

## Our Contributors.

SOMETHING THE CHURCH SHOULD BE  
THANKFUL FOR

BY KNOXIAN.

A worthy elder in one of our congregations when leading the devotions in the prayer meeting used to give thanks for a "variety of gifts in the Christian ministry."

That elder was sensible as all elders should be, and as most of them are. He had more sense than those ministers who think that all their brethren should be run through one mould, and should speak, and think, and preach, and pray, in exactly the same way. Watch closely that minister who speaks disparagingly of some of his brethren, and nine times out of ten the front of their offending is, that they don't do things as he does. If they thought as he thinks, and spoke and acted as he speaks and acts, they would be very good men and excellent ministers, but because they happen to have been built on a slightly different plan, and trained perhaps in a different school, the disparaging brother does not like them. Perhaps nature had not the benefit of the disparaging brother's advice when she formed the people he dislikes.

At this season of the year when the church courts are sitting, a thoughtful man can always see that a variety of gifts is an unspeakably great blessing to the Church. If all the ministers of the Church could do just one thing, no matter how well they did that one thing, the Church would probably go to pieces in less than five years. There is an immense variety of work to be done, and there must be a variety of talent to do it. The Head of the Church has given us that variety, and instead of belittling any kind of work or snarling at the men who do it, a good Christian and a loyal Presbyterian should give thanks as the elder did for a variety of gifts in the ministry and eldership.

Some men are singularly gifted for keeping minutes. In a few crisp sentences they put on record all that a Synod or Assembly does in half a day. They put nothing down but what was done, and leave nothing out worth putting in. The manner in which men like Dr. Reid, Dr. Fraser, Dr. Gray, and some others can keep the run of business for three hours, often amidst much distraction, and then give a correct record of it in three minutes, is a mystery to those who have tried to do the thing once or twice. Nobody can tell how much the higher courts owe to the men who keep the record. It seems an easy thing to read a page of minutes, but the writing of that page involved unceasing mental strain for three hours and an hour's condensing and re-writing when the "Fathers and brethren" were dining, or relating anecdotes in the lobbies, or possibly interviewing their briar roots under friendly canvas. If anybody thinks it an easy thing to keep minutes that will pass muster without criticism let him try, but let him remember that it will not do to wind up a minute as so many brethren wind up their resolutions by saying, "or something to that effect." Nature intended some men to draw up reports. Reports are exceedingly valuable. A Home Mission report puts the Home Mission work of the Church right under your eye in a condensed form. A Foreign Mission report does the same thing with our Foreign work. The Temperance report should give the mind of the Church on the temperance question. The Report on the State of Religion should give the spiritual condition of the Church in so far as spiritual results can be expressed in reports, the Sabbath School report should lay the Sabbath School work before the Church and so on. The drawing up of a good report requires no small amount of industry, patience and skill in arranging facts and figures. Besides the reports of standing committees, there are many that have to be drawn up during the meeting of Assembly and no small amount of initiating work is required in preparing some of them. There is always a good deal of interest taken in the election of a Moderator. In any General Assembly there are twenty or thirty men, each of whom do more real work in a couple of days than the Moderator does during the whole meeting, but no one takes any notice of them or their labours, except when a vote of thanks is given to the committee "especially to the Convener." That phrase has been so overworked that most Conveners would rather see it left out. The Church should be thankful that there are men who have a gift for drawing up good reports.

Some men are natural born chairmen. They were intended to preside over meetings of one kind and another. Everybody knows what a marvellous difference it makes at any kind of a meeting to have the right sort of a man in the chair. It is not easy to describe the ideal chairman, but we all know him when we see him. He is a man that never loses his head or his temper, that always says the right thing at the right time, in the right way and says just enough. We have long been thinking of writing a paper on "Chairmen that we have seen," and if all goes well we may say something on that fertile topic in this column before the rush of meetings begins next winter.

Some men were born to address popular meetings. They take to that kind of work instinctively, and practice makes them effective. There may possibly be too much speaking in our day in both Church and State. Cynical people sneer at oratory, and many men who cannot speak well themselves are foolish enough to try to belittle those who can, but the fact remains that most people, especially

Presbyterian people heartily enjoy a good speech. In a Church like ours, that has no ritual or anything of that kind to depend on, it will never do to disparage the speaking talent. Should the day ever come when the typical Presbyterian minister is a lisping, imbecile dude, instead of a strong manly speaker, we may cable for Macaulay's New Zealander. The Church should be thankful for what ever popular speaking talent it has.

