

REPORT FROM THE CARRYING PLACE.

Amount of Subscriptions during the year	£16 16 0
Collections after Sermons.....	2 12 0
	£18 7 0
‡ of collection 1869-70 sent Central Board, Toronto	5 10 0
Students' Fund, collection " ..	2 9 12
Mission Fund, " ..	2 4 6½
Widows and Orphans, " ..	2 10 1
Sustentation Fund, " ..	3 12 6
Gen. Pur. Fund, Jan. col. " ..	2 10 0
Total sent to Toronto.	£18 16 3
To Maryborough Missionary	£25 0 0
" Garden Cottage School.....	7 10 0
" Sundry School books and papers..	8 0 0
" Soxton, for attendance.....	0 10 0
Prayer Books, Testaments, &c	7 1 6
	£61 17 9

From Hillier, Marysburgh, Sophiasburgh, no report.

T. FOSTER,
Sec. pro. tem.

AN ESSAY ON PAROCHIAL VISITING.

Read before the Home District Clerical Association, March 19th, 1861, by the Rev. W. S. Darling, assistant Minister of the Holy Trinity Church, Toronto, and published by request.

No earnest minded parish priest can fail to be deeply alive to the great necessity and importance of the regular and systematic visitation of his parishioners. Apart from all considerations of profit to himself and the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer, he is bound to fulfil this part of his duty, if he would deliver his own soul from blood guiltiness, and if he would be instrumental in delivering the souls of others from the power and penalty of sin. It may be safely said that no clergyman, however able and exemplary his other ministrations, over-exerted that influence for good over his flock, to which he might legitimately have laid claim, who habitually fails to discharge this part of his duty. And while as an individual he thus loses power over the individual members of his flock, the church at large, through the same fault, suffers both in the estimation of her own children and in the opinions of those who are without.

Duties of great importance and necessity however, are commonly duties of considerable difficulty, and that of pastoral visitation forms no exception to this rule. It may be asserted with some confidence that it is an almost instinctive feeling of the difficulty of its proper and efficient discharge, that deters some of the clergy from devoting themselves to this department of their work with the zeal which they display in others.

Its difficulty arises from a great variety of causes—but at present we will advert to two only, the first of which springs from ourselves, the other arises from those to whom we are called to minister.

As regards ourselves, we are tempted to shrink from the fulfilment of this duty by the feeling that, in prospect at least, it is for the most part very irksome, and this feeling of repugnance is of course stronger in some minds than others, in consequence of peculiarities of individual temperament.

The fastidious man feels himself repelled by course manners, and if his lot is cast in a town or city he will at times find it necessary to put force upon himself, before he can face the filth and squalor and degradation which not unfre-

quently marks the dwellings of the poor and vicious who specially need his ministrations.

The young man who happens to possess a shy or timid manner will be sensible of a great and almost painful effort before he can bring himself to call upon those to whom perhaps he is an utter stranger, and to admonish those who it may be are far his seniors in age.

The earnest hearted and devout will be tempted to despair when, on reviewing the conversation which has taken place between himself and his parishioner, he sees how then he failed in the moral courage which was necessary to make some home thrust, and how how he allowed his most direct appeal to be parried by some conventional phraseology, or some miserable common-place.

The great bulk of the clergy feel that to spend day after day in constant intercourse with those who in education, feelings and social position, are, as the great mass of their parishioners must always be, inferior in these respects to themselves; to labour in the proof of what is self-evident, often without success, to endeavour with the like result to disabuse their minds of errors, which are as proposterous as they are mischievous—to meet with indifference which we are unable to overcome—with hardness which we are powerless to soften—with ignorance increased in a triple panoply of presumption—to labour on among those with whom we seem to have nothing in common, and to labour on with little apparent result, this is no small trial to our poor feeble faith, and many who have begun this important part of their work zealously and diligently, have allowed such discouragements as have been alluded to so to cast them down that they have become weary of what appeared to them so barren of good results.

