

PREACHING FOR A CALL.

MR. EDITOR.—That the question of how best to fill vacant pulpits, is an important and pressing one, is evidenced by the numerous letters you have published in your journal; by the same evidence it is plain that the question has not yet been answered to the satisfaction of all. It is not for your correspondent to say, as some have, how "it should be," nor is for him to sketch out a plan that shall seem to do for all but which may be good for none. It is his purpose rather to tell of what he has learned through his being a member of a congregation with a vacant pulpit.

Some half dozen years ago, the church at large had need of a good, wise and capable man to establish and maintain Presbyterian interests in a new and highly important field, and the church exercised her right to rule by removing from his congregation the man she chose, to the great grief of that congregation, and also, it was believed, to that congregation's great loss. In that congregation there were men of wisdom, who possessed the entire confidence of their brethren. These men, immediately upon learning that this pleading for their pastor's remaining had proved vain, bestirred themselves to find another. There was recommended to them one whom they, in their turn, felt that they could recommend to their fellow-members, and though the man they proposed to call, was many miles away, and practically a stranger to all, whose face many had never seen, he was chosen by that congregation without a hearing, six months before he was settled among them. That their choice was wise and God-directed the sequel proved.

Thus the pulpit was filled, and the congregation was not called upon to hear candidates; nor were ministers, with or without charges, given an opportunity to make themselves ignoble by "preaching for a call." To your correspondent it is a sad sight to see any minister of the Gospel of Christ, a professed disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus, striving, oftentimes secretly, by use of pen, of electricity, or of another's supposed influence, to gain a hearing, to show forth, one must think, to the congregation he desires to call him his superiority over others of his brethren to lead a flock into green pastures and to guide them through dark valleys. Where is that humility of mind and spirit to which they themselves exhort their hearers? God's call is made secondary to man's call, and God's servants by their own placing are reduced to the rank of worldly men, who advertise their excellences, and who seek to exalt and advance themselves.

Did these ministers know how common they make their sacred office, did they know how they expose themselves, oftentimes to ridicule, more often to people's pity, they would not be in haste to "get a hearing." Moreover, is it not a matter of fact that the great majority of probationers are inferior men, or men who have failed? Else, why is it that they are without charges? The best men are not generally seekers after work of any sort; but rather those whose services are sought, and when a man, be he a minister of the gospel, or a common day-laborer, is forced to look for employment, when the demand for such services as he is supposed to be fitted for is good, one finds difficulty in coming to any other conclusion than that that man, whatsoever he be, is by the very fact of his wandering, a man whom nobody wants. Do not almost all the many schemes to fill vacant pulpits that have been proposed make provision for the hearing of candidates? and, in this do they not tolerate an evil and honor a shame?

And, sir, did time and space permit, the evil to the congregation consequent upon the system that allows a minister to market his godliness, his holiness, his fervour and his learning, and that compels the congregation to put a price on all these, and to say, "This man is good enough, or not good enough, for us," this evil might be dwelt upon, leading us to the one conclusion that any such system is debasing to the highest and noblest life, and is destructive to the very end of the church's institution.

It was the purpose of your correspondent to speak further of a more recent vacancy that occurred in the congregation of which he is a member, and to endeavor to discover some helpful points in that vacancy's history; but this he must defer for the present. The writer of this letter is conscious of his feebleness to right the wrong and to solve the problem that has distressed so many minds, but he confesses that he has not seen, nor does he expect to see, in any one plan proposed to overcome the evil, the remedy and means all are eager to find.

Yours very truly,
A VOICE.

TRINIDAD.—A CORRECTION.

MR. EDITOR.—I have read with care the account of Trinidad, in one of the articles on "A Visit to the West Indies," in the CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. I cannot speak of the accuracy of the accounts of the other places visited, but I know of several errors in the writer's account of Trinidad, which have evidently arisen from very superficial observation. Begin with his account of religion. The Anglicans "hold the fort," he says. This is untrue, as the R.C.'s are by far the most numerous. According to last census they are 36.79 per cent. of the population, and are 73,590 out of 200,000; while the English Church has only 47,095. The Episcopal Church is numerous, because a great part of the Creole immigration from Barbadoes being Episcopal, naturally gravitate to that church. They are very high church, and are guilty of tactics that any Christian church ought to be ashamed of. Did I feel at liberty to make this an extended letter, I could tell you some incidents of their treatment of your own Canadian coolie missions that would astonish you. The writer's praise of the Anglicans at the expense of the Presbyterians, is sadly misplaced. It pained me to read his account of the service in Greyfriars church, and his most unwarranted and ill-natured remarks about Rev. Mr. McCurdy, a man of ability, truly consecrated to the Master's service, and a Canadian to boot. "Tis an evil bird that fouls its own nest."