Both nature and Providence have fitted some men for being Professors of Theology. The Church can never be sufficiently thankful for piety, learning, aptness to teach and good sense in our theological chairs. A fool is out of place anywhere in the Church but never so much out of place as when he undertakes to train ministers.

Some men are gifted in the way of writing books, and some write books who are not specially gifted in that way. The reception given to Mr. McKay's work on Baptism, and Mr. McAdam's "Master's Memorial," shows clearly that there is nothing in the cry about too many books. There is always room for a well written, suggestive book on a living subject, provided the author has a condensing apparatus in his study and knows how to use it.

Whether nature ever intended any minister to write for the newspapers or not is a question we dare not discuss.

Some ministers, some elders, some men of all kinds are highly gifted in the way of pushing things, others are gifted in the way of keeping things steady and not letting them go too fast. In fact there is an endless variety of gifts among ministers and laymen. The Church needs them all and should be thankful for them all. The thing we should be sorry for is that so many gifts go unused.

Moral. Let us give thanks for the variety of gifts in the Church.

### THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR MOVEMENT.

The following are two of the essays by Toronto writers, intended for the competition announced some time ago:—

How can Young People's Societies of Christian Endeavour in each local Church best promote and stimulate the systematic benevolence of young people for the missions of their own denomination?

FIRST. By disseminating knowledge concerning mission fields and missionaries. No one takes as warm and personal an interest in that of which they know nothing, as they do in that of which they know. This remark is more true regarding missions, probably, than it is of almost anything else. Then our first desire is to set forth ways and means, regarding the obtaining and giving forth of knowledge, concerning this grand and glorious branch of the work of the Church.

How to obtain knowledge. Outside of the multitude of books regarding many of the countries, their mission needs and present supply, there are the missionary intelligence columns of our great, influential, religious periodicals, monthly missionary leaflets, and published committee reports. Of this latter channel we only say, do not consider your knowledge complete until you have consulted and studied these. For this reason, the items are authentic, fresh, and accurate, very often depicting the exact needs of the particular mission fields, when other sources may perhaps generalize. The exact need of the field is just that which you want to know most of all.

SECOND. After the acquisition of knowledge concerning the missions by the average Christian Endeavourer, action cannot be long delayed. The multitude of God's created humans who have never even heard the Gospel mentioned, the immense fields which have only been brushed, as it were, on the outside, the utter helplessness of the small force at work, to overtake their tasks, and above all, the only too apparent indifference on the part of those who in many cases surround the thinker, will fill him with holy zeal, quicken his efforts and stir him up to grand deeds and ennobling thoughts. The very first action will be to give and persuade others to give, as God has prospered, of their substance towards the support of every mission enterprise.

How shall we give, and to what shall we be inclined? To your own Church schemes, of course. While Church union is a very good thing and to be wished for devoutly, should God think it wise to direct matters to that end. It should be borne in mind that your own denomination has the first claim on your purse, sympathy and prayers. This principle is not selfish, nor is it at variance with any Christian moral, rather the reverse. None should support the individual denomination mission work with greater zeal than one who has been raised within her walls and beneath her protection. Having decided to support your own Church, do so systematically, regularly and unfailingly; always remember to speak to others about doing the same. We recommend the following system: Procure envelopes, printed with a distinctive number and date of each Sabbath thereon (one for each Sabbath in the year); appoint a missionary treasurer who will issue these envelopes, keeping record in a private manner of the number which each member takes. These envelopes should be filled up every week by the holder, no matter how small the amount may be, and handed in whenever convenient; the whole idea concentrating in the regularity with which it is carried out. A very slight calculation will suffice to convince the most sceptical of the effectiveness of this system, and its influence could not fail to operate not only with givers themselves but on their immediate friends as well. At the close of each year the treasurer should publish a schedule showing the numbers only (no names), with the several amounts weekly, and in total, opposite. This would constitute very effective

missionary literature, illustrating that which so many overlook—the power of the small, if accumulated, to grow larger. If the society had one hundred members giving five cents per week average, the total would reach the very respectable sum of two hundred and sixty dollars per annum. This result would be reached at so small an amount of personal inconvenience that many would surely try it, for one year at least. It would be interesting in after life to follow up those who commenced so regularly and systematically in early days to give to the Lord. Their whole life would be strikingly full of beautiful answers to, and realizations of, those many gracious promises of God's holy Word.

