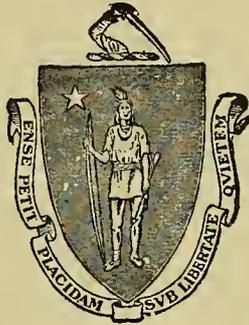


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Happenings in the Seminary

THE COUNTRY CHURCHES AND THE RURAL PROBLEM.

THE CAREW LECTURES, 1909-1910.

The Seminary was peculiarly fortunate in its choice both of a subject and lecturer for the Carew Course this fall. The aroused interest in rural affairs during the past few years, quickened by President Roosevelt's appointment of a Commission for their examination, has made the problem of the rural church one of peculiar interest. President Butterfield's connection with the Massachusetts Agricultural College, his sympathetic interest in the labors of the rural ministry manifested by the Conferences for them in connection with the summer school of the college at Amherst, and his selection by President Roosevelt for the work of the Rural Commission, gave assurance of his preëminent equipment for the service. The straightforward directness of the speaker, the grace of his formal presentation, his quick sense of humor, and his alert and profound interest in the rural problem on its religious and ethical, as well as on its sociological and economic sides, gave an added attractiveness to the lectures as they were delivered. The third of the lectures appears among the "contributed articles" and we are able to give comparatively full abstracts of the others.

LECTURE I. *The Rural Problem.*

Importance of the Food Supply.

The food supply of any country bears an intimate relation to the development of all its industries. And in spite of the qualifications necessary to the original Malthusian doctrine of population, it is mere truism to assert that ultimately the food supply will govern with an iron hand the extent of the world's population. Consequently the whole industrial order under modern conditions is rooted in an adequate food supply. Now the only source of food so far made available is the soil, carefully tilled and utilized for the growing of plants either for direct human consumption or for food for animals which in turn become human food. The question of food supply in America is a fundamental human question. It is essentially a rural problem because the people who furnish the food are the rural people.

Since the Civil War the tremendous growth of American manufacturing, the construction of railway lines, the organization of great financial concerns, have captured our imaginations, and we have come to think of the agricultural industry as a matter of decreasing importance. Relative to our total industry, agriculture occupies a less prominent place than it did half a century ago. But it is still our largest single industry, with greater real capitalization, larger net value of product, and employing more workers, than any other industry. Directly and indirectly it prepares a vast freightage for transportation companies. It profoundly influences our foreign commerce. It has the most intimate relation to our great financial institutions. Its success or failure bears fundamentally upon general business conditions. One-third of our workers are workers of land and consumers of manufactures. Thus from whatever angle we may view it, the business of farming in America stands out as a great essential business—the greatest American business in fact. It hardly seems necessary to remark that the implications of these facts involve vital economic questions. Agriculture looms up, therefore, as a prime economic interest in American progress.

These facts bring to the fore the very great significance of the rural population.

But mere mass is not a final test of significance. Yet one can hardly contemplate the fact that nearly forty millions of our American people live under conditions that are essentially rural, without being impressed by the important role those millions must necessarily play in our national life.

Consider for example the matter of political power. It is commonly asserted that our cities already dominate the government, and that in a short time they will be absolute masters of the political situation. Yet it is to be observed that the country towns in states like Connecticut and Rhode Island still hold power out of all proportion to their numerical strength and are not likely to relinquish it in the near future. Furthermore, under our system of election districts, the rural vote dominates in the majority of these districts electing members of our legislatures and of the Congress, and in many other districts holds the balance of power. The potential strength of the farming class is such that the political beliefs and political honesty of our rural electorate become a matter of first importance.

Inasmuch as the open country still furnishes and always will furnish an army of recruits for the cities, it is important that the general level of intelligence shall be maintained in the rural com-

munities. So it is with motives, morals, ideals of personal and neighborhood life.

There can be no doubt that, relatively, agriculture as an industry and the rural people numerically are declining. We have, to be sure, a rapidly increasing non-agricultural population, coincident with a check in the supply of new agricultural land; but it does not necessarily follow that less than the present number of workers will be needed on our farms. It is probable that the number of agricultural workers and consequently of the rural population will slowly but steadily increase for an indefinite period of time.

The effort has been made to show how important are the agricultural industry and the rural population as factors in our American business and life. It is now pertinent to inquire whether there is such a thing as "a rural problem." Are there tendencies likely to injure the business or to render the people less efficient? Are there forces at work which may affect the relationship of agriculture to national life? No doubt there are special difficulties in farming — is there one large rural question? But, I would attempt to outline a series of propositions which it seems to me are fundamental. It will be observed that a rough grouping of these propositions brings them into two main classes — those that have a bearing peculiarly industrial or economic, and those that deal with the larger social aspects of country life. Then I purpose to summarize by stating in specific terms the total rural problem in its large national aspect.

I. We must put all our land to its best possible use, as rapidly as it may be needed, at the same time conserving its fertility.

There are perhaps four essentials in a policy that seeks to apply this principle of adapting the land to its best use.

1. Adaptation of the land to those crops which it can best produce. In a rough way the American farmer has done precisely this thing. But it admits of much further development in a more scientific way.

2. Adaptation to market conditions. As between two crops to which any area of land is equally well adapted by reason of soil and climate, that necessarily will be chosen which the better supplies the available market. It should be noted that adaptation to the market does not imply acquiescence on the part of the farmer in the defective organization of our methods of distribution of products. There are actual market conditions that

must be met; there are improvements in the market that may be made.