I cannot tell the original meaning of the word Creole; but according to the use of the word here, this sentence is simply nonsense: "The Creoles are almost white, and are native born, while all the others are foreigners." Any person born in the West Indies is a Creole, whether white or black.

One other point proved the writer to be inaccurate and unreliable: his remarks about the colored people and the coolies. I do not think he would find many whites resident here who would not prefer the Indian to the Negro as a race. The blacks are notoriously lazy and indolent. To speak of the coolies (which by the way, is a wrong word to apply to all Indians, as the word means carrier or laborer, and all Indians are not carriers) as "a worthless, lazy, dirty, and almost inanimate" is more than an incautious statement, it is untrue. Trinidad would be of no consequence but for the Indian. Without him the sugar industry would go to the wall. The colored Creoles are too lazy and seek too high a wage. This is true also of the cocoa cultivation. Indeed, I may say that the people would starve but for the coolies, as they are almost the sole growers of fruit and vegetables.

The writer speaks with approbation of Dr. Grant's work. No commendation is too high for that noble man. Had the writer seen Dr. Grant's congregation of English-speaking Indians—clean, bright, intelligent, appreciative, many of them occupying good positions—and have noted their appearance and demeanor in church and in Sunday school, he would be sorry he ever penned such an article.

This letter I write as an unprejudiced outsider, here on a visit; but it is based on reliable information and as careful personal observation.

I hope in fairness to Trinidad that you will insert this letter.

I am, faithfully yours,
W. A. REID.

Ram's Horn: The man who will do God's will with all his might is as sure to be helped from heaven as that the sun will continue to give light.

Christian Endeavor.

TEMPERANCE IN ALL THINGS.

BY REV. W. S. MCTAVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE.

June 17th.—Prov. xxi. 16-30.

Temperance is a word of broad significance. We frequently use it in the narrow sense of abstinence from intoxicating beverages, but it really means a great deal more than that. Webster defines it thus, "Habitual moderation in regard to the indulgence of the natural appetites and passions; restrained or moderate indulgence; moderation." On the walls of the temple at Delphos there was this inscription, "Avoid excess." If that were intended as a definition of temperance it certainly was a very admirable one. We should avoid excess in all things. We all appreciate a dainty dish, but there is no reason why we, like some of the ancient Romans, should make a god of the stomach. It is certainly right and proper that we should be decently attired, but it is unseemly that we, like Beau Brummel, should spend hours in adjusting a cravat.

For the development of muscular and nervous energy it may be necessary to take a certain measure of recreation. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," Martin Luther played kite with the children, Thomas Chalmers played ball with the boys, and none of them complained of anything save that they could not run as fast or bat as true as he. When Elihu Burritt became weary in the library he found recreation at his forge. Daniel Webster enjoyed an hour with his gun or fishing-rod; George Bancroft, America's great historian, when far advanced in life, continued to ride on horseback daily, and to spend a little time in his flower garden, which has been described as one of the wonders of the world. Dr. W. Ormiston cured himself of insomnia by riding on horseback.

But while recreation may be necessary, it should be indulged in temperately, because if it be overdone it may destroy the very thing it was intended to build up. There are recreations and amusements in which the Christian may engage without any compromise of principle, but though those recreations or amusements may be, in themselves innocent enough, they may become disastrous in their effects if they are followed too long, or too continuously. The moderation of the Christian should be known to all men.

The text assigned us deals with such a variety of subjects that it is impossible to touch upon them all. For the sake of unity, therefore, we shall confine our attention to the 17th verse—"He that loveth pleasure, or sport, shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich."

(1.) Intemperate love of pleasure impoverishes a man financially. There is no need to refer here to gambling, betting and similar sports, for it is admitted by all that they place a man on the direct road to poverty. But an undue love of even good, athletic exercises may hamper a man financially. Many a young man has lost a good situation through an intemperate love of sport. Others again, for the same reason neglect their business, and in these days of keen competition it is the height of folly to sacrifice business at the shrine of pleasure. But even if a man be always at business during business hours, yet if he have been indulging too freely in sports, he is ill qualified for his work, and thus he puts a barrier in the way of his own progress.

