

on the safe side, especially in the matter of choosing a pastor, that it was necessary to make a thorough investigation of the preacher's waggon and valise. He accordingly instituted a careful search and *miserable visu!* discovered snugly tucked away under the seat of the carriage a little crock of butter which a kind old lady had insisted on placing there. Mr. Y. of course considered it his christian duty to advertise the discovery, and it is needless to say that the "call" was at once dropped. A minister who was wicked enough to carry butter around on the Sabbath was certainly not the kind of a man that was wanted in that place.

We mention these little instances in order that they may serve as a warning to our fellow-students in case any of them should ever be under the sad necessity of going out prospecting for a call.

Now, we ask in all seriousness, can nothing be done to improve our present system of filling vacancies, or does it really require improvement? It is, indeed, right that the people should have a voice in the choosing of the minister whom they are required to support; but it is equally important that the gospel messenger should ever stand above the level of a mere competitor for office. That he sometimes stands in that light in the eyes of the public, if not in his own, is a fact that is often too painfully evident. Our system may be right in principle, and yet under its operation the preacher not infrequently finds himself placed in a position which no independent, self-respecting man would care to occupy.

Much might be said in favor of having appointments made by some central board or committee, in touch with the requirements of the different fields, and in possession of the fullest information possible respecting the character and capability of the men depended upon for supplying these fields. This is practically what we have in our Home Mission Board. And yet this scheme, while, to some extent, meeting the case of those just entering upon the work of the ministry, does not provide for those who after, it may be, years of service find it necessary to contemplate a change in their sphere of labor. In such a situation, the preacher often sees that the only course open to him is to accept invitations to preach here and there, until he is fortunate enough to receive a call. When appointments come through Presbytery it may be possible to make some show of independence,