

new name of the Norfolk House. The hotel is situated close by the railway station. The rooms are clean and well furnished. The attention given to the dining room leaves nothing to be desired on the part of guests. The proprietor, Mr. Murray, who is well and favourably known in the community, gives his personal attention to the business. K.

September 1883.

### LONG VACANCIES.

MR. EDITOR,—Several communications have of late appeared in your columns in reference to a much needed reform in our Church. The evil complained of is the loss caused the Church by long vacancies; the remedy proposed is that Presbyteries be empowered to place a minister in congregations which fail to call within a specified time. With the principle involved in this scheme I do not intend specially to deal. If it should fail it would not do so because it is unrighteous so much as because it is impracticable in the present condition of ecclesiastical affairs.

It might be well, however, to ask if Presbytery in virtue of its constitution does not already possess the power referred to. It claims the right to remove a minister against his will, and to refuse to remove him when he desires removal; and there is surely a glaring inconsistency in our Church polity if Presbytery has this power over its clergy and does not possess similar power over its congregations. It is neither consistent nor just for a Church court to remove a pastor when in its judgment he stands in the way of Christ's cause—to remove him, *one* obstacle to religion,—and not remove a long vacancy, *another* and a worse obstacle to religion.

With the principle no fault should be found. It is hard to see why any humble minded Christian should object to the action of his Presbytery when so competent a court—a court in which his congregation has a voice—appoints a minister for him when he and his congregation, for reasons often unworthy, fail to select one for themselves.

My special object, however, in this communication is neither to condemn nor defend the scheme proposed. It seems to me that, if the causes of long vacancies were investigated, we might find a way of minimizing them, which would not interfere at all with the liberty of the people to select their own pastors. It is said that long vacancies cause material and spiritual loss to the Church, but what are the causes of these long vacancies. There is, I believe, nothing which tends more to prolong vacancies than our present system of paying probationers. Congregations able to pay any sum from \$700 to \$7,500 are at liberty to pay a probationer the sum of \$8 per Sabbath; and accordingly when they incur some debt or wish to establish a reserve fund, too often the poor minister becomes burdensome, and they soon get rid of him with a short-sighted policy in view of saving money by paying a student \$6 or a probationer \$8 per Sabbath. The sum of \$8 per Sabbath is about \$400 per year; so that a congregation paying the minimum stipend of \$700 accumulates a reserve of \$300 by remaining vacant one year. This is a temptation which very many congregations cannot resist. I have known congregations to remain vacant for two and three years for the very purpose of establishing a reserve fund, or of paying a trifling debt; and there are not a few vacant at this moment for the same purpose. Now, there is no reason why congregations should not pay their probationers as much as their pastors. I know it is said that a probationer is not worth as much as a pastor. Will some one say just how much a pastor is worth and how much a probationer? Can the value of either be estimated in dollars and cents? The question is not how much either is worth, but whether congregations have any right to starve or underpay either. The probationer has as much claim on the Church as the pastor inasmuch as he, not less than the pastor, exists for the benefit of the Church and is doing the Church's work; the fact of his being without a charge is no evidence that he doesn't need as much support.

The Church has belittled the probationer by teaching that he is not worth as much as a pastor. How? By saying that a pastor must have a yearly minimum stipend of \$750 with house, and that a probationer should have \$400 without house, and pay his own travelling expenses to and from the congregations to which he ministers. This difference is scarcely fair; inasmuch as both exist for the good of the Church and are both

doing the Church's work, if a minimum stipend be stated at all it should be the same in each case.

To say the least, a probationer should be paid not less than say, three-fourths (or four-fifths) of the amount which the congregation to whom he ministers pays its pastor; this would leave them one-fourth which would be amply sufficient to pay the extra expenses connected with a vacancy. While this plan would assuredly shorten very many vacancies, it would leave the responsibility of securing a pastor with the people, and would not encourage probationers to remain on the list; it is very unlikely that any man would prefer to spend the greater part of his time away from his family, be the guest of strangers, provide for his family, and pay his travelling expenses at a salary of \$560 without house, when he might have a salary of \$750 with manse, and no travelling expenses.

If some such plan as this were adopted it is more probable that the probationers' scheme would not be so difficult to work for lack of men. Ministers desiring to be freed from their charges would not hesitate so much to place themselves at the service of the Committee on Distribution of Probationers. There is many a pastor who would be glad to be released from his charge but who dare not attempt to pay his travelling expenses and keep his family on \$8 per week.

It is not claimed that this plan would prevent all lengthened vacancies; no scheme would do so; but I feel assured that it would prevent a great many, probably the majority. But if it prevented not a single one it would still be a blessing, a matter of simple justice to the probationers of our Church.

JUVENTUS.

### FOREIGN MISSIONS.

MR. EDITOR,—I beg leave to request your attention to the accompanying tract respecting the Foreign Missions of our Church, prepared by a sub-committee of the Western Section of the Assembly's Foreign Mission Committee. Parcels of the tract have been sent to ministers and others for the purpose of being distributed among the families of the Church, allowing one copy for each family in the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario, according to the published statistics of our Church; parcels have also been sent to the clerks of Presbyteries for distribution among the families in vacant congregations and mission stations.

