

Not to mention the demands made on the minister's time by callers on all kinds of business, especially in town and city charges, and by much driving in large and rural charges; nor the difficulty of not finding the various members of the family at home, even when the visitation is announced; another serious difficulty presents itself in the general want of responsiveness on the part of the people to all religious conversation. The minister is helped by interchanges of thought on all subjects from weather to politics, but when religion is introduced silence seals their lips. This leaves the pastor to grope his way as well as he can, and he may be as successful as the Syrian archer who drew his bow at a venture; but he may, on the other hand, take wrong aim, and do nothing or worse than nothing.

But it is not well to dwell too long on the difficulties met with in this or any other good work, lest we be discouraged. Look at them long enough to measure their greatness, and so to summon enough force to surmount them. For our encouragement we should notice some of the *advantages*. Preëminently the work of the Christian minister is to preach the word of God, and so to preach it as to meet the spiritual needs of the members of his flock. He is not to be a mere theorist, but a living power for good—a practical preacher. But in order to do this he must be acquainted with more than the Word. He must be familiar with those to whom he communicates, that he may *rightly* divide the word of truth. And there is no better way of becoming acquainted with the spiritual wants of his flock than the personal contact of pastor and people which takes place in pastoral visitation. Thus the preacher is ever provided with subjects fresh and interesting. He is also helped very much in determining the mode of treating these subjects. This is no small advantage. We are ever prone to fall into ruts, or by constantly repeating wear out ruts for ourselves. But the variety of thought suggested in the various conversations in the round of pastoral visitation guards against this.

Moreover, when this work is done as frequently as possible, done wisely and with true sympathy, it is a wonderful agency in winning the confidence of the people. They are kind to their pastor. I think it is Spurgeon who is credited with saying, "A visiting minister makes a church-going people."

Pastoral visitation also affords a minister opportunities for doing good which cannot be secured otherwise. At the homes of his people he sometimes meets persons who never go to church, and who it may be have not heard the word read nor a prayer offered for years. Sometimes in this way the careless are aroused. Then again, in private conversation with the members of his flock, the pastor discovers the peculiar traits of character belonging to each, and the difficulties which beset these; and is thus enabled to afford direction or help or comfort, as the case may require.

Did space permit, much more on other points of this subject might be written, but enough for the present.

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## THE TRAINING AND STATUS OF THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS IN THE EARLY DAYS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE reader of this article is not to expect any disquisition on the general subject—not even a systematic treatment of any aspect of it, but merely a few suggestions drawn from the story of the Apostles.

The Christian Church has been so long and so universally in the habit of looking on our Lord's first followers as unlettered and ignorant men, that no note