

world." Why is it that some men, whose pulpit abilities are below mediocrity, are so successful in the ministry—not a year passing without the conversion of souls under their labours? The secret of their success lies in *frequent visiting*. The most eloquent preachers, on the other hand, through an omission of this duty, are compelled to mourn over labours apparently useless. No man is fit to be called a pastor who neglects this duty.

Observe, however, it should not be permitted to come in contact with other duties already pointed out. There is a vast difference between visiting *none*, and visiting *all the time*. That eminent divine, Dr. Doddridge, laid it down as a rule, that a minister should not be bound to pay a pastoral visit to each family within his charge oftener than twice a year; though he might go more frequently, if circumstances would allow.

I said that this duty has been abused. It certainly has, when we do not make these visits subservient to the great end of our calling, the salvation of sinners. But I invite particular attention to a practice very prevalent among Methodist preachers, and which, perhaps, arises in part from the nature of our itinerant work. It is that of spending day after day and night after night in the houses of the people,—not in a private apartment, for pious meditation, mental improvement, or wrestling with God, but in the family circle to *while away the time*. The important duties of the pastoral office are lost sight of, and the minister of Christ sinks down to the level of a common *visitor*. Far be it from me, however, to charge our excellent system of itinerancy with having any tendency in that direction: I assert only, that the practice of travelling into so many different neighbourhoods is liable to such an abuse. Perhaps, also, the neglect of the people to supply their minister with a suitable home, may contribute to the evil; still the latter will always, by a judicious arrangement of some kind, have it in his power to guard against it. And, let me add, his character as a minister is involved in his conduct in this matter.

I shall finally particularize *the care of the young*, as constituting an essential part of the minister's work. "Feed my lambs", is an exhortation virtually addressed to every messenger of the cross.—At least one third of our congregations will be found to be composed of children and youth. Instructions addressed to their minds are apt to be treasured up. Discourses should occasionally be delivered especially to them. The claims of society upon them should be distinctly set forth. They should be taught the advantages of early piety. To this end, Sabbath schools and Bible classes ought to be established. The pastor must see that they are properly conducted. If need be, he must take the charge of some, and he should have the general superintendence of all, of them. Children should be taught to study the Bible, to understand its doctrines, and to live in accordance with its precepts. Were this department properly attended to, a salutary change in the state of society