3. Adaptation of farm practice to scientific methods of production.

There has been a revolutionary change in the best farm practice, during the past twenty years, due almost wholly to the results of the labors of agricultural experiment stations and agricultural colleges. The end is not yet.

This principle of adaptation to modern scientific knowledge has far-reaching economic consequences. Only the intelligent and the alert will quickly take up with the new things. The intelligent use of modern methods of farming inevitably makes it increasingly difficult for the inefficient farmer to keep up his relative status.

4. Adaptation of farm management to the most approved business practice.

Agriculture in general needs to be put upon a far more business-like basis than that on which it rests today.

There is an important reservation in the application of this general principle of adaptation, namely, that the land shall be used as rapidly as it may be needed.

Another vital consideration is that while land shall be put to its very best use, and in fact used to its full capacity, it must be treated in such a way that its natural fertility shall be fully conserved, if not increased.

II. There must be a reasonable financial return to the masses of soil-workers, as well as opportunity for fairly large rewards for special skill.

It is not enough that a few highly intelligent farmers can make a "good living" on the farm. It is necessary that as a class soil-workers, of fair intelligence and skill, can secure a decent living—a living somewhat commensurate with general standards of life. While agriculture can never yield the large rewards that sometimes flow from speculative or quasi-speculative enterprises, it is necessary that for the men of force and superior intelligence who devote themselves to farming there is waiting a reward in some degree commensurate with the effort expended. If this is not possible, agriculture must constantly be weakened by loss of leadership.

III. There must be an efficient means of distribution of soil products.

This is by no means the case at present in America. The near-by farmer has been consistently sacrificed in the interests of the long haul, and in fact the very perfection of this long-distance

system has over-estimated specialized production for a far-away market.

But far less efficient than the transportation machinery is the present method of handling products, particularly specialized products, between the producer and consumer. The difference between the farm price and the cost to consumer on the whole range of plant and animal products is altogether too great. It must be vastly improved.

IV. The land should in general be owned by those who till it.

This is not to be construed to mean that only one man and his family shall in all cases work a single farm. We must leave room for an enterprise sufficiently large to utilize some additional labor; but we do not wish a condition of even resident landlordism implying vast areas managed by one owner and worked by a large body of wage earners. Not that such instances may not exist, but they should not be the prevailing type. Landownership gives community interest and is vital to permanent rural civilization.

It is at this point that the question of foreign immigration has an important bearing. If it should come about that hordes of peasants from abroad should settle upon our lands more rapidly than the somewhat sluggish social machinery of rural life can grind the grist, American standards would be superseded by lower standards and a system of peasantry inaugurated, which would be most detrimental if not fatal to the genius of our national life.

V. The social strength of the farming class must be conserved.

It is vitally important in the development of American civilization that a class of people numerically so great shall maintain standards of individual and social strength consistent with our civilization. This may be expressed as the need for conservation of social power, and is made up of at least the following elements: (1) High intelligence — sufficiently high at least to represent average American life. (2) Organizing capacity. (3) Culture and refinement. Rusticity of mind or of manners must not be a feature of rural life. (4) Political efficiency. (5) Active and healthy moral and spiritual life.

VI. The rural community must be served by efficient social institutions, adapted to the peculiar needs of rural life.

The three great classes of institutions are the church and allied agencies of religion, the schools and other means of education, and the voluntary organizations and coöperative associations

for various ends. All these must be efficient for their purpose, developed to meet the special needs that arise under rural conditions.

VII. A clear and high ideal for rural life must be developed and maintained.

This must be regarded as after all the most significant need in rural life; the most important aspect of the rural problem.

A little study of each one of these seven propositions will reveal serious defects in our agricultural industry and community life, and indicate the most important steps toward amelioration. With respect to them, our agriculture is not in a wholly satisfactory condition. There certainly is a rural problem.

We may say that the rural problem is to maintain upon our land a class of people whose status in our society fairly represents American ideals, industrial, political, social and ethical.

Attention should be called to two further implications of this analysis and statement of the rural problem. First, that the industrial factor is essential. Second, that the ultimate problem is by no means wholly one of material prosperity, but is after all another phase of the great problem of human welfare and national destiny.

LECTURE II. *The Solution of the Rural Problem.*

Our task in this lecture is to attempt the statement of general principles by which the problem as presented in the former lecture may be solved. We do not propose to go into details with respect to methods, but rather to enunciate those large, general considerations which must govern in the outworkings of rural effort.

Let it be said at the outset that there is no panacea for the rural problem. It is not a simple problem—the remedy is not simple. When we come to discuss solutions, we are to remember that the different principles to be utilized may be worked out through different institutions. This word, may, however, he said: that inasmuch as the ultimate problem is essentially social, so the forces to be utilized for the direction of rural development are social. We cannot leave the problem to the chances of merely individual initiative. On the other hand, we cannot consciously direct *all* the forces that are to determine the final status of the American farmer. It is not within human power to shape the channels of social evolution with the skill of an engineer. The most that we can do is to call attention to the desired ends, and to set in motion those forces within our control

that we think will most fully enable rural society to reach its full stature.

The main agencies or principles that are to be utilized in the solution of the rural problem may be classified into five groups, which present genuine needs, and to a large degree real deficiencies, in our country life. They are as follows: (1) Socialization, (2) Education, (3) Organization, (4) Religious Idealism, (5) Federation of Forces.

I. Socialization:

By Socialization is meant in general the breaking down of the extreme individualism which exists in most of our country life and is, in fact, engendered by the farmer's mode of living, and the bringing together of these independent individual elements into a more coherent social group. The characteristic feature of country life is the, at least relative, isolation of its people. This simple distinction is fundamental in its sociological bearings. It is the main source of difference between rural and urban ideals.

