

many, that we can scarcely do more than indicate a few of the more prominent.

They are moreover reciprocal, they affect both pastor and people, and in speaking of them, we desire as much as possible to treat them conjointly rather than respectively.

1st. Pastoral visitation helps the people to live well, and the pastor to rule well. What but living well on the part of the people is the great object contemplated by the institution of the pastor's office? The great Head of the Church gave pastors for the perfecting of the saints. Unquestionably, holy living is one great end of the public preaching of the word; we should perhaps say, the great end, the ultimate, but still not the direct and immediate result.

Instruction is imparted systematically in the great truths of God's Word, with a view, it is true, to holy living, but not less to the correction of ideas, the refutation of errors, the explanation and illustration of the plan of salvation, conviction, conversion, comfort, edification, doctrinal instruction. On the part of the preacher, preaching, though not without heart, is still in the main, an exercise of the creative intellect; on the part of the hearer, hearing is an exercise of the receptive understanding.

In pastoral visitation, on the other hand, the life of the people is reached more directly and immediately. Here the minister deals not so much with thoughts, and things, and abstractions, as with individuals themselves, inquiring into their life, their hopes, the state of their affections towards God and things divine, their faithfulness to duty—personal, family and church. The teaching is purely practical, affectionately rebuking inconsistencies, stimulating effort, suggesting improvements, and urging their consecration to God. Thus the visited is taken for the time being out of the region of speculative hearing, (and how much hearing goes no further,) and forced to realize his personal responsibility. Listening to the sermon of the preacher, he may only flatter himself that he can appreciate the beauty of the diction, the aptness of the illustration, the logic of the argument; but listening to the plain speech of the visiting pastor, the affectionate exhortation to a holy life, the faithful reproof of sin, the earnest inquiry as to his spiritual state, he is made to feel, and unless irritated or hardened, will be made a better man.

But so also will visiting aid the pastor in governing. Whether it be the rule of a kingdom, or a family, or a church, it is most true, that they govern best who govern least. In all well regulated states, the prevention of crimes and disorders is regarded as a question of higher statemanship than the question of punishing them. So it will be in the government of a church. Much as we value the exercise of strict discipline, we value much more the wise government that makes the resort to discipline seldom necessary. And in no way can this be better effected, than by a system of judicious pastoral visitation.