

## Our Contributors.

### INEFFICIENCY THAT IS NOT MINISTRIAL.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Two blacks do not make a white. We make this strikingly fresh and original remark here because if we don't somebody else will make it several times before reading this paper through. To show that some ministers are not the only inefficient men in the Church will not help the ministers. That is a fact, a solid, undeniable, self-evident fact. We might indeed go farther and assert that the inefficiency of many other men is an additional reason why ministers should try all the harder to be conspicuously efficient. And still it is hardly fair to speak about ministers as if they were the only class in which inefficient men are found. Quite likely there are six inefficient elders in the Free Church of Scotland for every inefficient minister, but we do not learn that any steps are being taken to crowd them out of their places. There may be twenty inefficient elders and fifty inefficient managers in that Church for every conspicuously inefficient minister, but we do not hear that anybody is putting a little ecclesiastical dynamite under them to make them go. The number of precentors in that Church who sing in the most excruciating style is probably much larger than the number of ministers who preach badly, but nobody speaks of taking ecclesiastical steps to make precentors stop singing through the nose. Probably a movement in that direction would be no use.

Now let us look at this matter squarely in the face. Let it be assumed that in our own Church there are ministers who, either from lack of will or lack of ability, or from lack of both, do not do their work well. As a matter of fact the difference between ministers who are called efficient and many who are flippantly and often cruelly called inefficient is a difference in their opportunities. Unthinking, uncharitable people often condemn a minister who labours in a shrinking population among a lot of penurious, Gospel-hardened cranks because he does not accomplish as much as a neighbour who labours in a growing population among a generous, energetic, warm-hearted Christian people. In many cases of apparent success and failure the difference is more in the opportunities than in the men. But there is little use in enlarging on this point. Some people haven't a mind big enough to consider anybody's opportunities and surroundings.

Let it be assumed that there are ministers who from some cause or from a combination of causes are no good. All we want to insist on here and now is that people should not pile on them as if they were the only men in the Church who are no good. And that is exactly what a large number of people do. The men who are the most useless themselves generally shout the loudest when an effort is being made to show that a minister is useless. Men whose inefficiency or crankiness or example may have done much to hinder the growth of a congregation are nearly always among the first to blame the minister because the congregation does not grow.

There are about 5,000 elders in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Taken as a whole, they are the best body of Christian laymen in Canada. In the matter of intelligence, Christian character, loyalty to the truth and zeal for the Master's cause they have no equals that we know of in this country. But is it not a well-known fact that an unfortunately large proportion of the 5,000 are just as inefficient as it is possible for the most useless minister to be? How many Sessions divide their congregations into districts, visit these districts, keep an eye on the families, look out for strangers, visit the sick, attend to the raising of money for the Schemes of the Church, and discharge regularly and systematically those duties that lie at the very basis of congregational prosperity. Many do all this, but is it not a notorious fact that too many elders do little besides help to serve the tables when the sacrament of the Supper is dispensed? If there are inefficient ministers there are inefficient elders too. Then don't pounce on weak ministers, as if they were the only men who fail in duty.

There are about 8,000 deacons, managers and trustees in this Church. Some of them do the business of their congregations in first-class business style. They keep a sharp look out on the revenue and ex-

penditure all the year round, know weekly or monthly how the balance stands, meet regularly, talk matters over, try new plans and use their brains and business experience for the good of their congregation. Congregations whose business is managed in that way seldom have any financial trouble. But is it not notorious that the business of many congregations is not managed at all? The thing just runs, and often runs into the ground. One of the strongest evidences of the divine origin and perpetuity of the Church is that so many congregations live through the financial mismanagement with which they are afflicted. We respectfully suggest this argument to Professor Gregg or any other professor who can make any use of it. If there are inefficient ministers most assuredly there are inefficient managers. Then don't pile on poor, inefficient ministers, and blame them for every evil that comes upon the Church. Better financial management would have saved many a congregation from financial trouble and many a minister from alleged inefficiency.

What should be said about inefficient leadership in the service of song? Is there anybody in Canada who does not know that the exercise we call singing in many churches often drives people of taste out of the Church? Is there anybody who does not know that the poor singing is often more powerful to drive people of taste out than the most efficient pastor can be to keep them in? Granted that of late there has been considerable improvement, will any one who worships in a large number of Presbyterian Churches during the year say that the service of song in a majority of them is anything like what it should or might be? Cases are constantly occurring in which people leave or refuse to join Churches because the singing is excruciatingly bad, and in many of these cases the blame is laid on the minister. Yes, and sometimes laid on the minister by the very people who resist any improvement in the singing. Now, dear reader, don't you think that there are a few other people in the Church as inefficient as any of the ministers?

Moral: Don't charge every ill that affects the Church to the inefficiency of the ministry.

### PRESBYTERY ACCORDING TO THE REVISED BOOK.

(Concluded.)

