

very clever, we are only professional men. And will they not be tempted to think so; if we seldom or never visit them, if our earnestness is merely that of the pulpit, expending itself in public appeals, mere general exhortations, addressed to the mass? What a moral power has that preacher who can reach the affections of his hearers, who can move them to tears by the tenderness of his appeals. But how much greater the moral power of the minister who by such an intimate acquaintance with his people, as can only be given by pastoral visitation, has their consciences on his side and has won their hearts. The sermon of such an one, though it may contain but little that is striking and original, and affording no evidence of either great genius or eloquence, but meriting only the name of a plain, earnest gospel sermon, is possessed of a moral power and productive of moral results, far greater and more abiding than the most brilliant effort of the mere sensational preacher.

If we further consider that many of the impressions produced by preaching and that might have ripened into conversion, are lost because not followed up by personal and private dealing with the individual impressed, and that our visits to the flock often suggest subjects for discourse and afford us an opportunity of studying human nature in its exceedingly diversified forms and phases, even more valuable than that afforded by the study of the best book on mental and moral science, it will we think be admitted that pastoral visitation contributes to the moral power of the preacher.

4th. The spiritual benefit to be derived by the pastor himself from the work, is worthy of notice in this connection. How great the spiritual comfort and benefit a pastor often derives from fellowship with the more devoted of his flock. Fearing as he often does, that his preaching is doing little or no good, how is he cheered in his work when some of his people whose opinion he most values, have the honesty and kindness to tell him that his ministrations are most profitable to them. Of not less profit are those to him spiritually, in whom he takes less comfort, in whose conduct as inconsistent he has no complacency, whose indolence, or worldliness, or instability, calls for remonstrance, rebuke, reproof. For do not their faults exercise and thereby strengthen his virtues? It is in the rough battle of life, and not in the cell of the hermit, that the graces and virtues of the private Christian are developed, strengthened and perfected; and it is not in the seclusion of the study merely, nor even in the delightful fellowship of the more spiritual of the flock, that the man of God is perfected, thoroughly furnished unto every good work, but in the hand to hand conflict with the unbelief, the procrastination, the indifference of the unconverted in his congregation, and the waywardness, ignorance, and apathy of many who name the name of Christ. This is the school in which he not only teaches, but is himself taught, patience, humility, forbearance, wisdom, gentleness, courage, faith.

The position of the pastor is in some respects like, and in others unlike one of the ancients, who had many servants, some good and others very