

3. It is in the power of pastors in some cases to lessen or even to remove altogether the things of which the people complain and which tend, often with great rapidity, towards serious difficulties. A man may be naturally gloomy, or restless, or sensitive, or retiring; he may have become devoted to literary work, to philosophy, or to theological disquisition: but he is not an honest man if he accepts a call to the pastorate and does not subordinate all else in the spirit of his office, which is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit that rules in the body, to making his work as a pastor a success. One pastor has been in his congregation for years but "he hasn't yet got the length of our house." Another "hasn't been in our house for years." A third is "a very sensitive man, if any person says anything to him that grates on his feelings, or he hears anything that anyone has said, he can't meet that person. He is here often but he doesn't visit generally." A gentleman whom I occasionally meet has repeatedly remarked, "We never know when our minister will preach to us. I used to ask a friend to come with me to hear him, but we were disappointed so often I don't do it now. I think he must consider we haven't called him right the first time, perhaps we ought to call him over again. Another said of the same minister: "I wish he would go for good that we could call one that would stay at home. Our minister scarcely ever notices the young people of the congregation." A mother remarked recently, "our minister always speaks to the girls on the street but he never notices the boys. My boy will not go with us to church now, he has made a choice for himself and attends down street." It doesn't take much to make a beginning of trouble, but, behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire! The complaint of the neglect of family visitation (pastoral) is on the increase. "Our minister calls sometimes and chats freely but he never prays with the family." Presbyterian visitation might and ought to be able to prevent serious trouble rising from these and other removable causes: but I am inclined to think it ought to be gone about differently to accomplish very much. It ought to be attended to systematically and not in spurts; and instead of meeting the office-bearers and people only together, more might be accomplished by meeting with the office-bearers first and enquiring into matters from their point of view. The object is