Both good and bad results flow from this isolation of the farming people. Undoubtedly it makes for strong individual character, and on the whole for good morals and particularly for a superior family life — nowhere is family life so educative as in the country. On the other hand, the social results are generally bad. It is difficult to get farmers to work together, because they have so long worked separately. They often drift out of the current of the world's thought. Habits and conventions remain fixed, and stand in the way of progress.

Thus, at the threshold, we have to meet this characteristic fact of comparative isolation in a way to save what is good in it, and to obviate what is deleterious in it. In what ways may we meet it? What are the remedies for rural conditions that are essentially non-social? We may consider four.

1. The Development of Better Means of Communication. It is unnecessary to dwell on the advantages that have already accrued to our rural people through the establishment of general free rural mail delivery, the installation of rural telephones, the improvement of our highways, and the building of inter-urban trolley lines. These, to be sure, all have their reverse side, but in spite of these drawbacks, the general tendency of all these new means of communication, everyone of which has developed within a dozen years, has been to recreate rural life. That is a strong phrase, but it is not an exaggeration. In regions where these improvements prevail, farmers are in touch with one another

as never before. From the business, from the social, and from the intellectual points of view, the pace has been quickened with advantage. We can but hope that in the near future these means of communication will be fully developed in practically every corner of our agricultural area.

In this connection, a word should be said in regard to the hamlet system as a means of socializing our rural people. By some writers a general adoption of the hamlet system has been advocated. Undoubtedly there are some advantages attached to the rural hamlet, advantages which are obvious enough upon the surface, and which need no particular elucidation. Personally I have yet to be persuaded that the hamlet system is to be the chief means in America of socializing the farming class. The difficulty of bringing it about is a prime consideration. Moreover, one may question the desirability of this solution. Furthermore, the family life of our farms, under normal conditions, is the glory of our country life. Its efficiency, let it be said, is due in part to a degree of isolation. And finally, there is a widespread feeling that the average boy is far safer, morally, either in the country or in the large city, than he is in the average village.

2. Recreation. The closest observers of rural life are quite convinced that the recreations of the country, not only for children but for young people and for adults as well, are grossly inadequate. There are notable exceptions to these general truths, and there are wide variations of conditions, but in general it is safe to say that rural life is lacking in recreation. The dearth of wholesome amusement for children and youth is particularly noticeable. The movement for organized and educative play for city children may well have its counterpart in the country.

3. The Enrichment of Woman's Life. There are thousands of farm women who live a normal, happy life. At the same time, it is beyond question that the lot of many a woman on a farm is far from desirable — less desirable than that of the man. So far, we are doing little for the farmer's wife. From one point of view the farm woman is the key to the rural situation. Her status, her intelligence, her happiness, her welfare, her ideals, her intellectual development, are, on the farm as elsewhere, the test of civilization. Anything that will enrich family life must have a profound influence upon the ultimate solution of the farm problem. Here is a field that has virtually been untouched by those interested in rural life, and yet it is perhaps the crucial test.

4. The Community-sense, or Neighborhood Spirit. For the most part farm life is broken up into little neighborhoods, without

exact boundaries, without very much coherence, and in fact without much to tie people into a real group. If the farmer is to be socialized, it must be done objectively. He must have something to work for that is definite and worth while. Probably this can come about only by a definite propaganda which involves a full program for individual and community betterment, permeated by a sufficient leaven of idealism to stir the imagination and give moral values to the ends to be striven for by the people themselves.

II. Education:

There are three phases of rural education: First, the acquiring of accurate knowledge about agriculture and country life; second, the education of youth in schools and colleges; and third, the wide dissemination among all people of the knowledge of agriculture and country life.

The Acquiring of Knowledge. Within a generation institutions in America have been organized for the sole business of instituting scientific research into the realm of laws governing agricultural operations, and for experimenting with the practical application of those laws to the soil, the plant, and the animal. This work has been done principally by the United States Department of Agriculture, and by the splendid system of agricultural experiment stations, supported in part by the government and in part by the states. It is safe to say that great as has been their work, "it has but just begun," to use a common but striking phrase.

Until very recently almost no attention has been given to the scientific study of economic and social aspects of the business of farming and the life of the rural people. This neglected field is also to be tilled with thoroughness, and study therein promises to be fully as rewarding for human welfare as in the researches of the chemist and biologist.

Still another form of acquiring knowledge is being organized. At present it goes by the name of an "Agricultural Survey." The next few years will see a large development of agricultural surveys, which shall attempt to collate and systematize information relative to the natural conditions which concern individual farmers, as of soil, climate, etc.; the more minute economic conditions that govern his work, such as local markets and transportation; the methods of farm management by which he correlates the various factors of production and distribution to his own best advantage; and the social life which represents his environment, with its contribution to his industrial efficiency and to the enlargement of his own individual spirit.

The Development of the School as a Means of Rural Education. There are two large movements necessary in the growth of schools for the education of the rural people. The first lies with the rural school, *i. e.*, the common public school situated in a rural environment. There are three great difficulties in rural school work. First, to secure a modern school at an expense that is within the reach of the community. For this end state aid must be invoked on the principles that all the wealth of the state must provide for the education of all the youth of the state, and that the country boy and girl are entitled to the best education which the state can afford. Second, to provide adequate high school facilities. This will have to be done largely by a centralization of schools, and by transporting students either in vans or on trolley lines. Third, to make the school a vital and coherent part of the community life.

