

more than 1800 years of labour." Well, what of that? Have the people *now* living not to be converted individually in each successive generation, and if a city had been once wholly converted would it stay converted for a thousand years without sowing tares? Again, "Not one church or congregation is known where you may count upon more than one-fourth as really consecrated." Well, what of that? What has that to do with the subject, unless it means that the churches are worse than they used to be at some past time? "In the United States there are 35,000,000 more souls to be converted than in 1800." What of that? If the population of the world has in eighty-five years increased, or changed its place of abode, does that show that the nation is worse, or the individuals of the nation worse? "There are, at least, 200,000,000 more souls to be saved than there were eighty-five years ago." Well, does that prove that "the Gospel is *not* the power of God to save," or that the Holy Ghost is insufficient for this work? It certainly shows that in these days the human race is increasing rapidly, and perhaps that may be owing largely to the beneficial influences of *Christian* civilization. Murders in the United States are on the increase, and more money is spent on strong drink nine hundred times than on missions. What of that? Does that prove that the temperance sentiment is not advancing, or that the churches are not improving in mission work? Christendom is bristling with bayonets and vice is "swiftly undermining the foundations of society." Well, even so! That proves that Christianity has not yet done her work. But surely it does not prove that "the Gospel of God's grace" *cannot* do it, and will not in God's good time accomplish all He has promised (Phil. ii. 9 to 11): "Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." To my mind this resume of the state of Church and world has no bearing whatever on what God's word tells us to expect in His own good time from the preaching of the Gospel for the disciplining of all nations and Christ's presence with His Church until the end of the age (Matt. xxviii. 18 to 20). I may be "blinded" while others see; but I am not ignorant or unintelligent as to what they teach.

But let any advocate of the theory meet the questions fairly, and show the increasing wickedness of Church and world by

1. Mentioning any year, century, or period between the day of Pentecost and A.D. 1885, in which there were as many converted men and women on earth, or in which the proportion of true Christians to the whole human race, was as great as to-day.

2. Mention any time and place in which the Church was blessed with as much intelligent piety and self-consecration, or contained as large a portion of true Christians, as it does to-day.

3. Tell us when in the history of the United States Christian morality was as high in its tone and as generally prevalent as to-day; and when the Christian people manifested more zeal and greater devotedness than to-day.

4. Specify the time when the world's thousand millions in every land had as many servants of Christ labouring among them as powerful agencies for their enlightenment and amelioration at work; or enjoyed as much of the blessing of the "Kingdom of God" among them.

5. Point to a period in the history of England or America when life and property were as safe, crime as surely detected and punished, general morality as high, as they are to-day. The shadows are darker, I admit, because the light is clearer and stronger; the valleys are deeper because the peaks are higher. But what previous time can compare with the present?

6. Point to a time when the peace-spirit has prevailed among the nations as it does to-day; when wars were as few in number or conducted in as good a spirit as now; when the masses and their rulers had as intelligent an aversion to war or tasted so much the blessings of peace and security.

I will not anticipate, but I frankly avow my conviction that at no past period was as large a portion of the human race blessed in Christ, the seed of Abraham; at no past period did the Church or world enjoy so full a measure of blessing as in this year of grace. Nor is my faith in God's promises, and in the power of the Gospel and of the spirit of grace lessened in view of the increasing enormity of sin in consequence of material and scientific progress, "evil men and

seducers must wax worse" as their power for evil increases, or in view of the manifold shortcomings of God's people. I am no pessimist; and I think the theory is alike untrue to facts, dishonouring to God, contradictory to His promises, and repugnant to a sound philosophy.

KNOXONIAN REMONSTRATED WITH.

MR. EDITOR, Your correspondent, "Knoxonian," states that he does not care what anybody says about his method of dealing with the subject of the Aged and Infirm Ministers Fund, and so we are tempted to let him know with what a burst of honest indignation it was read in the family of one aged minister, who, thank God, rested from his labours ere the mercenary spirit, which is now, it would seem, so prevalent, made such a style of writing possible, and we think that unless every sentiment of noble independence has died out in their hearts, which we cannot believe, such a communication would call forth a vehement protest from every minister, aye, and from every son and daughter of the manse, whose eye it met. It is surely time some attempt was made to check the growing tendency to represent the pastors of the Church in the light of begging friars.

