

IV. THE PRIESTS ARE SHEPHERDS.

Most beautiful of all the figures is that of the shepherd! "I am the good shepherd," cries the Lord, "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep." Chief among the qualities of the shepherd is his knowledge of the sheep. "I know My sheep and am known of Mine. My sheep heareth My voice and followeth it, but the voice of the stranger will they not follow."

How then is the shepherd to know his sheep? And there at once occurs the thought of parochial visiting. No priest can do his work well or get to know his people unless he visits them in their homes. But the people must make it possible for him to make genuine pastoral calls. Do you think that is being done when out of five hundred calls, three hundred of them are pasteboard calls? Is it right to ask a priest to spend valuable time in that way? No man but a clergyman would ever humble himself enough to do it. It scarcely comports with the dignity of the priesthood to go about the parish pushing cards through the letter-box slits in the front doors of people's homes! How often he has wanted and tried to meet his people but the conventions of society make it impossible, and years pass before he personally knows many of the church members. Ought not the people to manifest as great a desire to know their priest as the priest continually manifests to know the people? A little mutuality in this respect would help towards the functions of the shepherd.

Then, too, the shepherd must guide the sheep. The old days of driving the flock have happily passed away. It is now the dear privilege of the pastor to lead his flock beside the still waters and into the green pastures. But is the flock willing to be led? Is there not often opposition to being guided? People are