(2.) Undue love of sport impoverishes a man intellectually. Many a student has failed in his examinations because of his unwise devotion to sports on the college campus or on the river. Nor have students been the only ones who have suffered. It has been said, "The time that may kill at billiards, theatres and clubs was the time that made Hugh Miller, Burritt, Wilson and many others illustrious."

(3.) Intemperate love of sport impoverishes a man spiritually. The greatest loss is not that of money nor even that of intellectual power. It is the loss of moral and spiritual power. Those who love innocent amusements so much that they will indulge in them till a late hour at night, or possibly an early hour in the morning, are but poorly prepared on their return home to compose the mind and enrich the heart by Bible study and secret prayer. When a Saturday afternoon is wholly spent in amusements one is not likely to be in a mood to enjoy the services of the house of God on Sabbath.

Much is being said and written about the Thirteenth International Christian Endeavor Convention, which is to convene in Cleveland, O., July 11, and continue five days. Much can be said, for the largeness and thoroughness of the preparations that are being made for it are such as no previous convention can boast of. No stone will be left unturned by the United Society to make the programme the very best that has yet been prepared, and as for the Cleveland Committee, everything is being turned inside out and upside down to have things just right. The whole city is being prepared for your coming. We are thus early hearing the cry, "On to Cleveland!" For some reason or other, 1894 seems to be the year. So may it be. Cleveland is waiting and praying for a great gathering and a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Will not the young people of our churches take advantage of this great opportunity? The "Committee of '94" as it comes in touch with the preparations that are being made for this great event, from one end of the country to the other, can feel the throbbing of the Convention pulse; and as each day goes by and the time comes nearer, the thump, thump becomes more rapid, the enthusiasm glows with a brighter lustre, and the one desire is heard for the privilege of attendance at the Cleveland Convention.

One of the items of special interest at the Cleveland Convention will be the "denominational rallies" to which the whole of Thursday afternoon will be devoted. Canadian Presbyterians will not have a meeting to themselves this year but will join in what promises to be an inspiring and practical joint Presbyterian rally which will be led by Rev. R. V. Hunter, of Terre Haute, Ind. The programme will be somewhat as following:—I. Endeavorers and the Local church. (1.) Trained to systematic giving. (2.) Helpful in church extension. (3.) Discussion. II. Advantages of denominational organization of the Christian Endeavor. (1.) Educational. (2.) Promoting efficiency. (3.) Discussion. III. Address by Rev. W. H. Hays, Chefoo, China. IV. Missionary extension course. (1.) Explained by S. L. Mershaw, of Chicago. (2.) Its possibilities Rev. Otis A. Smith, Evansville, Ind. (3.) Discussion.

The increase in the number of ministers, the enlargement of the power of the ministry, depend upon the number and the power of college graduates. If our ministry is to be enlarged, we must enlarge the number of Christian college men. If our work of preaching the gospel in every part of the globe is to be carried forward, we must enlarge the number and improve the quality of college students. If we are to hasten the coming of the kingdom of our Lord, we are to make colleges more worthy instruments of the divine grace. In securing such results the Christian Endeavor Society stands not only by the side of the college, but also stands before the college. It is the first to lead men to Christ, who coming to the college and going forth from the college, are themselves to lead men unto Christ as their Saviour.

At the consecration meeting, messages from members who are obliged to be absent should not be handed to those members who find it easy to take part in the meetings. Let them be sent or given to the more bashful and inexperienced members, for the reading of these messages is one way of overcoming timidity.

The Christian Endeavor Society has trained an elder in a Cumberland Presbyterian church out West. That's what the missionary says. He was the only male member of the church, was over fifty years old, and could take no public part until Christian Endeavor showed him how. And he's not alone.

One of the best ways of calling the roll on consecration nights is to call it by committees, having previously arranged the subject so that the members of each committee shall confine themselves to the one division of the subject of which they have been notified.

There are now eighty-three Presbyterian Christian Endeavor Societies in the British section. At the recent Presbyterian rally in London twenty societies were represented, addresses being given by Revs. Dr. MacEwan, J. G. Train and J. R. Gillies.

A Minnesota Endeavor society seeks to obtain from each member a definite pledge of gifts to missions. These pledges, moreover, are paid at a definite time and very fittingly at the consecration meeting.

There's a Christian Endeavor union in Wales,—the Swansea, Union, that already has enrolled 24 societies, with 1,100 members. This union was not in existence four months ago.