

## VISITING AS PART OF A CLERGYMAN'S WORK.

A Paper by the Rev. R. Hewton, of Maple Grove, read before the Ruri-Decanal Chapter of the District of Quebec.—(Continued.)

II. We come now to Regular Pastoral Visiting. This branch of Parochial work stands next in importance to visiting the sick.

My rule is to visit everybody under my charge regularly twice a year. In those visits a great deal may be done, but it must be done with tact. Apply the rule of common sense however, and we need not fear the result. If we bear in mind that we are doing Christ's work and endeavour to do it as He would have it done, we cannot go far wrong in this part of our duty. As a rule it is not a difficult matter to lead the subject of conversation into the desired channel. I generally read a portion of Scripture, catechize the children, make a few remarks suitable to the occasion, and pray in accordance therewith. I have seldom found apathy very prominent at such times. The first visit may not be so successful as desired, but in nine cases out of ten, the second or third will break through the icy barrier of indifference. At all events watch for opportunities. If we do we seldom watch in vain. An opportunity may arise when we least expect it for speaking some comforting word, some cheering portion of Scripture, which shall help lighten the burden of some heavy laden heart. Some weary soul, through God's help may be led to Christ, by a kind and loving word spoken in season. Who can tell how much may be done by such visits? God works in a silent mysterious way and we know not when He may be making the greatest use of us, His unworthy servants. If our hearts are filled with love to God, what is there we shall not be willing to do, in order to lead to Christ, His lambs that are straying amid the pomp and vanities of this wicked world, seeking to quench their thirst at dry fountains. Out of the fulness of a loving heart we should bear our faithful testimony to them, and lead them to the haven of rest to find their peace in Jesus which He alone can give. We ought, remembering the declaration we made before we were ordained, the solemn responsibilities we took upon ourselves, and the exhortation given us at that time, to make it the grand object of our pastoral visiting to provide spiritual life and devotedness among our Parishioners. Life and interest is what we have to awaken. This gained and we have made considerable advancement in our work.

I am one of those who believe in beautiful services in the worship of God. Make the ritual as beautiful, solemn, impressive and attractive as we can. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Let it be seen that it is not a dead formal thing—a dumb shew. Our public worship is the principal thing, but it is not enough. The services will benefit only those who attend them. They may be the grandest, the most solemn, the most devout and hearty, and the preacher may set forth the words of truth and soberness with inexpressible power and pathos of voice, but if the careless and indifferent do not attend how are they to be edified?

What is to be done then? Why, if they do not come to us we must go to them. "Go ye into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." Our Church services do not cover all the ground. We must go out into the field where the work is to be done. The work to be done is saving men's souls, the conversion of sinners, the careless and indifferent whom no services can reach.

We may meet with many disappointments. The work may be discouraging—almost hopeless perhaps,—but whom do we serve? We may meet with coldness, hardness, want of

appreciation. Need we never look behind for a solution of this difficulty? May there not be a little fault on both sides? What is the relationship between priest and people, teacher and taught?

These are questions which every clergyman may be called upon to answer for himself in connection with the results of his work. The circumstance which influences more than any other the success or otherwise of a Pastor's work is the relationship existing between the clergyman and people. We are sometimes too ready to turn towards the congregation for the explanation of the cause of that lack of acceptance which in some cases characterizes our sacred functions. Oftentimes it is not indifference on the part of the people that is to blame so much as some want of sympathy between the leader and led—between shepherd and flock. If the clergyman throws himself heart and soul, into the daily lives, the trials and troubles, and the happiness of his congregation, if he is ever holding out the right hand of genial friendship and hospitality, and going in and out amongst them as a loving sympathizing friend, and not always endeavouring to impress upon them his dignity and importance, and their littleness, there must of necessity arise a feeling of real respect, deepening daily into a firm and lasting affection which nought will or ever can dissolve, and which must go a long way towards influencing the spiritual lives of the people, as well as confirming them in an unswerving faithfulness to their religious duties.

III. This brings us to the third head. Sociable or Neighborly visits.

These seem to be a great waste of time, but they are expected of us, and we must yield to some extent to the demand. I will not say that people are just in these demands, but nevertheless there is the fact that we are expected to visit in a sociable way. Of course, do our very best and we cannot satisfy people in this respect. The Congregationalists call their minister the *Teaching member* of the Church. We are expected to be also the *visiting member*.