In thus briefly hinting at a few of the difficulties of this work arising from ourselves, some of those arising from our flock have been, also indicated, this with yet greater brevity. They may, notwithstanding the vast variety of their aspects, be summed up in this general assertion, that there is to be observed among all classes an almost unconscious dread of our coming, as it were to too close quarters with them on those matters which influence their own spiritual state—an adroitness in turning aside the point of any observation which may seem to have any direct application to their own individual cases; and a resolution in all our intercourse with them to keep on the safe ground of the merest generalities. Before leaving this part of the subject it may, for the sake of connexion be observed, that we are ourselves almost as apt to shrink from closer and deeper communion on these points as our parishioners, and that the want of it is often as deeply felt and deplored by them as by us. As we are referring at present only to the difficulties of this portion of our office, any suggestion by which they may be overcome must be postponed.

But beside the difficulties which encompass the fulfilment of this duty, there are also great dangers against which we must ever be on our guard. Dangers of which we must all to a greater or less degree be sensible, and which threaten both our own souls, and the souls of those committed to our care.

Every parish must have felt how much greater the difficulties are of ministering directly to the upper class of our parishioners, than to those of a more humble station, and in no department of duty are these difficulties more manifest than in parochial ministrations. There is a sort of conventional restraint which embarrasses such persons when topics of a grave nature are introduced, which often leads to so great a feeling of discomfort on both sides as to prove a constant and too frequently successful temptation to slip into the

common place subjects of ordinary conversation, and we leave the house with the unsatisfactory conviction that instead of having paid a visit, we have merely made "a call." It is not said that such calls are not of use, or that even if we fail in being able to turn them to better account, we should therefore neglect them—nothing should be omitted by us which may tend to cultivate a kind and friendly feeling between ourselves and all the members of our flock, and we must not consider ourselves exonerated from the obligation to attend to the proper attentions and conventionalities of society. It is merely suggested that the temptation to be satisfied with making mere "calls" upon the higher class of our parishioners, is a great danger to which we are exposed, and which every conscientious clergyman has felt—a danger which it requires unusual tact, earnestness, and ability altogether to avoid. To assume an unreal and professional sort of gravity—to feel ourselves bound to adopt a stiff and unnatural manner is a mistake so great as to be seldom fallen into, unless by young men who unite great conscientiousness, and a deep sense of the responsibility of their office with inexperience and ignorance of mankind—to drag in the subject of religion upon all occasions, is so offensive and indeed so irreverent that it has even been productive of more harm than good. But in avoiding one error we are bound to be very watchful against the great danger of falling into the opposite mistake; in avoiding assumed gravity we must in our earlier days especially be watchful against yielding to our natural levity, and in guarding against our unwise introduction of the subject of religion, we must be careful lest we fall into the equally great error of leaving it out altogether.

Every one however who feels bound to make the attempt to steer this middle course must be ready to acknowledge how much more easy it is to point the way to others than to follow it himself.

The suggestion of Professor Blunt in his very valuable book, "The Duties of the Parish Priest," that with the class of our parishioners alluded to, our conversation on ordinary occasions should be ecclesiastical rather than religious, appears the most judicious course that can be adopted, and the experience of the writer convinces him, that it is in attempting to follow out that suggestion that the best and most frequent opportunities occur for adverting briefly but naturally to those deeper and more directly spiritual topics to which we should ever be anxious to refer, remembering that the nature of the work we are called upon to do is nothing less than to "win souls to Christ."

In visiting our parishioners of the humble class we are at once set free from the difficulties which encompass our pastoral intercourse with those just alluded to, but we meet with others hardly less formidable in the danger to which they expose both the shepherd and the sheep. As this, however, is a paper read before those who having been for the most part for years in orders, and not a treatise intended for the instruction of those about to enter upon the work, there is no necessity as there is no space to enter upon any detailed description of them. It may suffice to give expression to what we all have felt that much of the unprofitableness of our religious intercourse with this portion of our flock is to be attributed to our want of some definite object in our visits. We are too apt to "drop in" upon a parishioner of this class, without thinking of any special topic of religious faith or duty to be urged upon his attention, and therefore, after the ordinary salutations and common places are over, we often feel somewhat at a loss how to proceed,