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Correspondence

CHURCH WOMEN AND VESTRIES.

Sir,—In the issue of your paper of April 27th, there is an editorial on Women and Vestry Meetings.

You speak of Toronto Diocese having now granted the right to vote for the election of wardens and vestrymen to women, though not yet for delegates to Synod. I am glad that the men of the Toronto Diocese have at last awakened! Calgary Diocese has had the privilege (I prefer to call it women's just right) to vote for wardens, vestrymen and delegates to Synod for three years now, and have asked at one Diocesan Synod for the right to vote there, but it was withdrawn, as it was felt that the time was not yet ripe for such a movement.

In your editorial you say that those who do the bulk of the work and know best what is needed, are denied any say in the most important meeting of the year, in a large number of the parishes. This is only too true, and surely it is just as necessary that those who do the bulk of the work in a parish and consequently know most of its needs, should have a voice in the Diocesan Synod of which the particular parish in which they work forms a part.

They must be in a far better position to know what is needed in administration both of men and finances than men who not only do not attend church meetings, but are more noticeable by their absence rather than by their presence at Divine service.

How often does the man sacrifice his personal comfort to help his church? I venture to say not very often.

Ask any church treasurer of the duplex envelope, who gives largest to the Mission Fund, the man or the woman? I do not hesitate to say that women, given the means, are twice as free in their gifts to God as men. These are facts well known to the clergy, yet what are they doing today? Dictating to the women of their parish as to what they shall do with the money so hardly earned, demanding that it shall be given to this or that object, never asking the women what they think or would like done; telling the women of their parish that they are not to ask God from the heart at their missionary meetings for what they want, but must read from books! Where are the God-fearing men of old? Oh, that they could come back for awhile and help us again. On all hands we hear the cry, to what is our church coming? I say it's the fault of the clergy that such a cry has gone up; we have lost the spirit of life, we are dead spiritually. We must learn more to pray from the heart. Book prayers are oftentimes very beautiful, but fail utterly to express our innermost needs to God, and if we women are good enough to work for our church, then I stoutly maintain we are good enough in God's sight to offer Him, if we feel so led by Him to do so, an extempore prayer right from the heart at our women's meetings. To many of us it is a scandal that any man calling himself a priest of God should dare to say that women must not pray extempore at their missionary meetings. We have to use our prayers in church from our Prayer Books, and rightly so, and we

all love our Prayer Books, but we love to go to our Heavenly Father with our own petitions as well, and how frequently many of us have to offer up a silent prayer in *God's House* that we may be patient and fortified to sit through the service, mumbled and rushed through as so very frequently is done. Fortunate indeed are those who have the privilege of attending Divine worship where it is conducted reverently and spiritually, but alas, to many there is only one Anglican Church available.

A WESTERNER.

Sir,—For the past twenty-five years, and maybe more, women in Ontario Diocese have had the privilege of voting at the Easter Vestries. And since the formation of Ottawa out of Ontario Diocese, the same privilege has been enjoyed by them in the new diocese. I cannot say that the ladies greatly appreciate their position; their attendance at vestries is not large.

GEORGE BOUSFIELD.

656 Rideau St., Ottawa.

DRUMMING UP THE PULPIT.

Sir,—A travelling salesman is well qualified to judge of the "talking points" of the selling argument of those who want people to "buy the truth." He is trained in the business of convincing men, "closing" with men. Mr. J. J. Rooney's letter in the current number of the "Canadian Churchman" has weight.

No one who knows Mr. Rooney will accuse him of impeaching the Church. We know that he criticizes the pulpit only because he is a lover of the Church.

We may not all agree that the prairie provinces have "bad preachers." We may not all agree that poor preaching is the great obstacle to the better growth of the Church, but we do agree that better preaching is desirable.

Rather than encourage the congregations to be over conscious of the "bad preaching," let the travelling salesman lay his complaint before the Professors in the Theological Colleges, the Examining Chaplains, and the Bishops.

May I suggest to my friend, Mr. Rooney, that he drum up the pews. The pews have it in their power to make or unmake both preacher and sermon. Any earnest man can become a power in the pulpit, if the Doctors of Divinity give him a fair start—inspiration—vision, convictions, purpose. If he conserves spirituality and knows what his business is as a preacher, his ministry in the pulpit will be a growing power.

As one who vividly recalls his own pioneering as a prairie pastor in N.W. Canada, and the trials of the three-fold ministry in a scattered group of missions. I fain would ask Mr. Rooney to drum up the pews. The congregations in the prairie provinces might be a little more demonstrative in expressing appreciation of sermons that help. The congregations can come into closer sympathy with the varied interests of the hard working pastor, and instead of challenging him against large odds to "make good" in the pulpit, give him appreciative encouragement, being convinced that he earnestly desires to bring a message to their souls.

The pew can make or unmake the pulpit. The sermon is not entirely the product of the preacher, it is in a large measure the product of the congregation.

A. L. MURRAY.

Evansville, Indiana, U.S.A.

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