

While cases may exist in which change of location may afford the Christian Pastor the means of adding to his fitness for the work of instruction, by the acquisition of something of which he might not otherwise have so conveniently made himself master, our impression is strong that its ordinary effect is the reverse of this. Speaking generally, growth in adaptation for the performance of duty is best secured by the effort to which, in the case of an honourable mind, its habitual performance prompts, especially where the matters dealt with are of a character to afford free scope for mental action—a condition which holds pre-eminently in the case of the Christian ministry. Take off the strain which necessity imposes, and the love of ease, so natural to us, is in danger of producing intermission of the effort which is the grand condition of improvement. Change, frequent change especially, would seem thus to endanger the work of instruction, by interfering with the requisite qualifications for it.

We conceive, moreover, that it can hardly fail further to operate mischievously by the undue narrowing of its range.

The Scriptures present the work of Christian instruction under the very significant figure of building up,—which includes the erection of a superstructure, as well as the laying of foundations. Assigning, as they do, to certain first principles, the doctrine concerning Christ, by way of eminence, the place of foundation, they call on us to direct our attention first to these, and to urge them with all affection and earnestness, and with fulness and frequency of repetition. The value, however, of these primary truths and considerations arising out of the relation which they bear to others which form their complement,—or to keep up the figure, constitute the superstructure—the presentation of these latter in due proportion is essential to the whole. Hence, we are exhorted, leaving first principles, to pass on to perfection. The sacrificing of the latter to the former, or their neglect for them, is spoken of as at once a misfortune and a reproach,—the existence of a necessity for it marking inferiority of condition. But this is a task too large to be overtaken within a limited pastorate. If teaching is to have in it anything of symmetry or completeness—both of which are requisite to efficiency—its range and plan of procedure must be determined in view of the time which can be devoted to it. Where that is limited, many topics which should be included must be either left out or dealt with in a very perfunctory manner—either of which courses will interfere seriously with the knowledge required for the healthy development of the Christian life. The repetition of a similar course by the Pastors who successively fulfil their brief career must dwarf those whom the Master would have developed to the size and strength of full-grown manhood.

Suppose the instructor, on the other hand, to base his plan on the wants of his charge, irrespective of the time which he may allow himself or have allowed him for carrying it out, the instruction they receive will be in danger of being fragmentary, as a premature, possibly an abrupt termination may be put to it.

Nor is this the whole of the hazard to which a shifting Pastorate exposes those who are so unfortunate as to be subjected to it. There is risk of its inducing confusion, as well as failing in fullness and symmetry. The men down as you please, there will be among them differences of view, so that they will on certain points give different explanations of the same creed. Should these differences be in themselves unimportant, their existence may still beget uncertainty on the part of those under instruction, or lead them to the holding of notions inconsistent with one another, and tending rather to mutual neutralization than working harmoniously together. Instances of this sort may be found probably to exist everywhere, there being so many sources besides the Pulpit whence ideas are drawn; but we have been struck with their frequency here. When these differences obtain in relation to the more important matters—which they may do, of course—the consequences will be so much the more serious.

In addition to the instruction of the people, the Pastor's work includes as its end the formation and development of their Christian character, with the cultivation and employment of their capabilities.

This also is a process which requires time, implying, as it does, the persevering use of measures carefully adapted to the dispositions and circumstances of the