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## PASTORAL VISITATION. \*

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The old adage, that "a house-going minister makes a church-going people," has some truth in it. We cannot, however, forbear stating in the outset our conviction that the regular work of preaching demands the best efforts. An efficient and conscientious discharge of the duties of the pulpit must form the groundwork of success in all the departments of usefulness open to a faithful pastor. Indeed, the carefulness of thorough preparation and an able advocacy of truth in public will aid the worker in his subsequent duties. In the circumstances of our country and times we may be sure that nothing will make amends for weakness in the exposition of the Word of God, and the enforcement of the great truths of the gospel. The call, however, for more frequent visitation on the part of a people ought to be wisely considered and yielded to, so far as the great end in view, even the salvation and edification of souls, is advanced. We make no account in this place of the cry as it originates in a fault-finding spirit. In all probability a people who love their minister will never be able to see enough of him, while frequently the spirit of dissatisfaction finds vent in the remark, "he never visits." There are two extremes which we must avoid: let it not be justly said, "there he comes at last," or, "here he comes again." Neither too seldom nor too often.

Pastoral visitation we regard as an important part of ministerial work. In that sublime address of Paul to the elders of the church at Ephesus, which contains a summary of our general business, "serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears;" of our special work, "take heed to yourselves and to all the flock"; and of our doctrine, "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ"; there is a statement of the place and manner of teaching, "how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house." This is sufficient scriptural authority for the custom. In fact the thing itself amounts to this, personal inspection and vigilance that our public work be not lost. It is, to use a figura-

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