

presented, the fact being that the men who have specially distinguished themselves in the Christian ministry have been, generally speaking, those who have longest occupied the same spheres, and that the churches which have taken the highest position in respect both of character and usefulness, have been those who have enjoyed the most settled ministry. Pastor and people have grown together strengthened by mutual love. In the respect and gratitude of the Christian community they stand associated; and in union will their names pass down to an admiring posterity—the complements of one another. The late Drs. Wardlaw, of Glasgow; Brown, of Edinburgh; and Smith, of Homerton; and Mr. Jay, of Bath; with Dr. Raffles, and Messrs. James and Binney—and their respective charges—may be named as examples in Britain, which we presume there would be little difficulty in paralleling in the United States, did we possess the requisite knowledge. The late Dr. Bogue, of Gosport, father of the London Missionary Society, spent nearly fifty years in that town, whose population at his death numbered less than 12,000; while the late Dr. Emmons, a recognized prince among New England theologians, held the pastorate of a small country church, at Franklin, Mass., (where he died at the age of 95), for nearly seventy years; and the father of Jonathan Edwards, whose place is among the giants, in their very fore-front, lived over sixty years as Pastor among one people.

Time would fail us were we attempting an enumeration of the men capable of better things, who have dwarfed themselves and destroyed their usefulness by their unsettledness,—or of the churches blighted and withered through the same means. I have never sympathized with the wonderment sometimes expressed at the slowness of the progress made by our principles in this country, or the feebleness of our churches. God be praised that he has kept me from the ungenerous-ness, and ingratitude, and blindness of such a course, as I trust he will ever do. The progress realized has been such as should call forth our devoutest and warmest thanksgiving; while the strength God has given us in His love should make us feel increasingly our obligation to labour for him and inspire us with a growing confidence in so doing. At the same time, our growth and present strength might have been greater, ought to have been, would have been, had we, as our late chairman remarked in his very admirable address to us the other morning, been more faithful to our principles. Of all we have to deplore—whether of weakness, or of cause furnished to the adversary for reproach—a large share must in justice be placed to the account of uncalled for, inconsiderate disruptions of the Pastoral relation.

If the things above advanced be correct, or make even a moderate approximation to correctness, it must be the duty of ministers and churches alike to seek by every means in their power to promote permanency in the pastorate, to establish it to the furthest practicable extent as the rule among our churches. Let both guard sedulously against everything in their own conduct tending to disturb a relation so sacred, and cultivate the dispositions and habits of action which would make its continuance an object of desire and a spring of blessing. The jealousy with which we repudiate interference from without should make us all the more careful to be a law to ourselves. We possess no right to do wrong; nor does any one who believes us to be doing wrong commit a crime by telling us plainly, provided he do it respectfully, that such is his opinion. To do so is a duty which he owes not less to us than to his Master and ours.

On what principle the opinion of neighbouring churches and brethren is to be altogether overlooked in connection with the dissolution of the Pastoral relation, while their countenance and co-operation are sought in its formation, we confess ourselves at a loss to understand. A healthful public sentiment among our churches on this point, as possibly also upon some others—a public sentiment which would make transgressors feel that it was at their peril they sinned—would be of incalculable service to us. There is an indecency, a gross indecency, to call it by no worse name, either in a church's tossing its pastor into empty space as a rotten potatoe may be pitched out of a field or garden, or a minister's divesting himself of the responsibilities which he voluntarily took upon himself amidst so much solemnity as he would of an old shoe.