

## Our Contributors.

### WHY DON'T YOU PROPOSE?

BY KNOXIAN.

The word propose is not to be used in this paper in the special sense in which young people sometimes use it. Why any given young man does not make a fair manly proposal to a young woman after he has led her to think he is going to do so is a question with which we shall not at the present time wrestle. Perhaps he is afraid. Probably he never meant to do so. Possibly visions of washing-day, house-cleaning, soothing syrup and grocers' bills haunt him. We have no controversy with that young man. We have our own opinion of a young man of that kind. If we did give him an idea he might have no place to put it.

The object of this paper is to put the question, "Why don't you propose?" to those people who are continually grumbling, criticising and fault-finding, but never propose any better way of doing things. They find fault with everything, but never propose anything themselves. They nibble, but they never suggest. These people abound in the State and swarm in the Church. Their work is easy. All they do is find fault with those who are working. Anybody can do that. No intellect is required. The patients in an asylum can criticise its management. Many of them do. No moral qualities are needed. The convicts in the Central Prison criticised the institution somewhat severely a short time ago. No culture is needed. Years ago this contributor saw a man who could not read holding a newspaper wrong side up and passing judgment upon it. He said it was a very poor paper. The business of fault-finding requires no brains, no moral qualities, no culture, and that is the reason so many people can go into it.

Gladstone challenges the admiration of all manly men just now because he has a plan which he sincerely believes will help Ireland. Thousands of good people don't believe in the plan, but they admire the sincerity and pluck of the Grand Old Man. He believes something must be done for Ireland, and he is not afraid to stand up before the world and say what he thinks that something should be. Hartington thinks something ought to be done, but he does not know what. Chamberlain says he has a plan—in his mind. It will never be any other place. Most likely it is not even there. People who think hanging human beings is governing them advocate what they call "heroic measures." In this connection "heroic measures," "coercion" and similar terms simply mean the spilling of human blood, and the terms are generally used by men who think spilling blood is a small matter if the blood is Irish. Gladstone is the only statesman in the Empire who has the courage to propose a plan. He can look down with dignified contempt on his critics and say: "Why don't you propose something?" They won't. They have nothing to propose.

This question—Why don't you propose something yourself?—is one that ought to be put to somebody every day.

The taxes are too high, shouts some man who would probably be quiet if he had a seat at the Council Board. The right thing to say to him is "Why don't you propose some way of making them lower?" Do you know any way of building school houses, paying teachers, repairing streets, making sidewalks, lighting the town, supplying it with water and keeping the peace in it, without paying money? If you do stand up like a little man and explain it. The world is waiting to hear you propose your plan."

Too many colleges in the Presbyterian Church! Some people think not, but we will not argue the matter. Let it be assumed that you are right, if not strikingly original, when you say "Too many colleges." Now give us a sketch of your plan for consolidation. Tell us how many colleges you would have and where you would locate them. Give us details. A plan that does not come down to details is not worth a brass farthing. Supposing ten pastors, five elders, one doctor of divinity, and one theological professor should shout "Too many colleges" at the rate of ninety words per minute, how long would it take them, working ten hours per day, to produce a feasible scheme for consolidation?

Our congregation is very cold; no life, no growth. Sad enough. What do you propose in the way of mending matters? You are just as much responsible for the coldness as anybody else. You are as cold

yourself as anybody else. If you were very warm you might warm up some of the others. Now, what do you propose? Supposing three elders, six male members, four married women, three old maids and one healthy crank were to groan "The Church is cold," at the rate of eighty words per minute, groaning eight hours per day, how long would it take them to groan the Church into a lively condition?

The finances of the congregation are falling behind. Well, what do you suggest? What plan do you propose for increasing the revenue? Something must be done? Let us hear your proposal. Supposing ten desponding men, and six weak brethren, and four men who pay nothing were to complain that the finances are getting behind at the rate of seventy-five words per minute, complaining all the time, how long would it take them to raise the congregational revenue twenty-five per cent.?

This question—Why don't you propose something?—will apply to many of the alleged grievances in connection with the General Assembly. The committees are not properly struck. Well, propose some better way of striking them. The discussions are confined to a few. Well, suggest some feasible way of inducing the many to take part. There is no sort of use in dwelling upon and magnifying grievances without suggesting some way of removing them. Talking about a sore never heals it. Keeping it open all the time makes it worse. What the Church and the world need is not men who can expatiate on the sores, but men who can make some feasible proposals to heal them.

Dr. Chalmers always asked one question about a man proposed for any given work—has he weight? A man who cannot propose a good feasible plan never has any real weight. Lord Palmerston had one test for every proposed colleague—has he resources? If he had no resources— if he could propose nothing in an emergency and do nothing—Palmerston did not want him in his Cabinet. Palmerston was Prime Minister of England for nearly half his lifetime, and no small part of his success lay in the fact that he always chose colleagues, if he could, who had resources. A man who has no resources, who cannot make a feasible proposal, who can do nothing but nibble and find fault, bears about the same relation in Church and State to a solid man of resources that a hornet bears to a good working horse.

