

I. We begin with the truth, that it must be the earnest desire of every faithful minister to employ his time and talents to the greatest advantage for the cause of Christ. The conversion of sinners and the edification of believers are the leading objects to be accomplished by the Christian ministry. Both of these are embraced in "the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ," (Eph. iv. 12.) Most assuredly the faithful minister will receive his reward, whether success attend his ministry or not; but every such minister must intensely desire his labors to be crowned with success. Indeed, we are clearly authorized to expect that our labors will not be in vain; and, therefore, the promise is, that "they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars, for ever and ever," (Dan. xii. 3.)

Different men have different gifts. One may be better fitted to preach to the impenitent, and his success may be mainly in the conversion of such; whilst another may find his chief usefulness in the edification of believers. A third may be specially fitted for some executive department of the church's evangelical operations. But every one called of God to the ministry, may be useful in the work; and the aim and the prayer of every one should be for the highest possible degree of usefulness. Every question respecting a change of location, then, should be considered and determined in view of this principle.

But ought not the pastoral relation to be permanent? When a minister has accepted a call, and has been installed as pastor of a church, ought he not to consider himself settled for life? Beyond a question, if the decision is to be made between a transient and a permanent ministry, the latter must have the preference. The Scriptures say nothing directly upon this particular point; and, therefore, our judgment must be formed on general principles. Those principles conduct us to the conclusion just stated; but we are not under the necessity of adopting either of these extremes.

The question as to the permanency of the pastoral relation, must be decided partly in view of the mental peculiarities and attainments of particular ministers; and partly in view of providential circumstances. There are some ministers who ought not to change their fields of labor, unless under extraordinary circumstances. They are men of well balanced minds, remarkable for sterling integrity, consistent piety and prudence, but whose pulpit powers are but moderate. Unable to make a strong impression upon the multitude, they do not attract a crowd; but they acquire an influence in a community, as good and wise men, by their attention to the poor, their visits to the afflicted, their judicious counsels, &c. This influence is of comparatively slow growth; but it is constantly growing, and in the course of years it becomes very extensive. Many persons, not particularly interested on the subject of religion, attend upon their preaching because they have learned to respect and admire them out of the pulpit, and they are profited by their scriptural discourses.

Such ministers have much to lose by changing their field of labor. They are like men who, by close attention to business, have gradually, in the course of years, acquired a good capital, on which they are doing a fine business, and who, if they remove to another place, leave almost the whole of their capital to begin business, as it were, *de novo*. They must again go through the same course of labor for a series of years, in order to gain the influence they had in their former field.

There is another class of ministers whose usefulness requires frequent changes. They are men of strong impulses, but whose minds have not been, perhaps could not be, disciplined to close study and patient investigation. What they know, they can present attractively, pointedly, powerfully; because they preach with strong emotion and with great fluency. They make effective appeals to the sympathies of men, to their consciences and their hearts. They have an eloquence some-