

does not speak well for our colleges. Why should Presbyterian congregations refuse to receive ministers sent to them, as Methodist congregations do? Is it because Presbyterian ministers are less efficient? Few Presbyterians will admit that it is because Presbyterian congregations are more given to criticising and fault-finding. If so, what is the cause? Does the Gospel of peace become one of strife and division when preached by Presbyterians? or are criticising and fault-finding Christian graces? or is it because they are more intelligent and spiritually minded that they are more fastidious and difficult to please? The most intelligent and spiritually-minded people are generally the least inclined to criticise and find fault, and *vice versa*. It is in the systems that the difference lies. The Methodist Church holds up the character of its ministers. The bare suggestion that a minister in good and regular standing in the Methodist Church is not fit to minister to an average congregation, is presented as an insult; while the poorest congregation in the Presbyterian Church may claim the right to reject fifty ministers, and pronounce them unfit to minister to it, and the Church sustains it in that right. The system tends to degrade the office of the ministry, and in proportion as that office is degraded its efficiency is impaired. It is argued by advocates of the Probationers' Scheme that such changes as those proposed would infringe on the liberties of congregations. I must say that after having closely observed the working of the Probationers' Scheme for eleven years, and tested it by actual experience, and questioned many congregations that have tried, I have come to the conclusion that the great majority of congregations appreciate their liberty about as much as some of the electors of Tipperary are said to have appreciated their right of suffrage.

A story is told of a priest who was seen on an election day bringing a number of voters, bound in carts, to the polling place, going before the carts brandishing his stick and crying out, "Make way for the free and independent electors!" The liberty forced on congregations under the Probationers' Scheme is prized by many of the congregations just as little. But in the scheme which I propose it is difficult to see how the rights of any can be infringed upon, as all who preferred finding their own supply to receiving it from Presbyteries would be at liberty to do so. There is no part of this scheme which has not been fairly tested by other Churches and found to work well, while the Probationers' Scheme has proved a conspicuous failure.

M.

MR. EDITOR,—As you have solicited correspondence on this subject, permit me to give the opinion I formed when I took appointments from it. I still hold it. It is this.

Vacancies should be divided into three classes: *First*, city charges which supply themselves, or charges which, in the judgment of the Presbytery, are entitled to do so; *secondly*, those which are prepared to call, and desire the Presbytery to send candidates; *thirdly*, those which are not prepared to call, but desire supply for a time.

There should also be two classes of probationers: *First*, those who desire to appear as candidates for immediate settlement; *secondly*, those who are willing to go for a time into congregations not prepared to call at once.

Each vacancy in the second class should be allowed six months to call, and if it cannot agree on a minister, then the Presbytery should select and settle one over it. Vacancies in the third class should be allowed six months to be in a position to call, then placed in the second class.

There is no patronage in the Presbyterianial choice and settlement of a minister, as suggested. The practice is of long standing in the Church of Scotland, and the principle is that adopted by the Episcopal and Methodist Churches. Nor is it inconsistent with the principles of the early secession—the Free and Relief Churches which separated from the Mother Church on account of the forcible intrusion of ministers on reclaiming congregations, and not on account of the exercise of patronage.

JOHN B. SCOTT.

Leamington, Ont., 25th May, 1882.

DISCOURAGEMENT is not a fruit of humility but of pride.—*Fenelon*.

If valuable things were too easily come by, we would not learn to take pains.

THE NON-SOCIABILITY OF CONGREGATIONS.

This evil does exist, but we are thankful in but few of our Churches. Where lurking, why not stamp it out? Perhaps nothing tends to weaken if not kill spiritual life so much as class distinction, or the narrow limits so often laid down by worldly wealth when riches alone are the consideration.

The minister may be—generally is—faithful, earnest, rightly dividing the word of life; but with his hands tied, and all his efforts hampered by this unfortunate element amongst his people, he finds his work curtailed; that he can do comparatively little to arouse a true and abiding interest in what should above all else be interesting—a closer communion with Him we profess to serve. Is this fair to the pastor? Is it fair to the membership? We opine not.

Wealth is bestowed by the Giver of good for a purpose very different to a gross absorbing pride in the riches themselves, and those who are beset and overcome by such pride invariably forget that nothing tends more to hinder growth in grace, or that their brethren who are poorer in the things of this world—whom they look at afar off—are likely to possess a larger share of riches which never fade nor take to themselves wings. Besides, the poor, being free of these bonds, are drawn with a greater love to Him who is King of kings, and who has Himself declared that He is peculiarly the friend, brother, sympathizer of those who are meek, lowly, and of a contrite mind.

Is it not sad to find a church crowded Sunday after Sunday, drawn thither by the heartburning appeals and faithful ministrations of a devoted servant of God, spiritually dead, where one-half stand aloof from and are as strange to the other as if a gulf came between? Think of a family so constituted! Just imagine the misery and misunderstanding under such a roof-tree! And what is a congregation—in name at least—but one large family, declaring itself bound together in loving obedience to the one loving Father? We know of cases where this estrangement so predominates, that actually those sitting in contiguous pews have for years, through false pride, never exchanged even the common courtesies of life. This is fearful when we know that all are alike in the sight of God, and that He is no distinguisher of persons. Such being the case, surely it is time that reserve and walls of division be broken down. Let us so determine, and, by a truer service to the Almighty, encourage the pastor's hands, giving him more abundant fruits for his labours, and by a genuine soul-stirring revival—an awakening to what tends to our lasting good—grant him that reward for which he craves, thus making the congregational family happy beyond time, united here and hereafter.