### SYNOD NOTES.

The Synod of Hamilton and London has met and adjourned. The business "docket" was small. There were no "burning" questions (at least not very scalding), and so the duties were soon over.

#### THE ARRANGEMENTS

for the reception and entertainment of the members were excellent. All who know Dr. Thompson might be sure that nothing would be wanting in interest and desire to entertain the Synod most respectably; and all who know anything of Mr. Nisbet will readily understand how perfectly these desires would be put into practical effect. The church in Sarnia is a very commodious one, its acoustic properties are very good (a matter of no little importance for Synod or Assembly), and the lecture room could not have been much better than it is if it had been built for the express purpose of accommodating synodical committees. No whisper of dissatisfaction either with the arrangements about the church or with the hospitality of the people of Sarnia was heard, but much was audibly spoken in praise.

#### THE ATTENDANCE

was not as large as we have seen at some meetings. There were a few ministers from the Hamilton Presbytery (none from the city) and two elders. Very few came from Bruce—no elders, I think. Some other Presbyteries were thinly represented. For all that the work of the Synod got on very smoothly and very satisfactorily. There will be no appeals to the General Assembly. Still it was not creditable to many brethren who had promised to attend, and caused provision to be made for their hospitable entertainment, to disappoint. It is to be hoped that they will do better next year when we meet in Chatham.

#### THE SERMON

was preached to a large audience by the retiring Moderator. The subject was the Effusion of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. None who know Mr. Robertson, of Chesterfield, will need to be

told of the ability, earnestness, unction and poetic beauty of the discourse. The pity is that so much of it was lost upon the audience from defect in delivery. A new feature in the Synod opening "exercises" was the organ performance during the assembling of the congregation, and the singing of an anthem by the choir before the sermon. We are not sure that every new thing is a good thing.

As we said before, the docket was not a large one. It is a pity, but Synodical powers were enlarged, so as to lighten the work of the Assembly and also to increase the interest of brethren in Synod meetings. Your correspondent humbly thinks that a little more time spent in the discussion of all subjects relating to

#### RELIGION AND MORALITY

would be of great advantage. The reports on State of Religion (by Dr. Thompson—a very excellent one by the way—which came near being ordered to be printed), on Sabbath Schools (by Mr. McAdam, of Strathroy), on Sabbath Observance (read by Mr. Gray), and on Temperance (by Mr. McLean) were all read, except the last, and for the most part disposed of at the evening meeting. Either the talking brethren were absent, or these important subjects should have had more consideration. The Synod stepped in the right direction when it resolved to commit the matter of Sabbath Observance to the State of Religion Committee. It will take another step in the same wise direction when it includes Sabbath Schools and Temperance in the work of the same committee. The reports were all very good and on the whole encouraging. Perhaps the gloomiest one was that on Sabbath Observance. Evidently Mammon has been having the upper hand. Intemperance has been grappled with by the churches and the nation; Sabbath desecration must be faced next and speedily. There must be no nonsense about this any longer. By the way, we think it is hardly fair to Synods and Assemblies that they should be asked, as was this Synod, to endorse and recommend the ventures of any publishing firm, when these have not been first submitted to the court for inspection.

The Synod was greatly under obligation to the London Presbytery for giving it a little work to do that looked like real business in the

#### GLENCOE APPEAL CASE.

This was a complaint of a minority of the Presbytery against a decision to grant the organization of a second congregation in that village. Dr. Proudfoot and Mr. Ball spoke for the appellants, and Messrs. McGillivray and Sutherland for the Presbytery. The discussion was very spirited, and in very good feeling on both sides. Dr. Cochrane made a most eloquent and sensible appeal in favour of upholding the unity of the Church, and against giving any encouragement to making congregational disruption too easy. He made some most flattering allusions to the pastor, Mr. Robbins, as a preacher and Christian gentleman. Evidently the whole Synod was of a similar opinion with the Doctor as to how the appeal should be decided. The motion of Mr. McMullen, who is always on the side of law and order, was unanimously carried.

#### OVERTURES.

The overtures of the Hamilton Presbytery, to regulate the appointment of Moderator of the General Assembly, was received with favour by the Synod. It is to be hoped, if it becomes law, that there will never be any more "electioneering" in that connection. Mr. Ball's overture, to provide annuities for college professors, church agents and others, is to come up in the General Assembly. Dr. Proudfoot's overture on Augmentation was fruitful of a beneficial discussion, but came to grief, as it was the opinion of many in the Synod Mr. Laidlaw's Probationers Scheme ought also to do.

#### FATHER CHINIQUY

was there. "Mr. Chiniquy ees not worth five cents: he ees nopodie." The joke of this last remark, which he made while addressing a large audience on Wednesday evening, was occasioned in the forenoon sederunt. Somebody seeing him in the Synod, where indeed he had sat from the commencement, moved that he be invited to sit and correspond, and also that he be asked to take a seat on the platform. Whereupon it was asked in great amazement by some one whom we shall not name just now: "What! Is Father Chiniquy not a member of the court?" So there was a little debate interjected into the proceedings—not