

Our Contributors.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MAKE IT BETTER?

BY KNOXONIAN.

The Church is in a bad state says, Mr. Self-righteous—little or no vital religion—too much formality—people are not what they profess to be—even the ministers are not much in earnest,—everything going wrong, etc.

Now Mr. Self-righteous, supposing all that to be so, what are you doing to make the Church better? You are a man—perhaps a member of the Church—a professing Christian—a Christian that professes to be much better than other Christians—you must one day render an account for the use you are making of your time, your talents, your money, your influence; what are you doing to make the Church better? It is as much your duty to improve the Church as it is the duty of any other man. If there is little vital godliness you are as much responsible for the lack as any other man. Now Mr. Self-righteous what are you doing to improve things?

Dearly beloved brother, let us come a little closer. Do you think that the Almighty created you, and endowed you with reason, and that the Saviour died for you, and that the Spirit is sanctifying you and that the divine grace sustains you and keeps you from falling, and that heaven awaits you and that all this has been done or is being done simply that you may make disparaging remarks about the Church Christ bought with His own blood. Divine wisdom never made such a tremendous expenditure for such a small result. No such price was ever paid for the criticism of any man. If you are a blood-bought man why don't you do something to make the Church better?

Brother Self-righteous, do you pray for the Church? If not your disparaging remarks are mere snarling. A man who has any real interest in the Church always does at least two things—he prays and pays.

Be careful, brother, or you may get into a tight corner here. Either you pray for the Church or you don't. If you don't you have no right to make remarks about its spiritual condition; if you do your prayers have not had much effect, for according to your own account the Church is in a very bad spiritual state. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. If you and others like you were righteous men and prayed earnestly for the Church it would be in a good spiritual condition. Hope you see the point, brother.

Similar criticism is often made about individual congregations. There is nothing more common than to hear people "beware and lament" the lack of life in congregations and yet these are as a rule the very people who do nothing to increase the life. It never seems to dawn on their minds that they are as much responsible for the alleged spiritual deadness as anybody else. Nor does it ever occur to them that it is as much their duty as the duty of any one else to try and improve things. The fact that a man considers his whole duty done when he has "bewailed and lamented" about his neighbours without thinking about himself is strong presumptive evidence that he is not any better than they are, and perhaps not as good as some of them.

We once heard of a worthy minister who cured a district prayer meeting of the "bewailing and lamenting" practice, in a rather original way. When the people came together their exhortations consisted mainly in lugubrious remarks on the degeneracy of the present age. The minister was willing enough to hear that unpleasant topic discussed provided the discussion was kept in proper proportion to the other exercises. What he objected to was taking up the whole time of the meeting with one topic. There was no use however, in proposing a direct remedy so he tried an indirect one. To have shown that the present age is not wholly bad would have wrecked the prayer meeting

and perhaps wrecked the minister too, so the good brother worked for desired results along another line. When the good men denounced the age the minister chimed in and said all the hard things about the age that he conscientiously could. As he knew a good deal more about the age than any of the people present his contribution was substantial. By and bye it began to dawn upon the meeting that mere denunciation of the age does nothing to mend it. Would that all who "beware and lament" over the age could learn the same lesson.

Supposing an unfortunate man had been found on the road half frozen to death one of those cold days in January. How much good would it have done the man if a lot of people had gathered around him and talked in this way.—Terribly cold climate this—January the coldest month for many years—weather very cold in Europe—heavy snow storms in the Old Country—everything frozen up in Manitoba—mercury down to 40 or 50—a foot of snow in Victoria—cold, yes, terribly cold—cold—cold—cold—cold.

All this time mind you the unfortunate man is lying half dead in the snow. Would any humane man—any rational man—say these people were doing their whole duty when they talked about the cold but did nothing to save the man. They came just as near doing their whole duty as people come who talk about lack of life in the Church but do nothing to increase life.

