

Our Contributors.

TOO MANY COLLEGES.

BY KNOXIAN.

Who can consistently raise or keep up this cry? Not one man who helped to form the Union of 1875. Not one man who was a member of the London Assembly and helped to found a sixth college two years ago. Strike out the names of those who without a word of complaint brought five colleges into the united Church ten years ago and the names of those who established a sixth college only two years ago, and the number of men who can, with any respectable degree of consistency, cry: "Too many colleges," becomes rather small. The number is a good deal smaller than the cry.

In 1871 a union wave struck the Presbyterianism of this Dominion. It was a good wave and, gathering force as it rolled, it soon carried everything before it. There was union in the air. The sentiment that prevailed was union sentiment. Nearly every minister in the Church got on that wave. A good many of them took good care that both the Church and the world knew they were up there. If a man stood in front of that wave he was in danger of being drowned ecclesiastically. Whatever views he might hold about *bapto* and *baptizo* he was sure to be immersed. That wave brought in five colleges. Did the brethren who were cheering and singing "Hest be the tie that binds" in that wave know they were bringing so many colleges into the united Church? Certainly they did. Did they stop for a little in the midst of the union negotiations and say to the Church and to each other: "Now we are going to have too many colleges in this united Church, let us consolidate them and then tate?" Not they. A few men, notably Dr. Reid, held that view but there was no use in pushing it. The wave was overwhelming. The union party carried everything before it. They said these things could be more easily settled after marriage. Most people who have some experience in marrying know that delicate questions are more easily settled before marriage. Now it is scarcely the correct thing for men who not only deliberately but enthusiastically brought these colleges into the Union to keep crying out: "Too many colleges," "Too many colleges!" Why didn't you raise that cry ten years ago? Why didn't you support the few wise men who took that position in 1874? There was a union wave in 1874-75. There is a too-many-colleges wave now. A man should not straddle both. The union wave brought in the colleges.

Two years ago the General Assembly established a sixth college. The deed was done with delightful unanimity. Not one voice was raised against it—not one. Half-a-dozen members rose and eulogized the gentleman who was appointed principal, but not one member said anything in opposition to the establishment of the college. One gentleman ventured to hint in almost hated breath that such matters should be sent down to Presbyteries, but the Assembly went on and established a sixth college in less than sixty minutes. Were there too many colleges when the Church had five? Then why establish a sixth? The position of the man who sat in the Assembly two years ago and helped to establish a sixth college while he believed we had already too many is exactly like that of the Plymouth Brother who says there are too many sects and then proceeds to remedy the evil by establishing another, and that the narrowest, most bitter and most exclusive of all. There may, perhaps, be too many colleges, but a good many gentlemen who take that position should revise their right to take or hold it.

But supposing we say nothing about the past or the right of any one to cry. "Too many colleges," and look the question: "Why not consolidate?" squarely in the face. A flood of light may be thrown on the question by asking one or two others; and by the way the light that comes from the following sources was not thrown on the matter by any members of the late Assembly. "Why not consolidate the colleges?" asks some brother. Why not consolidate a large number of our mission stations? Everybody who knows anything about it knows that a considerable number of our mission stations might be united with advantage to the Church. In many groups four mission stations might be made three, three two and two one. Have we not a good many mission stations within a reason-

able distance of self-sustaining congregations? Why not consolidate? Simply because it cannot be done. The Presbytery cannot do it. The Home Mission Committee cannot do it. When our people get organization and supply on a certain spot they stick to the spot or die. Now if it is so difficult to unite two mission stations, it does seem the very climax of absurdity to talk about the ease with which two colleges might be consolidated.

But this is not all. Is it not notorious that we have two congregations within a few yards of each other in many localities where one would meet all the requirements of the Church? Why don't Presbyteries consolidate these congregations? It would be the easiest thing in the world to find Presbyteries moving in favour of college consolidation that have congregations within their own bounds that ought to be united. Why don't they begin consolidation at home? The reply no doubt would be that they know certain congregations ought to be united but they cannot unite them. Exactly. And yet the very men who confess they cannot unite two struggling village congregations see no difficulty in uniting two colleges! The number of congregations that have united as a result of the Unions of '61 and '75 might almost be counted on one's fingers. Some of these that did unite split again and some that remained together have had a good deal of friction. The fact is, uniting organized bodies is one of the most difficult things in the world, and uniting organized bodies of Presbyterians seems almost an impossibility. It is easy to speak about union but when you come to arrange details the difficulties suddenly become insuperable. Some of these colleges may be united some day, but not until a good many of us die. A man enjoying fair health and doing as his masters wish cannot reasonably be asked to die, simply that he may gratify the friends of consolidation. That would be too much of a sacrifice to make to please even as good a man as John Charlton, M.P.

