

usually made or marred for eternity. At such a time he stands much in need of the loving counsel and care of his pastor, and he that is "wise to win souls" will not be an idle spectator of the young man during these years; and though there may be much in his tastes and temper fitted to repel, yet every one knows that no young heart is altogether proof against such approaches. Moreover, after the transition period may be regarded as past, after a graver stage of life has been attained, and a more sober cast of thought has set in, many a one has sighed for the purer faith and the holier joy which once was his, and has begun to look wistfully to a religious life and to long for light on the dark problems that were disturbing him. In such a case he would welcome a true man to speak with him, not in a pompous, perfunctory way, but frankly and affectionately—would welcome such a man as an angel of God. This is what the true Minister, and one *watching for souls as those that have to give an account*, will do. He will gladly avail himself of such opportunities as he can find—not *make*—to bring such to their right mind. This is what not a few Ministers, as the Committee discovered last year, lay out to do. Alarmed at the extent of non-profession among their adherents, notably among young men, they seek to improve the occasion of their pastoral rounds for the special benefit of such young persons—of dealing privately and personally with them, and bringing before them the solemn truth of God, and the Committee are persuaded that if more efforts of this kind were put forth—more private and personal dealing were resorted to, in regard to those that are standing aloof from the Holy Communion—a great change for the better would soon be effected all over the Church.

There is reason to fear that the pastoral office, which from its very nature implies an individual and personal, as well as a general oversight, of those that place themselves under the care of a Minister, has been greatly lowered and suffered to go into abeyance. The Minister is often merely a preacher, speaking to the people on Sunday in their collective capacity, exchanging civilities with a few of them on Monday, but a perfect stranger to their hearts and their deeper wants and aspirations. In their report last year the Committee ventured to recommend this very thing, especially in the interest of the young—those growing up to manhood, whose hearts had never responded to the invitations of the Gospel; and they noted that 27 Ministers out of 60 who made returns last year acted upon this principle. The Committee would renew that recommendation in this connection, and would call attention to the permanent obligation of the Christian Ministry to deal habitually with their people in a more close, personal and loving manner than has been common; for this will make the Ministry a far more real and blessed thing than it often is, and it will be productive of far more saving benefit to those thus treated—not in figures but in fact, as a physician treats his patient, or a shepherd treats his flock.

Question III. [see Q.]—Only 27 of the Congregations reporting condescend to name the proportion attending the regular service, and putting all these together the average of our people attending the regular service is a little over seven-twelfths. Then with regard to the prayer meeting during the week, the almost universal complaint is that the attendance—put down at one-tenth by several—is most discouraging. Nothing very definite can be gathered from these sheets in regard to the meetings for prayer. The main fact which strikes the Committee in this connection is the small attendance of our people on the regular Sabbath service. While seven-twelfths is about the ascertained average of those reporting, some put down the attend-

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