It is the easiest thing imaginable to point out evil in the world, or shortcomings in the Church, or weak spots in a congregation, or defects in any kind of work. To sit still and talk about the work of other people is so easy that a mental imbecile can do it as well as a Shakespeare. It is easy to find fault with the best man on earth or the best woman either. In a world like ours—a world damaged by sin there is always much that is wrong. As a general thing there is more wrong in the man who sees nothing but the wrong than in any other kind of man. The people who expatiate most on shortcomings as a rule have the least right to do so. The hardest things we ever hear about a doctor are generally uttered by people who never pay their doctor's bill. The man who denounces a newspaper savagely is generally in arrears for about ten years. It is often so in regard to Church matters. The man who has most to say against the Church as a whole or against any individual congregation or scheme is generally the man who does least to help, and not unfrequently the man who does most to hinder.

Let every man ask himself before God, what am I doing to make things better?

THE LATE REV. A. A. DRUMMOND.

Still another of the fathers has gone to his rest and reward. Following closely on the decease of Dr. Fraser, of Barrie, and Mr. Monteath, of Toronto, old-time members with him of the United Presbyterian Synod, comes that of Mr. Drummond, of Newcastle, who passed away after a long illness, on Tuesday, 7th. February, at the ripe age of seventy-three years.

Mr. Drummond was born at Comrie, Perthshire, Scotland, and his boyhood was spent at Falkirk, near Edinburgh, where some near relatives still reside. As a young man, he taught for some years in Crieff, in his native country. He studied for the ministry in the Divinity Hall of the United Associate Secession Synod in Glasgow, where he had as one of his classmates Dr. John Cairns, who came to be perhaps the greatest preacher and the best loved man in all Scotland. Mr. Drummond made excellent use of his opportunities. He was a good scholar, and continued a student all his days.

On his licensure he received two calls, both of which he declined, as his mind was made up to go to Canada as a missionary, in response to the urgent appeals of the Synod there for young and active men. Along with three other probationers or "preachers" as they were then styled, one of whom, Rev. Jas. Pringle, of Brampton,

has only recently finished his course, he sailed for Canada in the early summer of 1847. The voyage lasted six weeks,—no unusual time for those days. It was marked, however, by a thrilling incident. A terrible storm arose. So violent did it become that they were compelled to let the ship drive before the wind, with helm lashed. A towering wave swept the deck, tearing away the bulwarks and carrying two men overboard. One, a sailor, fortunately caught hold of a rope and was saved. The other, the first mate, was borne out to sea and perished. It fell to Mr. Drummond to write the sad news to the widowed bride—they had been married but a day or two before the sailing. The task would be tenderly done; for our brother was always skilful to administer comfort to the sorrowing.

Mr. Drummond's name appears for the first time in the church books in July, 1847, as one of seven—three ordained and four unordained—on the scheme for the "Distribution of Preachers." There were then four Presbyteries in the Missionary Synod, which, in that year, following the example of the mother church, changed its name to the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church,—viz: Flamboro, London, Montreal, and Toronto, and each of the "preachers" was to traverse the whole field within the six months. To use his own words, Mr. Drummond was "anxious to become a Canadian without delay," and he tells how, following the good example of the worthy elder who took him round to the farm-houses at his first appointment, he left his coat behind him, visiting in his shirt sleeves, as the weather was oppressively hot. How strange it must have seemed to the new arrival from Scotland to find his coat the only one in the crowded school house when Sabbath came! but such was the homely and comfortable custom for the men in the early settlements in summer-time.

He was soon called and was ordained to the First church, Brantford, on the 20th October, of the year of his arrival. There he remained ten years, doing mission work also in various places round about. When the Presbytery of Brant was formed about 1854, he was appointed first clerk, which position he held until his removal in 1857 to the township of Mornington, in the "Queen's bush" as the new west of that day was familiarly styled. This was a wide and rough mission field, with all the difficulties of a settlement just emerging from the forest. The salary was smaller and the work harder than at Brantford; but he was fond of pioneering. His health broke somewhat under the strain, and at the end of three years he removed to Shakespeare, on the "front," still retaining one of his former stations in North Easthope. Here he continued until 1876. It was a touching evidence of the affection of the people of his old charge that two representative men came all the way to Newcastle to attend his funeral.