The second movement in rural education is definite school instruction in agriculture as a vocational subject. At this point there is a great gap in our educational system. We need finishing schools, approximately of secondary grade, in which the leading effort shall be to educate pupils for agriculture and country life. Both the existing high schools and specially established schools will be utilized for this great work of vocational training in agriculture.

At the present time, our agricultural colleges are the most prominent feature of agricultural instruction. A brief summary of the agricultural vocations for which agricultural colleges may prepare would include (1) independent farming, (2) vocations connected with agriculture, such as the Forestry Service, or the superintendency of large estates, (3) research and teaching along agricultural lines, (4) positions in general enterprises more or less dependent upon agriculture, such as the canning industries, the fertilizer business, etc., (5) a series of vocations which are really agricultural in their nature, requiring agricultural training, and in which too, there are developed leaders in social service, such as teachers in rural communities, rural librarians, rural Y. M. C. A. secretaries, and country clergymen.

Popular Education in Agriculture. There is a multitude of ways by which information about agriculture and country life may be given currency among the people at large. This work, in a broad way, is known as Extension Work, and it means the development in organized form of various methods of reaching the farmers, at or near their homes. It consists of three rather distinct methods, or types of work. (1) Formal Teaching, or systematic instruction. (2) Work that is more or less advisory and suggestive, and perhaps not thoroughly organized.

(3) The third type of this extension work may be called "Co-ordination," by which an effort is made to bring together the different agencies representing the rural movement. Extension work promises to become one of the most important branches of the agricultural college activity, and in fact lies at the basis of a complete educational system for agriculture and country life. The working farmer must be reached on his own farm.

III. Organization:

The history of agricultural organizations in America is a very interesting one, beginning with the development of the agricultural fairs, the farmers' clubs, etc., and ending with the great farmers' movements of the last third of the nineteenth century. It is important not to omit from a discussion of the rural problem the place which organization fills in its solution. It is a fundamental necessity.

Organization becomes a test of class efficiency. Can the class maintain an organization that enables it to assert itself, to make itself felt for its own interests and for the interests of the nation?

Organization is also a powerful educational force. Whenever a class of people organizes for a given purpose, it is bound to debate the most fundamental considerations of political and industrial life, and such discussion cannot but be educative in its results. The social tendency of the age is clearly towards social self-direction. It is a mark of progress when a class can organize and determine its course. The fact that other classes are organized is therefore a very good reason why the farmers should organize. They need to organize for self-protection. Not only so, but no class of people can in an unorganized form assert itself as a part of the national life. In some way there must be a chance to gather up the group sentiment, the group power, the group opinion and bring it to bear on great issues.

At two points particularly is there great need for adequate organization of the agricultural classes. The present unsatisfactory system of distribution of farm products can never be fully remedied until farmers combine in a systematic and comprehensive fashion for business coöperation.

It is also vitally necessary that farmers shall insist upon legislation favorable to their own interests. I do not mean class legislation in an individual sense, but laws that give substantial justice to the farmers as producers.

Of course there are possible disadvantages coming from farmers' organizations. They may emphasize undesirable class distinctions. They may be unwisely led. They may tend to

eliminate the individual. These are small things about which we may be cautious. Fundamentally, organization is essential to rural progress and the solution of the rural problem. Probably the great development of agricultural organization, in the future, lies along the lines of business coöperation.

IV. Religious Idealism:

The groundwork of all efforts on behalf of the rural people is to establish the highest possible ideals for personal and community life. This idealism ought to permeate all attempts at socialization, all efforts at education, all movements for organization. Necessarily, however, it will be fostered most completely by the institutions of religion — by the church and its allies. This idealism will, first of all, have to do with the ethics of the situation, with the moral standards and habits of the people. But there is another element in this development of rural idealism that needs to be emphasized, the necessity of stimulating a love and appreciation of the rural environment and life. Agriculture, even with the use of machinery, yields itself more fully than any other industry to the poetic note. Now, this poetic phase of country life, not as sentimentalism, not as mere luxury of the senses, but as real, genuine romance and poetry at the heart of things, and as tied up with the processes of agriculture and with the life in the open, must penetrate the souls of the dwellers upon the land. The church ought to welcome the efforts of any agency that will cultivate this spirit of idealism in the country community among the rural people. At the same time, the church is peculiarly the conservator of the highest type of idealism — that which is moved by the religious instinct and belief. It ought to minister to the highest things in personal and community life.

V. Federation of Forces:

To carry out these principles of Socialization, Education, Organization, Idealism, it is obvious that we must have social agencies, machinery, institutions. We need a clearing-house for all rural workers and interests, in order that the ultimate goal of rural life may be kept constantly in mind, and that all workers may square their special labors to the main task. In fine, we need in the country the counterpart of the new movement for "city-planning," a movement which shall be a real "campaign for rural progress."

A necessary corollary of this "campaign for rural progress" is the development of personal leadership in rural communities. Individual men and women must do what needs doing — institu-

tions are but vehicles for carrying human endeavor, boilers for generating human powers.

LECTURE IV. *Difficulties and Suggestions.*

Thus far we have been discussing the more theoretical aspects of the relationship between the church and the rural problem. We come now to a brief discussion of some of the practical questions involved in the work of the church in the rural community.

First let us discuss some difficulties that face the church as it attempts to work out its task in the rural community. We may divide these into two classes — the difficulties with respect to the church as an institution, and those special difficulties that meet the clergyman in the country parish.