It may be urged that the people want consolidation, just ask those among them who might easily unite with some other congregation or mission station to consolidate at home and see what they will say about it. Anyway the colleges only cost the people 18 cents per annum or less than one third of a cent per Sabbath. That is the burden they groan under. Just fancy a stalwart Presbyterian walking to Church on Sabbath morning and saying to himself: "These colleges must be consolidated. I can stand it no longer—they cost me one-third of a cent every Sabbath."

A DEFENCE OF PRESBYTERIANISM

BY REV. D. FYLESON, ST. ANDREWS, QUEBEC.

I have read with interest and pleasure, although not with entire agreement, the articles of the Rev. O. J. Booth of St. Catharines, in reply to those of the Rev. R. Wallace, on Presbyterianism, and as no rejoinder has yet appeared in your columns, and Mr. Booth's friendly challenges remain unanswered, I beg to offer a few observations, that the case may not appear to go by default.

THE FIRST CHALLENGE

is to answer the question: If the Presbyterian system is that of the Apostles, how came the whole Church suddenly to renounce it for Episcopacy without one protesting voice?

The answer to this is, that the change was not "sudden," but gradual and slow. Episcopacy is not found in the New Testament. It is scarcely discernable in the sub-Apostolic age, but later on it appears more distinctly, till in the third century it is in full blow. This is not a mere Presbyterian prejudice, nor a careless assertion. The same conclusion is deliberately come to, as is well known, by learned scholars of the Episcopal Church, who have deeply studied the subject. To quote only two out of many that might be given, Dr. Jacob, in his Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament, says that "the Episcopate in the modern acceptation of the term, and as a distinct clerical order, does not appear in the New Testament, but was gradually introduced and extended throughout the Church at a later period." Again, the most learned prelate on the English Bench, Dr. Lightfoot, Bishop of Durham, admits that at the close of the Apostolic age traces of the Episcopate are "few and indistinct." But a more complete reply to this question will be found in the answer to

THE SECOND CHALLENGE,

which is: "To point to a single Church, say in the first 1,500 years after Christ, that had any other government than the Episcopal—that is, the three-fold order of the ministry, Bishops, Priests (or Presbyters) and Deacons. It is quite easy to name several. The Church at Ephesus is one.

EPHESUS.

When Paul on his memorable last journey to Jerusalem came to Miletus, being unable to visit Ephesus, he sent for the Elders of the Church in that city, and gave them a most solemn charge. "Take heed," said he, "to yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (lit. bishops), to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch," etc. Here plainly the Presbyters, or Elders, are the rulers of the Church, and the whole responsibility is laid on them to guard the flock against both heresies and ungodliness, as being the overseers or bishops. There is no appearance of a diocesan Bishop; and this, we know, puzzled Irenaeus, in whose time such functionaries had become general.

PHILIPPI.

Two or three years after this the Apostle wrote his Epistle to the Philippian Church, which is addressed "to all the saints which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." Here likewise there are only the two "lower orders," and no hint of any hierarchical Bishop.

PONTUS, ETC.

Again, there was a multitude of churches "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia," who had Presbyters over them, but apparently no Bishop; for the Apostle Peter, writing to them, exhorts the Elders among them, but makes no reference to any superior office-bearers. This would be difficult to account for if such officers existed; for, as their responsibilities and dangers would be greater than those of the ordinary Presbyters, would they not require a special word of encouragement and advice? But no such word is given. We infer (we do not assume, but reasonably infer) that those Churches had no diocesan Bishops.

CORINTH.

We have another example in the next age of a Church without a Bishop, viz.: in the city of Corinth. Clement of Rome, writing in the name of his own Church, reproves the Corinthians for the contentions and jealousies that had arisen amongst them, and had resulted in their removing from office the Presbyters or the Church, who had honourably discharged their duties. He further exhorts them to be subject to the Presbyters and to submit to chastisement for their faults. Surely, if there had been a Bishop over them he would have been appealed to. Or, if wanting such an officer, their organization as a Church had been imperfect, we might have expected some reference to their need of that which would be regarded as a remedy for the disorders that prevailed. Such reference being absent, we infer the absence of a Bishop.

Perhaps it has not been proved that these Churches had no diocesan Bishop. It is proverbially difficult to prove a negative. But if the challenger can prove that they had, or if he can show that our inference is unwarrantable, we shall yield the point.

Our brethren of the Episcopal Church would probably say that all this is beside the point, because the Apostles themselves were the Bishops of the Churches. This explanation, obvious as it is to them, does not seem to have occurred to Irenaeus in the case of Ephesus, although he lived so much nearer the Apostle's time; and it would not, at any rate, apply to Corinth. When the Epistle of Clement was written these faithful servants of the Lord all rested from their labours. Even the Beloved Disciple had probably ceased to "tarry" in this world. It is, however, the contention of our friends that there was a continuance of the Apostles, or a succession, in the form of Bishops, and Mr. Booth maintains that as the Episcopal Church has three orders, viz.: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, so the New Testament Church had Apostles, Presbyters, and Deacons, and that the Bishops are the

SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES.

If so, the Apostles were Bishops of a very different