

ON THE WING, AND WHY.

The article by ALUMNUS, in your last number, has suggested many thoughts to my mind in regard to the cause of such a state of things among us as he describes.

(1.) One cause of the removal of so many of our ministers to the other side of the line is, that when a minister settles among them an honest document is prepared, containing a statement of the amount of salary, terms of settlement, when salary is to be paid, etc., duly signed by parties who realize their responsibility to their Pastor, as they would to a bank, when their names are affixed to a note which will be protested unless met at the proper time. In this they are fully sustained by the Church, and the whole thing is put upon an intelligent business basis.

From what I can learn, it is not so in this country, as some Pastors are driven to all sorts of shifts, to save themselves from debt and disgrace. In many instances they are ashamed to meet their creditors in the House of God on the Lord's day, having no means of obtaining their own, so as to stand up honourably before men, fulfilling the Apostolic injunction, "owe no man anything but to love one another." The Churches do themselves and their minister an incalculable amount of harm in this way, as we fully believe they have the power to *make* or *break* their minister. Undoubtedly the "position as often makes the man, as the man the position." One of our churches in the old country having lost their Minister by death—one who had been an eminent man—chose a young man as his successor, and the office-bearers were asked how they could think of choosing one so young, and one too, of apparently little promise, who had still his position to make. Their answer was, "we make our own ministers," and the sequel proved the statement—to be true; for, without spoiling him—and a sensible man will not be easily spoiled—they provided for all his mental, physical and spiritual wants, honestly, and honourably in the sight of God.

(2.) Another cause of the unsettlement of many of our ministers seems to be, the *fickle* and *emotional* style of giving in this country.

When Mr. *Newcome*, or Mr. *Novelty* arrives, they with one accord exclaim, "Now we have got the man we need, I will deny myself to sustain *him*." But when he settles down to practical work, and he finds human faults and foibles to deal with, and he begins to discourse in such a way as leads them to think he knows something about them, and their wants, some one says, "That was intended for me; some one has been informing against me; I will not pay *my* money to support him; he is too personal, etc." Now sir, you know that where the matter of support is left open to such *possibilities*, it is high time to bring about a more honourable, and business-like way of settling ministers in this country, or more of them will be "on the wing" soon.

I will venture to assert, too, that the most delinquent are often the first to present their bills to the minister, if he should be so unfortunate to owe them, and they are the first to cry out about the minister's "extravagance," when he is not able to pay his debts, when perhaps the fact is that the last three quarters of his salary have not been paid to him.

I know that many of our finance committees and office-bearers feel their responsibilities in regard to these things, but many more of them do not think *they* are responsible, and simply remark, "The church is behind, but we cannot help it."

There is one passage of Scripture which very few ministers have the courage to preach from, especially in the churches where things are left so open and loose; I refer to 1 Tim. v., 8. If the premises of the apostle are correct, I leave it to the reader as to what he is to think of the character of that man, be he minister or layman, who will not make an effort to better his circumstances, and do justice to his family. God sometimes calls a man away from an unappreciative or ungrateful people. Let not emotion, or whim, or novelty, control our giving, let us give on *principle*, "not as unto *man* but as unto the Lord," and we shall have more true piety, greater prosperity, and more successful ministers.