

Our Contributors.

DR. SHEPHERD AND HIS SICK PARISHIONER.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Dr. Shepherd went out one afternoon to make some pastoral visits. He had not gone far until he met one of his parishioners named Mr. Thoughtless. The appearance of Mr. Thoughtless seemed to indicate that he had been ill. His face was pale, his step feeble, and altogether he looked like a man who was taking his first little walk after a severe sickness.

Good afternoon, Mr. Thoughtless, said the Doctor, I am sorry to see that you are not looking well. Have you been ill?

Yes, replied Mr. Thoughtless, I have been very ill. This is the first time I have been out in three weeks, and during all that time you never called to see me.

I am very sorry, indeed, to hear that have been so poorly, and sorry also that I did not see you. I never heard of your illness. No one told me, and this is the first that I have heard of the matter. Did you send word to me that you were ill?

No, I did not send any word.

And why did you not send some one to tell me?

Oh, I thought you would have heard about it.

Of course you sent for the doctor, Mr. Thoughtless, as soon as you became ill.

Oh yes, we sent for him right away, and he came to see me every day for two weeks—some days he came twice.

He is your family physician, I suppose?

Yes, he has attended our family for many years. We never have any other when we can get him.

No doubt he has quite an interest in your family over and above the fees you pay him.

Yes, I am sure he has, Mrs. Thoughtless has great confidence in him and would never have any other physician. The children are very fond of him. We all like him, and we have every reason to believe he reciprocates. He has stood by us in many a trying hour. He is a skilful physician and good friend.

Now, Mr. Thoughtless, why did you not take for granted that such a good family doctor would hear of your illness and come to see you without being sent for, or even told of your sickness?

Well, I—I—I—I—thought it was the right thing to send for him.

But if you assume that your minister can know without being told, why not assume too that your doctor can know without being told?

Well, it didn't just strike me in that way.

Now, Mr. Thoughtless, I don't wish to worry you, for I see you are weak, but when you are strong enough, we will talk this matter over. There are a few more points I would like to discuss with you.

Oh, go on Doctor, I can talk it out now. I haven't talked much for some time and I'm rather glad to have a talk about something besides sickness and those horrible medicines I have been taking.

Well, let me ask, did you send for your legal adviser during your illness?

Yes, I thought it might be as well to arrange my affairs. A man doesn't die any the sooner for having his business in proper shape, you know.

Mr. Lex, your legal adviser, is an old friend of yours, I suppose?

Well I should say he was. He has been my lawyer during the whole of my business life. He won some big suits for me some years ago. Splendid lawyer, Mr. Lex. What he does not know about law is not worth knowing. There are not many lawyers in this country that can get the start of Mr. Lex.

He's a firm friend of yours, I suppose?

Indeed he is. I don't think he would care to bring an action of any kind against me. I pay him big fees, and he attends to my affairs without special injunctions.

Now, Mr. Thoughtless, why did you not take for granted that Mr. Lex, this good lawyer of yours, would know that you were ill without being told? He is your legal adviser, your tried friend; he has charge of your affairs and advises you on business matters. Naturally enough, he would think that you need him more when you cannot attend to anything than when you are well. Why did you not assume that he would know you were ill, without being told? You told your lawyer. Why did you not tell your pastor too?

"Well," all that I can say is, it did not strike me in that way.

I suppose that you had some beef tea, Mr. Thoughtless, when you were ill?

Yes, I took beef tea until I was tired of it.

Did your meat man know you were ill, without being told, and send the supplies without being asked.

Of course not—we sent and told him.

Excuse me, Mr. Thoughtless, did the doctor give you anything stimulating when he began tonic treatment.

Oh yes, he ordered me to take some brandy and milk—stimulant and nourishment combined, you know.

You took it, I suppose?

You're right, I took it. I was so weak that I was glad to take anything.

Now, Mr. Thoughtless, did your druggist know you were ill, without being told, and send the brandy without being asked?

Of course he didn't—we told him and gave the order.

Your friends visited you during your illness. Did you send word to any of them?

Yes, we wrote and telegraphed and telephoned and told them every way.

Now, candidly, Mr. Thoughtless, was not your minister the only man that you thought would know without being told?

Well, Doctor, I thought you would miss me out of church.

But, my dear Mr. Thoughtless, don't you think a minister goes to church to worship God as well as any other man? Is he worshipping when taking a census of the absentees?

Well, Doctor, I confess—

No, my dear sir, I want no confession. I am not a priest. All I ask is, that you treat your pastor as fairly as you do your doctor, your lawyer, your meat man, your druggist, and your friends that you expect to visit you. Did I not visit you faithfully when you had trouble in your house once before?

Yes, you did, Doctor.

Well, now my friend, I wish you to let me know in future when there is sickness or trouble of any kind in the family. Will you do it?

Yes I will, Doctor, and I'll go right home now and explain all to my family. The women are a little riled, you know, but I can put them all right.

Very well. Good afternoon, Mr. Thoughtless.

