

such a state of things, the church cannot be expected to prosper, nor the pastor to be either useful or happy. One of the best evidences that God calls a minister to a particular church, is that He has made them willing to receive him.

We go further, and insist that the call should not only be unanimous, but *cordial*. A church sometimes takes a minister who happens to be before them, because they do not know that they can do better, although they receive him rather coldly. There is a vast difference between the position of such a pastor, and that of a pastor received to the hearts of the people, as a blessing God has sent to them. In the latter case, the same amount of labor will be attended with far greater results than in the former; whilst the encouragement the pastor has to labor, and his comfort in his work, are incomparably greater. It would certainly be most unwise for a pastor to leave a people whose confidence and affections he enjoys, to take charge of a church in which he meets but a lukewarm reception. No ordinary circumstances can justify such a change. But if a call comes unsought; if the field offered is, for the pastor, all things considered, a considerably wider field of usefulness than the one he occupies; and if it be unanimous and cordial; there can be little doubt that it comes from God, and ought to be accepted.

4. The evidence would be more conclusive if it should appear that the call was the result of *earnest prayer* for divine direction. Real blessings, and especially great blessings, are ordinarily bestowed on individuals, on families, and on churches, in answer to importunate prayer. If, therefore, God is sending a faithful pastor to a people, it is reasonable to expect that they will be led often and earnestly to the throne of grace to plead for the gift. It is a great privilege for a minister to go to a people who have gone to their heavenly Father to ask for a Pastor, and who will recognise in him an answer to their prayers.

5. It is hazardous for ministers of *advanced age* to change their fields of labor, unless their peculiar gifts fit them for *evangelists*. They may have deeper piety than at an earlier period; but they have not the enthusiasm nor the mental elasticity they once had. And whilst to the people amongst whom they have long labored, they are strongly attached, they do not so readily form new attachments. Still more, the young people who have been accustomed from infancy to see them in the pulpit and at their homes, may love and venerate them far more than they would a younger man; but they will not be able so readily to make the acquaintance and enlist the feelings of the young in a new field of labor. The call, therefore, should be a very clear one, to justify a settled pastor in changing his location, when he has passed *his fiftieth year*.

We do not forget that a call must come to a settled pastor through his Presbytery. Still, most churches will, as indeed they should, correspond with ministers whose services they desire to secure, in order to ascertain their views before proceeding so far as to make out a call; and if the principles in view of which such questions ought to be settled were well understood; in almost all instances in which the call ought to be declined, answers could be given, which would prevent the delay and disappointment incident to the regular prosecution of it. For when such a correspondence is opened, the way is prepared for the pastor, without indelicacy or impropriety, to make all necessary inquiries, to confer with his own Session, and to consult with those of his brethren whose opinions have weight with him. And it cannot be admitted, for a moment, that any minister of right feelings would encourage the making out of a call which he expects to decline. To do so, would be to trifle with the interests of the church of Christ, from motives utterly unworthy of a Christian minister.