for us to obviate the need

for earnest Christians to go elsewhere for comfort, instruction and exercise of their gifts of prayer and speech.

And finally, by each church thus conserving and developing its own spiritual forces to the utmost into steady permanent efforts, there will arise an intensifying of Evangelistic zeal in every part of the land; each congregation of believers will become a centre of light and power; visitation of the spiritually destitute will be maintained as regularly as in secular business; the young will grow up under the best nurture, and the number of those needing to be reclaimed in maturer years will be considerably lessened.

Brethren, the subject we have this evening considered is one in which personally we are deeply concerned. It means for us a deepening of our piety and a more wise and complete consecration of our lives to the holy service of our blessed Lord. The condition of our churches and of ourselves may well awaken our gravest solicitude, and the dark and dreadful sins of the world may well press on our spirit. It is certain we cannot,

accomplish all our hearts are set on; but we can lay our own hearts open more and more to the influence of the Divine Spirit; we can help to make our churches more full of zeal and love; we can train our children with greater wisdom and care, and everywhere exhibit to the world a character that will speak when our tongues are silent. The days are few and fleeting for us on earth; the opportunities for commending Christ to others are getting fewer; let us then be up and doing; let us from this day forth renew our vows; be true in our allegiance to Christ and His Church. And then, though for the future of your life, and when seas may roll between us and we can no longer work visibly hand in hand, the day will come when, with joytul hearts, we shall meet in more blissful regions and feel unutterably grateful for having been permitted to do even a small part to extend the Kingdom of God.

The address was listened to with the most profound attention, and occupied nearly two hours in delivery.

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