I. In the first place, there are too many churches. There are, to be sure, counter considerations which explain this situation and, in part at least, excuse it; but the general proposition is valid. Rural regions as a rule are over-churched. There are exaggerated cases of this condition observable everywhere, as for instance, when four or five small struggling churches exist within a constituency hardly large enough or wealthy enough to maintain more than one strong church. The problem of adequately financing the country church under a system of voluntary contributions is an extremely difficult problem at best. Now when you add to this natural difficulty, the necessity of keeping up three or four establishments where one would answer, and then add to this again the modest financial ability of the average farm community, you have a condition of things that is well-nigh hopeless.

II. Another difficulty in the country church is the great danger of an undue development of the "boss system" in church management. This is by no means universal, but it is not an uncommon phenomenon that some vigorous personality, one among a few, is likely to dominate the small country church; and when this is the case there is a combination of circumstances that frequently makes it almost impossible for an ambitious minister to do anything worthy.

III. During the past generation the church has suffered in leadership because other institutions have competed with it for social service. These organizations not only compete with the church socially, but they absorb time and energy and money that might otherwise, in part at least, be devoted to the church; and worst of all they sometimes produce the impression that so far as human welfare is concerned, they are almost as serviceable as the church.

IV. Another difficulty with the country church, already alluded to, is the existence of low ideals of its function — more particularly with reference to its relation to the community. It is a peril confronting every social institution, that it may become obsessed with its own importance, come to live for itself. As soon as a social institution like the church is thoroughly established and has a traditional hold upon the imaginations and habits of people, it is tempted to lose its spirit of service, and to live largely unto itself. It is fair to say that the ideal for church work and service is on a low plane in the average community, and largely because the church is so generally regarded as an ark of safety for those who are wise enough, or righteous enough, to be admitted on shipboard; instead of being, as it ought to be, an institution that organizes the spirit of human brotherhood under the leadership of the Master of life, for the redemption of the bodies and minds and hearts of men from the bondage of appetite and passion, and that ministers to the abiding need of all human souls for worship of the Divine and for the renewal of faith in the things that are eternal. Let us frankly face the situation; let us realize the need of a higher and broader ideal for the actual work of the church as a local institution.

V. Another difficulty that confronts the country church is the ease with which religion is separated from life. There is no need of dwelling on this point. It is a universal difficulty. The great question is to motive all our activities on the highest lines.

VI. As over against this narrow idea of religion, there is another difficulty, growing out of the effort to remedy this narrowness: that the church may attempt things not promotive of religious life, or at least may expend its chief energies upon unimportant matters.

Let us now discuss some of the special difficulties that confront the minister of the country church.

I. The first difficulty that shall be named is that which strikes at the very root of the country church problem,—the small salaries that are paid to country clergymen as a whole. There is no body of men deserving of greater praise than the ministers of the church, who in all times and in all places have sacrificed high ambitions, sometimes great positions and the hope of gain, for the sake of their work. It is a serious criticism of the church that it has permitted the present condition of affairs to continue. The average salary paid to our country ministers is shamefully low, disgracefully inadequate. The

church has no right to ask its leaders to serve under such conditions.

II. Another difficulty is the small field, with widely scattered parishioners. Of course it is possible for a clergyman to thoroughly cultivate a small field. Intensive parish work is perhaps as desirable as intensive farming. But the limitations growing out of the size of the parish, the number of people to be reached, the financial resources with which to man the guns, are abiding and serious.

III. The isolation of the country is a serious difficulty to the average country clergyman.

IV. It would be a slander on the country clergyman to say that as a class they are indolent. Doubtless it is easy for the country clergyman to become indolent. Most men need constant stimulus to do their best work, and the country church supplies this in relatively small measure. That the majority of country ministers do not let things go their own gait is a tribute to their high purposes.

V. The question of preparation for work in the country parish offers a difficulty of considerable proportions. We now ask our country clergymen to take a college course, followed by a seminary course of three years, and at the age of twenty-five perhaps, to "settle down" at a salary of \$600 or \$800 a year. I am not going to propose a lowering of the educational standard. The question, however, is inevitable. Is it not asking what is next to impossible when the attempt is made to train a large body of men for a permanent country ministry, under existing conditions, with the expenditure of time and money now required, and with salaries continuing at the present standards?

But a far more important question is this: Are men really being prepared for the country ministry? Do the seminary graduates go to the country parish with the intention of making it a life work? When they do go, do they understand the problems of the community? How to induce the young clergyman to make country church work his life work, how to prepare him for that work so that he shall go to it with clear insight, is to my mind a difficulty of extreme significance.

VI. The final difficulty that I see with respect to the country clergyman is that if he becomes a community leader, as he ought, he may scatter his energies. He must be a student of large affairs. He must know his community. He cannot neglect his professional study. All this means hard, untiring work. One may easily become superficial.

The title of this lecture is "Difficulties and Suggestions." We have dwelt somewhat, perhaps too strongly, upon the difficulties. The suggestions that are to follow must be put very briefly.

I. First of all, I shall strongly urge the study of the country church problem by the seminaries and by various church organizations. We first need to know the facts, to know what the real problems are. Let us have then a comprehensive field study of the actual problem of the country church.

II. Inaugurate a definite movement for the special preparation of young men for a career in the country parish. So far the need of this preparation has never been fully recognized. In addition to the conventional preparation, the minister does need some special study which shall bring him to appreciate the real needs of the rural people. At the risk of seeming to speak as a partisan of a particular type of educational institution, I venture to suggest that the agricultural colleges may also be invited by theological seminaries and church schools to coöperate in preparing men for church work in our rural communities. Would it not help if candidates for the country ministry should be permitted and encouraged, and possibly in some cases even required, to take more or less work at a well-equipped agricultural college, as a part of their regular preparation for the rural parish? Even a summer school course of a few weeks would do a great deal toward giving a young man possession of the general philosophy of the rural problem and a command of the literary sources of further study.