In the year just mentioned Mr. Drummond was called to Newcastle, where he found facilities for the education of his family, and a more limited field. The congregation, though small, was spirited and loyal. The relations between the people and their aging pastor were delightful. For fourteen years he continued to labor with remarkable energy and good success. When, in 1888, his health became seriously impaired, the little congregation acted in the most generous manner towards him. A summer holiday in his native land restored his strength in a measure. He remained pastor for two years longer, retiring early in 1890. The months immediately following his retirement brought much bodily distress. All hope of his recovery was finally abandoned, and on the day of the induction of his successor in August, his death was hourly expected. But he was of unusually tough fibre, and to the surprise of all, rallied; and although never again strong, was able to continue in the duties of the clerkship of Presbytery, which he had held since 1877, and frequently occupied the pulpit for brethren. Some of his ablest sermons belong to this closing period. The end came after an exhausting illness extending over several months.

His life had been a busy and useful one. He had had to do with the reviving or planting or fostering of ten different churches during an active ministry of 43 years, and was clerk of the Presbytery of Brant for three, and of the Presbytery of Whitby for sixteen years. He was also local superintendent of schools for a length of time in the West, and for many years acted as local agent for the Bible Society. His services to the church were not without recognition. He was chosen Moderator of the U. P. Synod in 1860, the year before the 1st union of the Canada Presbyterian Synod of London in 1873; and of the present Synod of Toronto and Kingston in 1882.

What manner of man was this venerable and honored father? He was a minister of the Gospel in every fibre of his being. He magnified the office of a preacher. He had cultivated with care a naturally good homiletic gift, and continued to sketch sermons after all hope was past that he should ever stand in the pulpit again. His preaching was expository and instructive and of a strongly evangelical type. It was never far from any part of his sermon to the Cross, "We preach Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God," was evidently his motto. Bright and hopeful, too, and, as the years went on, of increasing fervor and eloquence. The decay in bodily strength seemed to open wider the fountains of his heart and speech. As a pastor, he was diligent and beloved. Visiting seemed no task to him, and at the sick-bed or in the hours of mourning he was especially prized. His sympathy was deep and real, and his experience ripe. He took a willing share in public work in his locality. He was often on the temperance platform, and was the first, so far as known to the present writer, to take advantage of the clause in the School Act in regard to religious instruction in the High and Public schools, by arranging with the ministers of the other churches to visit the schools weekly in turns, and give instruction to the pupils of all denominations together. The example has been followed with profit in several places and has received the commendation of the Minister of Education.

Mr. Drummond was a man of strongly marked personal characteristics. He possessed a clear and well balanced mind and much native shrewdness. His excellent business capacity served him well in the early days of small salaries and many privations. It was no less useful in his official position in Presbytery or Synod. He was of strong opinions, but eminently companionable and brotherly, ever at the bidding of his co-presbyters. Within a very few years of the close of his ministry, when his strength was by no means what it had been, of his own motion he made a complete tour of the Presbytery to see the brethren and to speak on missions to their congregations. He was a large giver to the work of his congregation and to missions out of a never large stipend.

Perhaps the most marked feature of his religious life was the simplicity of his faith and the exceeding naturalness of his relations to the Lord Jesus. That Heavenly Master and Friend seemed always at his elbow. The directness of his address to Him in prayer was sometimes startling. Nearer still that beloved Redeemer appeared to come, as the weary months of his last illness dragged along. As the end drew near, the veil seemed almost entirely removed. Heaven was in sight. He was simply lying waiting, his heaviest cross, the disappointment of not getting away sooner. The bitterness was all taken away from death. It was merely the welcome unloosing of the last cord that bound him to earth and kept him from being with his Lord in glory. And, in beautiful expectancy his spirit passed.

His surviving family—Mrs. Drummond, Misses Agnes and Annie Drummond, of Newcastle, and Mr. A. A. Drummond, of Toronto—have the sympathy of a wide circle in their loss, and the church mourns one who did her loyal and faithful service up to the limit of his strength and opportunity.

The earnestness of life is the only passport to the satisfaction of life.