We commend these thoughts to the prayerful consideration of our membership, but above all to those who feel they are specially addressed, and for whom they are affectionately written. If so pondered over, it is not difficult to foresee springing into life that glorious life which governed the early Christians, while every Church will be strong numerically besides, what is of more price, strong in the strength of our common faith and the promises of a risen Lord. May that day soon come!

J. B. H.

Ottawa, May, 1882.

KNOX COLLEGE.

MR. EDITOR,—A recent appeal on behalf of the Building Fund contains the statement that a debt of \$26,000 still remains on the Building Fund and \$10,000 on the ordinary revenue. Such a statement is fitted to awaken considerable enquiry, if not a little anxiety. Some time ago a report was published to the effect that the debt on the Building Fund was fully provided for, and on that ground appeals were made from other directions; but if provided for, how does such a debt still remain? Was it only subscribed and still to be collected, with all the consequent loss by bad debts [from failure, removal and death? If so, then any appeal to the constituency of Knox College on the ground that its debt was provided for was premature, though no doubt the debts on building and revenue argue a lack of interest, somewhere. True, these debts are not formidable in themselves; equally large burdens have been swept off in a year or two, and we trust this one will. We have heard of large donations to Queen's, and the Permanent Endowment Fund was said to be very promising. Montreal has received large additions to its capital; Halifax thrives;

and the last report of the college of a sister church shows how Victoria has been remembered. Is old Knox to be left out in the cold? Has not her strength been her weakness? Is it not so now? Do the alumni and her friends act as if she could live anyway, and therefore just let her live? Surely not, and yet there must be a cause for the *apparent* apathy. We call attention to some of the difficulties with which Knox College has contended, and still has to contend: First, her income has had to bear considerable diminution for several years without a sufficient compensation; an annuity of considerable size; then a certain allowance to Montreal College, and latterly a share to Queen's; in short, its friends and territory have become common property, and thus the sympathy of her friends has been frittered away, and no small amount of interest lost; indeed the distinctive interest in Knox to a large extent has ceased. Now, do we find the other colleges pursuing so suicidal a course? By no means. Montreal College, with praiseworthy activity, works *her own* field. Queen's has most certainly improved the fact of union, and taken in her arms the *whole* west, and lauded the idea of a permanent endowment till all the fruitful fields had been gathered—at the same time receiving the share from the general fund. But Knox has been going on the old way, her debt the meanwhile not decreasing—sometimes, indeed, increasing. But what is the latest phase of difficulty? The panacea for college trouble, the union plan of last year, and to which not a few of the friends of Knox College had serious objection, has been suddenly and without notification abandoned, and a new scheme started which virtually cuts the ground from under Knox. We refer to the attempt to raise a new and separate support for Queen's by yearly payments. Appeals have been made for these yearly payments indiscriminately to all parties. Such appeals, if responded to as they have been, must of very necessity curtail the ordinary revenue to the college fund. If the quota which Queen's received from the general fund was found to be insufficient, why not appeal to the General Assembly, and be loyal to the arrangement till the Assembly met? There is no doubt whatever that the friends of Knox College will become heartily sick of college work and college collections if the process is to be a common grab-bag as spoil for every one who puts in a claim; and it seems very clear that the time has come when a decided effort should be put forth by the friends of Knox College to put her in a more independent position, and beyond the reach of a constant bleeding analogous to transfusion in physical science. This may appear selfish; it is only self-preservation; and the sooner the college authorities are alive to the necessities of the case the better.

PATIENT WATCHER.

PRESBYTERY OF STRATFORD.—This court met on the 30th ult. in the church in Nissouri South, for the induction of Mr. J. W. Purman, and for ordinary business. At the induction services Mr. McAlpine presided, Mr. Tully preached, Mr. Gordon addressed the minister, and Mr. Robert Scott the people. The congregation turned largely out, the services were all excellent, and the whole occasion was one of interest and promise. A circular on the proposed reception into the ministry of the Church of Mr. J. A. Vernon was read. Mr. Robert Scott was appointed Commissioner to General Assembly in place of Mr. Wright, resigned. Resolutions of petitioners from Blanchard were laid on the table till next meeting. The overture to General Assembly anent colleges, laid on the table at the March meeting was taken up and unanimously adopted in the terms following:—"Whereas it is highly important that the Church have immediate control of the education of its future minister: whereas the appointment and removal of Theological Professors in Queen's College is in the power of a self-elected Board, and these Professors are not under the control of the Church: whereas the salaries of these Professors are in part provided by the Church: whereas the late General Assembly instituted a common fund for the three colleges at Toronto, Kingston and Montreal: and whereas many object to supporting Professors over whom the Church does not exercise immediate control, and thus the common College Fund is liable to suffer:—it is therefore humbly suggested to the venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to take such action as may be necessary to bring the various Theological Colleges of the Church into uniform relations thereto."

—JOHN FOTHERINGHAM, Pres. Clerk.