

REPORT

Of the Committee of The Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, appointed to report on the best means to be adopted for raising contributions towards the Stipends of the Clergy in the various Parishes and Missions of this Diocese. Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Society, held on the 3rd of April, and ordered to be printed.

1. Until the members of the Church at large are induced, from a principle of faith in God's promises, and love to His holy cause, to look upon it as a privilege to be permitted to honour the Lord, with their substance, and with the first fruits of all their increase, the manifold evils of the voluntary system, in its ordinary development, must surely be acknowledged by every reflecting member of our communion.
2. The Church in this Diocese being, to a certain extent, under this system, must, to a similar extent, be exposed to these evils,—evils which will ultimately be more fully developed unless guarded against by timely precaution.
3. In addition to that unholy and palpable tendency of the voluntary principle to tempt the pastor to deal unfaithfully by his flock, it is a system which, from the peculiar organization of the Church, appears calculated to exert a more injurious influence over her than over religious communities of merely human origin.
4. While unity is an essential feature of the Church at large, unity of feeling and of action is absolutely necessary to the progress and prosperity of every Diocese within her pale; but the principle under consideration has a direct tendency to injure, if it cannot destroy that unity, because every Clergyman who is absolutely and directly dependent upon his flock for maintenance, and who can by any means make himself popular among them may—if he be so inclined—be tempted to exhibit in his own flock a defiance of Episcopal authority which must even be regarded the great element of Diocesan unity.
5. The unmitigated Gospel has ever excited the opposition of the human heart, and, consequently, he who determines to speak fully and faithfully concerning "Christ and the Church," will frequently, in spite of all the discretion he can use, have to encounter much opposition; and should it be, that he is either partially or wholly dependent for his maintenance upon the voluntary system, he may be reduced to straits, and perhaps to poverty, because, though diligent and conscientious, his faithfulness may destroy his popularity.
6. The Clergy are men of like feelings with others, and it is often difficult even for duty to silence the dictates of delicacy. This, however, must to a considerable extent be done by every Clergyman who would teach his flock the scriptural doctrine, that the labourer in spiritual things is worthy of his hire, for the bulk of his congregation will generally regard him, when addressing to them such admonitions as more anxious for the augmentation of his means than for the welfare of his flock. It may be said that the Clergy are bound to teach the whole truth, whether it bring upon them good report or evil report, and that this misapprehension or misrepresentation is a part of that cross, which, as the messengers of their Master, they are called to bear. But, though this may be true, it is to be feared that it is a truth which is not acted upon, for there is reason to think that the duty alluded to, is neither taught by the Clergy nor practised by the laity as it ought to be, to the great loss and detriment of both parties.
7. Seriously impressed with the gravity of these disadvantages, your Committee would respectfully suggest that contributions from the various parishes and missions in this Diocese, to the general mission fund of the Church Society, seems to them a plan, the apparent tendency of which would be to remedy these evils. That it appears to have been a principle acted upon in the primitive Church, in which, up to the fifth century, the whole contributions of the people, destined to the maintenance of the Clergy, were paid into a common fund.
8. It is a system which, if it could be adopted, would manifestly tend to promote unity in the Church, and to combine the advantages of greater actual in-