

ness, and enable him to use for the benefit of all what he has learned of common human needs from his private intercourse with each.

"The pulpit, however, has attractions of its own, which are in danger of casting the work of the pastor into the shade. There is great delight in the exercise of the mental powers employed in this function—in thinking out the sublime truths of Scripture, in arranging them in lucid order, in calling on the resources of imagination for their illustration; in seeking to find out acceptable words; in the animated utterance of thought under the stimulus of a public assembly; and in conscious power over the minds and hearts of men. Converse with books and thoughts, the ripest fruits of the studies of the living, and communion with the mighty dead—this is not so much labour as it is luxury. And in public address the speaker has it all his own way. He knows what he means to say, and says it as he means to. He can skilfully avoid difficulties. He is safe from question and reply. The tide of discourse flows on smoothly to its decorous and hallowed ending.

"This is not the hardest labour of a pastor's life, though to him, who rightly appreciates his responsibilities, is more than a thinker, scholar and orator, aims to win souls by means of the truth of God, preaching is a grave and earnest concern, undertaken and carried on with prayerful solicitude for the attainment of its highest end. But it is when we take men out of the pew, one by one, seek to discover the *status* Godward of every member of every family in our congregation, 'to give to every man his portion of meat in due season,' to 'warn every man and teach every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,' it is in this hand-to-hand, foot-to-foot combat that the real toil and effort of the watchman for souls begins.

"There is a difficulty, which often baffles the most earnest and ingenious fisher of men, in gaining access to each individual member of a congregation. Household visitation, however frequent, seldom brings us into contact with a whole family, and if it does, fails to present an opportunity for that dealing 'between thee and him alone' with each one of the circle, without which little can be accomplished. It is difficult to see a man of business, a mechanic, a clerk, a student, and many another, at such a time as is suitable alike to him, and the man of God who wants to help him. One must make opportunities, seize chance moments of meeting together, use paper and ink, and so on, to reach cases of this kind, so numerous and so important.

"Oftentimes, the circumstances of a visit to a particular household—the pressure of domestic occupations, the presence of other visitors, and the persistent unwillingness to converse on Christian themes, especially in their personal aspects, defeat the pastor's object and send him away disappointed and discouraged. In spite of all these hindrances, however, little imagined beforehand by the young dreamer about the ministry, and too little perceived by complainants about pastoral neglects—so vital is this part of the work, that it must be done; done not of necessity, but willingly; done, not in a formal, official, mechanical way, but naturally, cheerfully, with a wise flexibility of adaptation to all sorts and conditions of men, after the manner of Him who sat by the well of Samaria, took His place at the table of Simon the Pharisee, made Himself at home in the house of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, and in these and other unlikelier situations ever dropped the word in season, whether to an individual soul, a family, a company of guests, a synagogue-congregation, or a multitude by the sea shore, on the mountain slopes, or in the courts of His Father's house. Oh, for that abundance of heart out of which the mouth speaketh; that yearning compassion for men as sheep without a shepherd; that wisdom which knows what is in man; that power with God in personal intercession!

"Hindrances enough to our work there are without, in other men, but far more within, from ourselves. Notwithstanding the unwillingness of many to be addressed personally on religious subjects, there are many others, everywhere, who are waiting and longing to be spoken to; wondering much that no one does it;