III. Develop systematic, organized effort on behalf of a more useful country church. Church conferences, frequent and regular institutes for country pastors, and many other devices can be instituted as a part of the machinery for this work. Well-planned experiments may be tried under varying conditions. Make the work of the country church a live, aggressive work.

IV. Encourage the federation of churches. This is a fundamental article in a country church program. Subsidiary to this general idea of federation are the following suggestions: If actual church union is out of the question, or the abolition of extraneous churches, let there be coöperation for practical work in the community. If churches cannot unite organically, can they not unite for service? The pitiful thing about our sectarianism is not so much that the church is broken up into many separate units, but that this disunity of organization results in religious inefficiency. Of course, federation means ultimately the abolition of unnecessary churches. In the language of one of its leaders, there should

be neither "overlapping" nor "overlooking," but each church should be responsible for some given territory, and the work must be so divided that a systematic attempt shall be made to reach every individual. This ought to result in a condition where the church presents a united front in carrying out its real function.

V. Another important consideration that comes very close to this idea of federation is that the church shall make full use of its natural allies, such as the Young People's Society and the Sunday School. In this connection I wish to speak a strong word on behalf of the county work of the Young Men's Christian Association. The Y. M. C. A. should regard itself merely as a specialized organ of the church, and there should be the closest coöperation and harmony in their work.

VI. The development of lay leadership in the rural community is a matter of very large consequence in country church work. Here is another opportunity for the agricultural colleges and agricultural schools to help train men who will go back to the farm, and there not only make a success of the business of farming, but also throw themselves into community leadership.

VII. There must be a larger financial support. Two principles may be applied at this point. The first principle is that of developing more completely local support. The church is supported by the few, and sometimes not even adequately supported by its own members. In many places, enlarged community interest is the only solution; in still others, a new standard of giving by church members must be developed.

The second principle is based upon the belief that while a great many rural communities can support their own churches without external aid, a very large number can never hope to do this. It has been accepted as a principle among our leaders in education that the wealth of the whole state must be placed at the disposal of all the youth of the state. A somewhat similar principle must often be applied to the financial problem of the rural church; the wealth of the whole church must in some way be placed at the disposal of the whole church. The wealth concentrates in cities. If the small, isolated community cannot sustain itself, temporarily, at least, it must have outside aid.

There are perhaps four ways in which this outside aid may be given. The first is the most common one — that of aid from a central, denominational home missionary society. The second is an endowment of individual churches. The third is an endowment, or some special appropriation made by a particular denomination, to aid the rural churches in that denomination. The fourth is a general endowment for the rural church as such, irrespective of denominational lines.

The following plan for developing support for the country church is simply suggested:

1. Let each denomination having numerous rural churches segregate into a department its work for such churches, taking it out of the category of "missions," but putting it in each state, or in appropriate groups of states, on a firm administrative footing.

2. Let each denominational country church department become an active partner in a general Country Church Association for the given state or group of states, thus representing the total interest of the church in the rural problem. This Country Church Association should include theological schools, representatives of allied religious bodies, like the Y. M. C. A., which are interested in rural work, and individual farmers, clergymen, teachers and other rural workers.

3. Let each denominational department of the country church work in close harmony with this Country Church Association on the one hand, and on the other in closest touch and sympathy with the federation of churches.

4. Push the work of church federation, eliminating superfluous churches when possible, and uniting all existing churches for practical coöperative ends.

Thus overlapping could be eliminated, each church made responsible for a given territory, and no area would be left unchurched. Self-support would be encouraged and required, and exterior aid would be given more nearly by obligation, not so much by charity.

VIII. I have but one more suggestion. The church must share in a large campaign for rural progress. Let the church relate itself to all good movements for rural betterment. Let it become an ally and leader of all the great agencies that promise to create a new rural civilization, to maintain the status of the rural people. Let it not think anything unclean. Let it not hold itself aloof from Samaritan or Gentile. Let it reach the hearts of men through their daily lives and daily toil.

LECTURE V. *The Call of the Country Parish.*

The countryside is calling, calling for men. The great need of the present is leadership. Only men can vitalize institutions. The country church wants men of vision, who see the abiding issues that the countryman must face and conquer. She wants practical men, who can bring things to pass. She wants original men, who can enter a human field poorly tilled, and by new

methods can again secure a harvest that will gladden the heart of the great Husbandman. She wants aggressive men, who grow frequent crops of new ideas and dare to subject them to the flails of practical trial. She wants trained men, who have hammered out a plan for an active campaign for the rural church. She wants men with enthusiasms, whose spirit is not quenched by the waters of adversity.

She wants persistent men, who will stand by their task. She wants constructive men, who can transmute visions into wood and stone, dreams into live institutions, hopes into fruitage. She wants heroic men — men who love adventure and difficulty, men who can work alone with God and suffer no sense of loneliness.

There are numerous and powerful appeals coming up from the tillers of the soil to those still undecided as to the life task. Let us name some of these appeals.

