

HINTS ON PASTORAL WORK.*

How to turn pastoral work to educational account, and be a better student and preacher because one is a better pastor, is a problem worth considering; for "the people" our young minister serves are all glad to have him "call" and "visit;" the oftener and the longer the better. So they think and so they say, and this gives to our brother several hints which he is not slow to adopt.

He will not call or visit in the morning, unless in cases of extreme necessity, and these cases rarely occur. His private memorandum is, "A. M. in L.," which being interpreted is, "morning in library." He has underscored it with a crooked, saw-like line, expressive of his energy of purpose. He has said it in tones of energy both in private and pulpit until everybody knows that he will not be interrupted. Even old "Father —," the oldest and most influential and (be it said respectfully), in these latter days the most garrulous of all the stewards, who bored the last pastor by his frequent and protracted calls; even he has found out that the new man cannot be seen before one o'clock p.m. He tried and was foiled, and having failed utterly gave up the quest. The whole church soon knew that the pastor was inaccessible every morning. And the church liked it. They liked to tell it. It reflected credit on themselves and on their minister. And it told on the sermons preached on Sabbath days. The *verve* and the aroma of the morning hours were in them. The outsiders were attracted. The insiders were instructed.

But he did "call." He had a way of "calling" on the street. He had the art of saying more and of getting more out of the people he talked to, even when they chanced to meet, than most men who went and sat and stayed in professional form. He put his earnest life into smile and hand-grasp. He asked questions, gave information, canvassed some item of church business, found out about "wife and children," where they were, how they were, and what their plans for the near future. Somehow when that evening the head of the house reported to the heart of the house that casual conversation, and the children heard how the pastor had asked for them all by name, and had sent a motto to them to be repeated every day, they all felt that the pastor had called on them that day. They were the more sure to be at church the next Sunday.

Frequently when this pastoral pastor met men on the street or in the shop, there would come a word, a bow, a shake, a smile, a question, a hint, a proverb, a sally of wit, an answer to some echo of doubt, a bit of raillery more in earnest than in fun, and a sceptical fellow, leaving the friendly pastor, promised himself to "go to hear that man preach;" and somehow, as a casual question which had been asked in the brief conversation would recur, the sceptic had a feeling at the heart as if his mother had called to him out of the unseen, or as if he had heard an exhortation at a revival.

* Abridged from "The Itinerant's Club," in the *Methodist Review*. This is an unsigned article, but if its internal evidence does not indicate Bishop Vincent as its author, we are greatly mistaken.—ED.