

They may allow their affections to be weaned from a known and tried friend for the sake of a showy stranger, who may in fact prove a superficial charlatan. They may, as it sometimes happens, take steps, directly or indirectly, to substitute a "silver trumpet" for the "ram's horn"; and the injured pastor may give way and seek a new field of labour. The fastidious flock may obtain the object of their ambition—and that *without* the accompanying blessing of the Head of the Church. What profit can be expected? Even though he be a pious and evangelical minister, the people dwelling more on the excellence of the earthen vessel than on the treasure which it contains, may famish for lack of spiritual food. Every congregation should exercise great care in the choice of a pastor. The selection should be made conscientiously, and when once made, and the pastoral tie formed, all parties should feel that nothing short of the clear indication of the divine will can justify them in having that tie dissolved. Let morbid restlessness and craving for change be sternly checked. Man and wife should not prove more faithful to each other than pastor and people.

When a pastor changes his field of labor how much work requires to be done over again! It has taken years of patient toil to become thoroughly acquainted with the individual character of those under his care; and now in entering on a new field this task must be undertaken afresh. Removal also involves the severing of tender ties that bind minister and people to each other. Seldom is there full mutual acquiescence in the change; and no one but a pastor knows to the full the tenderness of the ties that must be broken. He it is who receives the mutual pledges of the bridal pair, and by the authority of God declares them husband and wife. From his hands drop the waters of baptism upon the consecrated offspring of every Christian family. To him the anxious soul, entering on the Christian course, unfolds its feelings, its difficulties and its doubts. In his ear the dying saint breathes his triumphs over the king of terrors and his prospects beyond the dark valley. With the daily incense from every family altar his name ascends to the ear of the "Hearer of prayer," and he becomes partaker with his people in their joys and sorrows. They look to him for counsel and instruction in life, and for comfort and encouragement at a dying hour. It is natural, therefore, that between him and them there should spring up an affection of peculiar depth and intensity. When such a feeling exists (and it ought always to co-exist with the pastoral relationship) it is evident that separation must be painful and may be injurious. We sincerely sympathise with pastor and people when God in his providence renders separation necessary, and we are persuaded that parting should never be thought of except when no other course is left. Church Courts should proceed with very great caution in the settlement of ministers. It is indeed a desirable thing to have the vacancies of the Church supplied; but much harm frequently results from premature settlements. When, after proper enquiry, however, and due deliberation, a settlement is effected, it commonly requires but a mutual effort on the part of the pastor, the people, and the Church generally, to discharge their respective duties, in order to obviate any necessity for removal till the Great Head of the Church calls His servant to enter upon the enjoyment of everlasting rest.

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