When ministers' salaries were far smaller, and the difficulties to be contended with immeasurably greater than they are now, far less was heard of pecuniary matters. Our straits were, for the most part, told only to God. The bare idea of receiving other help than that of the full and punctual payment of the stipend promised was distasteful both to ministers and their families; the habits of industry, economy and filial affection, which were inculcated both by precept and example, were a far more valuable inheritance to the children of the manse than land or bank stock, and their fathers knew that if their strength was weakened in the way they had sturdy sons and dutiful daughters ready to come between them and the fear of want or dependence. Several important points are, we think, ignored in "Knoxonian's" appeal, and this is one of them. Are ministers' children to be the only ones who are not called upon to "show piety at home, and to requite their parents that so the Church be not charged." Thirty or forty years, at least, are usually over before a minister thinks of retiring from active service, and this gives ample time for a family to have grown up, and to be so situated as to be in a position to do so. Then again, "Knoxonian" forgets that the very small incomes which made it impossible for ministers to lay up any provision for age or infirmity are now happily almost things of the past. Are ministers to be made to appear so shiftless and improvident that, instead of being of "the prudent who foreseeth evil and hideth himself," they are to be classed among the "simple who pass on and are punished"? Those of them who are disposed to approve of "Knoxonian's" style of advocating their cause would do well to remember that the people are quick enough to see that the same principle of prudent foresight which induces them to lay up for a rainy day can very well be practised by ministers, whose incomes henceforth are not to be less than \$750 per annum. While we do not believe that many, if any, of our aged ministers are in the deplorable plight of being homeless, childless, penniless, as "Knoxonian" implies, we know well that their claim upon the sympathy of the Church is far stronger than that of their successors can possibly be, and it would be well for young ministers to realize this, and hasten to put the Fund upon the footing of a provident society, aided, if need be, by the free-will offerings of the people, but largely sustained by themselves. This, we venture to say, could be done, and as a practical suggestion is usually worth a good deal more than gratuitous advice, we proceed to make one, which may be taken for what it is worth. Our ministers are, we believe, as a class not slow to put in practice the grand principle of systematic Christian beneficence, which it is their duty to inculcate. They, as well as their people, "come into the courts of the Lord and bring an offering with them." Many "bring their tithes into His storehouse." Now why should not these offerings flow more generally, and in larger measure, into such channels as are intended to benefit afflicted brethren and their families? These are just the schemes which they feel the greatest delicacy in urging upon the people. If they would make them their peculiar charge the sums they thus consecrate would, in all probability, yield a much larger income to this fund than the present low rates afford, the wants of

the present annuitants would be fully met, and by the time the young men of the Church have grown old in its service, and are no longer able to bear the burden and heat of the day of toil, the fund would be on such a footing that they can draw from it an income, which they will have the satisfaction of knowing has been largely secured by their own honest efforts, and which, supplemented by the savings of prudent economy and the labours of dutiful children, will make their old age as respectable and comfortable as they could desire.

We trust for the sake of "Knoxonian's" self-respect that he is not a son of the manse, and had no venerated father or revered pastor in his mind's eye, when he penned the paper which has called forth this protest from

A MINISTER'S FAMILY.

ANOTHER MILD PROTEST.

MR. EDITOR,—I was glad to see in your paper two "mild protests" against the proposed Woman's Home Missionary Society. Allow me to make a third. I do this not from any want of sympathy with Home Missions—for I consider Home Missions equally a duty of the Church with Foreign Missions, if not more so,—but because there is a want of the fitness of things in this new movement, and because I doubt very much whether it has emanated from the women of the Church themselves, or whether it has not merely been pushed forward by some sharp business men, who see thereby a means of raising money, and I do object to the women of the Church being considered mere money collectors and money raisers, as seems to be the growing idea. Is any Scheme needing money? "Get the women at work," say our musculline friends, when they ought to be putting their own hands a little deeper into their pockets.

For the Foreign Mission work there is a special call on women. There is work to be done for our heathen sisters which none but women can possibly do; they are degraded, down-trodden, in many cases little better than slaves, and the call comes to us as women to stretch to them a helping hand, and if we do it not, they perish; but there is no such plea for a separate society for Home Missions. However much our sisters in the back districts of our own country may need Gospel privileges, they are at no more disadvantage than their husbands or brothers, and can be equally reached. I cannot, therefore, see what call of duty there is for women separately to organize for this work. Why, we might as well have separate organizations for every Scheme of the Church—for the Widows and Orphans, for Aged and Infirm Ministers, for Colleges and even for an Assembly Fund, and then perhaps we might have a separate Church! May we be preserved from such a state of things. AGATHA.

February 1, 1886.

THE LADIES AND HOME MISSIONS.

MR. EDITOR,—The members of the Woman's Foreign Mission Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada ought to sympathize heartily with our Home Mission Committee in their manifest desire to awaken fresh and growing interest throughout the Church in her Home Mission work. Their attitude as a foreign missionary society binds them to this, and I believe the records of all the missionary associations of our Church, formed years ago by order of the General Assembly, will show that they do thus sympathize, gladly working as office-bearers, or collectors, or, at least, as contributors to the funds of these associations.

True, we have not in this way done what we could. We are open to appeal for more zeal, more prayerfulness, more self-denial, more liberality.

I cannot, however, believe that any considerable number of our members can have any sympathy with the scheme proposed by the Cravener of the Home Mission Committee, and published in the February number of the *Record*. The end they heartily approve of; the proposed means, they will, I think, regard as a mistake. Except in the case of large city churches, the existence and prosperous working of the two organizations side by side would seem utterly out of the question.

In ordinary cases it must be, we think, the one or the other. If this be so, then in view of the position already taken, and the work done in the Church by the Woman's Foreign Mission Society, the scheme proposed is one which involves grave responsibility. *Manse, Harrington, Jan. 30, 1886.* M. R. G.