The definition proposed in the book under revision excludes from membership in Presbytery ordained ministers, no matter how respectable their standing, varied their gifts, or large their experience, who may be without charge. They may have withdrawn from some particular charge influenced by the most unselfish motives, earnestly desiring to promote the glory of God. They may have wished to forestall or prevent some disruptive or disturbing scheme of ill-affected members; or to permit a union of separate elements to increase the strength of the Church; or as Christ instructed His disciples, as a testimony to those who would not receive nor hear His words. His Presbytery approve of his conduct; they praise his self-sacrifice, yet is he at once excluded from his seat as a member of Presbytery, deprived of the exercise of his inalienable functions as a Presbyter and relegated to the cold realms of a petty criticism, and of undeserved neglect. Surely this kind of procedure puts a premium on the miserable but too-often-practised habit of holding on to the last moment, however unloving, inharmonious and contentious an element of the charge may be, even while it wastes away in unseemly and prolonged wrangling.

But, further, this strange definition of the constituent elements of the Presbytery excludes as many classes of ministers as it includes. If it includes only ordained ministers who are pastors of congregations, it leaves out all ordained ministers who are not in pastoral charges. While under exception (b) it allows ordained ministers who are professors in colleges connected with the Church, it excludes those who may be principals, superintendents or instructors in institutions not connected with the Church. While exception (c) includes all ordained ministers who are employed in Church work by the appointment of the General Assembly, it excludes all those engaged in like work for the Synods, Presbyteries or colleges, but not appointed by the Assembly. While exception (d) includes all ordained ministers who are by enactment of the General Assembly placed on the roll, it excludes all ordained ministers without charge whose names are not so honoured by the General Assembly.

Thus the enactment, or the arbitrary choice, of the General Assembly, without any constitutional rule or law to guide their decisions, settles for these the right of membership in Presbytery. Even the Presbytery itself, which is an independent body, has not power of deciding in this case the qualifications of its own members. If the Church were an oligarchy this mode of making and unmaking members of Presbytery, and of handling men's rights might pass; but people accustomed to constitutional government and the free exercise of their personal and inalienable rights are not willing to be so used.

Then exception (e) includes those ordained ministers who having been long employed on mission fields, are recommended by the Home Mission Committee, and excludes all those on the same mission fields who are not recommended by this committee. Thus membership in these cases is a kind of promotion or reward for a service. The committee which certifies or approves is not a court of the Church, but itself a branch or arm of the Church's service, without ecclesiastical powersave in its own assigned sphere. Now, we believe that the Presbytery has the power and right to judge of the qualifications of its own members, and hence a committee which it has not appointed has no right to decide for it. But we believe, as already intimated, that the constitutional qualifications for the exercise of Presbyterial functions is the orderly setting apart of a man to the work of the ministry by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Surely every ordained minister who is working on a mission field is entitled to membership in Presbytery as fully as the pastor of a missionary or a supplemented Church, or indeed of any Church. Such minister surely does not need the recommendation of any committee to entitle him to his seat in Presbytery. It is his right and privilege; and a wrong is done him when, by any rule, he is refused his place. We believe much of the deadness and lack of evangelical life in Presbyteries would flee away if home missionaries would relate more of the scenes of their arduous work within the hearing of their Presbyterial brethren; the missionary would return to his field all aglow with the plentiful outflow of brotherly love bestowed on him. PARITY.

### THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY.

MR. EDITOR.—In your issue of January 11, 1888, which reached me about ten days later, I found certain notes from "an esteemed correspondent in California," which I am compelled to say are written in a frame of mind far from charitable or kind to allow charity its work. I am inclined thereby to believe the article referred to was penned while the writer was labouring under a fit of the blues, or controlled by some untoward influence which moulded his ideas; but as he appeals to the cause of "common honesty and candour" as his impelling principle, I also accept the same impulse, and thank him for the phrase.

I will not waste my time, or test the patience of your readers by criticising the whole subject-matter, but cannot quietly pass by the uncalled-for and unseemly remarks about the funeral of our late governor. I would ask, By what other mode can a people show their respect for the memory of a departed official, be he governor, president, king or emperor, than by a proper mourning display?

So far as known, there was nothing unseemly or offensive to any right-thinking man in the obsequies. All the ceremonies of the day were fitting, and showed to the world how truly our people felt their loss, and thus truly mourned for a good man gone from earth. He was the people's choice; they knew and recognized his worth, for he was an honest, upright man. Now was there any undue laudation, so far as I know, either of the deceased or of our state or city. The two last do exist and can vouch for themselves; neither need an apology from me for being what they are. I have been a resident of California, and in this city for over a quarter of a century (although a Scotch Canadian) and I always try to speak well of the country in which I live, and no man of true heart of proper feelings would do otherwise. I might, for the benefit of your correspondent, quote an old but true and very significant Scottish proverb, were I sure he could fully appreciate it.

Then, not satisfied to let the dead rest in all the brief glory accorded them, the living ex-governor has to run the gauntlet. A gift of a noble, generous heart is belittled. It is made to appear as if Senator Stanford had made misrepresentations as to the value