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How shall we best attract the people to church? Is it by eloquent preaching? By *quasi* ritualistic services? By well trained choirs, splendid organs, beautifully executed music? Is there no other, no better, more scriptural way, and one more becoming the Gospel simplicity, for which we claim credit, as the distinguishing characteristic of Presbyterianism?

That the services should be conducted decently and in order, that the various portions of our worship should be the best of their kind to which we can attain, few will venture to deny or hesitate to admit. That no minister has a right to go into the pulpit to lay before his people ill considered, hastily prepared and crude essays, misnamed sermons, no one can doubt. It is plainly the duty of every minister to devote his best talents to the service of the Lord, to preach eloquently if he can, to vary his prayers to suit the varying wants of his flock, and not to trust to the spur of the moment to string together a series of ill connected sentences, full of repetitions; prayers, in fact, which have, as it were, become stereotyped, so that the people can tell almost from the opening sentence the exact sequence of every other. These have all the disadvantages of a liturgy, without any of the advantages claimed for a set form by those who advocate its adoption. That the service of praise should be improved will scarcely be disputed, although it is necessary to guard against abandoning the solemnity and seriousness with which a body of worshippers should approach their Maker's Throne; "a grave, sweet melody" should be the rule, and one to be strictly adhered to. On no pretext should mere theatrical displays to captivate the unthinking be permitted.

But granting that all has been done that can be accomplished to make the House of God attractive, do a pastor's duties end there? The very name shows that they do not. As a pastor it is for him to know his

flock; to watch over them individually; to know not only the heads of families, but also the little ones—the lambs of the flock. It is sometimes urged that other duties so encroach on the time of the pastor that he cannot attend to pastoral visitation. There is public business to be attended to; a lecture to be prepared for delivery before some society or other; societies to be organized for penny readings, or some other object equally laudable, but which might be quite as well managed by others whose time could be better spared. Some from ambition to found outside stations, extend the bounds of their charges till they are so unwieldy that it is impossible to do justice to any one part of them. With these last we confess to have much sympathy, for with the present dearth of ministers to occupy the pulpits of the congregations who are able and willing to support a minister, a zealous man cannot but feel how desirable it is to carry the blessings of the Gospel to those who are ready to perish. What we wish to discover now, however, is why so many churches are in a declining state. The proper means of reaching the outlying wastes is another and a very important question.

To give life and vigour to a congregation, the minister must feel that his sphere of action is not merely the pulpit, and the Sabbath day the limit of his work. There is more real good done by the quiet talk in the family circle, more lightening of care and inspiring of faith in the love of a Saviour, by the sympathy of His servant in the struggles and trials of every day life to which those committed to his care are exposed, than can ever be effected by formal official visitations, however regularly performed. The informal call on a Monday to see if the absentee from church on the previous day had been ill, and the knowledge this conveys that the absence has been marked, will be far more effectual in main-