An efficient church

Doney Carl G
An Efficient Church

By

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With an Introduction by

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TO MY WIFE

“Even this poor gift I cannot give;
I bring but what belongs to thee.”

“Many daughters have done virtuously,
But thou excellest them all.”
INTRODUCTION

BY EARL CRANSTON

Some books are born so dead that neither untimely nor unkind is the sepulture that lays them away from sight under the dust of the vaulted storeroom. Of others it may be said that the making of the book was the unmaking of the author—because of some glaring fault of style, some unwarranted assumption of learning or piety, or unpardonable offense against decency or truth. Better the dust of the vault for "literary remains" than the epitaph awarded the author who brazenly or ignorantly presumes upon either the stupidity or moral obliquity of his public. His sin is mortal and the penalty swift and sure.

But the serious public is not unreasonable in its demands if dealt with in sincerity. It will overlook faults in construction and even condone occasional lapses in thought and judgment, if satisfied "by signs infallible" that the author is fairly entitled to his convictions and moved by high purpose in expressing them. Honest, earnest souls quickly know each other, and hindrances must be greater than those offered by infelicitous words or defective sentences to bar them from sympathetic communion. Truth is royal, crowned or uncrowned, in purple or in tattered robes.

But there is no disputing the fact that she has a warmer welcome when at least well clad, and the
reader of the following chapters is assured beforehand that when he is done with the book he will have no stock of second-hand commonplaces or misfit phrases to dispose of. In these days when many books, written for reasons primarily commercial, political, or artistic simply, dare to deal wantonly with matters serious and sacred; when self-constituted critics, and advisers absolutely untrained and uninformed, are assuming to instruct the Christian ministry and to solve off-hand the gravest problems of church life; and when even many church writers are wasting their efforts in books dogmatical, prelatical, piratical or fanatical, it is positively reassuring to find a busy pastor so alert to the question of his own usefulness, and so moved by the tremendous interests involved in the success of the gospel ministry, that neither the burdens of a great church nor the many-sidedness of the complex theme itself could deter him from such a study as that presented in the following chapters by Dr. Doney. After years of patient and painstaking inquiry seeking information at first hand as well as from other students, he gives us the fruit of his labor in this altogether creditable volume. To the attentive reader it will quickly appear that the author works with a trained mind, a fearless spirit, and by an exacting method. What is even better, there is manifest throughout the work the exalted aim that inspired it. It has been a pleasure to the writer of this brief introduction to read the pages in manuscript and to find everywhere evident the author’s "one purpose to increase the every-day efficiency of the minister."

The difficulties of a subject so involved make it im-
possible for any one mind to compass them to the satisfaction of all, but I believe that the most exacting critic will concede that in his study of the religious congregation the author lacks neither poise nor discernment, and that it would be impossible for so clear a thinker, actuated by a purpose so reverent, to produce a dull or profitless book. May it prove to many conscientious workers a manual of permanent value.