

inaries only. The work itself is the conversion of individual souls.

Oh! never cease, my brethren, never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are, or shall be, committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God; and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion or for viciousness of life.

If I am asked how a clergyman is to bring himself so close to his people as to deal effectually with individual souls, I should say: Tell your people plainly, in your sermons, and in your conversations, that this is what you want to do. Ask them, entreat them to speak freely to you of their hopes, their fears, their doubts and distresses. And when they come to do so, make everything give way to their necessities. Let even important business go, rather than lose the opportunity of winning—of helping a soul—rather than freeze expanding sympathies by any indication of inconvenience or hurry. And I would say, too, endeavour to make your pastoral visits the means of spiritual edification.

There are difficulties here, perhaps; but very often we make them for ourselves. Very often, that spiritual character, which we shrink from impressing upon our visit, is just what those visited expect and desire. Begin, and a spiritual confidence will grow up, that will bring you and your parishioners close together soul to soul. And then it is, when souls touch, that the divine spark of converting grace passes between them.

And here we come to that other point upon which I proposed to speak—the state of our own personal religion. To kindle others, we must first burn ourselves. The preach-