

## Our Letter Box.

We have been asked to touch upon some matters in our "Question Drawer," which are evidently of a personal character. It would be quite improper to do this. If the question even should be printed, those in the locality who know the circumstances would immediately say, "That is intended to hit so-and-so." It would never do to allow the "Question Drawer" to degenerate into personal controversy of this kind.

A pastor in New Brunswick writes: "We have a fine League here, which has really made our church the young people's church of the town." This is as it ought to be. A young people's society is not worth its salt, if it does not attract young people to the services of the church.

A correspondent asks if the contributions to the regular Church funds have decreased since the Forward Missionary Movement commenced. The answer is a decided negative. Where this movement has been most vigorously pressed the regular missionary fund shows the largest increase.

We are glad to receive a postal-card from Rev. G. T. Watts, an old Toronto Epworth League worker, who is now attending Drew Theological Seminary. Mr. Watts says that there are several Canadians there, and he places his copy of the Canadian Epworth Era upon the reading-room table for their edification, while he "reads every line of it" himself.

"Our pastor is holding special services, and consequently the League has not met for five weeks." This sentence is from one of our letters during the past month. Just think of it! An organization whose professed object is to "save souls," and yet the members never come together once during a revival campaign of five weeks. What can the officers be thinking about?

"Contrary to my own desires, I have been elected president of our League, and I feel very keenly the need of some helpful literature on the work. Enclosed find one dollar, for which please send me The Epworth Era, and any pamphlets and leaflets which you think will prove suggestive." This is an extract from a letter sent by a young man a few days ago. He takes a very direct and satisfactory method of obtaining information, which new presidents everywhere would do well to copy.

One of our ministers tells how he has solved the difficulty of holding two meetings during the week, in a country place. A chiding prayer-meeting with a weekly attendance of about a dozen, has been united with a League service, which succeeded in interesting about twice that number. The League constitution has been retained and followed, with several of the older people taking an active part. A chiding meeting, with its result has been a great increase of interest and attendance. Sometimes there are as many as a hundred present.

A discriminating observer, in a private letter expresses the conviction that our conventions suffer from two defects: First, too many themes. Programme committee

seem to think that the whole ground must be covered, every time, which is a mistake. Second, colorless papers and addresses, i.e., harmless, safe and sound, but with no direct stimulus or provocation to thought or activity. Our friend's criticism certainly applies to some of the conventions, but not to all. By all means, let us have more of the papers and speeches that "provoke to thought or activity."

Mr. A. T. Panabaker, of Hespeler, sends the following note: "Professor Torrington has held the nail firmly, in speaking of the manner in which our Epworth Leagues and Sunday-schools ignore our regular church hymns in their services. I rarely miss an opportunity, when called upon to take charge of either service, to introduce at least one such hymn, and have noticed with what heartiness and pleasure the young people enter into the singing of same. A little attention to this matter might work wonders in the singing by both our juvenile and adult congregations."

A good friend of the Epworth League makes the following suggestion: "Suppose we urge on our Leagues some such plan as this: First and third meetings per month to be at present taken up with miscellaneous topics, one of them with consecration service. The second and fourth evenings to be devoted to a general literary programme and a continu-

We quote this because it undoubtedly indicates the feeling of many good people concerning the League. They are continually urging the members to "Develop the spiritual part of the work," which usually means neglect of the social part which they do not consider "spiritual." What right has any one to say that one department of our society is spiritual, and the others are not? What narrow and crooked ideas people do get into their brains when they attempt to make distinctions between the sacred and the secular? We insist that every part of our League work is, or ought to be, spiritual. The literary and social evenings, rightly conducted, certainly contribute to the development of Christian character, and, therefore, have an important place in a society with aims like the Epworth League. The celebrated violinist, Reményi, used to get considerable music out of one string, but most players find it necessary to use several in order to produce satisfactory results. It is possible to run a League with one department, but it is very much better to have four, which, working together, produce harmony and variety.

A pastor asks if we can give a clear-cut definition of what constitutes an honorary member of the League. He goes on to say: "We have in our society some men and women, five or sixty years of age, who attend the meetings as regularly as the others, and lead the service in their turn. There are those who say that they cannot be active members because they are not young." We do not know anything of the local circumstances in this case, but are inclined to believe that these people are not by any means disqualified from active membership. The fact that they are interested sufficiently in the League to attend its services regularly, is an indication that they are decidedly young. People who keep young in heart and sympathy are a decided acquisition to the active membership of a League, no matter how many years have rolled over their heads. The honorary membership is the place for elderly people, who do not feel like taking the pledge, and cannot see their way clear to attend the services regularly, but are anxious to help in any way they can.

One of our ministers makes the following valuable suggestion: "Wouldn't it be a good idea to get our young people to gather from the old settlers the history of our churches from their establishment? Many of the pioneers are passing away. Unless a work be done soon, it can never be done. We shall have the historians of the future written from material which has been gathering "second-hand" unless we get the old people now living to give us an account of the early days of our churches. Who could do this better than leaguers? We could do it better than anyone else. We could collect the accounts (as we have collected) an "Old People's Night" at every League, and the histories of our various churches thus gathered could be deposited in Victoria University for future references. This is a most important work, and would give leaguers something definite to do, and might bring old people into sympathy with our work. What do you think of it? If I were wealthy, I would offer a prize for the best history of a local church, collected from pioneers, and written by an Epworthian."

The League at Kirkton has adopted the "Watch-Tower" method of the W. M. S. in their missionary meetings. The Missionary Committee gathers the latest news of the home and foreign fields and reports at the missionary meetings. The sum of \$35 was raised last year for the Forward Movement, and it is expected that this will be increased this year.

## COMING CONFERENCE CONVENTIONS.

MONTREAL CONFERENCE  
at Cornwall - - - Jan. 28-29

BAY OF QUINTE CONFERENCE,  
at Deseronto - - Feb. 18-20

LONDON CONFERENCE, at  
London - - - Mar. 11-12

ous study of some biblical book or period. The fifth week, which comes once a quarter, to be given to missions. Such a plan would be varied and comprehensive. This occasional social night might displace any of these except missions." What do our workers think of the proposal?

The president of one of our Leagues asks the privilege of "unburdening his heart" in reference to the work in his locality. As others may be in somewhat similar circumstances, we publish an extract from his letter. He says, "We organized our League in the four departments, and for a few months we sailed on a smooth sea. We have often had as many as eighty present at our meetings, but now we are on the down grade, and no one seems to care whether we have a League or not." Our friend then goes on to give what he believes to be the reason for the decline of interest: "Our pastor, who is a good man, does not seem to understand the object of League work. His watchword is 'Develop the spiritual part.' We have two services on Sunday, besides class-meeting, and an after service at the close of evening preaching, besides a prayer-meeting on Tuesday evening, and yet our pastor insists that the League meeting on Thursday evening shall be of the same character as the other services. He says, 'Drop the social and literary part, how can I piece of cake or a cup of coffee bring men to Christ?'"