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## PASTORAL VISITATION.

AN ESSAY READ AT THE MEETING OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA  
AND NEW BRUNSWICK, HELD AT MILTON, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1867,  
BY REV. R. K. BLACK.

[The first part of the following essay was devoted to proofs from the Old and New Testaments, of the *obligation and necessity* of pastoral visitation. These points, as the entire paper is of considerable length, we will omit, regarding them as admitted on all sides. The second part, here given, deals with the *benefits* of the practice; and the third, which we purpose inserting next month, with its *difficulties*.]

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We most decidedly place the public preaching of the word in the first rank of ministerial duties, but is it not significant, that while the minister is often enjoined to preach the word, and urged by the most solemn consideration to excel and abound in this noble department of labour, yet the Scripture designation of a minister of Christ is not a preacher, but a pastor, a bishop, an elder, all of which names give prominence to the idea of rule, supervision, care, watchfulness, inspection, and visitation of the flock?

The fact is that the Christian minister is not a mere orator, much less is he a priest standing between the people and God, to whom they are to come in their approach to the Divine Being, and who should maintain a dignified isolation from the laity, like that of the sacerdotal class in the Romish church, on whom, as consistent with their error, celibacy is enjoined, and to whom free social intercourse with their flock is forbidden; he is a pastor, an overseer, an elder, who goes among the people for their good and Christ's glory. He is not one of a sacred caste, whom conventional rule or episcopal ordination entitles to respect and authority, but one chosen from among the people by their free suffrages, whom they are to *know* as over them in the Lord, who is to *know* them collectively and individually, and who is to be respected, not for the mere accidents of office, but for his moral excellence, his ministerial faithfulness, his laboriousness in word and doctrine.

We now turn to notice some of the benefits resulting from a faithful observance of the duty of pastoral visitation. These are so marked and so