On behalf of the committee, I respectfully request the ministers, elders and managers of our Church to co-operate with the committee in making all connected with us acquainted with the state of our Foreign Mission work. That work has never, in the history of our Church, been surrounded with more favourable or encouraging circumstances than at present. The operations of the committee could be enlarged almost to any extent if the contributions of our people were proportionately increased, and a greater number of persons were prepared to say, Isaiah-like, "Here am I; send me." The Church has undoubtedly responded in the past to the calls of the committee and of its missionaries in heathen lands. We would regard that not only as an encouragement, but also as a warrant to press upon our friends the claims of our Foreign Mission work. The committee would also most earnestly request our people to plead with the Great Shepherd of the flock that He would induce many of our sons and daughters to "dedicate themselves to Gospel work in heathen lands, and also our people generally to render to the Lord according to what they have received from Him.

Toronto, Nov. 15th, 1883. THOMAS LOWRY, Sec.

### THE GENUINE ARTICLE.

On reading your issue of 31st. October. I could not refrain from expressing my satisfaction with several communications therein, especially the one signed "Presbyter" and two editorials. "The Genuine Article" and "Faith, Opinion and Fashion." I am glad to know that the theological system of which John Calvin was an exponent is not fast dying out and that there are men like "Presbyter," who will not adopt every new doctrine, though emanating from a Professor of Divinity. Would to God there were more such with the courage of their convictions to stand up for those grand old Presbyterian principles laid down by Christ and His apostles. When we read of one calling himself a Presbyterian coquetting with Arminians and adopting their methods, we are tempt-

ed to wish for the purifying influence of former days, that they might be made manifest that they are not of us.

Are Presbyterians asleep that they need an occasional stirring up by extraordinary means to the neglect of the ordinary means of Grace, or has the preaching of the Word lost its power? The followers of Arminius were holding union revival meetings, and I went one Sabbath evening lately to hear them—the subject being "Christian Perfection." The text was 1. John ii. 1. The minister, taking "Little Children" as meaning "the Church," said God would not write to us that we sin not "if it were not possible for us to live without sin. Surely he had never read 1. John i., and I felt like doing as the good Baptist deacon did, quoting eight verses and then sitting down again. Next Sabbath went again, heard the same speaker on the same subject—his text being Romans vi. 11, with verses 8th to 14th only for lesson; and I there learned why Arminians soar so high up among the angels, while Calvinists were content to occupy the lowest place. Why? Because the one would have the influence of the possible attaining of perfection hanging over him, while the other would be continually in the dust crying out: "Oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" And I thanked God and took courage—1st, that I was a Presbyterian; 2nd, that we have an educated ministry who can study the Scriptures in the original and give us the benefit of that study.

In conclusion, I hope that Presbyterians will continue to show their appreciation of the "Genuine Article" by pen and purse. It needs no apology. West Winchester, Oct., 1883. CONSTANT READER.

### THE ELDERSHIP.

MR. EDITOR,—In your last Presbyterian I noticed an article entitled "Strictures on Principal MacVicar's Opening Lecture" chiefly respecting the eldership. With many of the statements and ideas contained in that article I cannot agree. In the first place I cannot see any use of mentioning the elders of the old Jewish economy. They were a large council or parliament composed of laymen, and had no connection with the Levitical priesthood. As far as I can make out the meaning of the term elder in the Christian Church, it is applied exclusively to what we style the teaching elder or minister. Of course a body of elders or ministers would include men of great diversity of gifts, but that doesn't require a different title for the possession of each gift, else our Presbyterian Church would be like the Episcopalian with its numerous titles. The passages in Romans xii. and 1 Corinthians xii. do not mean more, I conceive, than that different ministers are differently gifted, and I am sure we are quite aware of that from our own experience. The fifth chapter of 1 Tim. 17th verse shows plainly that the elders who labour in word and doctrine are to be counted worthy of double honour; because, in addition, they rule well. The present Presbyterian arrangement may and does work well, but I cannot see any scriptural authority for teaching elders and ruling elders as distinct classes. The only distinctly marked orders are elders and deacons. Presbyter lays wonderful stress upon ruling and teaching. He surely doesn't mean to say that the elders in our Church exercise supreme rule and the ministers only second. That is not my experience now of some thirty years standing. Presbyter seems terribly afraid lest the people should groan under clerical government. Now I think they are a good deal under clerical government at present with some help from the lay elders or deacons, which is the most appropriate title, and on the whole the said people are quite contented.

The paragraph beginning with "what the Church specially needs" is a most extraordinary one, and is simply a condemnation of both our ministers and elders rather hazily expressed. Our elders are like our ministers, not altogether perfect; but, as a class, are modest and unassuming, and I believe anxious to do their duty, and very far from wishing to bear supreme rule in the Church.

November 8th, 1883. CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN.

A YOUNG People's Improvement Society in connection with St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Bowmanville, has been organized. It has begun its work under most favourable auspices. At a recent meeting admirable papers were read by Miss Little on "Luther's Mother," and by Miss Moorcraft on "Luther."