The effect of example is everywhere known and acknowledged. The person who gives liberally invariably commands respect, when soliciting subscriptions of any kind. The studious person has many imitators, even if afar off. The truly religious and God fearing man is sure of being held up as a person of goodly parts and worthy of all emulation. So would it be with the example set by our Y. P. S. C. E. systematic giving to missions scheme, when at the end of the year the sheet giving the summary made its appearance. What else would be necessary? The monthly missionary Church prayer meeting should be taken charge of wholly by the Y. P. S. C. E., with the pastor for presiding officer. This meeting could be made very interesting indeed; it could be made more than that, it could be made the instrument, by God's help, of directing the minds of many, young people especially, to the work and cause of missions. As we have said before, to know is to feel interested, and if a good live essay or address, or both, were delivered on one field, at one time, at each of these monthly meetings, we feel sure that at the end of a twelve-month year many would be strengthened in their resolve to work anew for the Master, more especially in the direction of better financial support for the mission fields, and their extension would surely follow.

After such a consummation had been reached what would be the proper method to follow? The Church missionary treasurer should distribute envelopes, similar to those mentioned before, to everyone, not only to members, but also to those not members, who attend many meetings. These are never reached in many cases and they certainly should be. Everyone should have an envelope to be filled up each week and handed back when convenient. The result would be an extraordinary awakening of the interest in, and on behalf of, missionaries and their fields, also a systematic benevolence for their support.

The proper distribution of exact missionary intelligence is very desirable. In very many congregations it is thought best to distribute (free) the official Church record or paper. This scheme is attended with most satisfactory results. Besides the missionary intelligence, there are always other matters which it is important every supporter of the Church should know of. Other missionary papers abound, of course, and every one subscribing there should be at least ten. Every young worker who gets up a club within his own sphere not only benefits the paper itself, but also the person subscribing, the Church interested and the schemes needing support as well.

The last impetus to systematic giving which we will mention is that of local missionary work, especially in city districts needing such effort. Who can forget the scenes, so many, so painful, and so varied, which are daily depicted along the alleys, slums and by-ways in any of our great cities? Who leaves these places without mentally resolving that henceforth "less for self, more for others" will be the guiding motto? Who can labour, even only once or twice, in these dark localities and fail to notice with exquisite pleasure the effect of reclamation accomplished with the help of God? Who can go among their friends after such experiences without telling the story with much fervour, as only those who have experienced the sensation can understand? Do such things restrain our givings? No! no! Very much otherwise. To see misery and poverty, with a present personal feeling of comfort and a knowledge of Jesus Christ in the heart, causes an intense desire to do good with our money, and oh! the pleasure of means rightly distributed on needy ones. The feeling is only equalled by the knowledge that "God loveth a cheerful giver," and that someday, in your intercourse with your friends in this work, you may be the blessed channel through which shall be given to some needy, yearning soul that which the world cannot take away, "The peace of God which passeth all understanding."

MATTHEW.

How can Young People's Societies of Christian Endeavour best promote the introduction of religious journals and other wholesome literature, into the families of the congregation with which they are connected.

The Christian Endeavour Society is pre-eminently a religious society; its aims and objects are contained in the prayer meeting primarily, and any other Godly and worthy object secondarily. Such a society cannot be a literary society, in the sense in which that term is so generally used; to be such would defeat its prime object. There are many of our Church members and adherents who regard with anything but favour a literary meeting; they recognize the value of literary research, they admit its great power in self-education and mind-broadening effect, but they deny the duty, pertaining to the Church, of sustaining and fostering such meetings. The fact of the matter is that there is laid out for everyone a plain path in this matter—the Church, while responsible for our growth in grace, has also the duty laid upon her of seeing to it that we are living up to our obligations every hour of our existence. If members are engaged in