Good afternoon, Doctor.

THE PRESBYTERY ACCORDING TO THE REVISION.

The following is the definition submitted to us in the Revised Book:

The Presbytery consists of—

(1) Ordained ministers within the bounds (a) who are pastors of congregations; (b), who are professors of theology in the Church, or professors in colleges connected with the Church; (c), who are employed by appointment of the General Assembly in some department of the work of the Church; (d), who by special enactment of the Assembly have their names placed on the roll; (e), who are engaged in the mission fields for a lengthened term with the sanction of the Assembly's Home Mission Committee.

(2) An elder from each pastoral charge.

We wish to observe in regard to this definition in the first place that it is vague and indefinite. It does not assign any precise limits—local, geographic or otherwise—to the Presbytery. Its terms are: "The Presbytery consists of ordained ministers within the bounds, who are pastors," etc. What bounds are meant? Those of the Dominion of Canada? or of British America? or of the Province of Ontario, or of Quebec? Or is it some other kind of bounds, e.g., the bounds of reason, or prudence, or convenience? Whatever kind of bounds is meant it should certainly be indicated in the form of the definition. If it is local, or geographic, as we presume it must be, such a phrase as this should be inserted, "of a given district"; then, this part of the definition would read, "ministers within the bounds of a given district."

Again the expression "ordained ministers," as here used is both vague and redundant. We may ask, who are meant? All ordained ministers within the bounds? Then, regularly ordained ministers of the Church of England, of the Methodist, Baptist, or Congregational Churches, being within the bounds, belong to the Presbytery. But if it does not mean all, only some of the ordained ministers within the bounds, the definition is defective, since it arbitrarily

omits some of the constituent elements of the body whose organization it professes to define; for those rightfully composing that body have a common characteristic, i.e., ordination, and an ecclesiastical parity already affirmed or determined. Hence in leaving out some of the constituent elements, i.e., of those having the common attribute of all, is as faulty as including others who do not profess it.

But why does the definition say, "ordained ministers, who are pastors"? Are not all pastors ordained ministers? Why not then reject the redundant words "ordained ministers," and define the Presbytery as consisting of all the pastors within the bounds, etc. The reason they are retained is no doubt to qualify the series of special classes which follow, and to assure us that they are all ordained ministers, a fact not necessarily implied in their respective vocations. Thus, the positions of Professor of Classics, Hebrew, Mathematics, Physics, or Moral Philosophy in a college or of the head of a department, or of an agency in the Church, do not necessarily involve the idea of ordination. Hence, in these cases, as the general attribute of the classes is not implied, it becomes necessary to affirm it. This whole cumbrous series of special classes should be wiped out of the definition, and those included in them be allowed to fall in with the other ministers of the Church into their place in the Presbytery; while all ministers of character and capability take their part in the business and work of the Presbytery. Any supposed or real evils with which the definition in its present form would deal could be better met and adjusted by fair and equitable legislation when cases arise, which must, in this country, be very seldom. But to incorporate in the constitution of the Church a definition of the court from which she derives her name, which arbitrarily deprives many ministers of their constitutional rights and privileges, has not the fairness of our time-honoured Presbyterianism. It is converting the constitution of the Church into a silent, but fatal executioner of rights, for which it offers us no redress, nor way of escape to the aggrieved. We should have a definition, which will include and secure the rights of all ministers and elders of individual congregations and the whole Church. It should be in harmony with the older, larger and more experienced branches of the Presbyterian Church—should be in accord with those English-speaking Presbyterians throughout the world. The following definitions of well-known historic Churches I cite and adduce to help us to see and judge what our definition ought to be:

First, from the "Form of Presbyterial Church Government," adopted by the Westminster Assembly and approved by the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland in 1665. This document takes, as will be seen, a broader view of the matter and gives a larger liberty as to the membership of Presbytery than many are now willing to allow. It affirms, "A Presbytery consisteth of ministers of the Word, and such other public officers as are agreeable to and warranted by the Word of God to be Church governors to join with the ministers in the government of the Church." The Book of Forms of the "Canada Presbyterian Church," first issued in 1865, gives this definition, "A Presbytery consists of the ministers of the several congregations within the bounds fixed by the Supreme Court, together with an elder from each ministerial charge."

In the Book of the Constitution and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, now in use in that Church, the Presbytery is briefly defined. "The Presbytery consists of the ministers of a defined district, with a ruling elder from each congregation."

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, commonly known as the Northern Presbyterian Church, which includes a larger number of ministers, elders and churches than any other in the world, in its Form of Church Government, gives us this definition, "A Presbytery consists of all the ministers and one ruling elder from each congregation, within a certain district, in number not less than five."

The most simple and comprehensive, perhaps, of all, is that of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, commonly called the Southern Presbyterian Church. In its "Book of Church Order," adopted in 1879, in the section on Presbytery it gives us this definition. "The Presbytery consists of all the ministers and one ruling elder from each church, within a certain district."

If we compare these brief, perspicuous and simple