But these neighborly visits may not be altogether the waste of time they seem. The clergymen may do much good in this way. He may take this opportunity of engendering a kindly feeling towards himself, which will be of great value to him in his sacred ministrations. He may have many opportunities of dropping the good seed without appearing to do so. If he take an interest in the temporal concerns of his flock, he will find them more accessible for the advancement of their spiritual welfare. It is his duty to enter into their pleasures, moreover, with the view of elevating and refining them. Of course he will not in this case forget that he is the clergyman—the spiritual pastor. His manner and speech will be such as become his character and position. I do not mean by this that there will be any prudery and undue stiffness about him. In short, let him be all that characterizes a true gentleman, and he need not be afraid of doing anything except doing wrong or doing nothing.

The clergyman should be an example to his flock in every sense of the word, and in order to effect this he must be an educational influence in their sociable life.

He will be following more closely in his Master's footsteps, if he be found in the Marriage Feast Chamber as well as in the sick room, as a man "in the world," though not "of the world."

A great deal has been said and written concerning the clergyman's position in society, but nothing with greater truth and force than the following, which I quote from "Evan's Bishopric of souls."

"Let but the clergyman be faithful in ministration, diligent in visitation; careful in adding to the treasures of his heart and he will have a

clear view of the bounds to which his time and the solemnity of his character confine him; he will be sober and vigilant, so as at every moment to be alive to the inconsistency of the man of the congregation with the man of company—of the man of visitation with the man of visits."

"He will not forget where and what he is; as a guest at table, he will remember that he is a minister of God's Holy Word and Sacraments, an instructor of the living, a consoler of the dying; and thus he will never be lost sight of in the mere minister to man's amusement; even the stranger will discover his office, not by his clothes, nor yet by unseasonable intrusion of subjects too solemn for the occasion; but by that indescribable propriety, that modest dignity, that gentleness and severity, which is derived from the habitual exercise of his profession."

"Such a character does indeed sanctify society,—all that he says tends to useful information, and he often finds occasion to drop something, which falling as good seed, may in time yield good fruit."

## NEWS FROM THE HOME FIELD.

### DIOCESE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

THE BISHOPRIC.—No answer has as yet been received from the Archbishop of Canterbury stating whom he and the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London had decided upon as the successor to the late Bishop. It has, however, been rumoured that a brother-in-law of the Archbishop of York has been selected. This may or may not be; but no letter has as yet been received explaining the errors or informalities in the papers, mentioned in the Archbishop's telegram received while the Synod was in session.—*Recorder*.

AMHERST.—Last Sunday, Rev. W. C. Wilson, Rector of All Saints, Springhill, took the duty at Christ Church. There was the usual morning and evening service, and two celebrations of the Holy Eucharist and nearly forty communicants. Mr. Wilson also delivered two admirable and impressive sermons. Prayers are said daily, morning and evening during the season of Advent. Rev. C. C. V. Brine, deacon in charge, officiating.

LOCKEPORT.—The following is from the *Parkstone Reminder*, a weekly paper printed in Parkstone, Dorset, G B:

The Rev. Simon Gibbons, Rector of Lockeport, Nova Scotia, preached on Sunday evening last one of his very interesting and characteristic sermons, descriptive of Missionary work among the English speaking population of British-America, and made an earnest appeal for assistance towards the needs of his large and extremely poor Parish in Nova Scotia. He also addressed the congregation of the Chapel of the Holy Angels in like manner in the afternoon. The pecuniary result was that £11 18s in all was collected for his Missions, £2 9s 8d of this being given at the Chapel.

WINDSOR FORKS.—St. Michael's Church after being closed for several weeks, to admit of painting, &c., was reopened on Sunday, the 20th. Owing to the unfavorable state of the weather there was only a small congregation present.

The walls of the nave have been blocked and painted in three tints, while the chancel is painted with a dark red, with gold bordering. The seats, pulpit, doors, &c., have also been brightened with a new coat. Altogether the little church now presents a neat and attractive appearance. It is due to the contractor, Mr. Van Mulder, to say that the members of the congregation are well pleased with his execution of the work.

PERSONAL.—The Rev. Simon Gibbons, Locke