There is the abiding significance of the great problem of agriculture and country life. A fundamental human industry is to be fostered. Scores of millions of American citizens are to be educated for life's work. These people are to be served by state and school. These millions are to retain a place in advancing American life consistent with our traditions and our hopes. The need of the church in all these great enterprises of rural society constitutes an appeal. Let no pressure of appeal from city slum, from lumber-camp or mining village, from immigrants' need, from bleeding, impoverished Armenia, from the newly pulsing China, or from the islands of the sea — heart-wringing and burning as these calls may be — let none of these things blind us to the slow-moving but irresistible tides of human life that ebb and flow in the homes and institutions of our American farm people.

The charms of the pastor's life in the open country constitute a call. For this cause many are called and few are chosen. But for that man who loves the open, whose heart responds to the soft music of meadow and field, whose ear is attuned to the rhythm of the seasons, who feels the romance of intelligent care of soil and plant and animal — to that man the rural parish offers rewards beyond all price.

The opportunities offered by the country parish for breadth of culture constitute a call not usually put down in the list of reasons for being a country clergyman. One does not need constant access to great libraries in order to acquire culture. Culture is appreciation of environment. It is a process of soul ripening. Close observation, meditation, pondering in the heart, much thinking, are the favorite tools of culture.

The very presence of the difficulties in country church work formulates a distinct call to men who like to conquer circumstance. The dearth of men constitutes a call. To those men who have the pioneer spirit there comes a strong appeal from the rural church. For here is a chance for unique work, something different, and yet supremely useful as well as rare.

The timeliness of a redirected country church work constitutes an appeal. There are large stirrings in all rural affairs. The fields are alive with movements for better farming, for more useful education, for coöperation. As never before, the country minister has efficient allies. And the church at large is stirring. She observes that the notes of idealism are betimes deadened by the "wearisome sound of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade." The man who goes to the country parish is captain in the host of a growing army that seeks to command the countryside as well as to capture cities.

The final and the supreme call from the country parish comes out of the abiding hunger of men and women for religion — religion interpreted in terms of daily toil, common human need, social evolution, justice and fraternity. Is it a small and mean task to maintain and enlarge in the country both individual and community ideals, under the inspiration and guidance of the religious motive, and to help forty millions of rural people to incarnate those ideals in personal and family life, in industrial effort and political development and in all social relationships?

In all the days of the church, men have been found who illustrated in their own lives the opportunities that lie before the clergyman in the country parish. At this moment there are men, in all parts of our own land, who see this new call of the country parish and are responding intelligently and gallantly. But one name gives us entrance into such a wealth of inspiration and suggestion that we may pause to review the work and method of the man.

About the middle of the eighteenth century, John Frederick Oberlin, bachelor of arts and doctor of philosophy of a great university, masterful student and courageous leader, declared that he did "not wish to labor in some comfortable pastoral charge," where he could be at ease; but "the question is, where can I be most useful?" God answered his prayer, and at the age of twenty-seven this man, who might have had a powerful church in a great center, entered upon his life-task, under the most forbidding conditions, in the Ban-de-la-Roche, among the "blue Alsatian mountains." Before his life work was finished

this rural community was so transformed in its whole life by his influence that the King of France conferred on him the medal of the Legion of Honor.

By what miracle was this transformation wrought? By preaching? Yes; Oberlin never failed to prepare his sermons with the greatest care. He was a reader of science, of history, of philosophy. Even in his mountain eyrie, he kept in touch with the world's thought. But was it by reading and study and faithful preaching alone that the change came? Listen!

Oberlin secured the first schoolhouse by promising that it should cost the people nothing. As a matter of fact, he paid a substantial share of the cost of two schoolhouses out of the savings of a salary of \$200 a year. He shouldered a pick and led the work of building the first highway and bridging the mountain stream. He proved that horticulture was practicable in the region by himself planting successful orchards. He introduced new varieties and new crops. He organized societies and clubs. He taught manners and morals. He planned and directed the school work in every detail. In the beginning, all of these efforts were opposed most vigorously. Some even tried to intimidate him. He carried every reform against severe opposition. He helped the people in spite of themselves. But in all his efforts he kept the religious element to the fore. All things were to be done for God as well as for oneself. He himself, while practical in the extreme, was also spiritual to the verge of mysticism.

Rural parishes in America that present the woeful conditions of the Ban-de-la-Roche in 1767 may not be common. Yet the underlying philosophy of Oberlin's life work must be the fundamental principle of the great country-parish work of the future. Oberlin believed in the unity of life, the marriage of labor and living. He knew that social justice, intelligent toil, happy environment, are tied up with the growth of the spirit. They act and react upon one another. He built a new and permanent rural civilization that lasts to this day unspoiled.

The parishes about the little village of Waldersbach, nestled among the Vosges mountains, thus became a laboratory in which the call of the country-parish met a deep answer of success and of peace.

There is a new interest in American country life. The love of the out-of-doors is growing. The unity of national life is found to consist in developing both urban and rural civilization. Great movements are under way designed to increase the yield of the soil, to put agriculture on a better business basis, to educate

rural youth, to secure coöperative effort among farmers. Is the church also astir in rural places? The country church has been a saving salt in the development of our great farming areas; is she alive today to these new movements? Is she leading in the campaign for rural progress?

The most ardent friend of the country church must give a sorrowful "No" in reply to these questions. The present situation, then, is nothing less than critical. It is vital that the new country-life movements be given a religious content. There is no time to be lost. The floods are rising. The day is at hand.

What shall we do to arouse the country church, to give it its rightful place among the forces at work for solving the rural problem?

We must ask men to consecrate themselves to life-long service in the country parish. We must root out the idea that only inferior men can find a permanent work in the country parish. The issues at stake merit the leadership of great men.

