

Against Hastening to Remove from our Post of Duty

By C H Spurgeon

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He was a wise man who said 'The roundest peg seldom fits into the roundest hole without some paring.' There is no position in life which, at the first, has not something irksome and trying about it. New-comers cannot expect to feel at home at once.

We remember our first wretched night at a school where we afterwards became supremely happy. Well do we recollect the misery of the first few months of a calling which we afterwards valued and enjoyed.

Our mind was sorely depressed on first coming into that sphere in London which has since been the delight of our life. Let no man, therefore, when he at first commences work in any place feel at all discouraged by the uneasiness which may come over him. It is natural that he should feel strange in a new position. The burden is not yet adapted to the shoulder, and the shoulder is not yet hardened to the load.

While feeling the irksomeness of a fresh position, do not be so foolish as to throw it up. Wait a little while, and time will work wonders. You will yet take pleasure in the very things which are now the source of discomfort. The very worst thing will be to hasten away and make a change, for the change will only bring trial in a fresh form, and you will endure afresh the evils which you have already almost mastered. The time which you have already spent at your new place will be lost, and the same weary first steps will have to be taken upon another ladder. Besides, you may readily leap out of the frying-pan into the fire. Change has charms to some men, but among its roses they find abundant thorns.

Has the minister just entered upon a fresh sphere, and does he miss the affectionate warmth of his old acquaintances? Does he find his new people strange and singular? Do they appear cold and distant? Let him persevere, and all this will wear off, and he will come to love the very people to whom he now feels an aversion, and find his best helpers among those who now seem to be utterly indifferent to him.

Has our young friend commenced teaching a class in the Sunday School, and does she find it far less pleasant work than she imagined? Are the children wild and careless and inattentive, and does her own power of teaching appear to be smaller than she hoped? Let her give double application to her holy toil, and she will come to love it. Should she leave it, she may incur the blame of those who put their hands to the plough and look back. The ice has been already broken; the edge has been taken off from the difficulty; let her persevere, and all will be well.

There is no position in this world without its disadvantages. We may be perpetually on the move to our continual disquiet, and each move may bring us under the same, or even greater, disadvantages. We remember a Scottish story of an unfortunate family who attributed all their troubles to their house being haunted by mischievous spirits. These superstitious individuals became at length desperate; nothing prospered in house or field, they would therefore pack up all and be gone from a spot so mysteriously infested. All the household goods were loaded up, and the husband, wife and the bairns were all flitting, when one of them cried out, 'The spirit is in the churn and is flitting, too.' Just so, the matters which hinder a man's success are generally in himself, and will move with him. There is bran in all meal, and there are dregs in all wine. All roads must at times be rough, and all seas must be tossed with tempest. To fly from trouble will need long wings, and to escape discomfort will require more than a magician's skill.

It is wiser to 'bear the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of'. It is probable that our present condition is the best possible for us, no other form of trial would be preferable. What right

have we to suspect the wisdom and the goodness of God in placing us where we are? It will be far more prudent to mistrust our own judgement when it leads us to murmuring and discontent. Occasionally it may be prudent to remove, or to change one's form of Christian service; but this must be done thoughtfully, prayerfully, and with a supreme regard to the glory of God, rather than out of respect to our own feelings.

A tree that is often transplanted will make but little growth, and bear but slender fruit. An increase of spiritual strength by greater communion with God, and a more resolute determination to glorify him in every possible way, will usually conquer difficulties and win success.

Double force will make easy that which now seems impossible. Do not, therefore, change the work, but change yourself. Attempt no other alteration till a distinct improvement in your own self has resolutely been carried out.

Look to the strong

We speak thus because we believe that many are discouraged at the outset of a career which, if they could see its end, would fill them with thankfulness; and Satan raises these discouragements to tempt them to leave a position in which they may damage his kingdom and glorify Christ. Courage, dear friend, you have a great Helper; look to the strong for strength. Say with Nehemiah, 'Should such a man as I flee?' Who are you that everything should be made smooth for your feet? Are you such a little babe in grace that only the slightest tasks should be allotted to you? Be a man, and play the man. Resolve that even at this present time, and where you now are, you will set up the standard, and hold the fort.

Many are the instances in which men have commenced their life-work under every possible disadvantage, and for months, and even years, they have seemed to make no headway whatsoever, and yet they have ultimately triumphed, and have come to bless the providence which called them into a place so well adapted for their gifts. It would have been their worst calamity if, under a fit of despondency, they had changed their station or relinquished their vocation. The church would have been the poorer, the world would have been the darker, and themselves the feebler, if they had shifted at the first even to the most promising spheres which tempted them.

That rock on which they stood, and mourned the hardness of the soil, was more full of the elements of fruitfulness than the softer soil at a little distance, which invited them to leave. Tarrying where they were, exercising indomitable perseverance, they have softened the granite, cultured it into fertility, and reaped a golden harvest.

If we desire to glorify God, we must not select the comfortable positions and the hopeful fields; it is best to make no selection, but to yield our own will to the will of God altogether. The hole is round enough, it will be difficult to make it any rounder; the proper plan is to round ourselves. If we will but adapt ourselves to our position, the position will adapt itself to us.

It may be that these lines will furnish counsel to a brother whose choice now lies between being a rolling stone and a pillar in the house of our God. To turn tail under present pressure may be the beginning of a cowardly career, neither honourable to God nor to man: to stand fast at this distressing juncture may be the commencement of an established position of supreme usefulness and honour.

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