

tion with his labors, which, should he continue, is likely to extend, and to cause distraction and division. It is doubtful whether a minister ought ever to permit a church to become divided, on the mere question of retaining him as pastor. If a party should desire to get rid of him, because they hold erroneous views of doctrine, or of any point in morals, fidelity to the truth might require him to resist them. Or if charges injurious to his moral character were made, he must defend himself. But in cases where neither of these things is involved, but where a respectable minority strongly desire a change; it is rarely, if ever, wise to remain and allow parties to be formed. For such divisions very generally result in great alienations, in the rapid decline of the spirituality of the church, and in the ruin of the pastor's usefulness. We could mention a church in a neighboring State, in which two parties were formed, the one—a minority—desiring the pastor to resign; the other desiring to retain him. The feeling between the parties became extremely bitter, defying all efforts of the Presbytery to settle the difficulty, until at length, the church was, by a rather high-handed measure, dissolved and re-organized; and in the re-organization several of the dissatisfied party, not willing to re-enter on the terms fixed by Presbytery, were left out. Even then, the parties were found still existing, and withering the prosperity of the church, for ten years after the excellent pastor had left. We could mention another church which, though in number and wealth very influential, in the course of several years, was almost destroyed in the same way. Wherever the fault may lie, it is certain that when such difficulties arise, the pastor's usefulness is at an end; unless, indeed, the dissatisfied party will withdraw, and organize another church—a thing not unfrequently done in our larger cities. In smaller towns and country places, this cannot be done; and therefore the injury resulting from such differences is the greater and more permanent. But when there is the appearance of such divisions, a field in itself more contracted, may prove to be a much wider field of usefulness for that minister; and if he will leave in time, he may save the church from permanent trouble, and himself from much mental suffering and loss of usefulness. In accepting a call to a church, we have always insisted upon it, that the session should at once candidly inform us, if they perceived any dissatisfaction arising.

The new field offered to a settled pastor, then, may offer much greater prospects of usefulness, because better suited to his peculiar talent; or because of a larger accessible population, or because of its being a more commanding position, or because of the state of things in his own church.

3. The question whether a call is to be regarded as providential, depends very much upon its *unanimity* and *cordiality*. The difficulties and discouragements of pastors are sufficiently numerous and great under the most favorable circumstances. They therefore greatly need the united prayers and support of their entire churches; and their peace of mind and their usefulness depend very much upon their securing them. Probably it ought not to be required that the whole church giving a call should actually prefer the man elected to every other individual whose name may be before them; but we are not going too far when we say that there should be *general acquiescence* in the call. If there be positive opposition to the pastor elect, the circumstances must be extraordinary which would render it wise for him to accept. The objections may be entirely groundless; yet the mere fact that there is a number of persons in the church who are not willing to receive the Gospel at his mouth, will produce an unhappy effect upon his spirits. Besides, there is no certainty that they will not seek to alienate others, and to undermine his influence; and whenever any difficulties arise, there is a party ready to throw their influence against him. Meanwhile his admirers are likely to become alienated from the others; and *vice versa*. In