We must go out to the men now toiling in the rural parishes, with a message of cheer, of coöperation, of encouragement.

We must appeal to the seminaries and other training schools for preachers to send forth men who have formed a well-grounded ambition to explore the resources of this great field, and who have qualified themselves for the task—who are well-armed for the campaign.

We must go to the colleges and appeal to strong young men who want hard places, who love to take chances, who have withal the desire to serve their fellows mightily.

We must appeal to the heroic in young men. Let us not try to show that the country parish is a garden of delight, a place of rest and ease. Rather let its difficulties and puzzling problems constitute a clarion-call to the men of heroic mold. We must show them that here is really a man's work, that something vital is at stake. We must appeal to high motives, expect large sacrifices.

The critical need just now is for a few strong men of large power to get hold of this country-church question in a virile way. It is the time for leadership. More than all else just now, we need a few men to achieve great results in the rural parish, to re-establish the leadership of the church. No organization can do it. No layman can do it. No educational institution can do it. A preacher must do it. Do it in spite of small salary, isolation, conservatism, restricted field, over-churching, or any other devil that shows its face. The call is imperative. Shall we be denied

the men? Is not the time ripe for a new "rural band"—a group of half-a-dozen men from the seminary, who find adjacent parishes in a rural region, and there quietly, coöperatively, persistently, grimly, study the situation, take leadership in all community life?

The time is ripe also for an organized movement on behalf of the country parish, that shall give dignity and direction to the efforts of solitary workers. The country parish is a peculiar field. New methods are needed. Men must be aroused from lethargy. A powerful coöperative enterprise must set standards, educate men, coördinate effort.

During the fall and early winter the Seminary has heard addresses in the Chapel or the Friday evening meeting of the students as follows: Rev. Sherrod Soule, Superintendent of the Connecticut Missionary Society, spoke on "Personal Experiences in Building up a Church"; Rev. John Coleman Adams, D.D., on "The Inspiration of Books"; Miss Gauthier, Probation Officer of the Juvenile Court, upon "The Work of the Juvenile Court"; Rev. J. H. Twitchell on "The Annals of a Neighborhood," and Edward W. Capen, Ph.D., on "Travels in Mission Fields."

A definite and inviting form of home missionary activity was presented by Secretary H. C. Herring, who indicated the special promise of work in the Dakotas, Idaho and Wyoming, and pointed out the advantages to men of going as a band of acquaintances and neighbors to selected fields in one of those states.

The students have also had opportunity of attending in the Seminary Chapel an address by Mr. George, on "The George Junior Republic," and a lecture by Professor B. W. Bacon of Yale Divinity School, on "Greek Influence in Palestine."

Two important conventions have come within the Seminary horizon of late. The students acted as hosts to the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Valley Student Missionary Conference, which began Saturday evening, October 30th, and continued with three sessions on the following day. About 110 delegates were present from Amherst, Berkeley Divinity School, Dartmouth, Mt. Hermon School, Northfield Seminary, Mt. Holyoke College, Smith College, Springfield Training School, Williams, Wesleyan and Yale, besides the students of the School of Religious Pedagogy and the Seminary. An informal reception and supper in the Seminary upon the arrival of the delegates helped to promote acquaintance and a sense of common interest at the start; and the convention was felt to be a means of encouragement and stimulus to the missionary interest of all present. Among the speakers were Dr. John Potts, Mr. Latouret, Dr. J. T. Headland and Dr. S. M. Zwemer.

During the Christmas vacation the quadrennial convention of the Student Volunteer Movement at Rochester, N. Y., attracted 18 students

from the Seminary and several from the School of Pedagogy. Professor Gillett was also present, representing the Faculty. A well balanced report of the convention was given at a fully attended meeting a day or two after their return brought the impulse of the convention back to the rest of the student body and the Faculty.

The sense of fellowship between Faculty and students was strengthened by a social meeting toward the close of the fall term, with the whole constituency of the Seminary as its subject. The meeting was largely taken up with prayer for the graduates of the Seminary now at work at home and abroad, as well as for those who are in course of preparation for the ministry. A refreshing freedom and earnestness marked the participation in the meeting.

The students as usual have found time for considerable activity outside the requirements of the Seminary course. So far as reported this work is as follows: Five members of the Senior Class have had regular preaching engagements; and two others have positions as pastors' assistants. Six members of the Middle Class preach regularly, two of them being Armenian students who minister to the people of their own race in New Britain and in Thompsonville. Two members of the Junior Class have pastorates.

An interesting experiment has been undertaken by two rural churches, which unite in a plan of pulpit supply by three Seminary students, who go to these churches in rotation for the Sunday services.

Beside these regular appointments, 10 Seniors have, between them, conducted 37 preaching services. Two Middlers have taken 6 services and one Junior reports a similar engagement. The Seminary has furnished one member of a church choir, one leader of a Mission Study Class, 14 teachers of Sunday-school classes, three teachers of English in night schools, in connection with the mission work of Warburton Chapel and three workers in boys' clubs. These are regular appointments. Occasional service of this sort has been rendered by 13 students.

The Seminary has appointed Lewis Hodous, 1900, a missionary of the American Board at Foo Chow, China, as William Thompson Fellow for one year. Mr. Hodous will utilize part of his regular furlough, together with additional time granted by the Board, in the study of Chinese literature with Dr. DeGroot at Leyden, Holland. This is a tribute to the scholarly work that Mr. Hodous has already done on the field, and a renewed indication of the Seminary's earnest coöperation with missionary endeavor.



