

ledge of the world and the thoughts that men think will give one power to drop a word in season. In answer to an objection rising from being defeated and thrown back in trying thus to do good, it has been said, "Is not that because you always think of yourself, and carry your own intellectual self and perceptions foremost and uppermost? A touch of true human nature would find them and melt them, and bear them down; but I admit it is no easy work. Yet I must say I have had some depressing experiences. I very well remember when I was a young curate, calling upon a poor old woman. Perhaps I seemed like a 'prentice hand at my work, I can't say; but the old body attempted her best to put me at my ease by saying, "Now young man, I see you are a young'un, don't be nervous, all you have to do is to read a short psalm and give me a shilling." In our intercourse, too, with people it is quite possible that a better side of our own nature may become known to them. "Ma," said a little girl to her mother on returning from church, "I like our preacher when he comes to see us, but I don't like to hear him preach." On being asked why, the response was, "His preaching sounded like scolding all the time."

2. We remark that *pastoral visitation is advantageous as a means of getting at the particular state of individuals.* To reach men personally often requires kindly dealing and touching appeals to their conscience. "Thou art the man," when honestly and wisely said, is likely to produce thought. This is coming to close quarters. It is taking aim, with the great end in view of bringing a soul to Jesus. All experience shows that consciences can thus be dealt with in a way most likely to do good. Dr. Spencer's *Pastoral Sketches* is a book containing many striking instances of this. As a means of explaining difficulties, meeting objections or giving simple illustrations of truth, the value of this pastoral watch-care is immense. Let us hear Baxter in the *Reformed Pastor* on this point:

"It is needless to make any further question of our obligation, when we know that this work is needful to our people's conversion and salvation, and that we are in general commanded to do all that is needful to those ends as far as we are able. Whether the unconverted have need of conversion, I hope is not doubted among us. And whether this be a means, and a most important means, experience may put beyond a doubt, if we had no more. Let them that have taken most pains in public examine their people and try whether many of them are not nearly as ignorant and careless as if they had never heard the Gospel. For my part I study to speak as plainly and movingly as I can—and next to my study to speak truly, these are my chief studies, and yet I frequently meet with persons that have been hearers eight or ten years, who know not whether Christ be God or man, and wonder when I tell them the history of His birth, and life and death, as if they had never heard it before. And of those who know the history of the Gospel, how few are there who know the nature of that faith, repentance and holiness which it requireth, or at least, who know their own hearts. But most of them have an ungrounded trust in Christ, hoping that He will pardon, justify and save them, while the world hath their hearts, and they live to the flesh. And this they take for justifying faith. I have found by experience that some ignorant persons who have been so long unprofitable hearers, have got more knowledge and remorse of conscience in half an hour's close discourse than they did from ten years' public preaching. I know that preaching the Gospel publicly is the most excellent means, because we speak to many at once; but it is usually