

not except for grave and cogent reasons, seek to have the relationship dissolved.

Sometimes it is the pastor who wishes to have the tie dissolved. In that case he should be very well satisfied as to the sufficiency of his reasons. Perhaps he is possessed of talents for the exercise of which his present field furnishes no scope. Then if a field offers which will afford opportunity for exercising all his gifts, he may be fully justified in entering upon it. He is responsible to God for the use he makes of his talents, and should take heed that not one of them lies buried. Is he seeking a larger income, or greater temporal advantages of any kind? Then the question arises, Does he already enjoy a competency? If his present field does not afford him the necessaries of life, there is no principle of reason or religion binding him to "serve at the altar" when he cannot "live by the altar." But separation should not be sought until every expedient has been exhausted in order to bring about a more satisfactory state of things. But if a pastor be already in the enjoyment of a competency, and if simply for the sake of a larger salary, or some other personal advantage, he is willing to separate from an attached flock, it is not difficult to show that he acts a part which is as inconsistent with the self-denying spirit of our holy religion, as it is with the character of a devoted and obedient servant of Him who though rich yet for our sakes became poor. *And when temporal advantages and personal conveniences are thus made prominent considerations in the choice of a field of labor to the casting into the background of providential indications of the divine will, it is not strange that such a choice should lead to disappointment, and perhaps prove a curse.*

It is not strange if in such a case, additional leanness be sent upon a spirit already poor; nor need it excite surprise if in the course of events, such an one should feel constrained to quit the field of his choice with lacerations of feeling and compunctions of conscience that may do much towards destroying his happiness to the end of his life. Nor are the consequences of such a course of action confined to the present state. "Son of man" saith God, "I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel"; and who that has mounted the watch-tower at the Master's bidding, can relinquish that watch-tower, not to serve the Master's ends, but his own, and then calmly look forward to that day when he shall give an account of his stewardship?

But the desire of change is not always—perhaps not most frequently—on the part of the pastor. There is a fastidiousness on the part of congregations, sometimes, that is very prejudicial to their own highest interests; and we fear we may say that at the present time this feeling is on the increase in the church. Change is sometimes useful; it may be even necessary. But it is not always so. It is often highly injurious. There are few changes against which there are stronger objections than to a change of pastors. If your minister is possessed of sincere piety; if he is constant and painstaking in the discharge of pastoral duties; then what motive can justify you in desiring a change? He may not be as eloquent as some of his brethren. His gifts and attainments may not be such as entitle him to a place in the front ranks. There are other qualifications as essential to ministerial usefulness as these; and it is well known that the success of the Christian pastor by no means depends upon the brilliancy of his talents or the extent of his erudition. Talents and attainments he requires; and the theme with which he deals in his doctrine is more than worthy of the highest gifts. But it is a fact specially worthy of notice that the most eloquent preachers are not always the most successful pastors. It is quite possible that a people may hear a preacher more learned, more eloquent, and more fashionable than their pastor.